



## Grelen's TOP 50!

We invite you to slow down, wander, gather, and reflect on the beauty that connects us!

*Our region is extraordinarily rich in gardens — grand estates, university collections, native plant sanctuaries, coastal landscapes, and hidden horticultural gems — all within a day's journey of Grelen. This curated list of fifty gardens reflects the breadth and diversity of the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast, celebrating places that are creating, cultivating, and inspiring in meaningful ways. Whether expansive or intimate, historic or contemporary, each garden contributes to a larger landscape story — one rooted in stewardship, beauty, and the enduring power of plants to connect us to place.*

## VIRGINIA

### 1. James Madison's Montpelier — Orange, VA

<https://www.montpelier.org/> A restored historic landscape where gardens, native meadows, and evolving interpretation connect land, stewardship, and history. The grounds are beautiful in every season, and the docents and tours are among the best in the region — thoughtful, nuanced, and deeply engaging.

**Grelen Note:** Montpelier is our long-time neighbor and friend. Our trail systems connect, and we share not only a boundary line but a belief in land stewardship, education, and community.

### 2. Monticello — Charlottesville, VA

<https://www.monticello.org/> Historic kitchen and flower gardens reflecting Jefferson's horticultural experimentation and Enlightenment-era design sensibility. The restored vegetable terraces, orchards, and ornamental beds demonstrate an early American commitment to agriculture, botany, and innovation — themes that continue to shape how we garden today.

### 3. Botanical Garden of the Piedmont — Charlottesville, VA

<https://www.bgapiedmont.org/> A developing native-focused public garden rooted in community, ecology, and regional plant stewardship.

**Grelen Note:** Leslie Gregg, Founder of The Market at Grelen, enjoys being a Board Member of this new, developing garden. Once completed it will be an incredible addition to Charlottesville!

### 4. Edith J. Carrier Arboretum (JMU) — Harrisonburg, VA

<https://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/> A woodland arboretum showcasing native plant collections against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge.

**5. Hahn Horticulture Garden (Virginia Tech) — Blacksburg, VA**

<https://www.hahngarden.vt.edu/> A thoughtfully layered university garden known for perennial design, research plantings, and Appalachian diversity.

**6. Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden — Richmond, VA**

<https://www.lewisginter.org/> A standout botanical garden with themed spaces, a glass conservatory, and four-season horticultural displays.

**7. Maymont — Richmond, VA**

<https://maymont.org/> An expansive historic estate blending Italian and Japanese garden design with rolling arboretum landscapes.

**8. Bryan Park Azalea Garden — Richmond, VA**

<https://www.bryanpark.com/> A beloved spring destination featuring sweeping azalea collections beneath a mature canopy of trees.

**9. State Arboretum of Virginia (Blandy Experimental Farm) — Boyce, VA**

<https://blandy.virginia.edu/arboretum> A research-driven arboretum celebrated for spring blossoms, autumn foliage, and curated tree collections.

**10. Morven Park — Leesburg, VA**

<https://www.morven.org/> Historic estate grounds combining formal gardens, open vistas, and preserved landscape heritage.

**11. Oatlands Historic House & Gardens — Leesburg, VA**

<https://www.oatlands.org/> One of Virginia's finest formal boxwood gardens, structured and elegant in every season.

**12. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens — Vienna, VA**

<https://www.novaparks.com/parks/meadowlark-botanical-gardens> A Northern Virginia gem offering lakeside paths, Asian-inspired design, and vibrant seasonal color.

**13. Green Spring Gardens — Alexandria, VA**

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring> A refined demonstration garden blending horticultural education with historic charm.

**14. George Washington's Mount Vernon — Mount Vernon, VA**

<https://www.mountvernon.org/> An early American estate landscape with formal gardens, kitchen plots, and sweeping Potomac River views.

**15. Norfolk Botanical Garden — Norfolk, VA**

<https://www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org/> Coastal light, water features, and one of the region's most extensive public plant collections.

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# WASHINGTON, DC

## 16. United States Botanic Garden — Washington, DC

<https://www.usbg.gov/> America's oldest continuously operating botanical garden, offering curated indoor and outdoor plant collections.

## 17. Bartholdi Park — Washington, DC

<https://www.usbg.gov/gardens-plants/outdoor-gardens> An intimate demonstration garden adjacent to the Conservatory, known for seasonal structure and sustainable design.

## 18. U.S. National Arboretum — Washington, DC

<https://www.usna.usda.gov/> Expansive grounds featuring curated tree collections, open meadows, and the iconic Capitol Columns.

## 19. National Bonsai & Penjing Museum — Washington, DC

<https://www.usna.usda.gov/bonsai> A living art collection showcasing centuries of craftsmanship through miniature tree design.

## 20. Dumbarton Oaks Gardens — Washington, DC

<https://www.doaks.org/visit/gardens> A masterclass in garden rooms, terraces, and classical landscape architecture in Georgetown.

## 21. Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens — Washington, DC

<https://www.hillwoodmuseum.org/> European-inspired formal gardens executed with precision and horticultural excellence.

## 22. Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens — Washington, DC

<https://www.nps.gov/keaq/> A rare urban water garden where lotus and lilies bloom spectacularly each summer.

## 23. Tudor Place — Washington, DC

<https://www.tudorplace.org/> An intimate Federal-era garden set within one of Georgetown's most historic estates.

