

National Horticulture Competition 2026
**Mini Garden Design Tray –
“Pollinator Paradise”**
Entry 2 to Level 1



Timeline of events

Horticulture students are invited to take part in a national competition held at Derwen College, in Shropshire, on Friday 19 June 2026.

- Applications welcome: Monday 8 December 2025–Friday 20 February 2026
- First round entries (including support statement) by: Friday 13 March 2026.
- Successful entries will be informed by Friday 27 March 2026, and must be available for the live final on Friday 19 June 2026.

Entry Requirements

- Competition is open to all Horticulture students from colleges of Further or Specialist education, aged 16–25
- Competition is open for learners working between Entry Level 2 and Level 1

Competition Task

Join us for an exciting and educational competition where candidates will create a **“Pollinator Paradise” Mini Garden Tray** through a two-stage process.

In the first round, each student will complete an individual planning task, designing their own mini garden by selecting pollinator-friendly plants, designing a layout, and labelling key features.

Successful planners progress to the second stage, the live final, where individual candidates bring their designs to life in a 30-minute hands-on challenge.

1. Plan and Design a Mini Garden

Competitors must produce a plan for a Mini Garden Tray with the theme “Pollinator Paradise”. The plan should demonstrate knowledge of plants, design skills, and understanding of pollinators.

The plan should include:

- Plant selection: at least 3 plants suitable for pollinators.
- Garden layout: a sketch or labelled diagram showing plant placement.
- Extra features: e.g. small shelters, water source or decorations for pollinators.

2. Live Mini Garden Design Tray

Competitors must follow their plan and create their Mini Garden Tray based on the theme “Pollinator Paradise”.

- Fill container with compost or soil.
- Prepare planting areas for chosen plants.
- Arrange and plant flowers/herbs according to the theme **“Pollinator Paradise.”**
- Add decorative features: stones, moss, mini shelters or water sources.
- Label garden: identify plants and features.

To be provided by the host:

- A garden tray for each competitor
- Compost/ Soil
- Tools
- Space for the competition to take place
- A range of plants/herbs to choose
- Water if needed for garden

To be provided by the competitor:

- Suitable work attire
- Features of the mini garden e.g. stones, moss, small shelters, water source or decorations for pollinators
- Garden labels to identify plants and features

Marking and Assessment

There will be one judge on site to ensure guidelines are adhered to and further judges who will judge the end product. Judging will be marked against the criteria:

- Use of Health and Safety (including PPE)
- Creativity – how the Pollinator Paradise theme has been interpreted
- Choice of plant selection
- Plant skills and placement of plants and features
- Design of overall finished mini garden tray
- A professional attitude to work

Additional Information

- Competitors will receive a Health and Safety briefing at the start of the competition.
- Competitors will start and finish work as instructed by the judges.
- Competitors will be given 30 minutes to complete their activities.
- Competitors must provide their own uniform / PPE.
- Competitors who arrive late for the event will not receive additional time.
- If, during the competition, competitors must leave their work (e.g.: medical reasons, toilet break), they will have the time recorded on a 'time out' sheet by a member of staff.
- The judges' decision is final.
- Prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed competitors, all others will be awarded a certificate of participation.
- Photographs taken during the event may be used for marketing/publicity purposes. Students and staff attending the competition will be required to complete a form to confirm or deny consent to use their image.
- Competitors must only receive agreed support that is outlined in their support statement. Support that is deemed to be outside that declared in the support statement could result in the competitor being disqualified from the competition.

Contact Details

For any further information, please contact Katie Roberts, Horticulture Lead, at Derwen College: 01691 661234