



Tim Saunders and family day out to

## SIR HAROLD HILLIER GARDENS

**Mathematics is even more influential than I realised. It plays a vital part in nature, we discover during our trip to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey, Hampshire.**

As we walk without a care around this wonderful garden we come across a sign about cones, which reads: "Pine cones are a mathematical marvel! The pattern of the cone follows the Fibonacci sequence, an amazing pattern found in nature. Each number in the sequence is the sum of the previous two numbers: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 and so on. The pattern creates the spiral found in cones, starting at the base of the cone and spiralling out to the tip." This same pattern and number sequence appears all over the natural world, for example in sunflowers and cacti. It allows for the most efficient use of space possible, covering the most surface area. Petals and leaves use this arrangement, too.

At just under 180 acres this magnificent landscape is home to more than 42,000 trees and shrubs including magnolia and rhododendron.

On arrival there are a lot of visitors and we queue at 2m intervals to enter. It is also necessary to queue for the toilets but only at busy times. The entrance to the gardens is very busy and so social distancing is difficult but as all the visitors spread out we feel like we are on our own. The weather is good to us and we are able to explore much of the grounds.

We walk past a tall euonymus, which prompts me to recall the line from Sir John Betjeman's A Subaltern's Love-Song that refers to this very tree:

"Her father's euonymus shines as we walk  
And swing past the summer-house, buried in talk"

There are a number of metal sculptures of such things as cones and just up from these are some benches at the top of a hill so we make our way to them for our picnic. After lunch the children race back down. We have visited a number of gardens now and each one has its own unique design and appeal.

It is a real joy when he forgets about all of this and starts playing hide and seek with sisters Harriett (9) and Heidi (7) in the gardens surrounding Jermyn's House.

A fine day out for all the family and a chance to relax and forget about life's difficulties, just for a moment.

**For more information visit:**  
[www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hilliergardens](http://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hilliergardens)

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