



Growing Guru



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THE MANY BENEFITS OF PUBLIC GARDENS

Since childhood I was drawn to plants, most likely because of my botanist mom who helped me grow plants to raise funds for buying my first bicycle and who took me to public gardens around the country. Since moving to New England, I have had a chance to visit many public gardens, arboretums, and conservatories, but I still have many more on my bucket list to visit. The information that I provide here is to encourage everyone to explore the wealth of public gardens in New England, many of which are free. If you have a membership to a garden, you may be able to visit others for free or reduced admission (with possibly a 90-mile restriction). Check the American Horticultural Society's [Reciprocal Admissions Program](#) and this [full North American list by state](#) (PDF) to find over 345 gardens.

The Waltham Garden Club has added a [webpage](#) to our website to provide more information on public gardens, arboretums, and conservatories in New England. Please make additional suggestions.



Some benefits of public gardens, arboretums, and conservatories that came to my mind:

- inspiration for plants and how to grow them in my own garden
- beauty in unique presentations (and my appreciation for the garden maintenance required)
- positive effects on my physical and mental health (quiet relaxation and activity outdoors)
- opportunity to observe plants from local ecosystems and from around the globe
- appreciation and preservation of habitats for native species and their pollinators
- a place for education of gardeners, visitors, and researchers

Find [more benefits of visiting](#) botanical gardens and [what to pack](#) for your visit. Watch [Public Gardens in Today's World](#), a recent presentation given by William Cullina, Executive Director of the Morris Arboretum in Pennsylvania and formerly at Garden in the Woods and Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. He is also author and photographer for numerous excellent books on North American native plants.