

Helene U. Taylor

Kew Gardens

Kew, as seen through my camera lens



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Helene U. Taylor was born in Norway in 1964 and moved to London, UK in 1999 where she still lives.

You can find more of her work on her extensive web-site, where her books, gingerbread houses, greeting cards and many other interesting things are presented.

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Preface

Over a period of nearly 2 years, in 2004 and 2005, I was repeatedly given a chance to visit Kew Gardens in London, UK. I got my first digital camera in 2004 and the plants and flowers at Kew became my practice targets. I have never been able to return to Kew Gardens since then, but the roughly 700 photos from that period are cherished memories. I have thought for a long time that some of those photos could eventually become a book, but only now, after having self-published two other books do I feel I can sit down and make my book about Kew.

I have made a careful selection of the best photos I could find among my collections, although some of them are not necessarily the best photos technically – they could be more in the category ‘interesting’. Readers will probably wonder what all these plants and flowers are called, and although I know the names of some of them – as in Camellias, Magnolias, Crocuses, Orchids and Rhododendrons and so on – I don’t know what their exact and full names are. Each of them can belong to subgenus, sections, subsections and series, so the only way to know exactly what the plant or flower you have in front of you is called is to look at the label – in this case, the label at Kew. Needless to say, it’s a bit too late for that for me, I didn’t think about bringing a notebook and writing down plant names back in 2004/2005 when taking the photos, I was just delighted with the amazing features my new digital camera had and the

freedom of a filmless camera. For that reason I have simply decided not to write any names of trees, plants and flowers here in this book. If you are a very curious person, I am sure you could be able to look up a particular flower on the Internet, but I suggest you just enjoy the photos!

Kew Gardens will always stand for me as the perfect place to take photographs. I still take photos in my own garden, on a weekly basis, and you can see many of them if you visit my web-site, but the flowers and plants in my garden are not as perfect as they are at Kew, and I have to tidy up and do all the weeding first, before I can start taking photos! You won’t be asked to do any dead-heading at Kew; it’s all perfect every morning, every day of the year. The 700 strong staff makes sure of that. It simply is the perfect place to take photos, if trees, plants and flowers - and the occasional curious squirrel are your thing. So sit down and enjoy the photos, this is not a serious horticultural encyclopaedia; this is a book about photos of beautiful plants and flowers - and there is even a squirrel, on page 36. I hope you enjoy the book as much as I enjoyed making it!

Helene U. Taylor
March 2010





The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, usually referred to simply as Kew Gardens, started out as parklands for the nobilities and kings and queens of the 16th century. It was enlarged and extended by Princess Augusta, whom with the help of Sir William Chambers built several garden structures and organised large parts of the garden. The formal part of Kew Gardens was created in 1759, and this is the recognised official start of Kew Botanical Gardens.











































