



## Grelen's Top 10

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

*Within 250 miles of Somerset, Virginia, there are gardens that do more than bloom — they inspire, educate, and quietly shape the way we see the landscape. These ten destinations represent the most impactful and beautiful public gardens in our region. From sweeping botanical collections to intimate garden rooms and historic estates, each offers a distinct experience of horticulture at its finest. Together, they form a constellation of places worth planning a trip around — anchors of beauty that continue cultivating curiosity and wonder season after season.*

### **1. Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden (Richmond, VA)**

A 50-acre public garden featuring themed areas such as the Rose Garden, Asian Valley, Children's Garden, and a striking domed conservatory. It offers beautiful plant collections, seasonal events, and strong educational programming.

Website: <https://www.lewisginter.org>

### **2. Maymont (Richmond, VA)**

A 100-acre historic estate with Italian and Japanese gardens, expansive lawns, wooded paths, and an arboretum setting. The grounds combine formal garden design with naturalistic landscapes and historic architecture.

Website: <https://maymont.org>

### **3. Norfolk Botanical Garden (Norfolk, VA)**

Spanning more than 150 acres, this coastal Virginia garden includes over 60 themed gardens, including roses, camellias, butterfly habitats, and Japanese landscapes. Seasonal blooms and waterfront scenery make it especially dynamic.

Website: <https://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org>

### **4. Sarah P. Duke Gardens (Durham, NC)**

A 55-acre botanical garden on Duke University's campus featuring formal terraces, water features, native plant collections, and an Asiatic arboretum set within rolling Piedmont terrain.

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

**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!

## **5. Longwood Gardens (Kennett Square, PA)**

One of the most celebrated botanical gardens in the United States, featuring more than 1,100 acres of formal gardens, woodlands, meadows, fountains, and a grand conservatory. Longwood is known for its extraordinary seasonal displays and immersive garden experiences year-round.

Website: <https://longwoodgardens.org>

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## **6. U.S. Botanic Garden (Washington, DC)**

One of the oldest botanic gardens in North America, featuring a historic conservatory with tropical, desert, and orchid collections, along with outdoor ornamental gardens and the Bartholdi Fountain & Gardens.

Website: <https://www.usbg.gov>

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## **7. U.S. National Arboretum (Washington, DC)**

A vast public garden and research institution showcasing extensive tree and shrub collections, seasonal flowering displays, and the renowned National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

Website: <https://www.usna.usda.gov>

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## **8. Dumbarton Oaks Gardens (Washington, DC)**

Designed by Beatrix Farrand, these terraced Georgetown gardens unfold in a series of formal rooms, fountains, orchards, and woodland paths, offering a masterclass in early 20th-century landscape design.

Website: <https://www.doaks.org/visit/garden>

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## **9. Kenilworth Park & Aquatic Gardens (Washington, DC)**

A unique National Park Service site preserving historic ponds of lotus and water lilies alongside tidal marsh habitat. The summer lotus bloom is particularly spectacular.

Website: <https://www.nps.gov/keaq>

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## **10. Ladew Topiary Gardens (Monkton, MD)**

A historic garden estate famous for its elaborate and whimsical topiary sculptures, arranged within outdoor garden rooms surrounding a manor house.

Website: <https://ladewgardens.org>

## **Honorary #11 — Montpelier (Orange, VA)**

The historic 2,650-acre estate of James Madison, offering restored gardens, sweeping lawns, and landscape vistas that are contiguous with Grelen's surrounding countryside, making it a meaningful neighboring landmark. Website: <https://montpelier.org>

**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.