

Winter Garden

The Winter Garden was carefully designed to bring together coloured stems, foliage and bark, variations in structure and texture, winter flowers and intoxicating scents.

Step into a world of winter colour, making the most of light from the low-lying sun and capturing the scent from winter blooms.

Catching the winter sunlight

First opened in 1979, this part of the Garden was landscaped to provide a shallow valley open to the south, allowing the low winter sunlight to flood in and enhance the vibrant colours of the plants. The gently meandering path runs from east to west, so the planting on one side is lit directly by the sun, while plants on the other are back-lit, with the sun shining through them.

Capturing winter scents

As the winter sun streams into the valley, the sloping sides and high hedges help hold in the sun's warmth. More sun gives more heat, which encourages the release of scent from winter-flowering plants.

A vibrant display

The Winter Garden planting scheme is a carefully designed mix of contrasting or complementary structures and textures. The combination of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants provides interest in the garden throughout the winter months.

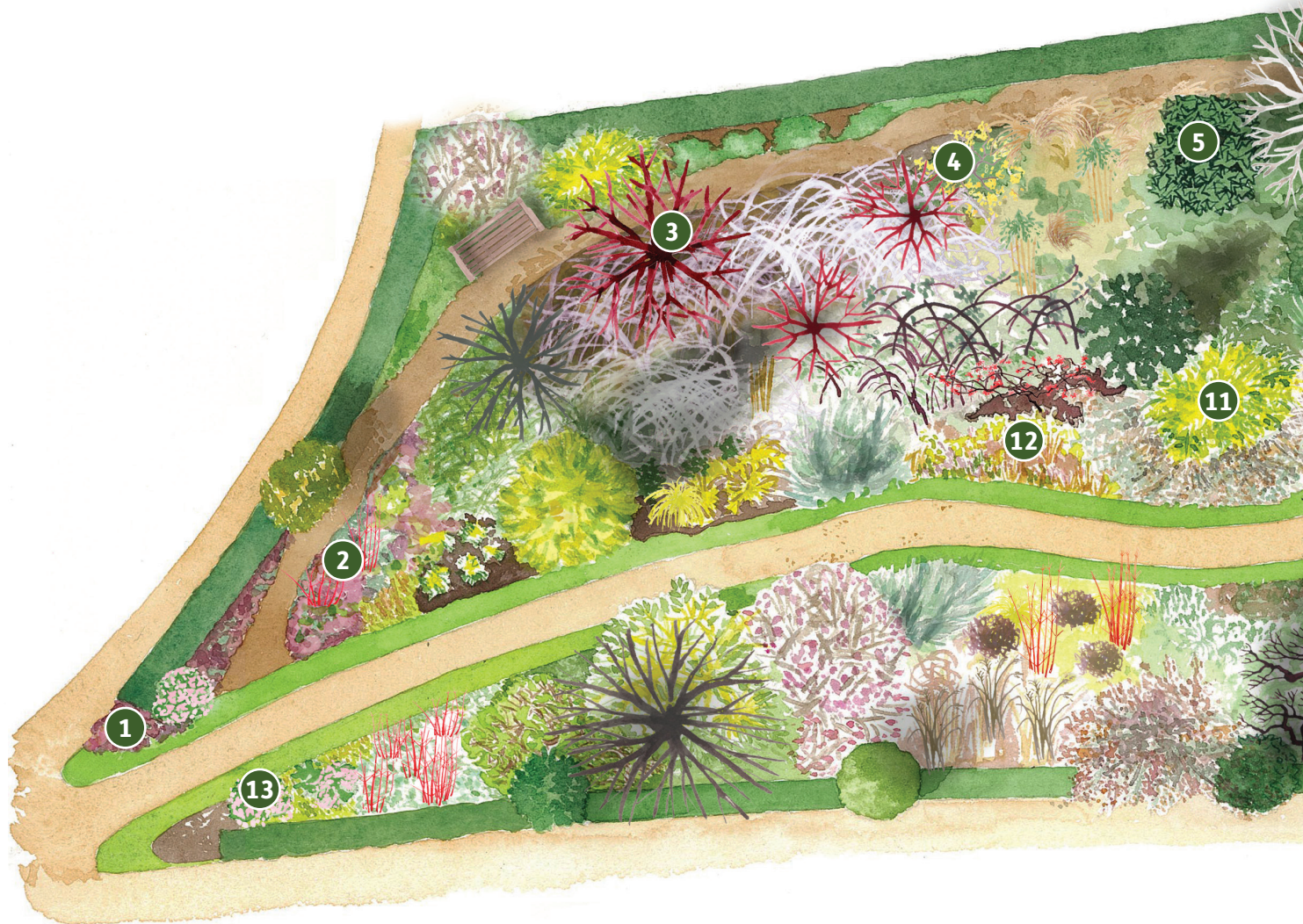
The smooth, shiny bark of Tibetan cherry (*Prunus serrula*) contrasts with the thorny stems of *Rubus* 'Goldenvale'.



