

SECRET GARDEN KEY



Hot Spot

This is the most protected part of the garden and the testing area for the tenderest plants new to the garden. If they survive here they are tested further out in the garden. In this area you will see succulents such as *Crassula*, some of our National Collection of *Puya* and the Flame Trees of Australia. *Clue: go through the gate, look up & you will see the Plantation Room Café balcony.*



Enchanted Pergola Pew

The Fig Tree is a variety called *Ficus* "Brown Turkey". It is one of the oldest plants in the garden and was planted before the turn of the 19th century. It is planted at the foot of a stone cliff so it has summer warmth in order to ripen the figs. Our figs are huge, much bigger than you usually see ordinarily, and they ripen in August.



Bob's Tree fern Utopia

Underneath Bob's Bridge, you will find a mini ecosystem from Tasmania. Tree ferns in gardens are usually stripped of their lower dead leaves; we leave them in order to show the dense thicket of understorey as seen in the wild. Among the tree trunks are very rare epiphytic ferns that are almost impossible to grow, but thriving where the conditions are perfect for them. *Clue: look for a gate overlooking a well.*



Aussie Wilderness

This part of the garden is a faithful representation of the flora of New South Wales. The views through *Eucalyptus* trees over wattles and tea trees are the same views with the same plant mix, constructed from detailed plans of where each plant was collected. *Clue: with the bridge and last fern at your back, go up the dirt track behind you.*



Cork Pavilion

Large swathes of the Mediterranean were once covered in cork forest which has been damaged by over exploitation. The garden around the curved stone benches shows how the understorey of these areas would have looked, largely devoid of vegetation as the cork tree produces a natural weed suppressant to favour its own young. *Cyclamen*, however, grow through the fallen leaves. *Clue: look for your first right on dirt when you see the sun dial ahead.*



Shepherd's Hut

The flora of this area represents the ephemeral wild flowers and first colonisers that can be seen invading a ramshackle building that is returning to the natural state. Eventually it will disappear below advancing waves of perennials and then shrubs and trees, only the walls will remain visible. *Clue: look for the V in the wall.*



Bamboo Enclosure

Bamboo grows as dense thickets. It suppresses other plants and forms a monoculture. This can be problematic outside of its natural environment where predators don't exist to hold it in check. Here you can see just how impenetrable the bamboo thicket can be, but individual stems (caulms) are different colours depending on species. *Clue: find the bench east from the Red Lacquer bridge.*



Mellow Meadow

Behind the meadow is an area of natural vegetation containing one of the rarest plants on the island or anywhere else in Britain, the Hoary Stock. This is its natural environment, where it takes advantage of exposed soil in areas of continuous cliff fall. It is unusual for botanic gardens in Britain to have natural populations of endangered species.



Hops Look Out

Hops were once an important crop to the Island economy, supporting the brewing industry of the Portsmouth city and naval port. You will see wild hops in hedgerows; these are escapees from earlier times before the hops were replaced with other cash crops. Our hop yard is now the sole commercial hop yard on the island. *Clue: continue past the poles.*



Willow Dome

The willow dome is made from interwoven stems of the crack willow; each is rooted into the floor and grows using its colleagues for support. Each year we wind the previous years "wands" back into shape to strengthen the whole. Eventually it becomes a room with living walls and a living roof. *Clue: go south from the swings to the boundary.*

VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDEN



SECRET GARDENS

This guide gives clues on how to find parts of the Garden that most people don't see.

Behind the veiled nooks of Ventnor Botanic Garden are a number of unseen gardens – little parcels of paradise. A new found sense of tranquillity and wonderment might just wash over you in one of **our ten favourite hidden spaces.**

Read the map carefully and beware of the uneven ground, the lizards, the steps, the overhanging branches, and seek out the healing wonders of VBG.

Bring an absorbing novel or just take in the view. Let the little ones lose themselves in their imagination in the enchanted alcoves off the main pathways.

Who said gardens are boring?

GET OFF THE PATH AND EXPLORE...

BEWARE – overhanging branches, nettles, uneven surfaces and more unexpected encounters. Explore at your own risk.

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visit www.botanic.co.uk for news & events

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the end of your visit.

