

One of the main aims of the restoration of Roberts Park is to recreate, through planting, some of its original atmosphere. In the late 19th century, beds, trees and lawns would have been well-tended, by a large team of gardeners. Herbaceous displays would have been changed twice a year, at considerable expense and effort. Plants were labelled, in an attempt to help educate Saltaire residents. An early 20th century postcard of the promenade shows that beds here were elaborate, densely planted and colourful. A pamphlet produced by Salt, Sons and Co. in 1895 described the Park as ‘one of the most beautiful in the world’, with ‘an abundant show of floral bloom the year round’.

The basic layout of the original planting at Roberts Park, dating from the 1870s, has survived almost in its entirety and includes planting beds, shrubs and trees. Many of you remember the Park in better days, with varied and colourful planting. Over time, however, the details, including the defined edges of the beds along the promenade, and most of the plants, have been lost.

The plan below, of the west lawn and promenade, illustrates how we intend to rejuvenate the Park planting, using a wide range of plants and trees to provide colour, texture, scent and beauty throughout the year.



The new planting will include:

- trees, including the Indian bean tree, several varieties of magnolia and the ‘Jelena’ witch hazel, which has striking red, autumn leaves;
- shrubs, including yew, euonymous, berberis and dogwood, which exhibit a variety of colours, textures and habits;
- bulbs, such as grape hyacinth, stinking iris (a beautiful, native plant which only releases its ‘perfume’ when its leaves are crushed!), cyclamen and a striking variety of narcissus called ‘Pheasant’s Eye’;
- flowering shrubs and herbaceous perennials, including geranium ‘Ann Folkard’, daylily ‘Golden Chimes’, hydrangea ‘Ayesha’ and the sweetly scented rugosa rose ‘Roseraie de l’Hay’;
- ferns, including southern polypody and the soft shield fern.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* ‘Pheasant’s Eye’; *Catalpa bignonioides* ‘Aurea’ (Indian bean tree); *Geranium* ‘Ann Folkard’; seed pods of *Iris foetidissima* (stinking iris); *Comus* ‘Eddie’s White Wonder’; and *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Jelena’ (witch hazel) in autumn.