The flowers of wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*) have an intense fragrance.



The Winter Garden



- 1 A honeyed aroma comes from the snowdrop 'S. Arnott' (*Galanthus*), dotted between the plum-tinged leaves of elephant's ear 'Bressingham Ruby' (*Bergenia*).
- 2 The bright-red stems of Siberian dogwood 'Sibirica' (*Cornus alba*) provide a blaze of colour right throughout the winter.
- 3 The polished mahogany-brown trunks and branches of the Tibetan cherry (*Prunus serrula*) shine against the ashen stems of bramble 'Goldenvale' (*Rubus*).
- 4 The flowers of wintersweet 'Grandiflorus' (*Chimonanthus praecox*) are sweetly scented with spicy overtones, and their waxy yellow blooms harbour an inner whorl of maroon petals.
- 5 Native to South America, the anchor plant (*Colletia paradoxa*) has unusual modified stems which resemble jet planes, providing architectural interest throughout the year.
- 6 The twisted, whirligig stems of corkscrew hazel 'Contorta' (*Corylus avellana*) stand out against the fine leaves of the Buchanan's sedge (*Carex buchananii*) which surround it.
- 7 The horizontal stems of Japanese witch-hazel 'Zuccariniana' (*Hamamelis japonica*) contrast with the vertical trunks of Chinese red birch (*Betula utilis* ssp. *albosinensis septantrionalis*).
- 8 The sweet aroma of winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera x purpusii*) engulfs you at the easterly end of the Winter Garden – it is strategically planted either side of the path.

