NSCDA Gardens

Gardens Owned by the NSCDA

Entrusted With History's Future
NSCDA GARDENS
Wilton House Museum
1750
Richmond, VA

A landscape reflects the living synthesis of people and place, which is vital to local and national identity.
Gardens help define the self-image of a region, its sense of place that differentiates it from other regions.
A garden is the dynamic backdrop to people’s lives.
A garden is a PLANNED space.
It is a plot of land used for the cultivation of flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables.
It is an area set aside for the display, cultivation and enjoyment of plants, incorporating both natural and man-made elements and materials. The etymology of garden refers to enclosure.
Clarke House – 1840
Chicago, IL

The landscapes/gardens of our properties are as rich and diverse as our museum properties and collections.
Gardens/landscapes span the years from 1680-1930 and include the only Royal Palace in the United States.
Together, the architecture of our Museums, our Collections, landscapes and gardens give a broad interpretation of our American cultural history. Martin House Farm - an 18th and 19th c. farmhouse with barns and cultivated fields surrounded by stone walls and woodlands.
Mt. Clare
Baltimore, MD

Our landscapes include the grand Maryland plantation Mt. Clare. View of the entrance courtyard.
Andrew Low – 1848
Savannah, GA

Example of gardens in an urban townhouse.
Our landscapes tell the story of building a nation, and include a wide spectrum of nationalities and social classes—here a Mexican style u-shaped garden.
Ximinez-Fatio House
St Augustine, FL

The architecture and landscape reflect both the Spanish and English design principles.
Hotel de Paris - 1875
Georgetown, CO

In the courtyard are “Harrison’s” yellow roses thought to have been brought over by Welsh miners.
The Conde-Charlotte Museum tells the story of Mobile, Alabama’s earliest history.
The First Presbyterian Church – 1740
Wilmington, DE

Our properties include religious and public buildings. This gambrel roofed brick structure was the first Presbyterian church built in Wilmington overlooking the Brandywine River.
Another example of a public building was completed in 1713 within the original walls of Charles Towne. It is believed to be Carolinas’ oldest governmental building and one of the few surviving military structures associated with the American Revolution.
Colonial Garden Styles
Martin House Farm
Swansea, MA

There are 3 general categories: rural New England, townspeople and merchants’ gardens, and country estates and plantations. A good example of a New England landscape above. The gardens were functional, and situated around the house and surrounding buildings, such as coops and hayracks.
In the early 18th c. Edmund Quincy expanded the house and laid out lovely gardens. His son, Edmund IV, was an accomplished horticulturist who further developed the family farm into a series of gardens and orchards. Originally the farm covered 200 acres—now, 2 acres. Today there is an herb garden and an English style pleasure garden. Its prominent feature is the formal plan of boxwoods in parterres.
Typically in New England Colonial gardens, vegetables and herbs were grown in fenced in or protected areas often in raised beds for better drainage. Orchards and fields were where the soil and exposure were best; walkways linked the house to the gardens and surrounding buildings. Paths were gravel, crushed clam shells or compacted soil, depending on the location. Whitehall is surrounded by several acres of orchard and meadows marked by old stone walls with an herb garden showing examples of plants used in the 1730s.
Another good example of a New England Colonial landscape—utilitarian in nature and situated on a prominent knoll overlooking the Stroudwater and Fore Rivers. The rear of the house had terraced herb and flower raised beds; the front of the house overlooked the shipyard.
The gardens reflect the dedication of Alexander Hamilton Ladd, who laid out the gardens in the late 19th c. with features from the 1800s, including an English Damask Rose, and the enormous horse chestnut tree planted in 1776.
Governor Stephen Hopkins House - 1743
Providence, RI

The Colonial Revival-style parterre garden was designed by Alden Hopkins of Williamsburg fame. (Late March photo)
Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum
1752-1766-1789
Wethersfield, CT

A Colonial Revival garden based on Amy Cogswell’s 1921 garden design. Notice the design of linear paths and hedges surrounding the garden.
Colonial Revival Gardens

A garden design intended to “evoke the garden design typical of the Colonial Period.” It is typified by simple rectilinear beds, straight rather than winding pathways. The garden is generally enclosed by low walls, fences or hedges. The Colonial Revival gardening movement began in 1876 - The Colonial Revival gardens are “romanticized versions” of Colonial Gardens.
The Southern townspeople followed a similar format for their gardens. In the Colonial cities and towns, plots were constricted by streets and buildings, therefore a formal garden design worked well. On the left is the half-timbered Fourth House, it literally was the 4th house constructed in the Moravian village. The Moravians settled in NC in the 1750s by acquiring a 100,000 acre tract of land which they called Wachovia.
Herb & Kitchen Gardens

