

Greet Spring With a Visit to a Public Garden

These eight gardens, located across the country, welcome visitors with a range of beloved blooms, traditional collections and experiential outdoor spaces.



Signs of spring: Daffodils at the New York Botanical Garden The New York Botanical Garden

By Cameron Walker

March 20, 2021

Last year, the pandemic shut the gates of many public gardens just as spring was on its way: According to a survey by the American Public Gardens Association, only about 4 percent of public gardens remained fully open as of March 30, 2020. Once public gardens began to reopen months later, they became places of natural respite for visitors, perhaps even more so than in the past.

Making up for last year's lost spring, these seven gardens around the country expect to be particularly glorious this year, offering a range of beloved spring flowers, traditional botanical collections and experiential outdoor spaces. At any garden changing conditions can make ephemeral blooms difficult to pin down, so plan on checking with the garden for updates (find more online at publicgardens.org), as well as for new protocols such as advance reservations, schedules, open areas and mask requirements. Annual members typically receive free garden admission.

CORAL GABLES, FLA.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

About a 30-minute drive south of downtown Miami, the 83-acre Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, named after the botanist and explorer David Fairchild, is working to grow once-plentiful native orchids and restore them to the region. March 21 is the final day of the garden's "Orchids in Bloom" event, but thousands of orchids — both native species and orchids from around the world — can be seen throughout the year. Of particular interest is the outdoor Richard H. Simons Rainforest, where orchids grow as they do in the wild, attached to trees as well as in the ground. In April, look for many colors of moth orchid, as well as the delicate violet orchid, a pendant-style native orchid with a spill of flowers. Beyond orchids, seek out the garden's many tropical plants and waterfalls. At the Wings of the Tropics exhibit, butterflies like the blue morpho flutter overhead, looking like flowers in flight. Tickets for adult visitors are \$24.95; U.S. active military and veterans are free. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the garden opens early for older adults and others vulnerable to illness.



Flower appreciation at the Orchids in Bloom festival, held by the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.
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