



WEST COUNTRY GARDENS

FEATURING THE RHS HAMPTON COURT
FLOWER FESTIVAL

JUNE 30TH - JULY 9TH 2020

Nowhere in the world is the passion for horticulture expressed more wholeheartedly than in Britain. For centuries, English gardens have been an inspiration for poets, painters, writers, and artists. From great country estates to the postage-stamp sized gardens of inner-city terraces, the British use their exceptionally long growing season to glorious advantage.

In addition to spending members-only day at the Royal Horticultural Society's premier summer show at Hampton Court, this is your invitation to see some of England's most famous gardens. Here, in the peak of the summer season, we'll visit the RHS showcase gardens at Wisley before heading down to England's

"West Country." From our base in the historic town of Taunton, we explore gardens great and small, from the grand estates of Montacute and Mapperton to the personal gardens of Anthony Young and Margery Fish.

Naturally, there are a host of other gorgeously blooming favorites along the way – the Savill Garden in Windsor, for example – and also a variety of non garden-related historic sites, from Glastonbury to Stonehenge. All at a relaxed pace with wonderful meals, first-class hotels, and the company of fellow gardening enthusiasts. Why not join us in the garden this summer?



THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): | \$4390 |
| SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: | \$ 980 |

Airfares are available from many US departure cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

HOTELS: 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges

COACHING: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary

MEALS: Breakfast daily, 1 tea, 4 dinners

GUIDES: Discover Europe tour guide throughout, local guides at Savill Garden, and Wisley

EXPENSES: Portage of one large suitcase per person

ENTRANCES: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

TICKETS: Full day entrance to the Hampton Court Flower Show, including membership in the Royal Horticultural Society

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.
Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.*

DISCOVER EUROPE LTD.
95 Adams Street
Keene, NH 03431
USA



e -info@discovereuropeltd.com
w - www.discovereuropeltd.com
t - (toll free) 866-563-7077
f - (fax) 603-563-7137



TUESDAY, JUNE 30TH - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1ST - Upon arrival at London's Heathrow Airport, you will be met and transported to our hotel in Royal Windsor. After time to unpack and relax, the rest of the day is free to unwind and recover from the overnight flight. In the afternoon your guide will conduct an orientation meeting and lead a short optional tour to points of local interest. This evening we gather for a welcome dinner at our hotel. **(D) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR**

THURSDAY, JULY 2ND - This morning we begin our horticultural adventures with a guided tour of Savill Garden. Created in 1930 by Sir Eric Savill, the Savill Garden is one of Britain's greatest ornamental gardens. We then visit the 240-acre flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural

Society at Wisley. This jewel in the crown of the RHS has been a living encyclopedia for gardeners for the past 100 years. We'll have free time for lunch on arrival and then tour the garden's highlights, with plenty of time to browse the Wisley store. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant in Windsor. **(B) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR**

FRIDAY, JULY 3RD - This morning, we drive down to the West Country. We'll break the journey to our hotel with a stop at the quintessentially English garden of Riddleys Cheer, just outside Bath. The owner, Anthony Young will show us around. July sees the climax of the 130 old-fashioned roses, species roses and ramblers, some cascading from the tops of trees. Upon arrival at our hotel, there will be time to unpack and rest up before we gather for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: TAUNTON**

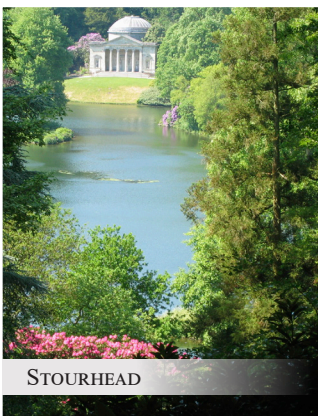
SATURDAY, JULY 4TH - A leisurely start this morning will take us first to nearby Montacute House. We'll have time to explore the formal gardens, visit the orangery and wander down the Lime Avenue, before we turn our attention to the inside of the house. This beautiful Elizabethan country home was featured recently in the BBC production of *Wolf Hall* and also houses a part of the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Heading north, we'll stop for lunch in Glastonbury, a town forever associated with the legend of King Arthur. We'll pay a visit to the Abbey before continuing on to Milton Lodge Gardens for a private guided tour and tea. We return to our hotel for free time to explore and find a local restaurant or pub for dinner. **(B, T) OVERNIGHT: TAUNTON**



MAPPERTON HOUSE

SUNDAY, JULY 5TH - Heading west to the border of the county of Devon, we visit the fabulous medieval house of Cothay Manor. Twelve acres of magical gardens surround the manor. Many garden rooms, each a garden in itself, are set off a 200 yard yew walk. In addition, there are fine trees, a cottage garden, courtyards, and a river walk; a true plantsman's paradise. The gardens have achieved the highest accolade of two stars in the Good Garden Guide and in June 2012 featured in the Daily Telegraph's "20 Best Gardens in Britain." This afternoon we pay a visit to Mapperton House, home of the Earl and Countess of Sandwich. The valley gardens at Mapperton reflect at least three periods of history. On the top level is the croquet lawn, where in dry weather the remains of a parterre, possibly 17th century, can be made out. On the next level is the Italianate garden laid out by Mrs. Ethel Labouchere in her husband's memory in the 1920s, complete with grottoes, stone ornamental birds, animals and fountains. An orangery was added by Victor Montagu in the late 1960s, the current Earl of Sandwich's father. Below the wall and summer house are fish ponds which lead to the wild garden with its wonderful specimen shrubs and trees. We return to Taunton for a free evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: TAUNTON**

MONDAY, JULY 6TH - Our first visit of the day is to Forde Abbey Gardens. Originally a Cistercian Monastery, today Forde Abbey is a private home with over 30 acres of award-winning gardens. We'll have a tour of the house and gardens. This afternoon, by way of contrast, we will be visiting the garden writer Margery Fish's archetypal cottage garden at East Lambrook. Margery Fish was the undisputed "Leading Lady of Gardening" from the 1950s and it was Margery's natural gift in bringing old-fashioned and contemporary plants together that has so dramatically influenced the way we garden today. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: TAUNTON**



STOURHEAD

TUESDAY, JULY 7TH - Heading back towards Windsor, we'll stop first in the village of Stourton, where we'll walk around the magnificent Stourhead Gardens, which surround a series of peaceful lakes in the middle of a 2,650-acre estate nestled among rolling hills. After lunch, we continue to the majestic and mysterious World Heritage site of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain, where we'll spend some time admiring the monument, and its brand new visitor facilities. From here we return to Windsor, where you will have time to freshen up before finding a restaurant for dinner. **(B) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8TH - This morning we leave our hotel by private coach for Hampton Court Palace, Henry VIII's magnificent Tudor home. We'll have a full day to spend at the Hampton Court Flower Show and an opportunity to explore the state apartments and the kitchens, with free time for lunch. Later in the afternoon, we'll return to our hotel with free time to relax before for gathering for our farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: WINDSOR**

THURSDAY, JULY 9TH - Morning transfer to London Heathrow Airport for return flights to the U.S. **(B)**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **T** - afternoon tea, **D** - dinner