



New Zealand Garden Odyssey: A Curated Journey with North Carolina State Extension Master Gardener Program February 26 – March 12, 2027

Step into lush coastal gardens filled with rare and extraordinary plants, pause beneath towering ancient trees, and explore landscapes shaped by sea, volcano, and mountain. Travel with **friends of North Carolina State Extension Master Gardener Program** on an unforgettable journey through New Zealand, one of the world's most botanically captivating destinations.

From the subtropical gardens of Auckland to the alpine splendor of Queenstown, enjoy rare access to private gardens, explore extraordinary public collections, and share this immersive experience with fellow garden enthusiasts who treasure plants, beauty, and discovery.

TRIP AT A GLANCE

- 3 Nights – Auckland
- 3 Nights – New Plymouth
- 3 Nights – Queenstown
- 2 Nights – Dunedin
- 3 Nights – Christchurch



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TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Rare access to exceptional private gardens ♦ The extraordinary themed landscapes of Hamilton Gardens ♦ Magnificent rhododendron collections in Taranaki ♦ Native New Zealand plant gardens and ecological landscapes ♦ Scenic cruise aboard a historic steamship on Lake Wakatipu ♦ A breathtaking excursion to Milford Sound in Fiordland National Park ♦ Historic estates and botanic collections in Dunedin ♦ Contemporary sculpture gardens and innovative landscape design ♦ Coastal gardens on the spectacular Banks Peninsula

IT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ With renowned plantsman and garden guide Jack Hobbs
- ✓ 14 nights in carefully selected 4-star hotels
- ✓ Domestic flight from New Plymouth to Queenstown
- ✓ Private coach transportation throughout the tour
- ✓ Entrance fees to all gardens and sites listed in the itinerary
- ✓ Exclusive access to select private gardens
- ✓ Cruise on Lake Wakatipu aboard the historic *TSS Earnslaw*
- ✓ Excursion to Milford Sound
- ✓ Daily breakfast and selected lunches and multi-course dinners
- ✓ Expert interpretation of plants, garden design and regional landscapes
- ✓ Travel with friends who share your passion for gardening and culture

TRIP FACTS

15 days / 14 nights (not including international flights)
Trip begins: February 26, 2027 in Auckland, New Zealand
Trip ends: March 12, 2027 in Christchurch, New Zealand
\$8,495 per person double occupancy (land only)
\$2,235 single occupancy supplement



SAVE \$200: Earthbound travel alumni save \$100 ♦ Pay your final balance by \$100



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YOUR GARDEN JOURNEY BEGINS

Meal Key:

B= Breakfast / L = Lunch / D = Dinner

Air Travel Days: February 24 & 25 – Depart the USA

When crossing the International Date Line, travelers “lose” a day on the journey to New Zealand but gain it back when returning home. To arrive in time for the tour, depart the United States no later than February 24 to arrive in Auckland on February 26.

Day 1: Friday, February 26 - Welcome to Auckland!

Arrive in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city, where sparkling harbors and volcanic hills create a dramatic natural setting. As most flights from the US arrive early in the morning, we’ll start the day with breakfast and a brief orientation, before traveling to the forested **Waitākere Ranges** to visit the **Arataki Visitor Centre**. From here, enjoy sweeping views across lush rainforest and the rugged coastline before taking a walk beneath towering **kauri trees**, among the largest and oldest trees on Earth. A **welcome lunch** is included. *Overnight Auckland Hilton (B, L)*

Day 2: Saturday, February 27 – Gardens of the Matakana Coast

A scenic drive north brings us to the Matakana region, known for its creative garden culture. We begin at **Omaio Garden**, a remarkable private garden where sculpture and planting combine to create a bold and immersive landscape composition. Later, we explore the Brick Bay Sculpture Trail, where contemporary artworks are thoughtfully set among vineyards, wetlands, and regenerating forest. After a day rich in art and nature, we return to the Hilton Auckland for an overnight stay. *Overnight Auckland Hilton (B, L)*



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Discover Hamilton Gardens

Day 3: Sunday, February 28 - Auckland's Great Gardens

Today we visit two of the country's most significant gardens. At the **Auckland Botanic Gardens**, discover extensive collections of temperate plants, innovative landscape displays, and important native plantings.

Later we explore the magnificent **Ayrlies Garden** and Wetlands, an award-winning private garden combining lush borders, expansive water features, and ecological wetlands. This evening, enjoy dinner on Auckland's waterfront.

Overnight Auckland Hilton (B, L, D)

Day 4: Monday, March 1 – South to New Plymouth via Hamilton Gardens

Travel south toward Taranaki with a stop at the extraordinary Hamilton Gardens. Unlike traditional botanical gardens, **Hamilton Gardens** presents a global journey through garden history. Its themed gardens recreate the design traditions of Italy, Persia, Japan, England, and beyond. After our visit and a light lunch, we continue to New Plymouth, gateway to the fertile Taranaki region.

Overnight New Plymouth International hotel (B, L, D)



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Explore Waiangana Gardens

Days 5 & 6: March 2 & 3 - Gardens of Taranaki

Over two relaxed days in New Plymouth, we explore a rich mix of gardens shaped by artistry and place. We begin at Saxton Sanctuary, a tranquil, design-led garden, followed by lunch at the elegant Nice Hotel. In the afternoon, we visit Waiangana Gardens, known for its intimate scale and creative planting.

