

# Go along and be thrilled by Botanic Lights 13 October to 6 November 2016

✘ Tonight the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh begins Botanic Lights 2016. This is a series of nightly events over the course of the next month which will transform our beautiful but familiar city garden with vibrant light displays, holograms and musical soundscapes.

Last night The Edinburgh Reporter went along to a preview event to see what you can expect to see this year.

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## Autumnal Colours

Although the gardens are lit up in every colour imaginable by the award-winning team at Unique Events, nature still finds a way of outshining. We are well into autumn now which means all the trees, shrubbery and other exotic plant-life are taking on their end of year hues, which is perhaps the only placatory feature of this time of year, as we slide into the darker months.

The golden, purple, reddish and amber coloured leaves which lie under your feet or cling on desperately to the ever-thinning canopy above, make a dynamic backdrop for the lightshow. It is as though the Botanics have stepped up their game especially for the occasion.

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## The Lights (of course)

[tweet\_box design="default"]This year's Botanic Lights is billed as their most ambitious yet, and we are inclined to agree.[/tweet\_box]

But it is not just the lights that are stunning, the music and soundscaping are too. The original music by Scottish composer and Royal Conservatoire graduate Claire McKenzie mixes with the ambient sounds of animals and insects native to continents the world over.

This year's theme is "Exploration". A map leads you through from the astounding display at the Chinese garden (more on that later) through to the Himalayas, where colourful Lung Ta prayer flags blow around in the wind, to exciting water displays in the ponds and documentary footage projected onto the face of Inverleith House.

By the end you have traversed every continent on earth as the horticulturalists and "plant-hunters" of history have. This is a nice reflection of the diversity of life to be found in Edinburgh's Botanic Gardens year round.

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### **Mulled Wine**

A mug of mulled wine or warm Pimms may warm you on an October/November evening, and there is also tea and coffee.

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### **That Hologram**

In the first few minutes of the tour, in the Chinese Garden section, you'll be greeted by a thirty-foot tall hologram of George Forrest, the so-called "Indiana Jones of Scotland". Instead of treasured artefacts, Forrest travelled the world, China and the Himalayas in particular, collecting and

cataloguing tens of thousands of plants and sending them back to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh for safe-keeping.

The display is unlike any other you are likely to see. Using the mist and spray of the pond as a screen, huge and detailed animations play out in the air in front of your eyes, with Chinese warriors and a massive, fire-breathing dragon. It really has to be seen to be believed.

Our short video features some of the highlights:

*Enjoy Botanic Lights [@TheBotanics](#) from tomorrow night [#botaniclights](#) [@EdinReporter](#) [pic.twitter.com/cJHBJ8MkxU](http://pic.twitter.com/cJHBJ8MkxU)*

*– Denitsa Tsekova (@denitsa\_tsekova) [October 12, 2016](#)*

Botanic Lights 2016 opens tonight 13 October 2016 and runs for 22 nights through October and November.

Tickets [here](#).