

This map invites you to be curious about the plants that you may encounter in a Cornish garden. Where did they come from? How did they get here? Why Cornwall?

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Cornish gardeners, plant collectors, botanists and nurserymen, backed by the wealth and horticultural interests of the Cornish gentry, not only transformed the gardens of Cornwall but also had a profound impact on the development of horticulture itself. The rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias, tree ferns, monkey puzzle trees and countless other plants that we enjoy in Cornish gardens today are all part of this legacy.

Gardens can be places to experience beauty, solace, freedom, space, places to feel closer to nature, to encounter rare plants, to touch the earth. Gardens can be places to go when we want to think and places to go when we don't want to think.

A garden could be considered as a place of many layers, with more than one story to tell. The introduction to Cornwall of plants from all around the world is inextricably linked with the colonial activities, communications networks and trade that largely enabled it.

"As people have moved across the world, plants have moved with them. This movement of plants is not merely connected to empire: it has been a fundamental activity of empire."
Cathy Turner

Digging a little deeper can uncover uncomfortable questions. Would our experience of gardens be deepened or diminished by knowledge of colonial exploitation, the devastation of native plant habitats or connections between ornamental gardens and wealth derived from slavery?

Is there a plant or tree that invites your curiosity or that you feel a connection to? What messages, languages, memories, stories, histories or names are hidden in its leaves, petals or roots? Use the space below to jot down your thoughts or questions about this plant.

What's in a name?

Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) created the system of naming and classifying plant and animal species that is still used by scientists today. Building on John Ray's concept of genus and species, Linnaeus' two part naming system enabled scientists across the world to communicate, knowing they were talking about the same plant. In many cases however, the exercise distanced a plant from its original context, latinising or erasing the plants local name, and in so doing separating it from indigenous people's knowledge about its uses and cultural significance.

1-7 Plants and Empire

Botanical exchange house

The movement of plants from different regions of the world to Britain was aided by a network of botanical gardens with Kew in London as the central hub. The significance of botany to the empire's development was such that between 1755 and 1818 the British established gardens in colonised locations including ¹St Vincent, ²Jamaica, ³Calcutta (Kolkata), ⁴Madras (Chennai), ⁵St Helena, ⁶Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and ⁷Trinidad.

These gardens were exchange points for botanical research, horticultural knowledge and plant propagation also enabling

the safe transportation of healthy plants across the world. By 1810 Kew Gardens was not only a recipient of plants from the colonies, but was, in Joseph Banks' words, conceived as 'a great botanical exchange house for the empire'.

The economic interests attached to plant collecting were powerful. In addition to valuable ornamental specimens, Kew was asking plant collectors to send back samples of useful plants that could be exploited for their properties and potential applications to all areas of life and industry.

1 The Wardian Case

Primula vulgaris

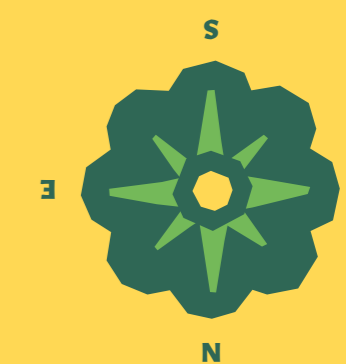


During the 18th and 19th centuries the length of a sea voyage was unpredictable. The movement of plants across the oceans meant that a living plant was vulnerable to many trials such as water rations, limited sunlight, or the salty curse of sea spray. This led to the development of a portable plant cabinet invented by Whitechapel doctor, Nathaniel Ward (1791-1868). The Wardian case is, in effect, a sealed miniature glasshouse capable of retaining its own moisture and atmosphere. Its first sea trial took place in 1834, with living plants

from England, including a primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), being transported to Sydney, Australia. The plants arrived in fine health after a 6-month voyage and the Wardian Case went into mass production. Its legacy remains visible in the gardens of the world and the world gardens of Cornwall.

Gaze through the window of a conservatory or greenhouse. Sense the light, the atmosphere and humidity. Put your roots down for a few moments of stillness. Touch the coolness of the glass. Prepare to go on a journey.

Variegated Map of Cornish Gardens



2 Saccharum officinarum

Jamaica

No sugar grows at **Trengwainton**, and yet *Saccharum officinarum*, sugar cane, grew Trengwainton. When Rose Price bought Trengwainton in 1814, his wealth came from inherited Jamaican plantations producing sugar and rum. As owner of Worthy Park plantation he increased production by increasing the number of enslaved, mainly West African people, working there.

3 Ginkgo biloba

China



Rose Price was largely resident in Cornwall where he established the gardens at **Trengwainton** including a unique walled kitchen garden. In the orchard, a Ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) known in Chinese medicine for its memory-sharpening properties, is thought to have been planted during the Price era.

