

Glasgow Botanic Gardens History

History

Glasgow Botanic Gardens were originally founded on an 8 - acre site at the west end of Sauchiehall Street at Sandyford in 1817. This was through the initiative of Thomas Hopkirk of Dalbeth who donated his own plant collection to form the nucleus of the new garden.

- The Royal Botanical Institution of Glasgow ran the Botanic Gardens and an agreement was reached with Glasgow University for the provision of teaching aids, including a supply of plants for medical and botanical classes.
- William Jackson Hooker, Regius Professor of Botany at the University of Glasgow (1820-41), took a very active part in the development of the Botanic Gardens. As a result they became eminent in botanical circles throughout the world. Hooker remained in Glasgow for 20 years before being made Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.
- This early success led to expansion and the purchase of the present site at Kelvinside, which was established in 1842.
- At that time entry into the Gardens was mainly restricted to members of the Royal Botanical Institution and their friends although later the public were admitted on selected days for the princely sum of one penny.
- The Kibble Palace which now houses a forest of tree ferns was originally a private conservatory located at Couthport on Loch Long. It was moved to its present site in 1873 and was originally used as a concert hall and meeting place, hosting celebrated speakers such as Gladstone and Disraeli.
- Increasing financial difficulties led to the Gardens being taken over by the then Glasgow Corporation in 1891 on condition that they continued as a Botanic Garden and maintained links with the university.
- The Botanic Gardens are still a very popular venue with visitors from around the world as well as locals.

Outstanding Features

- Glasgow Botanic Gardens is home to a number of significant plant collections including:
 - The National Collection of Begonias
 - The National Collection of Tree Ferns
 - The National Collection of Dendrobium Orchids
 - An Extensive Collection of Economic and Medicinal Plants
 - The Substantial collection of trees opened the door to membership of The National Tree Collections of Scotland
- Within the Kibble Palace there is a fine collection of marble statues including the popular 'Eve' and 'King Robert of Sicily'.
- For more information on hiring the Kibble Palace visit our [Venue Hire page](#)