



# Heralding Spring Plant Trail



2025

Welcome the coming of spring with us and discover the winter and early spring plants growing in the Garden today. Look out for the numbered Spring Trail labels next to the plants.

### 1. *Quercus coccifera*

The *Quercus coccifera*, also known as the holly oak or kermes oak, has spiky evergreen leaves which resemble a holly leaf. In spring, it produces small reddish flowers followed by small acorns.

### 2. *Carica papaya*

In the Tropical Corridor Glasshouse you can find *Carica papaya* known as papaya, papaw or pawpaw. This plant was first used in Mesoamerica, now southern Mexico and Central America. The fruit is rich in antioxidants, fibre and folic acid. Papaya also contains two enzymes, papain and chymopapain, which aid digestive issues and reduce inflammation.

### 3. *Delosperma lehmanni*

Continue through to the Southern Africa Glasshouse to find this succulent, also known as the ice plant. It is frost-hardy, and some say it shimmers as if covered in ice crystals. The plant has thick, angular, hairless leaves, and surprisingly, it produces bright yellow, daisy-like flowers.

### 4. *Iris unguicularis* 'Walter Butt'

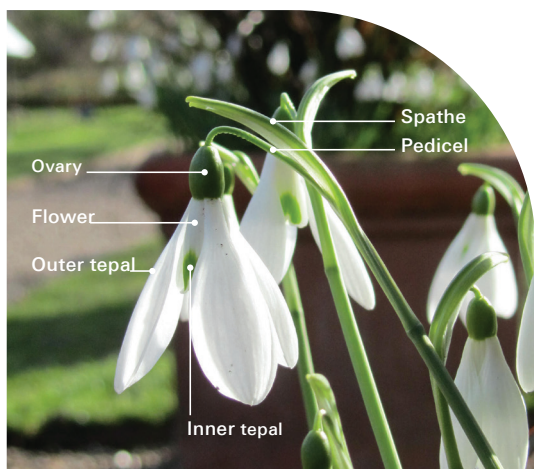
In the Pharmaceutical Beds in the Garden of Medicinal Plants, you'll find this beautiful blue iris. It's a variety from Algeria and blooms in winter. The iris flower contains antioxidants with anticancer properties, but the entire plant is toxic to humans.

### 5. *Echium pininana*

As you walk through the Atlantic Islands Border, look for several impressive large plants. This stunning plant from the Canary Islands no longer requires winter protection due to milder winters in the UK. You may notice some plants with winter protection today; this is to shield them from frost.

### 6. *Vinca difformis*

In front of the beehives, you will see this winter-flowering periwinkle. It has starry, whitish-blue flowers and belongs to the Apocynaceae plant family. To learn more about plant families, visit the Dicotyledon Order Beds, where each bed contains a different plant family.



#### Plant name abbreviations:

'spp.' – species

'var.' – variety

'subsp.' – subspecies

## 7. *Drimys winteri*

This plant originates from Chile and Argentina. In the late 1500s, sailors made a drink by infusing the bark in water. As the bark of the tree is rich in vitamin C, it proved to be an excellent remedy for scurvy. Much like the plant-derived medicine quinine, this allowed colonising Western countries to travel further at sea and subsequently exploit the resources and people they encountered.

## 8. *Chimonanthus praecox* 'Grandiflorus'

You can likely smell this plant before you see it. Known as wintersweet, it originates from China and has strongly scented flowers that provide nectar in winter. This offers essential food for pollinating insects like bees and flies when few other plants are in bloom.

## 9. *Eranthis hyemalis*

Also known as winter aconite, this plant is one of the first to flower each year. It produces bright yellow flowers, reproduces quickly, then dies back to the ground to repeat the process next year.

## 10. *Galanthus spp.* (snowdrops)

We grow a variety of snowdrop cultivars in this area. While snowdrops typically bloom in late winter, changing climates have caused them to appear earlier, making their arrival even harder to predict. We recommend exploring the different common names of the snowdrops planted here.

## 11. *Sarcococca ruscifolia* *var. ruscifolia*

The plant known as sweet box gets its common name from the small clusters of highly fragrant flowers it produces. You'll find and smell many more sweet boxes around the Garden.

## 12. *Prunus mume*

*Prunus mume*, known as Chinese plum or Japanese apricot, originates from China and is related to both plums and apricots. It produces beautiful white blossoms in late winter and early spring. The unripe fruit is antibacterial and has been used to help prevent dental diseases.

## 13. *Leucojum aestivum* *subsp. aestivum*

*Leucojum's* are in the same family as snowdrops, Amaryllidaceae. They are commonly known as snowflakes. Snowflakes are much larger than snowdrops, they have bell-shaped flowers and each tepal has green spots on the end.