Price, who owned more than 500 enslaved people, wrote a vehement pamphlet against the Anti-Slavery Act. He died a month after the act was introduced in 1834. It is hard to comprehend today that enslavers received financial compensation

from the government after the abolition of slavery. Rose Price's executors claimed a total of £11,102 in compensation for 543 enslaved people.

After Price died in 1834 Trengwainton changed hands several times before the Bolitho family bought the estate in 1867, developing the garden and its plant collections as they are today.

Could a Cornish orchard be a place to reflect upon lives cruelly treated in distant lands?

Can an ancient tree help us to remember oppressions of the past?

4 Echium pininana

La Palma, Canary Islands

The towering spires of blue flowers that dominate Cornwall's gardens in summer belong to the tree echium, a plant from the Canary Islands.

Whilst *Echium pininana* is iconic and ubiquitous in Cornwall, habitat loss on La Palma where the plant is endemic, has resulted in it being listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

Islands are often home to rare species of plants that can't be found anywhere else. This makes island floras exceptionally vulnerable to extinction, for example where large areas of an island are burned or cleared to introduce single crops.



5 Rhododendron macabeaenum

India

The gardens at **Trengwainton** were significantly developed by the Bolitho family who acquired the estate in 1867. Much of the interesting planting comes from E.H.W. Bolitho's (1882-1969) co-sponsorship of plant collector Frank Kingdon-Ward (1885

- 1958). Kingdon-Ward's expedition to North East India and Myanmar in 1927 - 1928 collected *Rhododendron macabeaenum*. Grown from seed by the head gardener Alfred Creek, it flowered for the first time in Britain at Trengwainton.



6 Dicksonia squarrosa

New Zealand

There is another **Trelissick**, a New Zealand sheep farm at Castle Hill (Kura Tawhiti). Built in 1866 by John and Charles Enys, the brothers named the farm after their uncle's Trelissick estate in Cornwall. John Enys (1837-1912) was a keen naturalist who collected and studied botanical, geological and natural science specimens. His name is attached to a number of botanical species found in the Kura Tawhiti area, notably *Ranunculus ensyii*. Over a period of 30



years he sent plants and seeds to Cornwall via the Gilbert family of Trelissick, to the **Enys** estate near Penryn. John was an avid collector of New Zealand ferns. Tree ferns, such as *Dicksonia squarrosa* that can be found at **Glendurgan**, are a distinctive feature of many Cornish gardens today.

Navigating Plants About this map

This map explores Cornwall's unique role in global plant collecting and propagation in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Part of an ongoing research project enquiring into Cornwall's rich and complex horticultural history, including connections to colonisation, the map unfolds some of the fascinating stories at the root of Cornish gardens.

'A Variegated Map of Cornish Gardens' has been created by a team of artists and researchers, in consultation with National Trust staff and other experts in plants, people and place. It focuses on Glendurgan, Trelissick and Trengwainton, where lead artists Small Acts are creating 'Plant Navigations', a performance that expands on the seeds of stories encountered in this limited edition map.

The research team is led by National Trust Cultural Heritage Curator for Cornwall, Fridy Duterloo with Cathy Turner, Professor of Drama at University of Exeter, Ann Matchette, Senior Lecturer and Curator in History of Art, Heritage, and Museums at University of Bristol and Katie Etheridge and Simon Persighetti, co-directors of Small Acts.

Photographs by Small Acts except: Rhododendron macabeaenum: National Trust/Marina Rule, Wardian Case (catalogue no. 91712): Economic Botany Collection, Kew, tetrandria from Elizabeth Warren's Hortus Siccus of the Indigenous Plants of Cornwall Volume (II/II). Reproduced with the kind permission of The Royal Institution of Cornwall

Graphic design by Will Works

A Favourable Climate

The ambient climate and acid soil of Cornwall is an important factor in its key role in the history of horticultural development in Britain. Decomposing granite bedrock creates a naturally acidic soil in which ericaceous plants such as Rhododendrons, Camellias and Magnolias can survive. Moist and mild weather, neither too hot in summer or too cold in winter, enables these plants from temperate climates to thrive. Sea mists mimic Himalayan humidity. Even extended day length comes into play. These favourable conditions partly extend into Devon where **Veitch** established his world-famous nurseries at Killerton and Exeter.

In the 19th century multiple factors align with Cornwall's climate and geology to create unique conditions for growth and experimentation. Factors include the wealth and interests of gentry, international connections by sea through trade and communication routes, the skill and care of gardeners, the entrepreneurship of nurserymen, the royal institutions and societies and local botanical collectors with their global networks.

A Cornish Garden Never Stands Still

Gardens by their nature are dynamic places that continually change and develop. The challenge for the gardener responsible for a historic garden is to maintain the spirit of the garden whilst adapting and planning for the future.