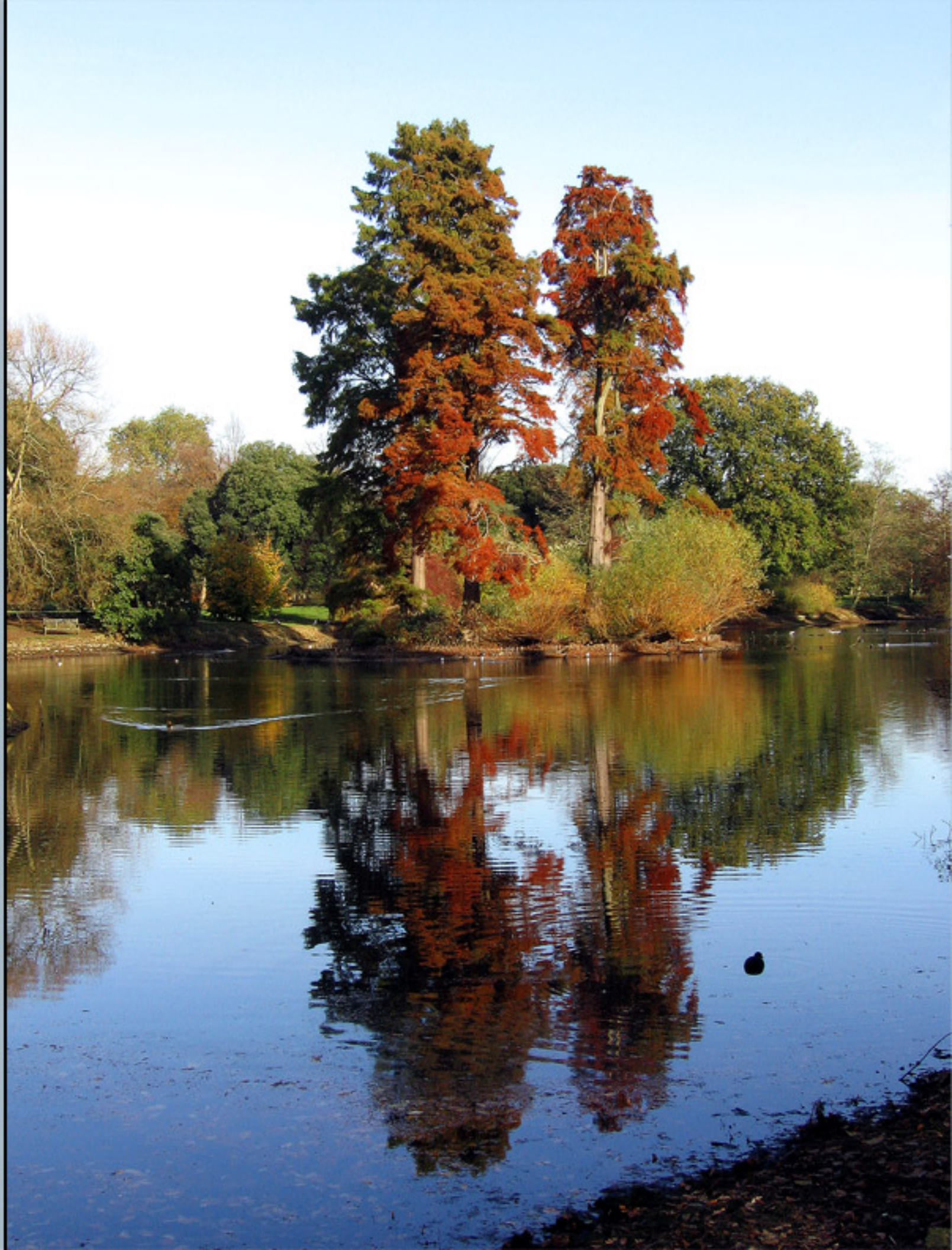




Kew has the largest compost heap in the world, made from green waste from the gardens and the waste from the stables of the Household Cavalry.

The compost is mainly used in the gardens but on occasion has been auctioned as part of a fund raising event for the gardens.

























