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Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Founded in 1984, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is located on 80 acres in Richmond, Virginia. A public place for the display and scientific study of plants, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is one of only two independent public botanical gardens in Virginia and has the designation of a state botanical garden.

THE GARDEN TODAY

Mission

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden provides education to the community about the plant world, promotes the best in horticulture and landscape design, and works toward the goal of being a leader in botanical and applied horticultural research.

Vision

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden will become one of the top ten public gardens in the U.S., known for the quality of its displays, facilities and programs.

The Gardens

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden offers year-round beauty on a historic property with more than 50 acres of spectacular gardens. **More than a dozen themed gardens** include a Healing Garden, Sunken Garden, Asian Valley, Rose Garden, a wetland garden, a Victorian garden, and a Children's Garden. A classical domed Conservatory is the only one of its kind in the mid-Atlantic with everchanging displays, orchids and tropical plants.

Facilities

The **Education and Library Complex** includes the **Joan Massey Conference Center**, the **Lora M. Robins Library**, and the **Charles F. Gillette Education Center** featuring classroom and laboratory space. The **E. Claiborne Robins Visitors Center** features the **Garden Shop**, **Garden Cafe**, meeting space and exhibits. The **Robins Tea House** restaurant serves lunch daily and overlooks the lake and the Garden. The **Conservatory** houses exotic and unusual plants from around the world. The **Children's Garden** provides a learning landscape with a wheelchair-accessible Tree House, Adventure Pathway, International Village and Water and Sand Play areas. The Garden also rents its facilities for special events and is a popular site for corporate events and weddings.

Hours

The Garden is open year-round with the exception of January 1, Thanksgiving Day, and December 24 & 25.

Visitors Center/Garden	Daily 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Garden Cafe	Daily 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Robins Tea House	Daily 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (closed some days in Jan. and Feb.)
Garden Shop	Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sun. 1-5 p.m.

The Garden has extended hours til 9 p.m. on Thursdays in April and in July, August and September.

Cost

There is no charge to enter the visitors center; however, there is an admission fee to enter the Garden. The cost is \$10 for adults, \$9 for senior citizens, and \$6 for children ages 3 through 12.

Special Events

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden hosts events throughout the year such as Plant Sales in the fall and spring, a Million Blooms throughout April, a Mother's Day Concert, the Groovin' in the Garden concert series and GardenFest of Lights.

Education

Adult programs range from "how-to" sessions to lectures by renowned garden experts. Children's programs are age-specific and meet Virginia Standards of Learning requirements.

Research

The Garden collects and cultivates plants from all over the world and maintains a botanical library and herbarium.

Facility Rental

The Garden is a popular setting for special events and meetings. Facilities for rent include the E. Claiborne Robins Visitors Center, the Joan Massey Conference Center, Bloemendaal House and the Robins Tea House. The Garden hosts over 400 weddings, private events and meetings annually.

Membership

Membership to the Garden is open to anyone. Currently the Garden has over 12,000 member households. For one low annual fee members can visit as often as they like and enjoy special benefits such as a 10 percent discount in the Garden Shop and the *Garden Times* newsletter. An individual membership is \$60 and a family membership is \$85.

Volunteers

Volunteers were instrumental in the development of the Garden and continue to play an important role. Approximately 600 people volunteer at the Garden.

Attendance

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is a top tourist destination in the Richmond area and typically ranks in the five most-visited Richmond attractions.

HISTORY

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is on property that was Powhatan Indian hunting ground and was once owned by Patrick Henry.

- 1884 Lewis Ginter bought the property and built the Lakeside Wheel Club, a one-story structure that was later modified and incorporated into Bloemendaal House. The Wheel Club was a destination for Richmond bicyclists.
- 1897 Lewis Ginter died at the age of 73.
- 1913 Grace Arents, Ginter's niece, bought the abandoned Lakeside Wheel Club. She remodeled the structure, adding a second story, and made it a convalescent home for sick children from the city.

Later with the founding of the Instructional Visiting Nurses Association, the convalescent home was no longer needed and Arents moved into the house with her companion, Mary Garland Smith. She called it Bloemendaal in tribute to the Ginter family's Dutch ancestors and developed gardens on the property. Bloemendaal means "valley of flowers."

- 1926 Grace Arents died at the age of 78. She willed life-rights to Smith and stipulated after Smith's death the city of Richmond was to develop the property as a botanical garden honoring Lewis Ginter.
- 1968 Mary Garland Smith died at the age of 100. The city of Richmond took possession of the property. The city investigated plans for a botanical garden but none of them came to fruition and the property languished.
- 1981 A group of botanists, horticulturists and interested citizens banded together to form the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Inc. to uphold the will of Arents. A lawsuit ensued.
- 1984 An amicable settlement allowed the formation of the Garden. The Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden was chartered by court decree.
- 1989 The Garden Club of Virginia restored the Grace Arents Garden as the first garden site of the new Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.
- 1993 The three-acre Henry M. Flagler Perennial Garden was completed and dedicated, a gift of the Flagler Foundation.
- The Robins Tea House was built and dedicated, a gift of E. Claiborne and Lora Robins.
- 1994-1995 The West Island Garden, Children's Garden, Lucy Payne Minor Garden, Margaret Johanna Streb Garden and the Cottage Garden were completed.

A GROWING GARDEN

On May 1, 1997, the Garden announced phase one of its capital campaign "A Growing Vision." In spring of 2004, the Garden completed its \$41 million Capital Campaign. Projects included:

Opened March 1999 Anne Holt Massey Greenhouses

Features: A fully automated, state-of-the-art growing and research facility used to produce plants from around the world.

Opened April 1999 E. Claiborne Robins Visitors Center

Size: 27,000 square feet

Features: Meeting facilities, gallery space for exhibits, a special entrance for group tours, an expanded Garden Shop, a Garden Cafe and other amenities for visitors.

Planted in 2000 Central Garden

Size: Three acres

Features: The area behind the visitors center is being developed into three acres of new gardens. Recent additions include a Four Seasons Garden, a Rose Belvedere, an arbor, a Healing Garden and a Sunken Garden.

Opened September 2002 Education and Library Complex

Features: A library, classrooms, and meeting facilities to serve children and adult education programs and garden-related organizations.

Opened March 2003 Conservatory

Features: This formal, classical building features year-round displays filled with colorful, rare and fascinating plants from around the world.

Opened September 2005 Children's Garden

Features: A learning landscape with a wheelchair-accessible Tree House, Adventure Pathway, International Village, and Sand and Water Play areas.

Opened May 2008 Rose Garden

Features: More than 1,800 stunning roses selected for fragrance, rebloom and disease resistance. The Rose Garden includes a meandering pathway allowing guests to be surrounded by scented blooms. A terraced lawn and stone pavilion make this a popular area for rentals and performances.