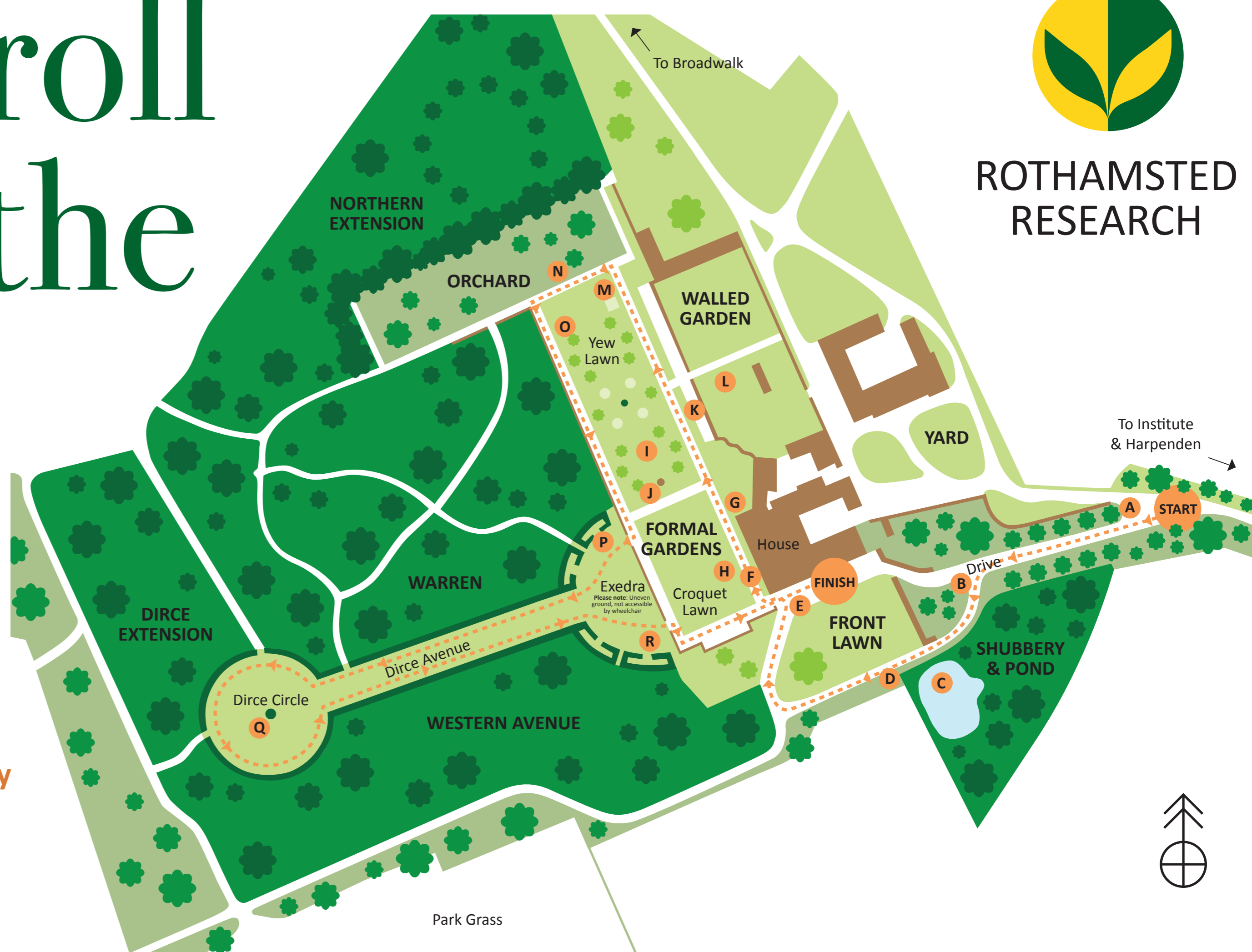




Take a stroll through the Manor Gardens

The Gardens are entered by the wrought iron, Grade II listed, main gate **A**. The gates and railings date from the early 18th century, probably 1721, when an avenue of elms was planted in front of the house. The driveway is lined with flowering cherry (*Prunus* “Kanzan”) backed by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*). The wall to the right is screened by several different varieties of climbing roses.



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At the end of this short avenue, the road divides to enclose a large **shrubbery** **B**. This was the site of the old coach house, which was demolished in the 1960s. Here you can see a black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), beautyberry (*Callicarpa bodinieri*) and silk tassel (*Garrya elliptica* “James Roof”) against a background of yew.