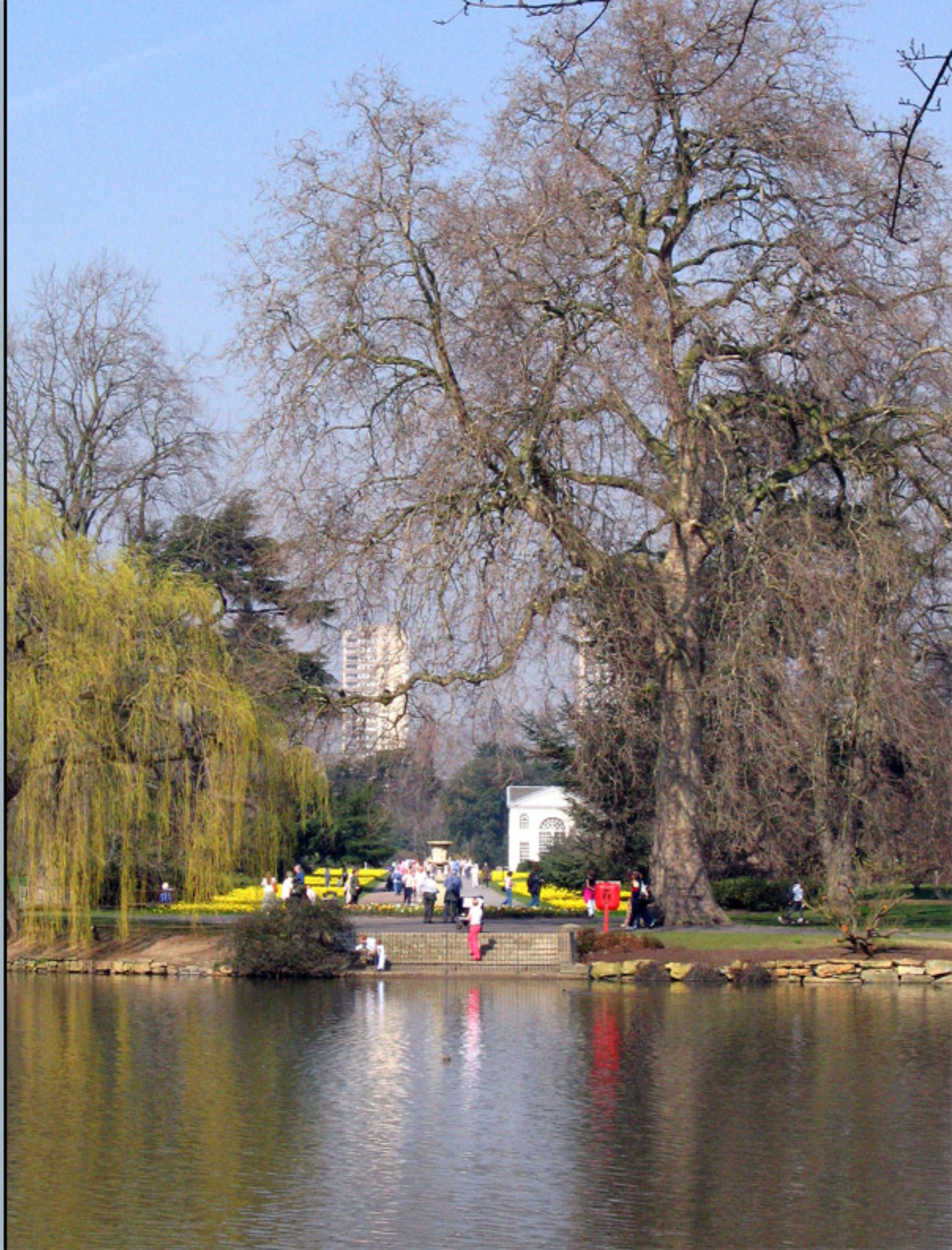






























The library and archives at Kew are one of the worlds largest botanical collections with over half a million items including books, botanical illustrations, photographs, letters and manuscripts, periodicals and maps.













