"You've got to look back 100 years, you've got to look forward 100 years and then you've got to understand each plant and each group of plants, and the different environments in a garden. It's incredibly complex." John Lanyon, Head Gardener at Treillick, Glendurgan and Trerice.

Horticulture will play an ever increasing part in how we address environmental changes and their impact on food security. At Treillick a vision to bring the walled garden back into production looks to the future as well as to its past as, "the fruit garden of Cornwall".

A changing climate with more extremes in weather systems is creating challenging conditions for some plant species that have previously thrived in Southern climates of the UK. This is having an impact on how the National Trust manages its gardens and plant collections which includes planning for long term propagation and in some cases relocation of affected plants.

Joseph Hooker and William Hooker

Rhododendrons for Kew

Can you imagine Cornish gardens without rhododendrons? Part of the landscape in Cornwall, these plants have their origins in India and the Himalayas. In the 1840's **Joseph Hooker** (1817 - 1911) travelled to Sikkim, northeast India, on a mission to find and send back plants to his father **William Hooker**, the first director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at **Kew**. Joseph brought back over

25 species of rhododendron previously unseen in Northern Europe, triggering a craze for the plants in which Cornish gardens were at the centre. Hooker's seeds were propagated in the gardens of **Robert Were Fox** at **Penjerrick** as well as at **Tremough** and **Carclew**.

The plants flourished in Cornwall, and gardeners began to experiment with the creation of new rhododendron hybrids.

R. Gill & Son

Penryn's Himalayan Nurseries

Richard Gill (1848 - 1927) was head gardener for the Shilton family at Tremough. Gill's talent for hybridising rhododendrons to create new varieties led to starting his own nursery business, developed with his son Richard E. Gill who later studied at **Kew**.

Known in their time as one of the finest rhododendron nurseries in Britain, Gill's new varieties became internationally sought after. **Trelissick** has a rare Rhododendron magnificum from the Gills. The nursery later relocated

to **Carclew** where the Gill family remained in business until the late 20th century.

An R. Gill & Son catalogue includes this photograph of an unnamed Tibetan plant collector in their employ.



Elizabeth Andrew Warren

Local and global plant collecting in Cornwall



Botanist Elizabeth Andrew Warren (1786-1864) lived in Flushing near Falmouth. Skilled in identifying previously unrecorded Cornish flora, she collected and classified 100's of Cornish plants and algae including lichens, mosses, ferns, heather, grasses and seaweeds. Her contribution to the scientific record is a 3-volume herbarium of the 'Indigenous Plants of Cornwall'.

From 1834 she corresponded with **William Hooker**, who was then Professor of Botany at Glasgow University.

Alongside the exchange of knowledge and information, their letters reveal that Warren was sending Hooker botanical specimens

sourced from different regions of the world. How did she do this from Flushing?

With Falmouth's **Packet Service** on her doorstep, Elizabeth Warren drew on her network of contacts and family members overseas and in the navy who posted her plant material via Falmouth's Packet ships. She received specimens from places including the Caribbean, India (from **Francis Jenkins**), Hong Kong, Tierra Del Feugo, Crimea and New Zealand.

Expert at arranging specimens for herbaria and museums, Warren complained that after a long voyage sometimes all that fell out of a packet were "heaps of fallen leaves and broken sticks".

Charles Lemon

A Victorian visit to Carclew

Murrays' Handbook for Travellers in Devon and Cornwall from 1863 tells visitors to Carclew they "will be delighted with the gardens, so richly are they stored with curious plants. For many years Sir Charles Lemon has cultivated a

collection of exotic trees and shrubs, and, as the climate is peculiar, the result of his experiments is highly interesting...Rhododendron arboreum, from the Himalayas, here really becomes a tree."

William Lobb and Thomas Lobb

Perranarworthal to Peru



Born in Perranarworthal, the son of a gamekeeper, William Lobb (1809 - 1864) worked at several significant Cornish gardens including **Carclew** and **Scorrier**. Whilst at Carclew, William collected plants for **Elizabeth Warren** who recommended him as "a good collector" to **William Hooker**.

In 1837 William and his brother Thomas were employed as gardeners at Killerton for **James Veitch**. The Veitch family

ran nurseries in Exeter and Chelsea, employing 'plant hunters' to bring to the commercial market numerous species previously unknown in Europe.

Between 1840 and 1857 William was sent by Veitch on expeditions to South America, notably bringing back seeds from Chile of the Araucaria araucana commonly known as the monkey puzzle tree. Unable to climb the tree, William apparently shot down cones with a rifle.

Thomas Lobb (1817-1894), William's brother, also became a plant collector for Veitch, and was sent to India and Malaya (1843-60), bringing back orchids and carnivorous nepenthes or pitcher plants.

