

BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS



THE BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL
GARDENS
AN EDUCATIONAL CHARITY

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL GARDENS NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN & WINTER 2017

Opening Times 2017/18

The Gardens are open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day from **10.00 am**.

Closing Times

October to March: doors close at 5.00pm.

April to September: Doors close at 6.00 pm (the Gardens will close at dusk if earlier – the gift shop will close 15 minutes before closing).

Admission Prices	
Family *	£22
Adult	£7.50
Groups of 10 or more	£6 (adult) or £4 (concessions)
Concessions	£5.25
Children under 5	FREE
SHOP	FREE

*Family ticket = 2 adults and up to 3 concessions.

School visits are priced separately.

Please Note: all prices include a 10% donation as part of the Gift Aid scheme.

giftaid it

Membership Options

Family Membership £65 – allows entry for up to 5 people from the same family

Annual Membership £40 – allows entry for 2 people from the same family

Concessions (students, 60+) - £27.50

Life Membership - £795 Senior Life Membership (65+) - £495

Corporate Season Ticket - £117.50 – entry for 5 people

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FRIENDS



Autumn is now upon us and we should be inspired by the beautiful colours in the Gardens. Some of our tree colours are truly magnificent and definitely worth a photograph.

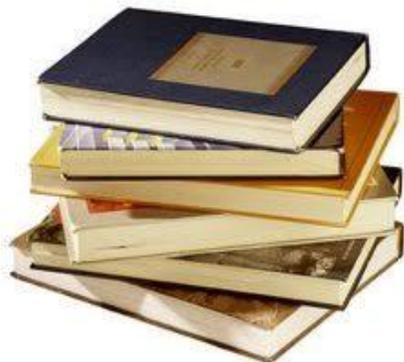
The events at the Gardens have been successful over the summer and the Friends held a Craft Fair on National Heritage Day. There was no admission fee on that day and the visitor numbers swelled to over 2000. All the stall holders were very impressed by the footfall, sales were good and everyone went home happy.

We have a wonderful magical illuminated trail from 29th



November to 1st January with a scented fire garden and tunnel of light amongst other festive fun and, of course, Santa and his Elves. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Have you visited the Memory Garden? A tranquil area with a pool surrounded by brass plaques of remembrance from some of our members and visitors. This is fast becoming a welcome way of remembering a loved one and a three year family membership is included in the sponsorship. The Gardens welcome all sponsorships including benches and trees which are still very popular and more information can be obtained from Reception.



The first event for the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens is the Book Fair in March. We will start collecting books from the beginning of January. Books can be left at Reception, but please, no reference books as these do not sell.

I hope you enjoy your visit to the Botanical Gardens and appreciate all the hard work from our team of gardeners.

Best wishes

Rosemary Radford

Chairman of the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Sponsorship Details

Tree Sponsorship

Mrs V. Mallinson

Peter Hooper in memory of
Fiona Dorothea Hooper



Early Appeals for Plants

Sally Dickson

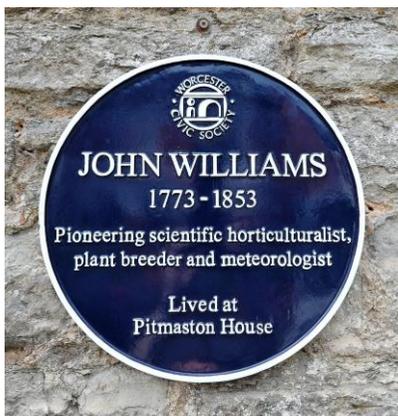
In 1832, when they opened to the public, Birmingham Botanical Gardens were still appealing for plants. In response, John Williams wrote a letter to the Curator on 20th August, one of a number of letters that have recently been donated to the Gardens.

John Williams was a renowned horticulturalist who lived at Pitmaston House in Worcester (pictured). He had inherited the family distillery in Worcester and his



income enabled him to build the house and move there with his wife and family in 1804. He then indulged his interests in meteorology and horticulture.