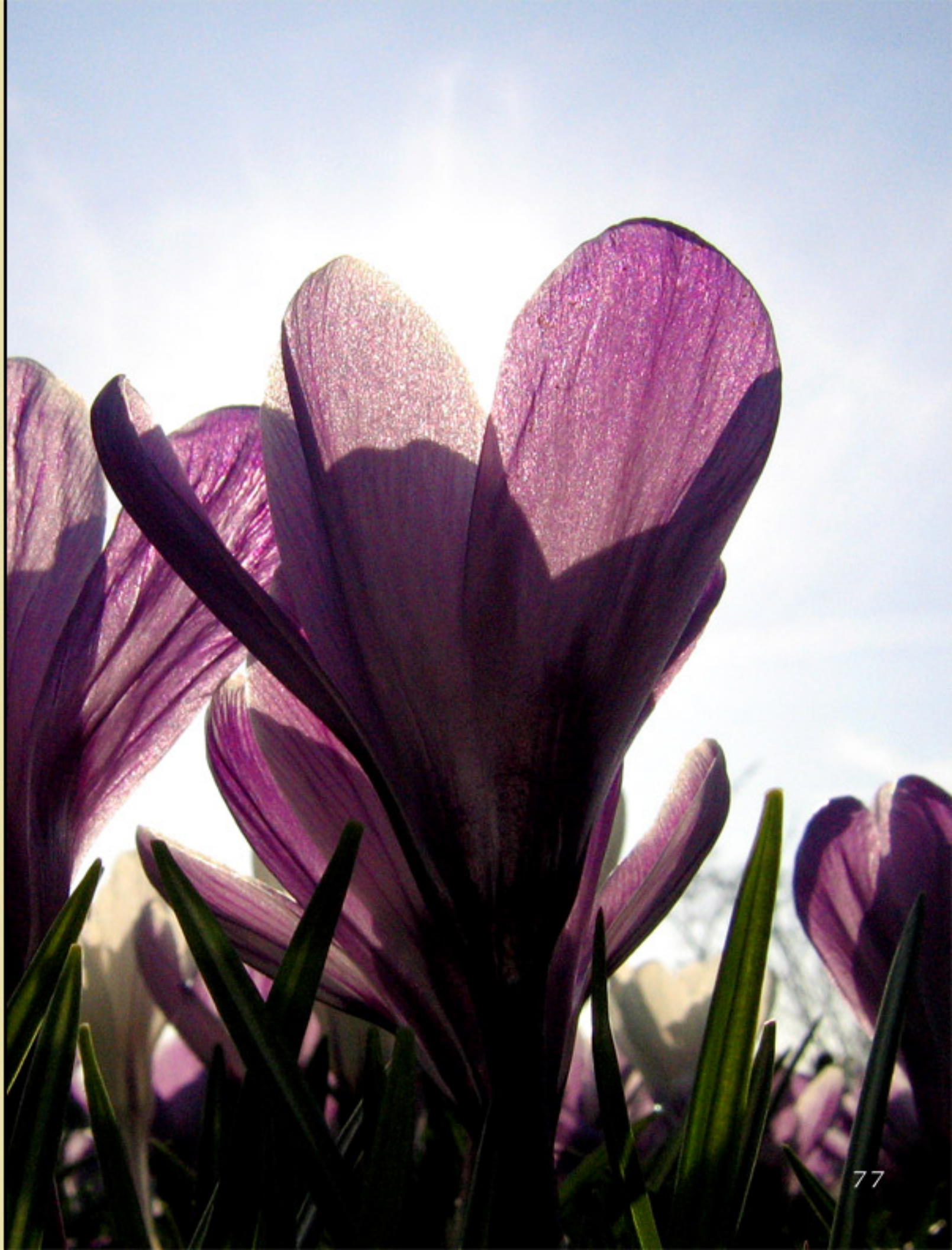


The Palm House was built by architect Decimus Burton and iron-maker Richard Turner between 1844 and 1848, and was the first large-scale structural use of wrought iron. The structure's panes of glass are all hand-blown.

The Temperate House, which is twice as large as the Palm House, followed later in the 19th century. It is now the largest Victorian glasshouse in existence.



































The Waterlily House was built in 1852, and was then the widest single span glasshouse in the world. It has an 11 m wide concrete pond to house the huge attraction of the age, *Victoria amazonica*, the giant Amazonian waterlily. Sadly, the waterlily never did well in the glasshouse, and the pond was redesigned for other plants in 1866.

It was converted back to its original use in 1991, and today it is the hottest and most humid environment at Kew and contains a range of interesting waterlilies and many additional plants.





























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