

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Winter family trail

Welcome to this 45-minute winter trail. The Gardens might seem like they are fast asleep over the winter months, but there is still lots to discover!



Start at Victoria Gate

As you exit the ticket barriers, turn left and make your way along the path. Keep your eyes peeled for a gate set back from the path on the left-hand side with a mythical beast perched high on top.

1 Can you spot what creature is resting on top of this 18th-century gate? That's right! It's a unicorn. Unicorns are mythical creatures, and it was believed that their horns had magical properties that could cure diseases. Plants have been used in medicine since prehistoric times, and here at Kew, our scientists are making new medicinal plant discoveries all the time. That's why Kew scientists are working hard to reduce plant extinction by collecting and preserving as many seeds as they can. Every plant is precious!

→TAP to detect more animals that are hiding nearby.

Continue along this pathway.

2 As you walk along the path, look out for the green-leaved bushes lining the path on the left-hand side. Even though it's cold, these evergreen plants have kept their leaves, and some still even have their brightly coloured flowers!

- ★ If the flowers have gone at the time of your visit, can you see where more will bloom?
- ★ Can you see the large buds that are ready to burst into flowers when spring comes?
- ★ These plants add some much-needed winter colour to the Gardens, but they are also very useful to us.
- ★ Can you guess what much-loved drink they provide?

Tick the box when you have completed this section of the trail

☐

→TAP to find out why we love this plant so much!

Continue walking along this path until you reach some buildings on your left. These are Kew's art galleries. The further one is the Marianne North Gallery. Stand outside this red brick building.

3 Marianne North was a Victorian artist who travelled all around the world, painting the plants that captivated her. Between 1871 and 1885 she produced 848 paintings – far too many to keep at home! She paid for this gallery to be built so that she could share her work with the visitors at Kew. Marianne designed the layout, and framed and hung all her work herself.

- ★ What does the outside of her gallery look like?
- ★ Can you think of some good describing words for this building?

→TAP to sharpen your observation skills.

Now it is time to go inside the gallery. What do you think it will look like inside?

4 There is so much to see inside the gallery.

- ★ Above each section of paintings, can you spy the country where they were painted?
- ★ Let's concentrate on the wall opposite the door that you came in. Can you spot India?

One of the things that makes Marianne's paintings special is that she painted plants exactly where they were growing, to show people where they live. In the India section, there is a special painting – it is the only one that shows a picture of Marianne herself!

- ★ Have a look. Can you find her?

→TAP to reveal more of Marianne's secrets.

Can you see the room at the back of the gallery? That's your next stop – South Africa!

5 Find painting 367. Marianne painted this plant in 1883, and she had never seen such a plant before, so she sent back samples of it to Kew. Kew's plant experts, called botanists, realised that this was a species new to science and so they named it *Kniphofia northiae* after Marianne North! Marianne has other plants named after her too, like the one in painting 561, called *Nepenthes northiana*.

- ★ Imagine you are Marianne on her travels – choose a painting that you like and try to draw it. What is it about this plant that interests you?
- ★ Don't forget to sign it in an interesting way like Marianne!

→TAP to discover what happened to the plant samples that Marianne sent to Kew.

Return back to the main room of the gallery and locate Singapore. Now find painting 577.

6 This painting shows the mangosteen fruit. Marianne said they 'melt in the mouth with a grape-like sweetness'.

- ★ What fruits do you love to eat?
- ★ Can you describe how they taste?
- ★ Can you spot a monkey in the picture?

The monkey lived with the family that Marianne stayed with in Singapore. He was very lively and loved playing with Marianne but whenever she tried to paint him he turned upside down just to annoy her!

- ★ What is your favourite animal?
- ★ Why?

→TAP to find more fruits and animals in the gallery.

Painting clues:

- ★ Did you spot Marianne in India? She is in painting 226.
- ★ Which painting did Marianne sign? It's number 193.

Want to keep this adventure going?

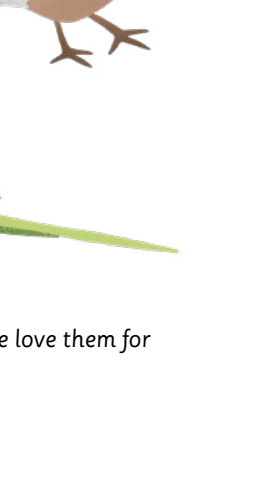
- ★ Pop next door to the Shirley Sherwood Gallery to view some modern art.
- ★ Visit the Winter Garden on the hill just to the right of these galleries to see some winter colour and smell the gorgeous witch hazel.
- ★ Explore the Temperate House to find some real examples of some of the plants in Marianne's paintings.

