Mount Usher
TREE TRAIL

A Guide To Ireland's Greatest Garden

Mount Usher Gardens & Café
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The Mount Usher Garden was created by four generations of The Walpole Family spanning a period of 115 years commencing in 1865. In 1980 the gardens were bought by Mrs Madelaine Jay who leased it to the current tenants, Avoca Handweavers in 2007. The garden, which covers 8ha (22 acres) through which the Vartry River runs, is home to 32 of the Champion Trees of Ireland as well as approximately 4,500 different varieties of trees, shrubs and plants, many of which are rarely seen growing anywhere else in Ireland. The Walpole’s were greatly influenced by Ireland’s most famous gardener, William Robinson (1838-1935) who campaigned against the formal layouts popular in his youth which emphasised structural schemes and the mass planting of annuals as seen in public parks to this day. Instead Robinson proposed that gardens should be laid out in harmony with nature and the immediate landscape, maintained naturally and be reflective of nature rather than an attempt to conquer it. He was hugely successful both practically and financially and his legacy are ‘Robinsonian’ gardens, of which Mount Usher is recognised worldwide as one of the greatest examples.

Robinson was not what we call an ‘organic gardener’, this aspect of Mount Usher was introduced by Mrs Jay and while it makes life challenging for myself and the team, the garden continues to be maintained organically without the use of herbicides or pesticides.

The Vartry River is a wonderful focal point throughout the garden, all our visitors love the little weirs in it and the suspension bridges over it which were created by Thomas Walpole, a son of the founder, Edward. Until they were built the river virtually dried out during dry summers. Being the focal point the river can cause visitors to stay beside it as they move around the property but we hope you will also explore areas away from it as otherwise you will miss some of our treasures.

We wish to thank all our visitors and season ticket holders for their continued support, it is you who enable us to maintain Mount Usher and keep it open to the public. We know we are totally prejudiced but we feel it is a very special garden which should be experienced and enjoyed by everyone.

Sean Heffernan
Head Gardener

2. **Chilean Barberry.* Berberis valdiviana.** A tree-like Berberis. Large clusters of bright orange flowers in April.

3. **Japanese Maple.** *Acer palmatum var. dissectum*. This beautiful Japanese maple has fine deeply cut leaves. Good autumn colour and an attractive winter silhouette.

4. **Bentham’s Cornel.** *Cornus capitata*. This evergreen dogwood from China produces creamy yellow bracts in summer followed by red pendulous fruits in autumn.

5. **Chinese Coffin Juniper.* Juniperus recurva var. coxii.** This weeping Juniper is considered to be at risk in China due to its valuable timber. Planted 1925.


7. **Japanese Maple.** *Acer palmatum ‘Atropurpureum’*. These small ornamental maples are grown for their fine leaf shapes and their vivid autumn colours.


10. **Armenian Oak.** *Quercus pontica*. This very rare Turkish oak appears on the ‘Red List’ of plants and animals critically endangered in the wild.

11. **New Zealand Red Beech.* Nothofagus fusca.** This magnificent New Zealand tree is the best example of its type in Ireland. Planted 1920.

12. **Strawberry Dogwood.** *Cornus kousa var. chinensis*. This Chinese variety of Japanese dogwood produces a profusion of creamy white bracts in summer followed by red fruits. Brilliant autumn colour. Planted 1905.

13. **Paper Bark Maple.** *Acer griseum*. A Chinese maple with beautiful orange flaky bark, good autumn colour and an attractive winter silhouette.

14. **Kobushi.** *Magnolia kobus*. In early spring, before the leaves appear, the entire crown of this Japanese magnolia is covered in masses of small white flowers.

*Denotes a tree of outstanding size or quality.
15. **Australian Tree Fern.** *Dicksonia antarctica.* A slow growing tree fern from Australia.


17. **Winter’s Bark.** *Drimys winteri.* Named after Captain William Winter. He discovered that chewing the bark treated scurvy. From South America this evergreen tree produces ivory white flowers in early summer.


19. **Tasmanian Waratah.** *Telopea truncata.* An Australian tree grown for its exotic red spider-like flowers in early summer.