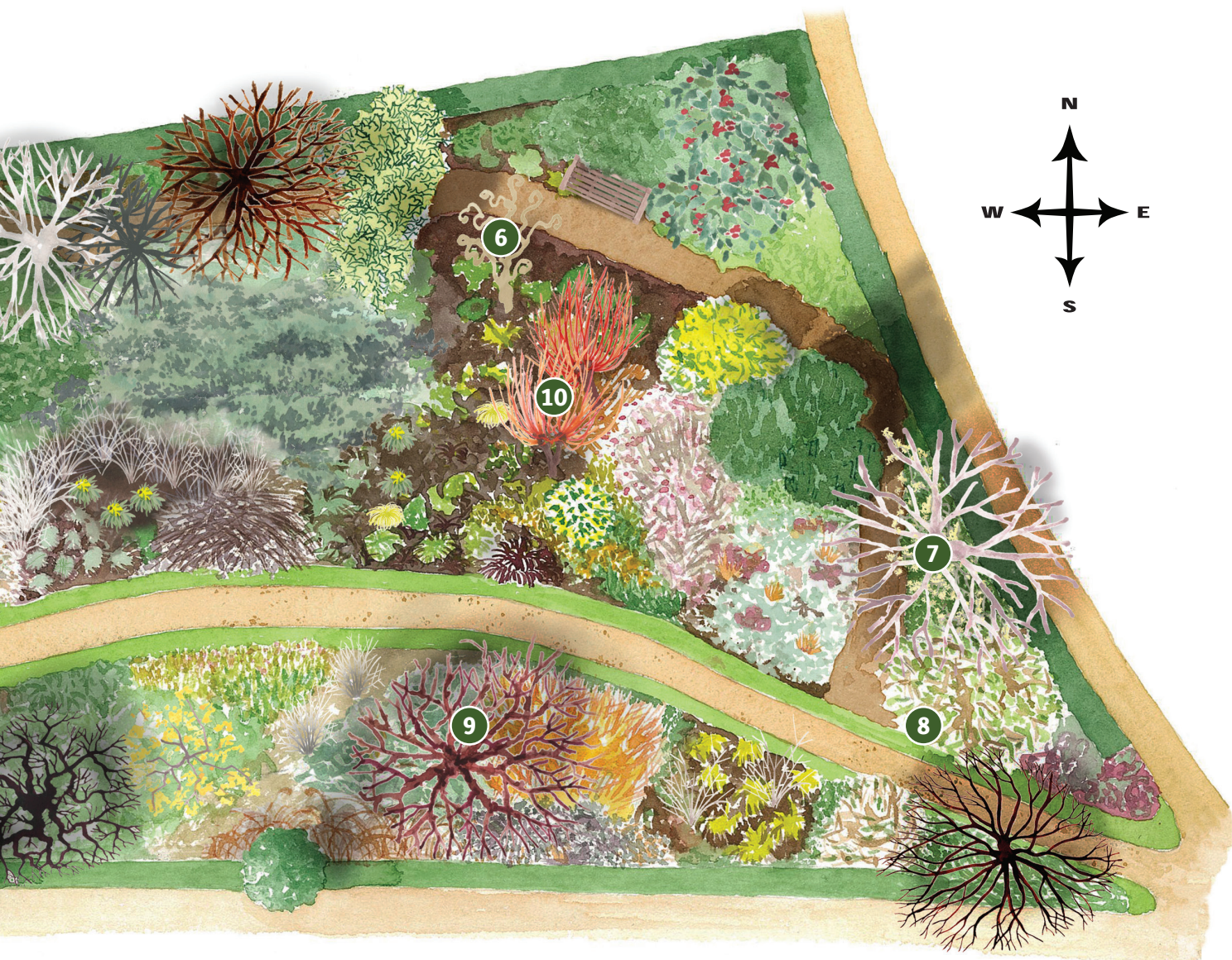


Illustration by Y. Farooqui

- 9** The burnt copper, peeling bark of paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) is offset by the yellows and oranges of bloody dogwood 'Midwinter Fire' (*Cornus sanguinea*) to its left, and the fuzzy, burgundy stems of the Japanese wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*) to its right.
- 10** Two groups of pollarded coral bark willows 'Britzensis' (*Salix alba* var. *vitellina*) frame the dell, separated by low-lying drifts of mondo grass 'Nigrescens' (*Ophiopogon planiscapus*) and stinking hellebore 'Wester Flisk' (*Helleborus foetidus*), interspersed with clumps of snowdrops (*Galanthus*).
- 11** Lemon-yellow flower spikes of Oregon grape 'Winter Sun' (*Mahonia × media*) complement the blue-green foliage of Lawson's cypress 'Wisselii' (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), and the red berries and bronze foliage of Wilson's barberry (*Berberis wilsoniae*).
- 12** Brass-coloured, spidery witch-hazel 'Jelena' (*Hamamelis × intermedia*) makes a bold impact against the dusty pink flowers of Darley Dale heath 'Kramer's Rote' (*Erica darleyensis*) in the foreground.
- 13** The heady scent from the flowers of the Nepalese paper plant 'Jacqueline Postill' (*Daphne bholua*) dominates the western end of the Winter Garden.

Plants grown for their winter interest

The Winter Garden is at its best from December to April, when plants equipped to survive in harsh winter conditions can show off some of their best attributes.



Snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.) contain antifreeze proteins in the plant cell walls. In harsh winter conditions these proteins bind to ice in the cells preventing the crystals from growing and damaging the plant tissue.



Oregon grape 'Winter Sun' (*Mahonia x media*) flowers in the spring in mountainous regions. In Britain, when early winter cold spells are broken by milder days, it is fooled into thinking it is spring, and the buds open.



Plants with highly fragrant flowers like the Nepalese paper plant 'Jaqueline Postill' (*Daphne bholua*) make good plants for urban areas, where they attract winter pollinators such as the buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*).



Arrowwood 'Dawn' (*Viburnum x bodnantense*) is a cross which has inherited its strong scent from one parent plant, Farrer's viburnum (*Viburnum farreri*), and its branching habit from the other, grand viburnum (*Viburnum grandiflorum*).



Willows and dogwoods like Siberian dogwood 'Sibirica' (*Cornus alba*) are cut back (or 'pollarded') in the spring, to encourage fresh growth of coloured stems the next year.



Evergreen leaves like those of the common holly 'Argentea Marginata' (*Ilex aquifolium*) have a waxy surface (or 'cuticle') to stop them drying out while they continue to photosynthesise over winter.

A full Winter Garden plant list is available from the ticket offices or visit www.botanic.cam.ac.uk/winter-garden to download a copy.