The next day, choose between the vibrant Pukeiti Rhododendron Garden or the refined Arts and Crafts setting of Tūpare. We then continue to Te Kainga Marire, a beautifully composed native plant garden. If time allows, we end with a stroll through Pukekura Park, a scenic local favorite. *Sleep in New Plymouth International hotel (Breakfast, plus one additional multi course meal daily)*

Day 7: Thursday, March 4 – South to Queenstown: Gateway to the Southern Alps

Fly south to Queenstown, a spectacular alpine town beside Lake Wakatipu. Enjoy a free afternoon to stroll along the lakeshore or browse Queenstown's charming shops and galleries. *Overnight Hilton Queenstown (B, D)*

Day 8: Friday, March 5 - Walter Peak Farm Garden & a historic steamship

Board the historic TSS *Earnslaw* steamship for a scenic cruise across Lake Wakatipu. At Walter Peak High Country Farm, explore charming homestead gardens surrounded by dramatic alpine scenery. *Overnight Hilton Queenstown (B, L)*



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Cruise stunning Milford Sound

Day 9: Saturday, March 6 – Stunning Milford Sound

Today we travel by private coach into Fiordland National Park to experience the breathtaking fjord of Milford Sound. This UNESCO-recognized landscape is renowned for its towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and lush temperate rainforest. Our excursion includes lunch and a spectacular cruise through the fjord. We return to Queenstown in the early evening. *Overnight Hilton Queenstown (B, L)*

Day 10: Sunday, March 7 – Transfer to the town of Dunedin

The journey from Queenstown to Dunedin unfolds as a gentle tapestry of changing landscapes, where alpine grandeur gives way to the warm, open beauty of Central Otago. Leaving the lakes and peaks behind, the road winds through sunlit valleys, vineyard-covered slopes, and rugged gorges carved by the Kawarau River, before softening into rolling farmland and wide pastoral plains. Along the way, the light seems to stretch endlessly across golden hills and quiet countryside, creating a sense of space and calm. As you approach Dunedin, the land grows greener and more coastal, with a subtle, windswept elegance that hints at the sea beyond—an ever-changing journey that is as serene as it is beautiful. *Overnight at the Fable Dunedin Hotel (B, D)*



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Spend a morning at Larnach Castle Gardens

Day 11: Monday, March 8 - Larnach Castle Garden & Dunedin Botanic Garden

Delight in a full day of horticultural treasures. Begin at **Larnach Castle Garden**, where sweeping terraces, lush flower borders, and hidden corners reveal vibrant seasonal blooms, fragrant shrubs, and elegant Victorian plantings at every turn. After a leisurely lunch, stroll through the **Dunedin Botanic Garden**, home to an impressive arboretum, aviary, native plant collection, and a world-class display of camellias. Each path invites discovery, with textures, scents, and colors that will inspire and captivate every garden enthusiast. *Overnight at the Fable Dunedin Hotel (B, D)*

Day 12: Tuesday, March 9 – Gardens and Coastal Wonders en Route to

Christchurch: As we journey north toward Christchurch, the landscape unfolds with rolling hills, rugged coastline, and serene farmland. If time allows, we pause near Oamaru to admire the striking **Moeraki Boulders** and the sculpted Waitaki limestone formations, natural wonders that complement New Zealand's cultivated beauty. Continuing on, we visit **Broadfield Garden**, a thoughtfully landscaped haven just south of Christchurch, where native plants, textured foliage, and seasonal blooms showcase the elegance and diversity of New Zealand horticulture. This scenic journey blends coastal charm, geological marvels, and botanical delights, offering a perfect introduction to Christchurch's celebrated gardens. *Overnight at Chateau on the Park Christchurch (B, D)*



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Day 13: Wednesday, March 10 – Gardens Christchurch

Known as New Zealand’s “Garden City”, Christchurch is filled with gems including the celebrated **Ōhinetahi Garden** - sculpture and landscape overlooking Lyttelton Harbour. In the afternoon, spend some time exploring the old city center or stroll through the Christchurch Botanical Gardens. *Overnight at Chateau on the Park Christchurch (B, D)*

Day 14: Thursday, March 11 – Banks Peninsula Gardens

Discover the enchanting gardens of the **Banks Peninsula**, where coastal beauty and artistic expression meet. Wander the dramatic terraces of **Fisherman’s Bay Garden**, a masterful coastal retreat, and be delighted by the playful creativity of **The Giant’s House** in Akaroa, with its whimsical mosaics and sculptural plantings. In the evening, we come together for a **gala farewell dinner**, celebrating the beauty, friendships, and inspiration of our New Zealand garden journey. *Overnight at Chateau on the Park Christchurch (B, D)*

Day 15: Friday, March 12 – Tour Concludes

Transfer to Christchurch International Airport for flights home. Guests wishing to extend their stay may consider a scenic train journey to Arthur’s Pass National Park in the South Alps. (B)

Meet Your Garden Guide



Jack Hobbs (MNZM) is probably the best-known horticulturist in New Zealand. He was manager of the Auckland Botanic Gardens for 30 years until he retired in 2024. He has co-authored several gardening books and written numerous articles for gardening magazines, is an acclaimed photographer, a popular television and radio presenter, and a successful plant breeder widely acknowledged as the first systematic breeder of New Zealand native plants. He has led numerous garden and wildflower tours around the world and within New Zealand over the past 25 years.



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Know Before You Go!

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Physical Requirements: It is the responsibility of each guest to be aware of their physical abilities or limitations and to be in sufficient good health to undertake the trip. [Click here](#) to read “Is an Earthbound trip right for you?” or call the Earthbound office for more details.

Travel Insurance: Earthbound Expeditions strongly encourages the purchase of travel insurance coverage. We include information on trip insurance in your deposit information.

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