21. **Chinese fir.*  *Cunninghamia lanceolata.* Another champion and related to the Redwoods but with foliage resembling a Monkey Puzzle. A native of China.


23. **New Zealand Rimu.*  *Dacrydium cupressinum.* An elegant slow growing weeping tree from New Zealand. This one planted in 1920 is nearly fully grown.


25. **Oriental Plane.** *Platanus orientalis.* A handsome tree grown for its deeply toothed leaves that turn bronze in autumn. Small fruits persist on the tree over winter.

26. **Tibetan Cherry.** *Prunus serrula.* A spring flowering Chinese cherry that is grown for its beautiful burnished copper coloured bark.


29. **Tasmanian Cedar.** *Athrotaxis selaginoides.* A rarity from Tasmania. Planted 1908.
30. **Handkerchief Tree.** *Davidia involucrata.* Named after the large white bracts that cover this Chinese tree in May, followed in autumn by large spherical seeds. Planted 1930.

31. **Mexican Blue Pine.** *Pinus montezumae.* Beautiful blue-green foliage on this large domed Irish champion tree, one of the finest specimens of its type in Europe. Planted 1909.

32. **Japanese White Pine.** *Pinus parviflora.* This species is much used in the art of bonsai due to its dense foliage.

33. **Deciduous Eucryphia.** *Eucryphia glutinosa.* The best hardy Eucryphia to grow in Ireland. This Chilean tree produces masses of white flowers in late summer.

34. **Huon Pine.** *Lagarostrobos franklinii.* A Tasmanian podocarp, not a pine at all. Although slow growing some trees in the wild are estimated to be hundreds of years old.

35. **Chinese Tulip Tree.** *Liriodendron chinensis.* The Chinese relative of the American tulip tree. A fine specimen of this species with excellent autumn colour. Planted 1912.

36. **White Gum.** *Eucalyptus viminalis.* An outstanding specimen from Australia. The bark falls away in long strips to reveal a smooth grey trunk. Planted in 1911.

37. **Cork Oak.** *Quercus suber.* Once essential to the wine industry, the introduction of plastic corks has jeopardised the future of the cork forests in Portugal. Planted 1974

38. **Mountain Cabbage Palm.** *Cordyline indivisa.* Not a tree or a palm but a woody-stemmed plant. This Cordyline from New Zealand is too tender for most gardens.


40. **Mexican Cypress.** *Cupressus lusitanica.* A particularly fine example of its kind.

41. **Wollemi Pine.** *Wollemia nobilis.* Thought to be extinct but discovered in 1994 growing in a river valley in Australia. This tree is dedicated to former owner of Mount Usher Mrs Madelaine Jay. Planted 2007.

42. **Stewartia rostrata.** A beautiful Chinese woodland tree. Pretty white rose like flowers appear in summer followed by pointed seed capsules. Planted 1940.

43. **King George’s Rhododendron.** *Rhododendron loderi* ‘King George’. In late spring pale pink buds open to huge trusses of funnel shaped fragrant white flowers.

44. **Indian Horse Chestnut.** *Aesculus indica* ‘Sydney Pearce’. In early summer it produces upright panicles of pink flowers with yellow centres. Planted 1968.
Thanks to Des Irvine for the kind use of images. www.desirvine.com
45. Wilson’s Magnolia. *Magnolia wilsonii*. This small Chinese woodland magnolia produces beautiful ‘upside down’ very fragrant cup shaped white flowers with crimson stamens in early summer.

46. Chilean Beech.* Nothofagus dombeyi. This magnificent fast growing Irish champion tree was planted in 1920.

47. Brewers Weeping Spruce.* Picea breweriana. This American weeping spruce has been almost wiped out by wild fires in the Californian mountains. Planted 1928.


50. Tree Heath. *Erica arborea var. alpina*. A large mediterranean tree heather producing a mass of scented white flowers in spring.


52. Chilean Myrtle.* Luma apiculata. One of the oldest surviving plantings in the garden. Masses of small white flowers appear in mid summer. Planted 1890.

