

Coronavirus – The Botanic will open their gates in July

Locals in Edinburgh can enjoy the Botanic again when the team there opens the public gates on Wednesday, 1 July 2020.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon made an announcement to The Scottish Parliament on the way out of the lockdown earlier today.

Reflecting her update, well-considered strategies have been adopted to create a safe environment for visitors and staff at Inverleith, in Edinburgh and all of the other sites across Scotland which RBGE run. New, temporary, measures include a one-way system on a number of garden paths and some restrictions to access of other confined areas such as shops and toilets. Staff will be using PPE.

Regius Keeper Simon Milne MBE explained: “We look forward to welcoming back visitors to all four Gardens. This connection with the environment is vital for the well-being of all. With the safety of our staff and visitors remaining our prime concern, we have amended operations on all sites to introduce measures that should build trust and confidence.

“Lockdown has been a difficult time for everyone, caution is widespread and life will remain away from what we regard as normal for some time. Travel restrictions remain in place and, for the immediate future, all four Gardens will be restricted to welcoming their local communities. However, this is a first hugely important step in our return to extended outreach.”

A new and important measure for the reopening of the Edinburgh

flagship Garden is the introduction of time slots tickets, to be booked in advance by visitors. Time slots can be booked on-line from Wednesday, 24 June 2020.

While admission to the Garden remains free of charge, this temporary method of entry will enable staff to limit the number of visitors accessing the Garden at any one time, gradually building capacity when all are comfortable the operational guidelines work.

The Glasshouses will remain closed, initially.

The Garden will initially be open from 10am-5pm and capacity will be limited to 2,000 visitors a day. To ensure personal distancing, entry will be through the Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) Gate at Arboretum Place, to the south of the John Hope Gateway visitor centre, and the East Gate on Inverleith Row. Any queues will be managed to ensure a smooth flow into the Garden.

Simon Milne concluded: "It is heartening visitors enjoyed following us online while the gates were closed and we hope they will continue to do so. However, the benefits of real time interaction with the natural environment are unsurpassable. We ask for everyone's patience, understanding and support as we resume operations steadily and in a way that works for everyone."

Visitors returning to all four Gardens will be invited to make a donation or support the organisation by becoming a member and providing crucial support for this world-leading charity in plant science and conservation horticulture. Looking forward, its research and conservation initiatives at home and around the world have never been more important. By supporting the organisation, supporters can make real change in tackling the challenges of the climate emergency and habitat crisis.

<https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/>