Bearing to the left at this junction one can see **the pond** **C**. It appears to be a natural dew pond and features in some old pictures of the manor house dating back to the 17th century. It is overlooked by several ancient oak trees (*Quercus robur*), which also feature in paintings by Lady Caroline Lawes dating from the late 19th century.

A section of **ha-ha** **D** extends along the south of the front lawn, overlooking the fields beyond. It was surmounted by a 19th century ornamental wall until it collapsed in the 1990s.

Looking north from this vantage point, across the expanse of lawn towards the manor house (Grade I listed), with its ornate clock tower, you can admire a view that is little changed since the middle of the 17th century.

The south face of the house **E** is framed by two southern Magnolias (*Magnolia grandiflora*). Other climbers on this wall include Wisteria (*Wisteria floribunda*), kiwifruit (*Actinidia chinensis*) and grape (*Vitis vinifera*). Around the front door, there are two climbing roses.

Moving **around the corner of the house** **F** you will see various wall shrubs, most notably firethorn (*Pyracantha* sp.) and Japanese quince (*Chaenomeles* sp.).

On the wall to the right of the black wooden door, with a crest above it, is an **old glory rose** **G** (*Rosa* “Gloire de Dijon”). The present rose is clearly not of this vintage but may well be descended from a plant of around that date via several generations of cuttings.

The area on your left is **the croquet lawn** **H**, originally designed as a bowling green, with two rose arches. The one at the south-west end used to have a marble statue under it but it was stolen in 1997; you can still see an indentation in the lawn where it stood.

The yew lawn **I** is set on a lower level than the Croquet Lawn, which provides a panoramic view. Flower beds and clipped yews are symmetrically arranged around circular stone beds, and an ornamental “fountain” feature, which appear to have always been intended for planting rather than water. In the centre of the pond is a statue of **the bather** **J** by Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge.

The west wall of the Walled Garden provides an impressive backdrop to **the herbaceous borders** **K**. Several varieties of Clematis, and winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) clamber over its solid support. The borders have undergone extensive renovation. Replanting has been progressive and many new plants have been introduced with the intention of providing a spectacle of colour over a long season.

The walled garden **L** is over 300 years old. The top section of the west wall, with its embellishments, is a later addition to the base, which is Grade II listed. The enclosed area behind the wall (not accessible to the public)

was a productive kitchen garden until the early 1970s. It is now mainly used for storage by the gardeners but it is hoped that the area will be refurbished over the next few years.

Set within the lawn, towards its northern end, is a bed planted with **red clover** **M**. This is the smallest of Rothamsted’s famous “Classical Experiments”, which were started between 1843 and 1856. It has been used to grow red clover continuously since 1854. It was established within the kitchen garden but, when the Walled Garden was halved in size in the 1860s, it was left “stranded” in the newly-created parterre.

The area of longer grass beyond the Yew Lawn, was once the site of a fruit **orchard** **N** but the trees were removed during the early 1980s. The area has since been planted with variety of coloured-bark trees, and is managed as a wild flower meadow.

On the woodland side of the yew lawn, is a **rose arch** **O**; the arches were redesigned, rebuilt and extended the full length of the lawn and ornamental wall in 1993-1994. The arches were replanted with different varieties of climbing and rambling roses, and are underplanted with a collection of

50 different Hosta varieties (a list of the plants is available). In the woods, towards its northern end, is an octagonal brick and timber summerhouse with a clay-tiled roof, which is much in need of renovation. Around it and extending farther into the woods are what remains of collections of Camellias, Rhododendrons and daffodils planted by the late Leslie Scowen, who worked at Rothamsted from 1946-1974. He was a keen amateur breeder of daffodils, who enjoyed some success at RHS shows, and many of the daffodils are unnamed varieties bred by him.

At the house end of the Rose Arch walk, you will find a little bridge that leads you to **the exedra** **P**, a semi-circular grassed area with two copper beeches and two stone “rococo” urns.

From here, an avenue lined with clipped yew hedging leads to the sculpture by Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge entitled **“Death of Dirce”** **Q**.

As you walk back to the house, the small copper beech on your left, next to the Ha-Ha, is intended to be a replacement for **the copper beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* “Purpurea”) **R** on your right; the latter is a superb grafted specimen of an unknown cultivar.