53. Orangebark. *Stewartia monadelpha*. An attractive small tree from Japan and China. It has white flowers in mid summer and good autumn colour.

54. Pagoda Dogwood. *Cornus alternifolia ‘Argentea’*. Useful variegated shrub, the leaves create an attractive hazy effect.


58. Evergreen Asian Oak. *Quercus glauca*. A very unusual oak, the leaves have evolved to repel rainwater.

59. Golden Oak.* Quercus alnifolia*. An evergreen oak from Cyprus that prevents excessive water loss by producing small leaves with a waxy coating above and a dense felt beneath. Planted 1940
60. **Western Red Cedar.** *Thuja plicata*. This North American giant is over a century old. Traditionally used for totem poles and canoes by native Americans. Planted 1907.

61. **Emmenopterys.** *Emmenopterys henryi*. A very rare tree from China that has failed to produce flowers anywhere in Ireland.

62. **Incense Cedar.** *Calocedrus decurrens*. One of the oldest introduced trees in Mount Usher. The timber from this North American tree is aromatic and insect resistant. Planted 1890.

63. **Himalayan Birch.** *Betula utilis var. jacquemontii ‘Trinity College’*. A recently discovered Irish form of this white bark birch.

64. **Monarch Birch.** *Betula maximowicziana*. A Japanese birch noted for its large heart shaped leaves.


66. **Chilean bell Flower.** *Crinodendron hookerianum*. A slightly tender Chilean tree, with curious pendulous red flowers that appear from May onwards.

67. **Coral Bark Maple.** *Acer palmatum ‘Sango-Kaku’*. A very attractive Japanese maple grown primarily for its soft yellow autumn colour and red winter twigs.

68. **Rhododendron barbatum.** A multi-stemmed Himalayan rhododendron with peeling reddish purple bark. Bright red tubular flowers appear in March.

69. **American Sweet Gum.** *Liquidambar styraciflua*. Recently very popular due to its magnificent autumn colour, with the leaves turning purple red and yellow.


72. **Tree Fuchsia.** *Fuchsia excorticata*. Unusual tree-like New Zealand fuchsia with flowers borne on the wood of the branches. It has attractive orange peeling bark.

74. **Purple Cootamundra Wattle.** *Acacia baileyana* ‘Purpurea’. A recently planted tender acacia. A purple version of the common green leaved *Acacia baileyana*.

75. **Persian Ironwood.** *Parrotia persica*. It has tiny red flowers in early spring but it is really grown for its spectacular autumn colour. From Northern Iran.

76. **Snowdrop Tree.** *Halesia carolina*. This North American small tree is festooned with pendant white flowers in late spring. Sometimes also called the necklace tree.

77. **Hillier’s Falsecypress.** *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* ‘Hillieri’. A beautiful tree any time of year. The bright yellow juvenile foliage is particularly notable in spring.

78. **Chesnut leaved Oak.* Quercus castaneifolia*. A large growing oak from Northern Iran, not nearly fully grown. Only for the largest of gardens. Planted 1940.

79. **Pacific Silver Fir.** *Abies amabilis*. A tree normally only growing on the north west coast of North America

80. **Dawn Redwood.** *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. A deciduous conifer from a time when dinosaurs walked the earth, yet only discovered growing in China in 1943.

81. **Caucasian Maple.** *Acer cappadocicum*. From central Asia, this tree has attractively shaped leaves, which turn a bright yellow in autumn.

82. **Lacebark.** *Hoheria glabrata* ‘Glory of Amlwch’. This award-winning tree is a hybrid of New Zealand parents. It produces white flowers in abundance in mid summer.


84. **Mexican Blue Pine.** *Pinus montezumae*. These are seedlings of our big Montezumae.


86. **Euodia.** *Tetradium danielli*. A large spreading tree from China and Korea. Clusters of scented white flowers appear from late summer followed by masses of reddish brown fruit.


88. **Nepalese Paper Plant.** *Daphne bholua* ‘Jacqueline Postil’. In winter, small pink flowers produce the most beautiful fragrance.
VISITORS NOTES