The garden and nearby land were converted into an ornamental nursery where he developed hybrid fruits. It has been said that the stamp of J. Williams ... is a mark of special quality.” He distributed a variety of apples including the ‘Pitmaston Pine Apple’, and ‘Pitmaston Nonpareil’. He was responsible for two of the most successful dessert varieties of pear: the





'William' and the 'Pitmaston Duchess' (pictured). He also introduced the 'Pitmaston Champagne Gooseberry' and a nectarine named 'Pitmaston Orange'.

He experimented with micro-climates describing, in 1818, a vinery he had constructed "with a steam vault under the soil, for supplying occasional warmth to the roots." He added "I have noticed the effects of ground heat with some attention."

He wrote articles for the Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London, the predecessor of the RHS, giving readers the benefit of his experience including one about "the fences most eligible for Gardens and Orchards." He found that a hawthorn hedge harboured insects which attacked his fruit trees while a holly hedge left them relatively unscathed. In 1848 the Society visited Pitmaston and saw vines that had been planted forty years previously.

Williams' letter embodies many of these interests:

"I have desired my Gardener to send you some number of the most approved of my numerous collection of Strawberries which I have raised from seed, having previously crossed the blossoms so as to obtain mixtures of opposites.

I should advise you to plant these strawberries in the upper part of your Garden, as the blossoms are often cut off in May by the frosty night in low ground."

He refers to the "hasty view I took of the locality of your Garden" and offers to use a thermometer to find out where the frost line

is and “thus ascertain how low you may venture to plant strawberries.”

Appended is a list of five varieties of fruit which he donated. The ‘Pitmaston Pine Apple’ (pictured) was originally raised by Mr White, steward to Lord Foley but was being grown at Pitmaston by 1820. It was first shown in 1845, thirteen years after its donation to the Gardens. It is



a small connoisseurs’ apple, “its crisp golden flesh has a richness of intense sweet-sharp juice with nutty notes of pineapple and muscat grape – to live for!” It is still occasionally found in old Scottish orchards.



‘Virginian’ was a strawberry (pictured) discovered in America which reached Europe c.1624. It is unclear what fruits the other varieties represent: ‘Supreme Cane’, ‘Bishops Wick’, and ‘Pitmaston Early Black’.

Two other letters date from June 1833. Both are responses to requests made on 6th June for entries to the Gardens’ first competitive exhibition of plants. It was to be held at the Society of Arts rooms in New Street on 19th and 20th June. There was not a lot of time to prepare entries. The replies were sent to Thomas Knott, the proprietor of Aris’s Gazette and Honorary Secretary to the Gardens, and John

Darwall, a local physician and an originator of the scheme to found the Gardens, who was joint Honorary Treasurer.

William Henry Lord Lyttelton was a patron of the project to found the Gardens. His letter was sent from Spencer House in London, the home of his wife's family; he had married Sarah Spencer in



1813. After being an M.P. and Member of the House of Lords, ill health forced him to return to his house at Hagley

(pictured) in 1832 where he became a country gentleman. His father had laid out the grounds at Hagley Hall, making use of the natural landscape rather than earth-moving. It was full of walks and 'peeps' and monuments. Lord Lyttelton started to take an interest in the estate and recorded his observations in his diary, chronicling the weather and the animals and plants growing there. For example, he recorded the first fawn seen in the Park, the flowering of the roses, and the flights of starlings wheeling about the Park.

He told Thomas Knott, "I quite approve of the intended Exhibitions, & I will direct my Gardener, who is now in London, but will shortly return to Hagley, to send over any plants or their productions that he may think suitable."

The Earl of Dartmouth similarly promised to instruct his Gardener to send "any productions of my garden that he may consider suitable, though I fear there may not be any at present worth offering. I regret that I shall not be able to attend the first of the

Society's exhibitions as I shall be engaged in London till after the time fixed for it."

William Legge, 4th Earl of Dartmouth, had been approached for his patronage, in 1829, at the start of the project to found the Gardens. In September the shareholders elected him president, a post he held until his death in 1853.

