

- ### Key
- Trail route
  - Wheelchair-friendly route
  - Things to look out for on the trail
  - Snacks and drinks
  - Free wi-fi hotspot
  - Wheelchair-accessible toilet
  - Baby-changing facility
  - Shop

#### Start at Victoria Gate

Turn right past Victoria Gate Café and toilets and continue until you reach the Campanile.

**1 The Campanile may sound and look like an Italian bell tower, but it was actually designed as a chimney for the Palm House boilers. Underground furnaces heated water tanks and forced steam through an underground tunnel to keep Kew's tropical species at the correct temperature.**

Turn right and look straight ahead at Kew's skilfully sculpted Verdun Bench.

**2 This bench was made from an oak tree grown here at Kew.**

- ★ Can you stand tall and strong like an oak?
- ★ Sit on the bench and look across the pond to see the Palm House guarded by the Queen's Beasts.
- ★ How many can you see?

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

↪ Turn over to find out the story behind this sculptural seat.

Turn right and walk straight ahead. Go down the steps towards the pond to reach the Chinese Guardian Lions.

**3 These stone lions are very old and weigh about ten tonnes each. That's heavier than two Asian elephants and almost as heavy as a double-decker bus!**

- ★ Are there two lions or are there three?
  - ★ What else can you see?
- 

Head back up the steps and turn left along the pond.

**4 Stop when you see the tall conifers known as swamp cypress trees.**

- ★ Can you see one of the defining features of this tree, its knobbly 'knees' which poke up through the waterlogged bank?
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about these stunning trees.

Carry on walking around the Palm House Pond until you're standing in front of The Botanical restaurant (formally a museum).

**5 The sculpture in the centre of the Palm House Pond shows Hercules wrestling the river-god Achelous.**

- ★ Why do you think Achelous has turned himself into a serpent?
  - ★ Look across the pond and you might hear, or even see, an eel splashing on the surface or a fish flying out of the water as it feeds.
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about visitors to the pond.

Walk around the Palm House Pond until you arrive at a large mound, which forms part of the Woodland Garden. Follow the path up towards the Temple of Aeolus.

**6 Aeolus was the mythical king of storms and winds. This temple once had a seat which spun all the way around.**

- ★ Can you hear the sound of the wind echoing in the temple?
  - ★ How many columns does the temple have?
  - ★ Admire the view: what's the furthest thing you can see?
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about the Temple of Aeolus and the Kitchen Garden you can see in the distance.

Follow the other path down into the Woodland Garden and turn right. Be careful of tree roots.

**7 As you walk through the Woodland Garden, listen and look up in the trees.**

- ★ How many different animals can you see and hear?
- 

↪ Turn over to see how many creatures you can match on our list.

**8 As you come out of the Woodland Garden, you'll see a giant black walnut tree.**

- ★ Look under the tree: can you see a 'set of teeth'?
  - ★ Count them 1, 2, 3...
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about the unusual purple toothwort plant.

Walk to the left of the Kitchen Garden until you reach the Rock Garden.

**9 Walk through the Rock Garden and imagine trekking through valleys and climbing mountains around the world.**

- ★ Listen to the running water and see how the beautiful seed heads catch the winter sunshine.
  - ★ Can you spot miniature alpine plants growing in the rocks' cracks, and bulbs peeping above the soil?
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about the Rock Garden.

When you reach the end of the Rock Garden you'll be at your final destination, the Davies Alpine House.

**10 Imagine you've arrived at the top of a mountain.**

- ★ Look around the glasshouse and see how many different flowers you can find.
- 

↪ Turn over to find out more about the Davies Alpine House.

## More activities...

- 2 A **sessile oak acorn** was collected from France and planted here at Kew in 1919. The acorn grew into a stunning tree known as the Verdun oak, near the Palm House Pond. It sadly fell after a severe storm, but its wood was used to create this seat, in memory of the end of the First World War.



- ★ Can you find an oak tree at Kew today?
- ★ Look underneath and see if you can find an acorn.

- 4 **Swamp cypresses** are deciduous conifers, which means they lose their leaves every year. In autumn, their delicate leaves turn a beautiful shade of orange before they fall. Swamp cypress wood is especially water resistant and has even been used to hold up houses in the canals of Venice. The oldest known living swamp cypress can be found in North America and is over 2,000 years old.