## 14. *Galanthus nivalis*

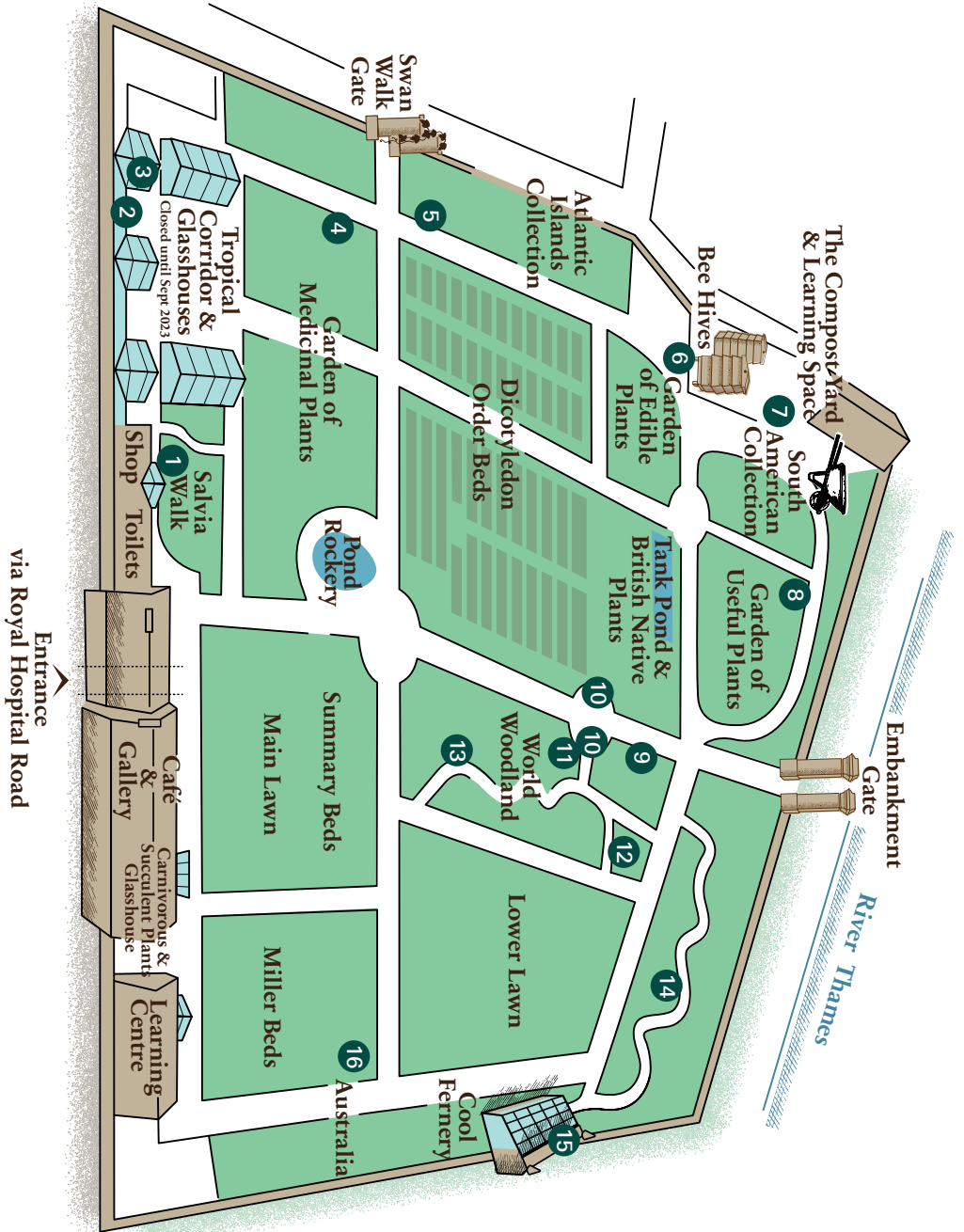
This common snowdrop is often found in deciduous woodland and may have already bloomed depending on when you visit. The bulb of *Galanthus nivalis* contains galantamine, a compound used in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

## 15. *Platycerium* *bifurcatum*

Look up in the Cool Fernery Glasshouse and you'll see this plant. This epiphytic Staghorn Fern grows on other plants rather than in the ground. Its distinctive fronds resemble stag antlers. The fern has two types of fronds: fertile fronds that extend outward and sterile fronds that form a flat base to protect the root crown.

## 16. *Viscum album*

Commonly known as mistletoe, this poisonous, parasitic plant gets all its nutrients from a host plant, in this instance, an apple tree. Mistletoe is rich in myths and symbolism. In Greek mythology it was given to the hero Aeneas, to protect him on his journey to the underworld and ensure his return.



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