

Botanic Gardens



Route description

This route through an historic city park is along surfaced paths with a few steps and some slight hills.

Distance

0.8 miles 1.3 km.

Average Time

25 - 35 mins. plus time to enjoy the gardens.

Access

By bike – The park is adjacent to National Cycle Network Route 9.

By bus - Metro Services: any 7 or 8 bus.

By car - On-street parking around Botanic Avenue and Stranmillis area.

Trail Route

This is a circular walk that can be started from any of seven entrances to Botanic Gardens. This description begins at the main entrance at the Stranmillis Road.

Once inside the main gates of the park you will see the statue of Lord Kelvin **(1)** in front of you. Follow the path to the right; this leads past the front of the Ulster Museum and to the entrance of the Tropical Ravine **(2)**.

From the ravine take the flagstone path to the right. Continue past an entrance gate to your right and straight ahead to the herbaceous borders **(3)**.

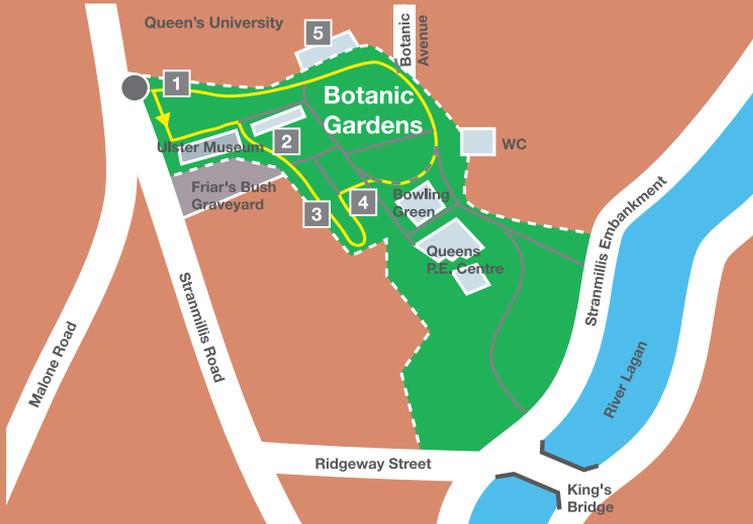
The path goes along the top border and then doubles back on itself along the lower border. Follow this until you reach a low wall and set of

steps on your right that leads through the stone pergolas in the centre of the rose garden **(4)**.

Beyond the rose garden, go right on the tarmac path and then take the narrow path on your left which leads on to the main path round the park. Turn right and follow this path past the bowling green and two further entrances on your right. Pass the rockery and then the main lawn on your left, until you reach a three-way junction.

From here you can see the Palm House **(5)**. Pause to enjoy the splendour of the Palm House, both inside and out. To complete the walk, continue along the path, which leads past the oak and conifer collections, back to the entrance at Stranmillis Road.

Trail 06



History

The upsurge of interest in botany and horticulture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to the formation of the Belfast Botanic and Horticultural Society in 1827, and the Belfast Botanic Garden a year later. With time the garden became renowned for its horticulture and as a popular venue for social events such as balloon ascents, tournaments, flower shows and band concerts.

Financial problems led to the property being sold to Belfast Corporation and opened free to the public on 1st January 1895.

Things of Interest

Lord Kelvin Statue (1)

This commemorates the famous physicist, Lord Kelvin, and was erected in 1912.

The Tropical Ravine (2)

The ravine was constructed between 1887 and 1889 by Charles McKimm, curator of the garden, and his staff. It contains a fascinating collection of exotic species growing in a sunken glen.

Herbaceous borders (3)

These four wide borders are among the longest of their type in the country. They look at their most colourful in summer but the beauty

of the grasses and bamboo can be appreciated even in winter.

Rose garden (4)

This charming rose garden was laid out in 1932 and contains a good selection of large-flowered and cluster-flowered roses.

The Palm House (5)

Easily the most striking feature of the gardens, the Palm House was designed by Charles Lanyon, and built between 1838 and 1852. It contains collections of tropical plants arranged in a cool wing, a stove wing and the higher central dome. Many of the species on display during the 19th century are still grown today.

Look out for

- banana plants and other economic species growing in the Tropical Ravine.
- treecreepers that roost in the soft bark of the redwood trees near the Kelvin statue.

For further information see the Botanic Gardens leaflet.