- ★ How old do you think this tree is?

- 5 At some point, the **adult eels** in this pond will make the journey back to the River Thames and then travel 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean to breed. Keep a look out for visiting **grey herons** and **cormorants**. They are often seen at the edge of the pond, waiting patiently to feast on fish and eels.

The pipes in the fountain often get blocked by the many nesting birds or slippery eels, who like to make homes in them.

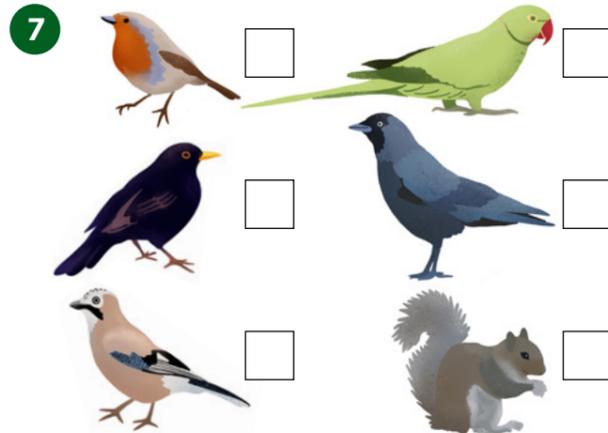


- ★ What other birds can you see?

- ★ How do you think the eels get to the river?

- 6 The mound was built from earth dug out during the creation of the Palm House Pond, over 100 years ago.
- At the back of the **Agius Evolution Garden**, to the left, is the **Kitchen Garden**. It was once a lot larger (reaching beyond the Jodrell Laboratory) and fed the Georgian royal family. No royals live at Kew Palace today – though the Queen celebrated her eightieth birthday here in 2006!

- ★ What's your favourite vegetable?



Draw any other birds or animals that you see

- 8 **Purple toothwort** is a parasitic plant that grows on the roots of other plants. You can see it at the base of this walnut tree.

Hidden underground, it also has rows of scale-like leaves.



- ★ How do you think it got the name toothwort?
- ★ Do its flowering and fruiting spikes look like rows of teeth?

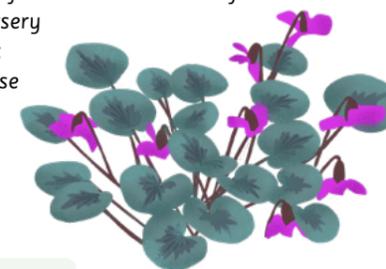
- 9 Kew's **Rock Garden** was originally built in 1882 and is one of the oldest and largest in the world. Over 70 per cent of the plants here have been specially grown from seeds.

- ★ Can you see any small mesh bags collecting wild seeds for our scientists?

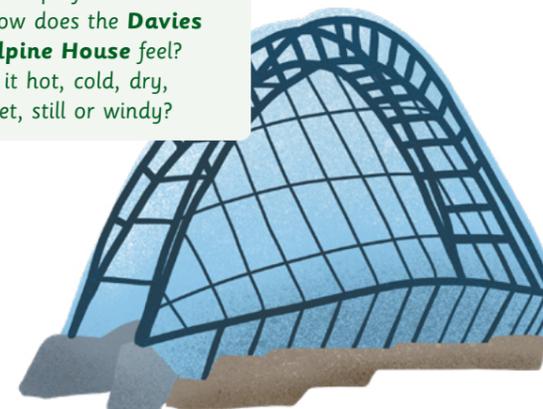


- 10 These plants have adapted to endure severe conditions, from the Arctic to the Alps and the Andes. In the wild, **alpinines** spend the winter asleep under a blanket of snow.

The flowers you'll find here are looked after in our Alpine Nursery and only brought into the glasshouse when they come into bloom.



- ★ How would it feel at the top of a mountain?
- ★ How does the **Davies Alpine House** feel?
- ★ Is it hot, cold, dry, wet, still or windy?



Designed in partnership with our Volunteer Family Community Connectors.

Thank you for visiting today.



Royal Botanic Gardens  
**Kew**

## Winter family trail

Take a journey of discovery from Victoria Gate and find lions, temples, serpents and knobbly knees along the way.