



BONUS: SCAVENGER HUNT

Find the following as you move through the Gardens:

Crow

Spider web

Stick (on the ground!) that would make a good wand



Magical Plants Halloween Trail



National Botanic Gardens of Ireland

1. The Red Bed of Amaranth

These flowers are from South and Central America. The Aztec people ate it - sometimes they popped the seeds of it, just like popcorn. Some people call these flowers 'love-lies-bleeding'. Why do you think people call it that?



2. The Viking House

This house is a copy of a house from over 1,000 years ago! What is it made out of?

Long ago, before TV, the internet, and even books, people would gather around a fire and tell stories to pass the time. The Viking people told many tales of their gods, such as Thor and Loki . What story would you tell on a dark night by the fire?



3. The Hedge of Thorns

Here we have a row of hawthorn trees, sometimes called the 'fairy tree'. People believe it is bad luck to cut one down as the faeries will be upset! Many hedges in Ireland are made up of hawthorn trees. Which animals might you find in a hawthorn tree?



4. Moss of the Marshes

The word bog means 'soft' in Irish. Bog moss like this absorbs a lot of water and keeps it in the bog. Just like forests, bogs store carbon. People used it to absorb blood from wounds after battle and as toilet paper!

Over many years, bog moss and other plants get pressed into the ground and turn into turf, which is used as fuel. Can you find a piece of turf? Why do you think we should protect bogs?



5. Spiny Heads

This is the seed head of a teasel plant. It has purple flowers in the summer. In autumn, birds such as goldfinches eat the seeds.

People used to gather these seed heads and use them as brushes to 'tease' wool. Perhaps a witch would use it to brush her hair... Can you find any other plants witches might use? See if you can find any twigs that may have fallen from a witch's broom.



6. Pumpkin Cottage

Did you know that Halloween started in Ireland? People believed that at Halloween, the veil between the worlds of the living and dead falls, allowing all sorts of spirits and frightening creatures to visit us. People used to carve scary faces into vegetables such as turnips to ward away evil spirits. When Irish people went to America, they found that pumpkins are easier to carve. We grow many kinds of pumpkins, with different shapes and colours. Can you find them?



7. Rosemary Memories

Rub the leaves and smell your hand (this releases the scent). What does it remind you of?

Rosemary has been used for many things - for cooking, for medicine, and for magic. It is said that if you put a bit under your pillow you will have no nightmares. It is also said to be good for memory.

What other herbs can you find here? Which ones smell the nicest?



8. Yew Tree Grove

These trees are evergreen, which means they keep their leaves all year round. In ancient Ireland, they represented life after death. They are very poisonous, so never eat any part of them.

Look at the shapes of these different types of yew. Some are very twisty. Which tree do you think is the spookiest in the Gardens? Why?



9. A Contortion of Hazel

This twisty tree is a form of hazel. According to Irish myth, nine magical hazel trees grew nuts that contained all the world's wisdom. Some of these nuts fell into some water and were eaten by a salmon. This fish became known as the Salmon of Knowledge. A boy called Fionn MacCumhaill later cooked and tasted this salmon. By this act, he became the wisest person in the world.

Can you find another tree that looks magical?

