



Hampshire all set to celebrate the “Year of the Garden” (Featuring the county’s “Top 10 Gardens”)

Less than 40 minutes from central London, Hampshire is embracing the ‘Year of the Garden’ in 2016, thanks largely to its associations with some of the greatest names in gardening history, including the Rothschilds' azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias at Exbury Gardens, the prized collections of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey...and even the stunning gardens of Downton Abbey!

The world famous woodland gardens of [Exbury](#) in the New Forest is the place where visitors come to smell the heady aromas and see the stunning colours of The Rothschild Collection as they burst into bloom in spring.

At the [Sir Harold Hillier](#) Gardens, meanwhile, there is an amazing displays of more than 42,000 different plants set within a 180-acres garden paradise, including a Bog Garden, Heather Garden, Hydrangea Walk, Himalayan Valley and Acer Valley - along with one of Europe’s largest Winter Gardens.

And it's the county where you can even walk in the footsteps of Lord and Lady Crawley, Lady Edith, Lady Mary and the staff below stairs at [Highclere Castle](#) - in the gardens near Newbury where the popular TV series Downton Abbey was filmed.

The 12th century priory setting of the National Trust’s [Mottisfont Abbey](#), near Romsey, is one of Hampshire’s best loved gardens is. People flock here every summer to see its stunning rose garden with an amazing variety of wonderfully perfumed roses in a range of vibrant colours and delicate hues. Equally popular is the Winter Garden at Mottisfont, as well as a riverside walk which takes you on a tranquil and tree-lined stroll along the banks of the River Test.

More intimate gardens in Hampshire, with a bigger story to tell, include the beautifully maintained gardens at [Jane Austen's](#) former home at Chawton; and the gardens at [Gilbert White's House](#) in Selborne which helps to introduce the world’s first ecologist to a steady flow of visitors.

Another of the county’s National Trust properties is [Hinton Ampner](#), which is best known for a garden widely acknowledged as a masterpiece of 20th century design. Set in superb Hampshire countryside, there are magnificent vistas across parkland and the South Downs. Highlights of the garden include the dell, a sunken garden with fine topiary, and the recently restored walled garden.

One of the gems in Hampshire’s gardening crown, meanwhile, is [West Green](#), near Hook - currently the home and passion of Australian born Marylyn Abbott, well known as a garden writer and designer. While the garden itself combines neo-classical style with flamboyant contemporary design, the restored Lake Field embraces one of England’s most eclectic collections of garden follies. A path leads from the serenity of the lake to the contemporary Garden of the Five Bridges crossed

by chinoisire inspired bridges. It then meanders through a woodland glade to the terraced Theatre Lawn. And in the Summer the garden becomes the backdrop for a season of Country House Opera and musical events

Special mention must also be made of one of the world finest water gardens which is opened 12 times a year to the public - [Longstock Park Water Garden](#) on John Lewis Partnership's world famous Leckfield Estate near Stockbridge; and [Lavender Fields](#) in Alton, where the fragrant fields epitomize "England at its finest".

To locate these, and other, gardens in Hampshire, visit <http://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions/statey-homes-and-gardens>.

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