2026 Garden Reviews

Guests will get multiple gardens for the price of one at this location. As part of the volunteer work Open Gate Garden Club performs on an ongoing basis, we invite guests to tour the grounds of "***St John Parish***". The flowers (perennials and annuals) and many bushes around the Main Church, the stone Chapel, and the Rectory are all maintained by garden club members. Behind the rectory there is also a year-round fish pond. In addition, the Rosary Garden and Stations of the Cross path behind the Activity Center (adjacent to Bush Park) are also available for viewing. These additional garden spaces are maintained by parish volunteers.

This "***Adorable, Kid Friendly***" 1856 vintage city-home garden welcomes visitors with vibrant white and green flowers and ornamental grasses in the front yard including an in-ground fountain and unique yard art. The side yard is loaded with Lily-of-the-valley and a Japanese Willow. Then continue to the back yard across a brick pathway to a deck bordered with grapevines, a variety of hydrangeas, raised beds full of flowers and vegetables, the sweetest "She Shed"/toy storage, hostas, and strawberry patch. Go down a natural stone pathway *(not handicap accessible)* to another garden with fire pit area, seating, honeysuckle, Icelandic poppies, coreopsis and a multitude of plants selected for their unique foliage. This home is a picturesque example of what can be done in 8 years of hard work with a relatively small yard.

This "***Mackinac Island Inspired***" home has been lovingly nurtured for 25 years. It was transformed from no landscape at all to a lush garden reflecting the charm of Mackinac Island. There are over 85 varieties of hostas, perennial geraniums, 3 different elderberry trees (Laced up, Black Lace and Lemony Lace), a unique (20' tall) slender sweet gum tree, coral bell, hydrangea, and a variety of colorful annuals. The owner grew up helping his uncles in their nurseries in Tennessee. At age 15, he built his own greenhouse and has been gardening since. The sloping grounds of this yard provide a gentle flow, further enhancing the graceful setting.

This "***Cottage Garden***" started 25 years ago with conscious decisions to keep the maintenance low. The owners started going down the natural path before it was the thing to do. They also wanted the natural elements to be featured: the lake, the creek and the dam, bringing in plants from their parent's homes. Peonies, hostas and Rose-a-Sharons are some of the plants that have survived all these years. Also Shasta daisies, cone flowers, Siberian iris, coreopsis, and black-eyed Susans to add continuous color from spring to fall, drawing bees and butterflies. Planting beds of ground covers were added in difficult planting areas. These beds feature goose neck loosestrife, pachysandra, and scented geranium. Lastly there is a hidden path that follows the creek. The area there is kept natural and provides a peaceful shaded walkway.

The "***Fun Restoration***" of this 1960 home has been the passion of their owners since they moved to Runyan Lake in 2021. They've lovingly crafted both formal and informal garden spaces to enhance the grounds including flower beds, boulder retaining wall, pots, fruit trees, and even a working

greenhouse. A laser-cut iron wall is the background against which gorgeous wisteria climb. The owners love to showcase their large canna variety in large pots throughout the property. A natural fence of hydrangea and roses flank the north side of the backyard all the way down to the lakeshore. At night, stunning moonflower bloom near the gazebo on the patio.

James A Bailey (i.e. Barnum & Bailey) built this gorgeous mansion in 1902 for his brother, Edward McGinnis. The current owners have spent the last 5 years restoring the grounds to do tribute to the Victorian era gardens of the 19th & 20th centuries. In addition to the front pathway flanked by rose bushes and boxwoods, the backyard reflects the "***Controlled Chaos***" of the homeowners. The backyard of the "McGinnis Mansion" features almost a dozen 4x4 raised bed gardens containing a multitude of vegetables and flowers. You won't want to miss this garden for its history, its architecture, and its unparalleled charm.

Come visit the gardens of this 1860 combination Greek revival and Italianate style mansion. The "***Formal square garden***" reflects the Italianate time period complete with a pond in the middle and formal statues representing the four seasons. Added in 1906, the wrap-around porch is decked out in red and white flowers with blue pots. There's an extensive coneflower bed, many hydrangea bushes and interesting trees. You'll find an antique carriage on the porch and an old fashioned sleigh decorated with flowers on the front lawn. In the back is the carriage house with a beautiful stone wall with pieces of it original to the building. Walk through the rock garden complete with a vintage outhouse used as a garden shed.

SUPPLEMENTAL: The following commercial properties are not on the formal Garden Tour, and will not be staffed by Garden Club members, but are within walking distance and provide beautiful settings to view if you have the time.

111 College…right between the two gardens above. ***Venue 111*** *provides the perfect setting, indoors and out. The outdoor space includes roses, hydrangea, shrubbery, climbing flowers and hundreds of plant species to enhance the setting for any event.*

204 S. Saginaw…Stop in at the ***Holly Café*** *between gardens or after the tour. Holly Café provides outdoor seating amidst dozens of rose plants, or you can eat inside the retro-decorated café. Menu items include sandwiches, breakfast items, coffee drinks or cocktails, homemade pastries, etc. Show this ticket for 10% off your meal (Alcoholic beverages excluded).*