

Brimming with vibrant colours, tropical scents and fabulous flowers!

Morrab Gardens' collection of sub-tropical plants has grown over the years. In the 1880s, there were no nurseries selling exotic plants; the original planting was the result of gifts from local landowners, including the Bolithos of Trengwainton, the Williamses of Trewidden, the Dorrien Smiths of Tresco, and Canon Boscawen, rector of Ludgvan. Today, the tradition continues with donations from Burncoose, Trevena Cross and Fentongollan nurseries. The exotic plants include:



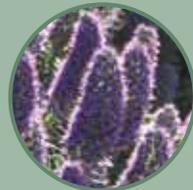
Century plant (*Agave americana*) – native to southern USA and Mexico – so-called because it seldom flowers. Although perennial, each rosette flowers only once, and then dies. Morrab Gardens has an extensive collection of agaves.

Banana 'tree' (*Musa basjoo*) – native to Indo-Malaya and Australia – not a tree at all, but a giant herb! Other *Musa* species are grown in over 100 countries for their edible fruit.



Tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) – native to Australia – said to have come to Cornwall as ships' ballast in the late nineteenth century. Morrab Gardens has a fine collection of ferns and tree ferns (those with a trunk elevating the fronds above ground level), some very old.

Echium (*Echium* spp.) – native to North Africa – easily distinguished in summer by its giant flower spikes, some up to 4 metres high. The thousands of flowers are irresistible to bees.



Lobster claw (*Heliconia* spp.) – native to tropical America and Pacific regions – also called wild plantain or false bird-of-paradise. The waxy 'flowers' are bracts – red and yellow, edged green – on long stems.

Windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) – native to central China – easily recognized by its hairy trunk and mass of palmy leaves. Morrab Gardens has several.



FRIENDS OF MORRAB GARDENS

Join the Friends of Morrab Gardens

The Friends are a lively group of people who share a love of Morrab Gardens. Some volunteer to help in the greenhouses and grounds, others get involved in fundraising. Regular events are organized, with Friends getting together to visit other gardens, learn new horticultural skills, or enjoy a social gathering.

By becoming a Friend of Morrab Gardens, your subscription will help to provide all the extras that make the Gardens so special. Annual membership is just £10, or £15 for couples. For more information, and to download a membership form, go to: www.morrabgardens.org/friends/. To hire the bandstand, use the contact form on the website.

Remember gardens need friends too!



<https://penzance.co.uk/tourism/townwalk.htm>



@MorrabGardens

MORRAB GARDENS



The sub-tropical oasis
in the heart of Penzance

ABOUT MORRAB GARDENS

Morrab House and walled garden were built in 1841 by a wealthy brewer, Samuel Pidwell. By the late nineteenth century, Penzance was a popular seaside resort, and in 1888 Penzance Corporation acquired the property at auction as a park for visitors' recreation.

The villa was leased by Penzance Private Library, renamed Morrab Library. A competition was held to design a public park, and London designer Reginald Upcher won the twenty-guinea prize with his plan for the three-acre site.

It included a bandstand, tennis grounds, children's playground, gymnasium and sub-tropical garden, all divided by a series of curvilinear walks. A copy of the original plans may be viewed on request in Morrab Library.

When the park opened in 1889, the *Gardeners' Chronicle* noted: 'One of its features is a Palm-grove, where tourists may fancy themselves in the tropics or on Mediterranean shores.' A significant role for the gardens was the study of acclimatization of rare sub-tropical plants – a tradition that continues today.

The Boer War memorial was erected in 1904 to commemorate the Penzance men

who gave their lives in the South African campaign. It was restored in 2002.

The cast-iron bandstand, built in 1905 with a donation from local merchant JH Bennett, was renovated in 2004.

The cast-iron fountain has a pedestal with dolphins, and cherubs riding tortoises. Originally, water came from a spring above Causewayhead; now it is run by electric motor.

The cannon was brought to the Gardens from outside the former public library in Morrab Road.

