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THE JEAN & ALFRED GOLDSTEIN EXHIBITION

GEORGE HARRISON

A GARDENER'S LIFE

FEBRUARY 9 – JUNE 29, 2025

SELBY 
GARDENS
DOWNTOWN SARASOTA
THE LIVING MUSEUM®

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The ninth installment of the Jean & Alfred Goldstein Exhibition Series at Selby Gardens explores the deep and meaningful connection between musician George Harrison – best remembered as the lead guitarist of the legendary rock band The Beatles – and the pastime of gardening, which became his greatest passion.

Harrison's love of gardening was an integral part of his identity. For much of his life, the renowned singer-songwriter described himself as "just a gardener." His 1980 autobiography, *I Me Mine*, is dedicated "to gardeners everywhere."

In 1970, not long after The Beatles disbanded, the then 27-year-old Harrison purchased the estate of Friar Park on a hill above the small English town of Henley-on-Thames. Dating from the late nineteenth century, this once grand Victorian mansion with spectacular gardens had fallen into disrepair. With the help of his family and friends, Harrison was able to revitalize the neglected property, consisting of the mansion, lodges, and 32 acres of grounds. It was in this process that Harrison's love of gardening began to flower.

The exhibition at Selby Gardens combines a dynamic display of photos and ephemera in the Museum of Botany & the Arts with stunning horticultural vignettes in the Tropical Conservatory and throughout the gardens of the 15-acre Downtown Sarasota campus. Featured throughout the exhibition is a selection of Harrison's music and lyrics, as well as excerpts from *Came the Lightening: Twenty Poems for George* by Harrison's wife, Olivia, dedicated to her husband and reflecting on their time together. The resulting multi-sensory experience highlights Harrison's connection to nature and celebrates his life and legacy through the power of plants.

Selby Gardens gratefully acknowledges the guidance and support of the Harrison family archive in the development of this exhibition.

February 25, 1943

George is born in Liverpool, England



1960

Forms The Beatles with Lennon and McCartney (joined by Ringo Starr in 1962)

1970

Purchases Friar Park after the break-up of The Beatles

1972

Sets up Friar Park Studio, Henley-on-Thames (F.P.S.H.O.T.)



1974

Founds Dark Horse Records

1988

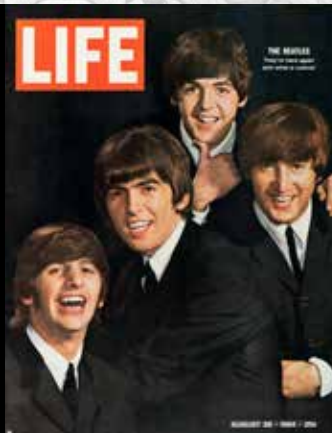
Forms The Traveling Wilburys with Bob Dylan, Jeff Lynne, Roy Orbison, and Tom Petty

GEORGE HARRISON

TIMELINE

1964

Experiences Beatlemania in the United States



1971

Organizes the Concert for Bangladesh with Ravi Shankar



1988

Inducted with The Beatles into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

1958

Joins The Quarrymen with John Lennon and Paul McCartney



1970

Releases the solo album, *All Things Must Pass*

November 29, 2001

George passes away



SARASOTA BAY

SELBY GARDENS
DOWNTOWN SARASOTA



Please take this brief survey to help Selby Gardens meet the requirements of our grant funders.

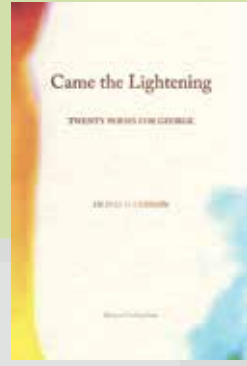
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HUDSON BAYOU

MORGANROTH FAMILY PALM PROMENADE

US HWY 41 / MOUND STREET

- Ye Dial Garden ● Tropical Conservatory
- Ye Alpine Garden ● Museum of Botany & the Arts
- Ye Kolam Garden ● Selby House Cafe
- Ye Treble Garden 🌸 Green Orchid Restaurant
- Ye Maze for Losing Ye Bodies



Excerpts from *Came the Lightening: Twenty Poems for George* by Olivia Harrison can be found throughout the exhibition.

ORANGE AVENUE

Horticultural Vignettes

The horticultural vignettes located throughout Selby Gardens' Downtown Sarasota campus reflect a variety of influences. Some draw their inspiration from the original gardens at Friar Park designed by Frank Crisp or the more recent gardens planted by George and Olivia Harrison. Others pay homage to George Harrison's music.

The use of archaic language in ye titles of ye vignettes is a nod to the descriptions of features on a plan of the gardens at Friar Park illustrated by Alan Tabor and published by Frank Crisp in 1914.

Ye Dial Garden

Harrison's *Dark Horse* album can be heard in the background of this playful garden, which draws its inspiration from Crisp's dial or topiary garden at Friar Park. Crisp's garden showcased his notable collection of sundials and topiaries, or decoratively clipped trees.



Ye Alpine Garden

This towering display is inspired by the remarkable alpine or rock garden at Friar Park, which is complete with a scale model of the Matterhorn.



Ye Kolam Garden

Reflecting Harrison's great interest in Indian music, which he helped to popularize in the West, this knot garden is in the shape of a kolam, a geometrical line drawing traditionally composed on the floor using rice flour in south India.

Ye Treble Garden

The design of this knot garden plays on the treble clef, a common element in musical notation. The garden pays homage to Harrison's music, and his *Living in the Material World* album can be heard in the background.