Francis Jenkins

Camellia sinensis var assamica

Born in Cornwall, Francis Jenkins (1793-1866) joined the East India Company in 1810 as a commissioner and agent for Assam Province. A keen botanist, he became a significant player in the development of tea growing in the region as part of East India Company's attempt to break China's tea monopoly. Between 1838 and 1841 Jenkins sent plant specimens to The Royal Horticultural Society of Cornwall including Camellia sinensis var assamica or Assam Tea.

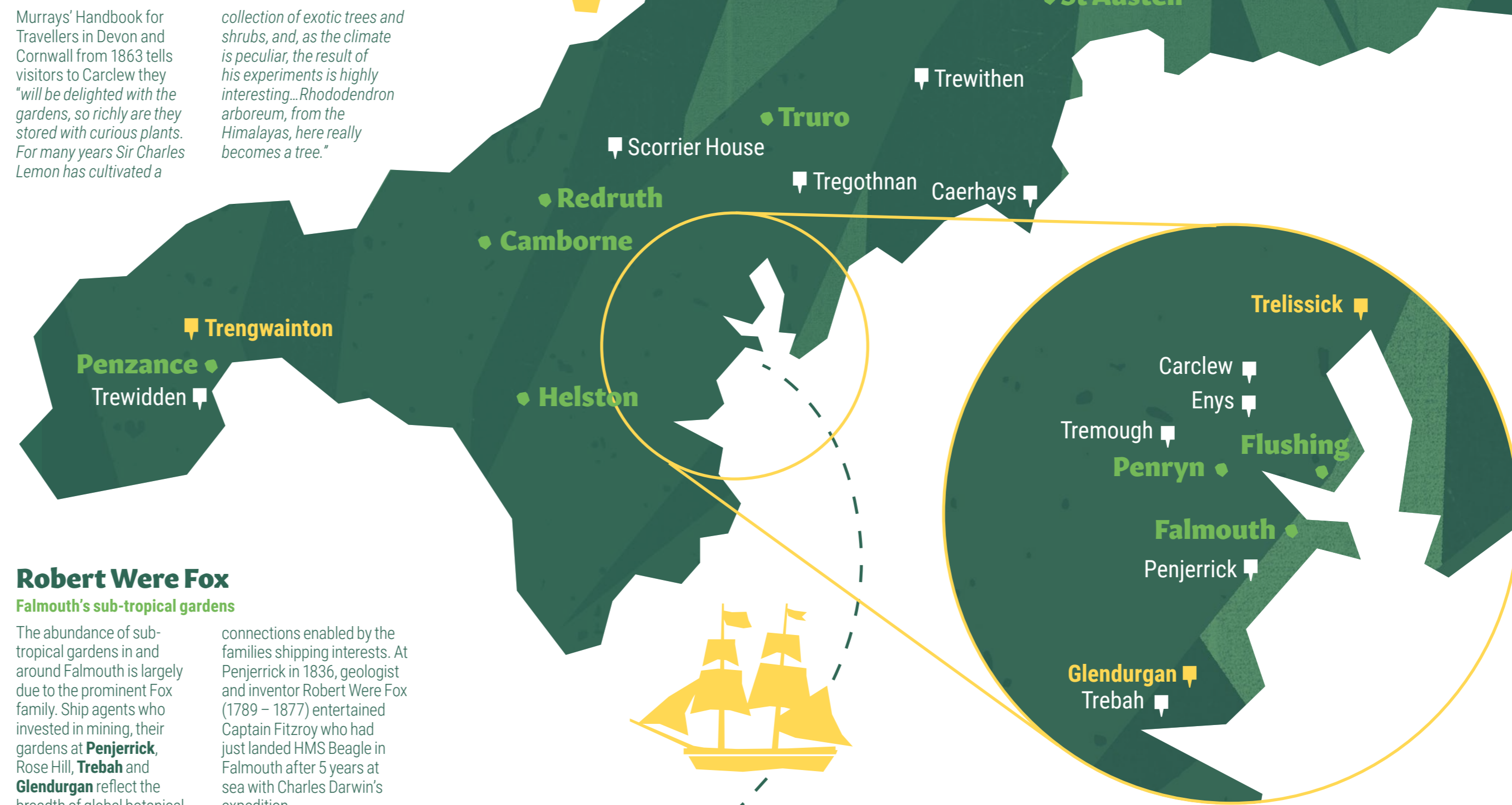
A map of Cornwall
A map of the world
A map the shape of a leaf

Our compass,
a flower pointing east
to catch the rising sun

Roots search for familiar soil,
a name appears on a leaf

Dig a little deeper

How many stories can a garden tell?



Featured Garden

Garden

Town

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Kew