## 24. National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden — Washington, DC

<https://www.nga.gov/visit/sculpture-garden.html> A refined urban landscape where contemporary sculpture and seasonal plantings coexist.

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# MARYLAND

## 25. Brookside Gardens — Wheaton, MD

<https://www.brooksidegardens.org/>

A thoughtfully designed public garden with conservatory displays and structured perennial beds.

## 26. Ladew Topiary Gardens — Monkton, MD

<https://ladewgardens.org/> Whimsical topiary and formal garden rooms blending European tradition with regional charm.

**27. Rawlings Conservatory — Baltimore, MD**

<https://rawlingsconservatory.org/>

A historic glasshouse filled with tropical, desert, and Mediterranean plant collections.

**28. Cylburn Arboretum — Baltimore, MD**

<https://www.cylburn.org/> A tranquil hillside arboretum offering mature trees and expansive garden views.

**29. Adkins Arboretum — Ridgely, MD**

<https://www.adkinsarboretum.org/>

A native plant sanctuary dedicated to Mid-Atlantic woodland ecology and habitat preservation.

**30. Historic London Town & Gardens — Edgewater, MD**

<https://historiclondontown.org/> Colonial-inspired gardens overlooking the South River with restored historic plantings.

**31. McCrillis Gardens — Takoma Park, MD**

<https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/mccrillis-gardens/> A small but beautifully designed woodland garden with intimate scale and thoughtful composition.

**32. Glenstone — Potomac, MD**

<https://www.glenstone.org/>

Contemporary art integrated seamlessly into a minimalist landscape of meadows and water.

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## NORTH CAROLINA

**33. Sarah P. Duke Gardens — Durham, NC**

<https://gardens.duke.edu/>

One of the Southeast's premier public gardens, celebrated for its formal terraces, woodland paths, and sweeping lawns. Duke Gardens blends horticultural excellence with academic research and ecological stewardship — a place where education and beauty meet.

**Grelen Note:** Duke holds special meaning for our family. Dan, founder of Grelen Nursery, is an alumnus and has donated many trees to the Gardens over the years. We absolutely love walking through these gardens when we go to Durham!

**34. North Carolina Botanical Garden — Chapel Hill, NC**

<https://ncbg.unc.edu/>

A nationally recognized leader in native plant conservation and ecological garden design.

**35. JC Raulston Arboretum — Raleigh, NC**

<https://jcra.ncsu.edu/>

A plant collector's paradise showcasing rare specimens and dynamic seasonal trials.

**36. Daniel Stowe Conservancy — Belmont, NC**

<https://www.dsbg.org/>

Elegant formal gardens and fountains framed by Carolina Piedmont landscapes.

**37. Reynolda Gardens — Winston-Salem, NC**

<https://reynolda.org/visit/gardens/> A restored estate garden blending historic structure with educational programming.

**38. Airlie Gardens — Wilmington, NC**

<https://airliegardens.org/>

Coastal gardens defined by ancient live oaks, hydrangeas, and reflective waterways.

**39. Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden — Kernersville, NC**

<https://www.cienergarden.org/>

A European-inspired display garden with intimate rooms and impressive perennial borders.

**40. Sandhills Horticultural Gardens — Pinehurst, NC**

<https://www.sandhills.edu/hort/>

A teaching garden showcasing diverse plant collections and seasonal design inspiration.

**41. Greensboro Arboretum — Greensboro, NC**

<https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/parks-recreation/parks-gardens/greensboro-arboretum>

A municipal arboretum featuring themed gardens and well-curated plant collections.

**42. UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens — Charlotte, NC**

<https://botanicalgardens.charlotte.edu/>

A university garden highlighting native habitats, conservation efforts, and botanical research.

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## DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA & WEST VIRGINIA

**43. Longwood Gardens — Kennett Square, PA**

<https://longwoodgardens.org/>

A world-class horticultural destination where grand conservatories, fountains, and immersive seasonal displays create an unforgettable garden experience. Longwood sets a benchmark for excellence — ambitious, beautifully maintained, and constantly evolving.

**44. Chanticleer — Wayne, PA**

<https://www.chanticleergarden.org/>

A design-forward garden where creativity, bold planting combinations, and experimentation thrive.

**45. Morris Arboretum & Gardens — Philadelphia, PA**

<https://www.morrisarboretum.org/>

A historic arboretum offering sweeping views and diverse woody plant collections.

**46. Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens — Devon, PA**

<https://www.jenkinsarboretum.org/>

A serene woodland garden specializing in rhododendrons and native plant beauty.

**47. Winterthur — Winterthur, DE**

<https://www.winterthur.org/>

A sweeping estate landscape celebrated for naturalistic design and seasonal drama.

**48. Mt. Cuba Center — Hockessin, DE**

<https://www.mtcubacenter.org/> A nationally respected native plant garden advancing ecological horticulture research.

**49. Oglebay — Wheeling, WV**

<https://oglebay.com/>

Formal gardens and seasonal displays nestled within rolling Appalachian landscapes.

**50. WVU Core Arboretum — Morgantown, WV**

<https://arboretum.wvu.edu/>

A riverfront woodland arboretum dedicated to Appalachian native species and quiet exploration.

*\*Please note: Mileage is approximate. The 250 destinations were determined using a straight-line radius (“as the crow flies”) rather than driving distance.*