Continue to enjoy the Gardens with one of our themed trails.

More activities...

1 Stand still and listen... what can you **hear**? The Gardens may be sleepy, but they are full of birdsong!

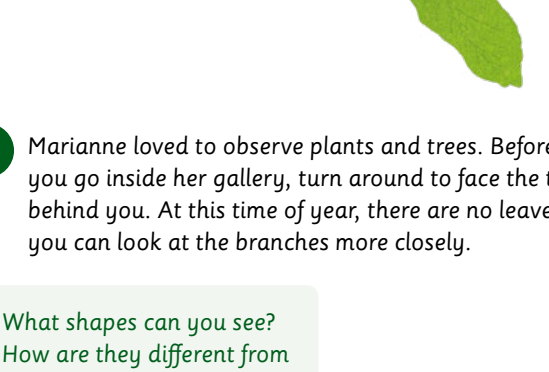
- ★ Can you tell what birds are nearby from the sounds they make?
- ★ Have a look at the pictures of some of the birds that can be found at Kew, and see if you can match them with their name.



As you continue along the trail, see if you can hear or see any.

1. Woodpecker (green)
2. Egyptian goose
3. Parakeet
4. Jay
5. Robin

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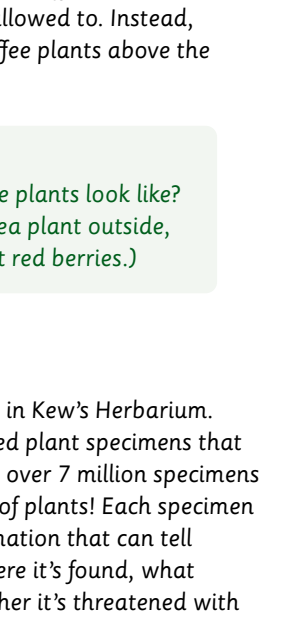
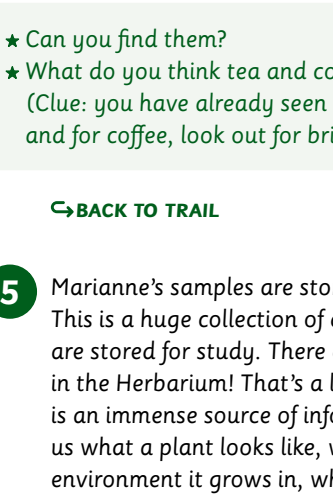


2 These plants are camellias and we love them for their leaves.

- ★ Can you guess what these leaves give us?

One particular camellia, *Camellia sinensis*, is where we get tea from. Here in the UK, we love our tea – 100 million cups are drunk here every day! These plants were actually brought here from China, where there are over 112 varieties of tea that all taste different. Conduct a tea survey amongst the adults you know to find out which is the most popular!

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3 Marianne loved to observe plants and trees. Before you go inside her gallery, turn around to face the trees behind you. At this time of year, there are no leaves, so you can look at the branches more closely.

- ★ What shapes can you see?
- ★ How are they different from each other?

Choose a tree and go up close to examine its bark. Touch it.

- ★ Is it full of cracks or is it smooth?

Compare the bark of some different trees. When you go inside the gallery, you will see that Marianne arranged different types of wood all around the bottom of the walls. Compare them and talk about how they differ from each other.

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4 Artists normally sign their work, but out of all of Marianne's paintings, she only ever signed one!

- ★ Can you find it? Look in North America!

Marianne wanted to serve tea and coffee to visitors in her gallery, but she was not allowed to. Instead, she decided to paint tea and coffee plants above the doorways as a little joke!

- ★ Can you find them?
- ★ What do you think tea and coffee plants look like? (Clue: you have already seen a tea plant outside, and for coffee, look out for bright red berries.)

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5 Marianne's samples are stored in Kew's Herbarium. This is a huge collection of dried plant specimens that are stored for study. There are over 7 million specimens in the Herbarium! That's a lot of plants! Each specimen is an immense source of information that can tell us what a plant looks like, where it's found, what environment it grows in, whether it's threatened with extinction, and when it flowers or produces seed. Peek into the room on the right-hand side at the back of the gallery to see Marianne's specimen.

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6 There are lots of fruits in the gallery that you might recognise, and maybe a few new ones to discover. Have a look at **117** – this is akee, Jamaica's national fruit. It's delicious with salt fish, but don't eat the seeds because they are poisonous! How about **550**, durian? It is delicious but smells absolutely disgusting! There are lots of animals and insects in the paintings too.

- ★ Look out for insects in the paintings – see how many you can find.
- ★ Which countries do they come from?
- ★ Which creatures do you recognise and which ones have you never seen before?

Choose a painting that you like and try to draw it

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