

## **Carol Reese - UT Ornamental Horticulture Specialist Western Region**

An incomplete and opinionated list of “must see” gardens/landscapes: Be aware that there are many many more that I have not listed, and that may be as good or better.

Also, pay attention to local garden groups for educational events, and potential tours of private gardens. In the Memphis area, the Memphis Horticulture Society, the Mid-south Hydrangea Society, the Daffodil Society, the Herb Society and the Hosta Society are very active groups, and . Membership fees are money well spent for the detailed regional information they provide, and this money is often used to garner very good outside speakers for events. Plant sales and swaps are another advantage. Plant money is best spent on local gardening sources, including and especially the local botanic gardens, master gardener plant sales, plant society sales, such as the strong local chapter of the Daffodil Society, and the Midsouth Hydrangea Society. These plants will be regionally adapted whereas the plants on sale at big box stores may not be, plus do they really benefit your local community like these local groups?

Also, explore on your own. Take a leisurely drive through neighborhoods and take note of what you like or don't. Look at mistakes and overgrown plants, and maintenance nightmares. Check out attractive fencing, structures, creative parking and screening. Note trees and what happens under them such as mulching, plantings, bed shapes, etc. The older neighborhoods can give you a good feel for how time will affect your choices. If you are not shy, knock on a door to inquire about the landscape or a particular plant. The person answering is usually initially suspicious, but once your intentions are made clear, it often leads to a new friendship or even a new plant in hand from a rooted cutting or seedling.

## **Garden destinations in Tennessee:**

**UT Gardens in Jackson, Crossville and Knoxville** <https://ag.tennessee.edu/utg/Pages/history.aspx> All are open to the public any daylight hour 365 days a year. All differ because of regional adaptations but also age of gardens affects maturity and development. Knoxville was original, then Jackson, then Crossville. Visitors can usually find most plants are well labeled and visits are encouraged throughout the four seasons to view plants for interest year round.

Many public botanical gardens are usually open only certain hours or by fee or membership:

**Memphis:** Dixon Gardens, Memphis Botanic Garden, Lichterman Nature Center, Elmwood Cemetery, and don't forget the Cooper Young Event in May.

**Nashville:** Cheekwood Gardens, Centennial Park, many of the historic homes

**Knoxville:** UT Gardens a must, and Knoxville Botanical Garden is good.

## **Surrounding states:**

**Arkansas** - Garvan Woodland Gardens, Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, Crystal Bridges Trails and Grounds at Crystal Bridges Art Museum.

**Louisiana** – Longue Vue Gardens, Norton Gardens and Art Gallery in Shreveport, Gardens of the American Rose Center in Shreveport

**Mississippi** – MSU has trial gardens in Poplarville and Crystal Springs - Crosby Arboretum for native enthusiasts

**Georgia** – Atlanta Botanical Garden, Smith-Gilbert Garden, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, UGA campus and trial gardens, Gibbs Gardens, and Callaway Gardens

**Alabama**- Huntsville Botanic, Birmingham Botanical, Longleaf Botanical, Bellingrath, Mobile Botanical Garden and the Aldridge Gardens in Hoover

**Kentucky** - Yew Dell Gardens, Cave Hill Cemetery (a MUST for tree lovers), White Hall Gardens, the State Botanical Garden of KY, Western KY Botanical Garden and the Bernheim.

**South Carolina** – Many, many, but I feel I must mention the South Carolina Botanical Gardens for trial garden demonstrations and also a little gem of a garden that is open only by appointment, Moore Farms, designed by the unique Jenks Farmer. He also is instrumental for Riverbanks Botanical Garden among others.

**North Carolina**- The State Botanical Garden in Asheville is nice and of course, the Biltmore Estate is incredible albeit expensive. The Raleigh area however, is the real goldmine. The Raulston Arboretum is one of the top gardens in the country. Period. Be sure to include visits to Sarah P. Duke Gardens in Durham, though and the North Carolina Botanical Garden at Chapel Hill. Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is a gem, as is Paul J. Ceiner. I highly recommend two destination nurseries that also have display gardens, but visits must be arranged or on advertised open days to the public. Unique Gardens, and Juniper Level Botanic Garden, which is the display garden of Plant Delights Nursery. Plant shopping in this area reflects the diversity displayed at these gardens so be sure to allow time for shopping. If you run out of room in your vehicle, remember shipping is a viable option.

**Further afield**, and without much logic applied to geographical rhyme or reason:

Missouri Botanical Gardens is an incredible online resource and garden.

In Texas, the Dallas Arboretum, Shangri La, Fort Worth Botanical and Mercer, just to mention a few. San Antonio is a favorite of many just be aware that climate differences are so extreme that many of those plants may not be appropriate for your garden.

in Philadelphia PA, Longwood of course, the Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore and maybe my favorite garden of all time, the nearby Chanticleer.

In VA, the Ginter and the display gardens at Virginia Tech. Too much to see in DC area to list but the United States Botanical Garden needs to be mentioned, and for the all day perusal for plant geeks, the National Arboretum. If you like conifers, don't miss the Gotelli collection there.

Many many in New York but take note of the New York Botanical and Wave Hill.

In Ohio, the Cincinnati Zoo is a must see, but also put Spring Grove Cemetery as a must for tree lovers. Both it and the one mentioned in Kentucky, Cave Hill were started in the mid 1800's as memorial parks meant to be beautiful arboreta and grounds for families to visit and picnic alongside the graves of loved ones. Today, you will find magnificent specimens of venerable trees, many of which are state or national champions for their species. These are big, big cemeteries so get a map beforehand to chart your way around or take a guided tour. Beautiful small roads meander throughout, so go even if a lot of walking isn't your thing. Both are magical. Many old cemeteries are in fact good places to look for venerable trees. The Cleveland Botanic Garden another goodie, as is the Dawes.

Chicago Botanical Garden is fabulous and huge research trials ongoing and has much to see. The Morton Arboretum for the tree lovers.

The Minnesota arboretum is spectacular and creative.

Wisconsin, the Allen Centennial Gardens, the Madison Arboretum, Rotary Botanical Gardens.

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Many of the plant selections in the Northwest may not thrive here, but still, my memories of Heronswood (Seattle) and the inspiration it provided are priceless. If in that area, throughout Washington state and Oregon, you must explore the many great gardens and envy how well they can grow many conifers or different types of Japanese maples that are not as happy here in the south. Bellevue, Bioedel Reserve, Oregon Garden, are just a few.

As you see, this list could be endless. Maybe the best thing to do is try to network with garden groups in other regions and plan trips accordingly.