In the 1830s Dartmouth was living at Sandwell Hall (pictured), then in Staffordshire, an early eighteenth century brick house with 66 rooms. The park had oak trees and pools to the north and "a lofty park wall and rich phalanx of plantations on rising ground to the south" to ensure seclusion from the

the "manufacturing country". In addition his father had paid a high price for some nearby land to prevent building on it.



In June 1833 both Lyttelton and Dartmouth were among the prize winners.

Main Sources:

Letters donated by J.H. Lee, nos. 5-7.

Askwith, B., *The Lytteltons*, Chatto & Windus, 1975.

Ballard, P., *An Oasis of Delight: The History of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens*, Brewin Books, 2003.

Gwilliam, H.W., *Old Worcester: People and Places*, Worcester, 1977.

Hawthorne, L., *The Northern Pomona: Apples for Cool Climates*, Pomona Publications, 2007 (two quotations from p.156).

Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London, vol.2, 1818.

Victoria County History of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire.

Worcester Civic Society Newsletter, vol.10, no.1, Summer 2016.

Citrus Sp. (numerous species)

Includes orange, lemon, lime, grapefruit, satsuma, etc. found in the Mediterranean House.



Citrus fruits have been cultivated since ancient times, first domesticated in south east Asia where they are found in the wild. Through time, mankind has spread these around the warmer parts of the world for useful crops. Citrus are

evergreen trees and shrubs with highly fragrant, white flowers. These flowers can appear all year round, but are especially abundant from late winter to spring. After pollination, the ovary at the base of the flower swells and slowly grows into the fruit. It can take up to 12 months for the fruits to mature to its full size. The fruits only change colour when grown in cool climates. In tropical countries, even mature orange or lemon fruits can stay green! Citrus like an acidic compost with excellent drainage and lots of fertiliser. We grow ours in ericaceous compost and perlite in clay pots. Watering can be liberal during the summer, but should be greatly reduced during the winter. Citrus are gross feeders and quickly show signs of hunger (yellow leaves) if not well fed! A foliage spray with water is done daily by hose, as they love humidity. Humidity helps to prevent leaf drop.

- A plant of the Month for December – see other Plants of the Month on the Gardens' website.

SPONSORS OF THE 2016 NEWSLETTERS



Wills & Powers of Attorney

Probate



Trusts & Charities

Residential Property

Commercial Property



Property Disputes

Employment

Dispute Resolution



are pleased to sponsor the Botanical Gardens Newsletter and feel lucky to be so close to these wonderful Gardens.

We and our clients can look out on our own gardens as we discuss legal matters.

If you have any queries please contact us on 0121 693 2222

www.tyndallwoods.co.uk

facebook.com/tyndallwoodssolicitors

[@Tyndallwoods](https://twitter.com/Tyndallwoods)

29 Woodbourne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B17 8BY



Local Matters, National Strength.

Perfectly timed business and tax advice from local accountants with local knowledge will be music to your ears.

Finely tuning our own business to meet our clients needs has helped us to be proactive and advise thousands of businesses throughout the UK. Our network of local offices provide all the essential aspects of business support to your company.

Visit www.hwca.com today and enjoy the performance.

Sterling House, 71 Francis Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8SP.

Telephone: 0121 456 1613 E-Mail: birmingham@hwca.com



A.B. Taylor

Funeral Services Limited

are proud to have sponsored the landscaping to create the Memory Garden



0121 434 4340

taylorfunerals@btconnect.com
49 Wolverhampton Road South
Quinton, Birmingham, B32 2AY

With you EVERY step of the way

For support and guidance when arranging a funeral or preplanning for the future, please speak with one of our compassionate and experienced staff.

Golden Charter
Funeral Plans





BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

Westbourne Road,

Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM, B15 3TR.

Tel: 0121 454 1860 Fax: 0121 454 7835

Website: www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

Email: admin@birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 528981

Photographs by BBG, Gill Mills, Sally Dickson, et al.