Plan of the gardens at Friar Park illustrated by Alan Tabor and published by Frank Crisp, 1914
Image courtesy of the Oxfordshire History Centre

Selby House Cafe

Grab a beverage or a bite to eat here, surrounded by a selection of Beatles photos and memorabilia.



© Harrison Family

Ye Maze for Losing Ye Bodies

It is easy to lose yourself in this hedge maze, inspired by a similar feature of Crisp's gardens at Friar Park. A selection of Harrison's lyrics can be found throughout the maze.

Museum of Botany & the Arts

Discover here the story of Harrison's love of gardening and the gardens at Friar Park through a display of photos and ephemera. An arched structure referencing "Ye Glasshouses" at Friar Park enlivens the entrance.

Tropical Conservatory

“... where are many plants both quaint and rare.”

Where All Things Must Pass

The entrance to the Tropical Conservatory features a stunning display of plants incorporating Barry Feinstein's iconic photo of Harrison from the cover of his solo album, *All Things Must Pass*, released in 1970. The album itself can be heard in the background.



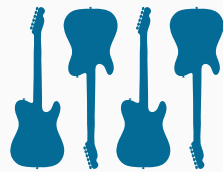
Ye (Pine) Apple Scruffs



The title of this display plays on the title of Harrison's song, *Apple Scruffs*, which paid tribute to a die-hard group of Beatles fans. The bromeliads displayed here are related to the pineapple, also in the Bromeliaceae family. They are interspersed with garden gnomes inspired by those at Friar Park enjoyed by Crisp and Harrison, who featured them on album covers and in videos.

Ye (Gently) Weeping Garden

This sculptural garden combines water, weeping plants, and electric guitars. Fans of The Beatles will appreciate the play on the title of Harrison's hit song, *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*, released by the band in 1968.



Ye Dark Hort Garden

This dramatic display of dark foliage plays on the title of Harrison's solo album, *Dark Horse*, released in 1974.



Ye Palm Garden

This striking palm garden references the cover design of Harrison's solo album, *Living in the Material World*, released in 1973. The pun on the double meaning of palm was, in this case, irresistible.



If Not Fern You

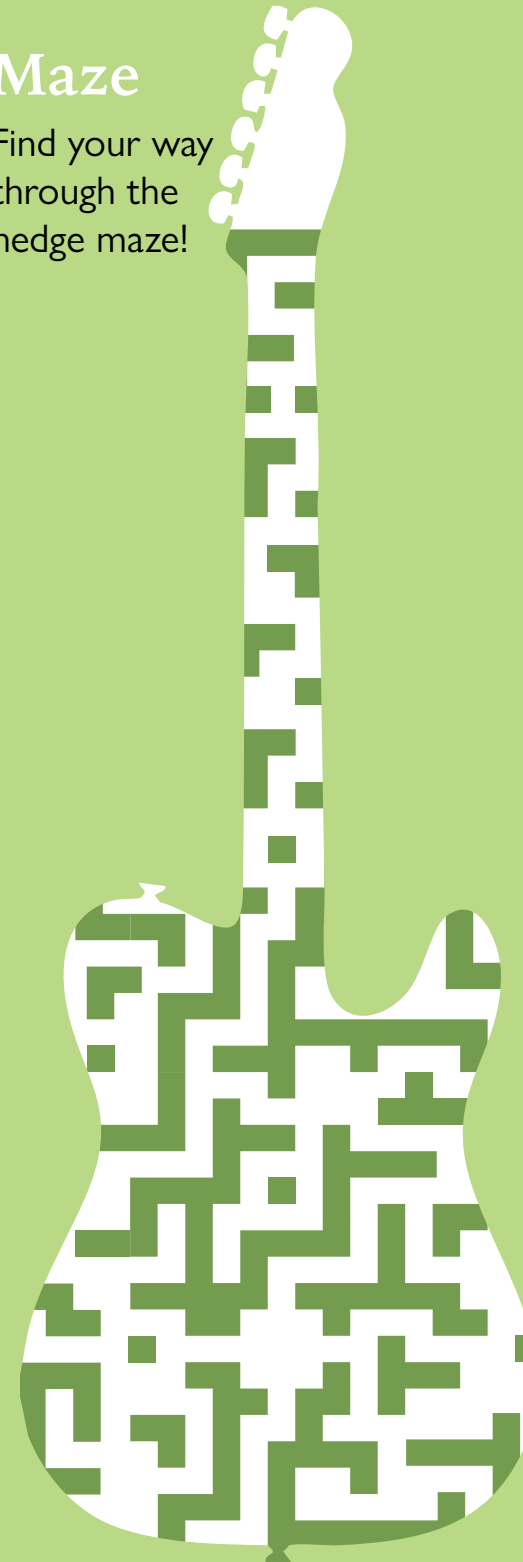
The title of this garden plays on the title of Harrison's song, *If Not For You*. The garden itself is filled with fabulous ferns, which were the subject of a popular craze at the time Crisp laid out the original gardens at Friar Park.



Family Activities

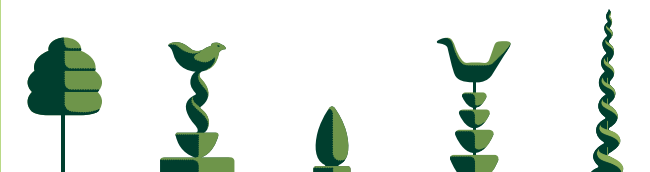
Maze

Find your way through the hedge maze!



Topiary Garden

Topiary is the horticultural practice of clipping the foliage and branches of trees and shrubs to develop and maintain clearly defined shapes. Create your own topiary garden below!



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