

Europe's Gardens in Bloom

By Genevieve Northup

The temperature is slowly rising, the days are growing longer and the first flower buds are opening. Soon Europe will be in full bloom, and the best place to see the remarkable transition from winter to spring is at one of these incredible gardens.

Villa d'Este Tivoli, Italy

Villa d'Este is considered the archetype of Renaissance gardens. Behind the palace, a hillside terrace overlooks a lush green space and fountains. Visitors witness water rushing over moss-covered archways and splashing from 30-foot-high jets.

Castle Gardens of Arcen Arcen, Netherlands

Fifteen environments are packed into 80 acres at Arcen Castle. A 35,000-square-foot greenhouse provides sanctuary for banana and palm trees, cactus varieties, and Mediterranean olive, fig and pistachio perennials. The Rosearium has areas devoted to different roses, such as climbing, miniature and 17th century varieties. A playground, miniature golf course and knights' tournaments entertain little visitors.

Linderhof Palace Gardens Ettal, Germany

King Ludwig II of Bavaria idolized the French monarchy of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the late 1800s, he commissioned many royal residences, including one in the Bavarian Alps.

Traditional gardens flank each side of Linderhof. To the north, an ornate carved gazebo crowns a bluff. Thirty stepped basins form a waterfall streaming down to a sculpture of Neptune and rearing horses. To the south, two grand staircases cascade below the columned Venus temple. Beyond, paths lead to Moorish and Moroccan outbuildings and the Venus Grotto, an artificial cave featuring a lagoon, shell-shaped boat, frescoes and theatrical lighting.

Kew Gardens London, England

Kew Gardens is home to more than 30,000 plant species. Some sections are organized geographically; others are designated by specific species, such as water lilies, azaleas, bonsais and giant redwoods. Founded by Princess Diana, the conservatory mimics wet and dry tropical climates, allowing cactus, African violet, and orchid varieties to flourish. In spring and summer, the blossoming geometric flower beds of the

Queen's Garden and Palm House Parterre create kaleidoscopic displays.

Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, France

In the early 20th century, Beatrice Ephrussi de Rothschild inherited her father's fortune and built an Italian-style mansion on the French Riviera. Exploring the nine gardens — each distinguished by stunning architecture and foliage — is like touring ostentatious royal apartments. Elements of medieval structures, such as curved window casings, gargoyles and columns, line hedges and vine-wrapped walls in the stone garden. During early summer, the rose garden explodes with vibrant pink hues reminiscent of floral wallpaper. Balconies spaced along the estate's perimeter provide unobstructed sea views.

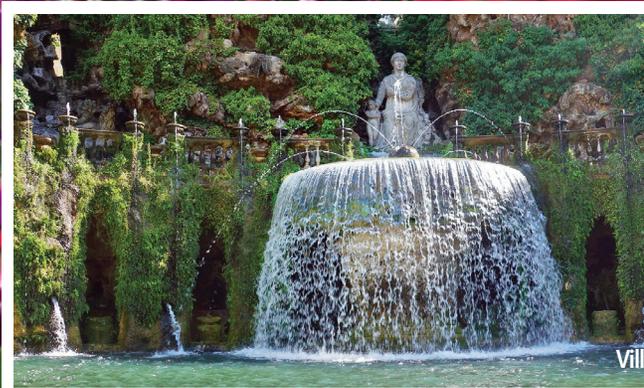
Monet's Garden Giverny, France

Known for his achievements as an impressionist artist, Claude Monet was also triumphant in transforming a dilapidated property into a paradise that inspired his later landscape art. While traveling the countryside to paint, Monet's letters home often referenced his much-loved gardens.

Now managed by the Claude Monet



Monet's Garden



Villa

Foundation, the manor continues to captivate aspiring artists, photographers and the public. Blooming arbors drape the path to the house. Irises, tulips, oriental poppies, peonies and greenery thrive in mixed plots. A few steps away, a pond is covered in water lilies and surrounded by weeping willow branches dangling just above the surface — a familiar scene from Monet's famous works.

*Lost Garden of Heligan
Mevagissey, England*

For several hundred years, the wealthy Tremayne family owned an impressive estate in Cornwall. During World War I, the land was neglected, and eventually reclaimed by nature. Restoration began 20 years ago, turning 200 acres into an outdoor exhibit of old and new English horticulture. Guests can admire rhododendrons (similar to azaleas) as large as buildings, walk across the tropical jungle on a Burmese rope bridge, and search for giants made of ferns, grass and rock.

*Mainau Island
Lake Constance, Germany*

Situated adjacent to the town of Constance, Mainau Island's 110-acre recreation area is easily accessible by bus or foot. Onsite, there are a number of restaurants and gardens, scenic

trails, a petting zoo, vineyard and palace tour. Guests can see non-native plants and animals, such as rare butterflies, tropical birds and palms, in special habitats

*Versailles Palace Gardens
Versailles, France*

Louis XIV spent untold sums to build his 700-room chateau in the late 17th century. This extravagance extended to the 2,000 acres of gardens, where a carpet of perfectly manicured grass and placid reflecting pools stretches to the horizon. Along the main promenade, larger-than-life lead, marble and bronze fountains depict Greek and Roman gods. Interestingly, Versailles lacked adequate resources to run 2,000 water jets simultaneously, so groundskeepers rushed to turn on each fountain before the king and his VIPs strolled by. Today, water circulates through the statues just a few hours on weekends, holidays and select weekdays during the peak tourist season. ■



Mainau Island

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