Bolduc House Museum
Sainte Genevieve, MO

Joel Lane
Raleigh, NC

Early American gardens generally had 2 separate gardens, the house plot or merestead (kitchen garden) for herbs, vegetables and flowers used everyday. The herbs were planted for cooking, medicinal and fragrance purposes. A stand alone herb garden was not common.
Mt. Clare
Baltimore, MD

In larger landscapes, the second garden was for large-scale crops and fruit trees.
Landscape architects, and historians, often refer to the “Colonial Period” for gardens as 1620-1840, as new ideas and new plant materials did not always reach various parts of the country in a timely fashion.
One of the best and earliest examples of American architecture in the historic French Quarter of New Orleans. The House and Garden reflect the prosperous lifestyle of the Creole families. Again, linear paths and raised beds are present.
As part of Dumbarton House’s efforts to interpret the historic house and grounds, a landscaping plan was adopted in late 2009 which, among other things, called for the creation of a historically-appropriate herb garden. Dumbarton House Advisory Committee member Guy Williams of DCA Landscape Architects, Inc., designed the garden and researched which plants would be appropriate for the recreation of a 19th-century herb garden. DCA Landscape Architects is an award-winning Georgetown-based firm which plans and executes projects ranging from small gardens to large-scale master planning and estate planning. Plants would fall under one or more of several general categories of use, ranging from culinary and medicinal to aromatic and economic. The result is a landscaped herb garden with over 40 different plants, herbs, and flowers which in the 18th and 19th centuries were used in everything from herbal teas to soaps and perfumes.
Andrew Low House 1848
Savannah, GA

Another fine example of an urban garden.
The piazzas, or porches, are shuttered, with a nod to the west Indian influence - a practice still used frequently in the south. Thomas Jefferson also used shutters at Monticello, and, in hot urban environments, they afford privacy and shade.
Gardens of Country Estates and Wealthy Land Owners

The third category of Colonial Garden styles are the gardens of wealthy landowners and country estates. These gardens were a combination of both naturalistic and formal garden designs and often employed newer gardening ideas.
Many of the landscapes and gardens have been restored through historical research and archaeological work. At Gunston, archaeological evidence has revealed the existence of a double allee approaching the house, which narrowed to create an illusion of greater distance. There are formal gardens, a deer park and farmyard.
Originally it was the center of a 2,000 acre tobacco plantation. Arthur Shurcliffe, a Colonial Revival landscape Architect, designed the grounds (Shurcliffe was famous for many gardens at Colonial Williamsburg.) This was an early project of the Garden Club of VA, completed in the 1930s. The rear lawn is terraced overlooking the James River.
Here there are geometric beds with 18th c. culinary and medicinal herbs outlined with dwarf boxwoods, a pair of horse chestnut and other commemorative trees. Van Cortlandt was the first Museum Property under the auspices of the NSCDA to open to the Public in 1897.
Kent Plantation House
Alexandria, LA

Another Colonial Revival garden that is part of a country estate. This is the parterre garden.
Originally built by the botanist, James Logan, in the 1720s, it evolved into an early Georgian brick mansion. James Logan was recognized by his experiments and findings on the reproduction of maize. He tutored John Bartram, the American botanist, horticulturist and explorer, and introduced him to the well known Swedish botanist, Linnaeus.
When the Manor was purchased/saved in the early 20th c., all traces of the original gardens/landscape no longer remained. Plot by plot, bed by bed, the garden restoration continues. This is the sundial in the Rose Garden.
Hemerocallis ‘Colonial Dame’

The registrar’s name was Milliken in 1947. Flower- 6”, light orange yellow with apricot eyezone, described as elegant.
‘Colonial Dame’ Camellia

It is no longer available commercially and has been in danger of being “lost.” Fortunately, through the efforts of MAGNOLIA PLANTATION’S initiative to “rescue antique and disappearing camellias”, as well as a team of Dames to locate specimens; it is now being propagated privately and commercially. It was registered by Tick Tock nursery of Thomasville, GA in 1955.
The cultural landscape reveals the visible human imprint of activity on the land. The NSCDA has been at the forefront of the historic preservation movement in this country- The 44 Corporate Societies and over 15,000 members, have played and continue to play an important role in saving, restoring, interpreting and maintaining America’s historical landscape, which includes open lands and gardens.