

BIRMINGHAM  
BOTANICAL GARDENS



THE BIRMINGHAM  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS  
AN EDUCATIONAL CHARITY

FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM  
BOTANICAL GARDENS NEWSLETTER  
SPRING 2015

## Opening Times 2015

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

## Closing Times

**1st January to 30th April:** Doors close at **5.00pm**

**1 May to 30 September:** Doors close at **6.00pm** - weekends at **7.00pm**

Admission Prices	
Family *	£22
Adult or Two Adults	£7 or £12
Groups **	£6 (adult) or £4 (concessions)
Concessions	£4.75
Children under 5	FREE
SHOP	FREE

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

\*\* Pricing valid for groups of 10 or more. School visits are priced separately.

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

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## 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

Single Membership £35

Guest Ticket £13 – may be purchased by Annual, Family or Single Members only and allows entry for one other person

A Happy New Year to our members and visitors. I would like to thank our Newsletter sponsors as this sponsorship pays for the printing and has enabled the Friends to publish the Newsletter without having to use money raised from their events. We are extremely grateful for their continued support.



The Friends Craft Fair in November had some interesting stalls, but unfortunately, despite the free entry to the Gardens, the footfall wasn't as promising as we had hoped. I know we face competition from all over Birmingham, but the Friends rely on support to raise funds for specific projects.

As I have mentioned before the Gardens rely on volunteers. If you have down-sized your house and miss your big garden, or just love gardening why not volunteer for a few hours and help make the Gardens the beautiful place we love to see all the year. If you prefer something slightly more challenging we always need volunteers in the office and shop.



Are you stuck for a card or present for a friend? Then visit our shop where there is a great selection of gifts and plants. Whilst at the Gardens visit the Gallery where we have an interesting range of pictures at very reasonable prices. We have something for everyone!

Please visit the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in 2015 - a wonderful setting within the heart of Birmingham.

**Rosemary Radford – Chairman of the Friends of BBG**

## *Lachenalia aloides*



This is by far the most popular species in its genus and looking at its stunning flowers and interesting leaves it is not hard to understand why. While *Lachenalia aloides* is a quite variable species, its tubular flowers are often bright yellow accented with red and green while the leaves can be marked with dramatic purple tiger stripes.

This Cape Cowslip, which originates from the winter rainfall region of South Africa, puts on a spectacular exotic display this time of the year while being dormant in the summer.

*Lachenalia* are quite adaptable and fairly easy to grow. In early autumn six to twelve bulbs can be planted to a 15cm pot using a well-drained mix with little humus. They don't mind being crowded – in fact they give a better display when planted this way!

## *Iris reticulata*



*Iris reticulata* must be one of the most beautiful of hardy plants. Quite often its leaves begin to shoot as the snow is still on the ground. While the foliage is only a few inches tall the buds appear and once opened the striking flowers of this dwarf iris are displayed. The blooms vary from pale blue to deep violet and have central yellow splashes down the middle of each petal.

As this iris species flowers far ahead of clumping perennials it can truly dominate a patch of ground for as long as it is in bloom. Therefore it is perfect for providing some pre-spring excitement to spots in the garden that are quiescent until late March. Alternatively, it can be grown in pots for a movable spring display.

Native to the Caucasus, *Iris reticulata* gets its name from the netted (reticulate) tunic which encloses the bulb of this species.

## The Memory Garden

The Friends of the Botanical Gardens raise funds to support the well-being and continuation of the Gardens.

The most recent Friends initiative is the creation of the Memory Garden - with the landscaping designed to create a peaceful environment to remember loved ones. The first phase was completed in January 2015 and planting will commence in the Spring.



Please take time to visit the Memory Garden which is located alongside the Cascade and pool. The Memory Garden is centred around a newly constructed circular pool with a millstone water feature. The flowing water, circular ripples and landscaping are designed to be spiritually appropriate for memories and celebrating life.

The Memory Garden creates the opportunity for a commemorative plaque to be placed within the surrounding stone slabs to celebrate the lives of loved ones. It could be an alternative to a gravestone or memorial within the grounds of a crematorium or cemetery. It is a green option - a tranquil place for friends and family members to re-visit a loved one is important. The Memory Garden will be part of the Gardens forever.



The Friends see this Garden as a sense of connection with memory to a particular place and beautiful environment which can be readily accessed. The sponsorship funds will not only go towards maintaining the Memory Garden, but also to sustaining the Gardens generally for future generations. If you wish to think about becoming a sponsor, please ask for a leaflet at reception.

The Friends would be grateful for the support of members of the Botanical Gardens, their guests and other visitors in publicising this commemorative sponsorship opportunity. Please take a leaflet and give it to anyone that you think might be interested.

Some potential sponsors have come forward where previous arrangements have not provided this link to a beautiful place. Potential sponsors may wish to choose this sponsorship as part of their planning for themselves, or may be prompted by the passing of a loved one.

Sponsorship details are currently being finalised and will shortly be on the Botanical Gardens website and literature will be available at the Gardens

The Friends would like to remind members that newsletters and other related information regarding events and activities can be received by email. If you would like to receive information about the Gardens by email, please let the Gardens have your email address. If you have not already done so and you are a tax payer, could you please at the same time make sure that the Gardens have a completed Gift Aid form so that tax can be reclaimed on any present or future donations you make to the Gardens.

Thank you.

**Rosemary Radford**  
**Chairman of the Friends**



## *Anemone blanda*



This hardy perennial bulb is a cultivated variety of a species which comes from the eastern Mediterranean region and which is sometimes called the Grecian or Greek windflower. The species, which may have white or blue flowers, colonises scrub land, rocky areas and woodland clearings in its native habitat and is equally happy here in the UK in woodland gardens and shaded areas. This cultivar was selected, as its name suggests, for the distinct blue coloration of its flowers.

Bulbs planted in autumn will flower in the following spring and, if left undisturbed, will spread naturally. Established clumps can be divided in summer, after flowering, to increase stock. Handle the plants carefully as their sap can cause skin irritation.

## *Amelanchier laevis*



Closely related to rowans the impressively named Allegheny serviceberry from North America is an absolute joy in April, literally covered in pink blushed white flowers and salmon pink young leaves. Its close relative *Amelanchier lamarckii* the snowy mespilus is equally attractive and an ideal tree for a small garden.

The fleeting but spectacular spring display is followed by a long and vibrant autumn show of yellow, orange and red leaves. This tree will give you years of enjoyment and a fantastic start to the spring blossom trail.

- These are some of the plants of the month for the next few months at the Gardens. For other plants that look spectacular in these months see the website

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

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**All photographs by the BBG and Gill Mills**

