

Britain's Top 10 Visitor Gardens

London, September 30, 2008 – The arrival of autumn presents a new season of opportunity to visit and enjoy Britain's public gardens and in particular the spectacular displays of autumn colours. With this in mind TripAdvisor®, the world's largest travel community, today announced the top 10 public gardens in Britain, according to traveller popularity and TripAdvisor editors.

1. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London: situated in the London suburb of Richmond upon Thames, Kew is probably the most famous and popular garden in the world. Steeped in history, it attracts some 1.5 million visitors each year who flock to see and experience the treetop walkway, the world's largest compost heap, the famous palm house, water lily house, collections of carnivorous plants and cacti and others too numerous to mention.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "One of my favourite places in London."

2. Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, Scotland: Renowned for its horticultural excellence, the Botanics comprise some 70 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds providing a tranquil oasis just one mile from Edinburgh city centre.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "a perfect outing for a sunny afternoon."

3. Groombridge Place & Enchanted Forest, Tunbridge Wells, Kent: These amazing award winning 17th century gardens have been updated with contemporary styling and features. Set in 200 acres of wooded parkland with a moated manor house backdrop, formal features such as the White Rose Garden, Drunken Topiary, Secret Garden, Knot Garden and Peacock Walk contrast with the ancient woodland of the 'Enchanted Forest' where there's mystery, magic and excitement to challenge the imagination of young and old alike.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Certainly enchanted me!!"

4. Stourhead House and Gardens, Wiltshire-Somerset: were laid out between 1741 and 1780 to create a breathtaking landscape of lakeside walks, grottoes and classical temples. The gardens are home to a large collection of trees and shrubs from around the world and overlooked by one of the finest follies in Britain, King Alfred's Tower and in the surrounding woodland are two iron age forts.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Another delight around every corner."

5. Hampton Court, East Molesey, Surrey: Hampton Court's Privy Garden has been restored to its 16th Century glory. Designed for William III it remained a private garden for residents of the palace right up until the early 20th century. Hampton Court is also home to the world-famous Hampton Court Palace Hedge Maze. Planted sometime for William III around 1690 it covers a third of an acre and contains half a mile of paths.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Most beautiful garden I ever saw."

6. Grayside House & Gardens, Morpeth, Northumberland: designed by Victorian inventor Lord Armstrong Grayside is a garden of breathtaking drama whatever the season. It features spectacular terraced gardens and one of Europe's largest rock gardens, which tumbles down a valley at the bottom of which is the tallest Douglas Fir in England.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Really. This is one of the most amazing places I have ever visited."

7. Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury, Cotswolds, Gloucestershire: The national Arboretum in Gloucestershire is one of the most spectacular tree gardens in the world. Covering 600 acres it contains an historic collection of over 3000 different trees and shrub species, many of which are rare or endangered in their native lands.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "If you haven't been, go NOW, while the autumn colours are at their best."

8. Fountains Abbey and Studely Royal Water Garden, Ripon, North Yorkshire: is a huge estate of beauty and surprises on the Yorkshire Dales. Comprising some 800 acres of contrasting countryside, it includes the mysterious Abbey Ruins and one of the most spectacular and intriguing Georgian water gardens stuffed with Classical statues and follies.

Said a TripAdvisor article: "one of the most historic and beautiful places in Europe."

9. Chelsea Physic Garden, Chelsea, London: Situated in the heart of London and founded by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries in 1673, this is the second oldest botanical garden in Britain. A centre of both relaxation and science, it continues to research the properties, origins and conservation of over 5000 species. Its rock garden is the oldest English garden devoted to alpine plants.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Beautiful garden with great history."

10. The Lost Gardens of Heligen, Mevagissey, Cornwall: is one of the most intriguing estates in England. Once a popular 19th century attraction it disappeared from public view behind a covering of bramble and ivy like something from a fairy tale, only to be rediscovered and restored in the late 20th century. The popular attraction boasts a breathtaking collection of massive rhododendrons and camellias, an Italian garden and a 'jungle' of sub-tropical tree ferns.

Said a TripAdvisor member: "Great day out!"

TripAdvisor Director of Communications, Europe, Luke Fredberg said, "Britain is fortunate in having such a rich heritage of public gardens. The volume and range of reviews and opinions posted on TripAdvisor from around the world testify to their popularity as a visitor attraction."

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