



International Garden and Flower Shows

Learn about some of the world's best flower and garden shows.

By Jessica Walliser

U.S. Garden and Flower Shows

Read Jessica Walliser's article describing some of the best garden and flower shows in the United States. Read more Gardening fanatics who have been bitten by the travel bug will take great pleasure in visiting an international flower and garden show.

Found all around the world, these shows promise: A touch of the unusual with plenty of 'up-and-coming' recently introduced plants.

A taste of high-style garden design, a plethora of educational opportunities.

And a spirit of adventure.

Shows to Add to Your Travel Itinerary

There are scores of international garden expos, each with their own personality and each chock full of reasons to plan a visit.

A staple of British history, garden shows got their start across the pond and provided the inspiration and foundation for many of the U.S. shows.

There are several spectacular shows held there each year and each is well worth the trip.

ENGLAND

Shrewsbury Flower Show: August 15 & 16

Operating since July of 1875, Britain's Shrewsbury Flower Show holds the Guinness World Record for being the world's longest running flower show. With an expected attendance of around 75,000 visitors, the show runs for only two days and showcases over 3 million blooms. This year's show will be held on August 15 and 16 in Shrewsbury's 29-acre Quarry Park. It boasts horse jumping, entertainment and fireworks in addition to its amazing horticultural exhibits.

Chelsea Flower Show: May 20-24

The Chelsea Flower Show is without a doubt the world's most famous flower show. Held for five days each May on the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London, the Chelsea Flower Show is run by Britain's Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and features over 20 show gardens created by designers from across the globe.

This year's event runs from May 20 to 24; attendance at the 11-acre site is expected to number more than 150,000. Chelsea is famous for all the right reasons: dramatic blooms, designs to die for, and plenty of gardening inspiration.

Hampton Court Palace Flower Show: July 8-13

Another RHS event is the breathtaking Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, held July 8 through 13 at the Hampton Court Palace in Surrey, England. Hampton Court is known for its beautiful location and is one of the largest annual flower shows in the world with over 50 display gardens in place.

AUSTRALIA

Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show: April 2-6

For yet another magnificent gardening expo, head to Australia. The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show is the largest such event in the southern hemisphere and has been taking place for 13 years.

The 2008 show runs April 2 through 6 and is held in the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens in Melbourne,



Australia. The location itself is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and event organizers work hard to blend the site's historical importance and beauty to the show's theme and mission.

Visitors can expect to be awed by the designs of cutting edge floral and landscape design professionals.

CHINA

The Hong Kong Flower Expo: March 14-24

Held annually in Victoria Park, the Hong Kong Flower Expo can draw more than a half million visitors. From March 14 to 24, show guests can view stunning landscape displays, unusual potted plants and cultural performances.

Visitors can also participate in plant-care clinics and floral art demonstrations as well as guided walks and children's programs. Designed to instill visitors with an appreciation of horticulture, the Hong Kong Flower Expo features exhibitors from over 20 countries specializing in just about everything related to growing.

HOLLAND

Floriade: In 2012, April-November

And for a truly dramatic affair, head to Holland. Every 10 years since 1960, The Netherlands has hosted Floriade, a unique flower show that changes locations with each occurrence.

The 2012 show will be set among the varied landscape of the sand dunes and oak and birch forests of GreenPark, located in the Venlo district of Holland. Covering 90 acres of exhibit area and hosting over 100 exhibitors, Floriade expects more than 2 million visitors during its April to November run.

This show is truly beyond compare and boasts literally millions and millions of blooms. Make your travel plans early and consider joining a group tour for a full "behind-the-scenes" exploration of this extraordinary show.

CANADA

The Vancouver Sun Garden Show: All of June

A Canadian show offers an international flower show experience a little closer to home. The Vancouver Sun Garden Show is held each year on the grounds of the VanDusen Botanical Garden in Vancouver, British Columbia each June. Offering exhibitors, educational programs, contests and displays, it's the largest outdoor garden show in North America and focuses on new and exciting ideas and designs.

Tips for Visiting International Shows

Here are a few things to keep in mind when visiting an international garden show.

Take Notes, Not Plants

First and foremost, there will be lots and lots of plants for sale, but bringing them back to the U.S. without the proper permits is not allowed. So take plenty of notes and plan on buying any desired plants after you are back at home.

Re-Pack Carefully

Of course bringing back pruners, grafting knives or other purchased gardening equipment, will require you packing them into your checked bags, not your carry-on.

Take Your Time ...

And be considerate of your travel companions.

The shows listed above are quite extensive and some require at least one full day to really "see" them.

Travel with a fellow gardener and plan to spend some time touring the shows apart from each other. Not everyone explores at the same pace and each gardener will appreciate something different.

About the Author: Horticulturalist Jessica Walliser can be heard every Saturday from 12 to 2 p.m. EST on Sirius satellite radio channel 114, where she co-hosts "The Organic Gardeners."

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