

# Welcome to Gatwick

Discover what's on our doorstep

RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey




## AMAZING GARDENS

### 9 amazing gardens near Gatwick Airport

Some of Britain's most magnificent gardens flourish in the counties around the airport. Step off the plane and wander through spectacular botanic gardens, classic English country gardens and ancient woodland carpeted in bluebells. There's something different to see every month of the year.

Here are 9 amazing gardens to discover near Gatwick.

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YOUR LONDON AIRPORT  
*Gatwick*


#### 1. RHS Garden Wisley, Surrey

The historic home of the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society counts among the greatest gardens in the world. Wisley's 97 hectares (240 acres) house one of the planet's largest plant collections and it's easy to while away a pleasant day wandering through the garden's distinct areas.

In spring, drift through blousy displays of rhododendrons, camelias, magnolias and hydrangeas on Battleston Hill. Make a beeline for the celebrated Mixed Borders and delicately scented delights of the Bowes-Lyon Rose Garden in summer. Walk beneath centuries-old trees flushed with colour in autumn, and step into the jungle-like Glasshouse when the temperatures drop in winter. You're guaranteed to leave feeling inspired, so allow time to browse the plant centre in the new Welcome building, which also has a restaurant, café and shop.

 **Website:** [www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley](http://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley)

 **Open:** Year-round excluding Christmas Day.


 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** RHS Wisley is 25 miles (40km) northwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 40 mins by road, or 1 hour by rail to Woking station, then a 20-min taxi.


#### 2. Nymans, West Sussex

There's something incurably romantic about Nymans. You can't fail to be moved by the wisteria-draped ruins, the result of a terrible fire in 1947. The 1920s rose garden, scented by 600 rose bushes, is a dream to stroll through – as are the adjoining woodlands carpeted with wildflowers.

This is a garden to lose yourself in. There's a delight around every corner, from tree-lined avenues to azalea-framed vistas of the Sussex Weald countryside beyond. It's all thanks to three generations of the Messels, a family of plant hunters, botanists and designers who filled their beloved Nymans with heritage collections and exotic species from around the world.

 **Website:** [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans)

 **Open:** Garden and café year-round, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.


 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Nymans is 10 miles (15km) south of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 15 mins by road.

#### 3. Wakehurst, West Sussex

The further you venture from the Elizabethan mansion at the heart of Wakefield, the wilder the botanical garden becomes. Ornamental gardens give way to the Himalayan Glade, woodland and the Loder Valley Nature Reserve populated by dormice, kingfishers, butterflies and 300 different plant species. In total, there are 200 hectares (500 acres) filled with plants from around the world so wear sturdy shoes if you plan to see it all!

Explore underground at the Millennium Seed Bank, where you can learn about Wakehurst's mission to conserve 25% of the world's plant species. There's also a thriving calendar of events and exhibitions, from badger watching evenings and willow weaving workshops to daily guided walking tours and afternoon teas in the Elizabethan Mansion.

 **Websites:** [www.kew.org/wakehurst](http://www.kew.org/wakehurst) [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wakehurst](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wakehurst)

 **Open:** Year-round, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Wakehurst is 10 miles (15km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 15 mins by road, or 15 mins by rail to Haywards Heath station then a 10-min taxi, or 5 mins by rail to Three Bridges station then a 25-min bus.

#### 4. Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Kent

It's hard to believe that dreamy Sissinghurst Castle Garden was once a Saxon pig farm. Over its long history, the site has been a prison for thousands of French sailors, a poor house and a profitable farm. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that influential literary couple Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson transformed the garden into the romantic place you see today.

The poetic garden is a perfect blend of Harold's keenness for formal geometry and Vita's vision of a 'tumble of roses and honeysuckle, figs and vines'. Depending on the time of year, you'll see irises, long beds of tulips, Kentish cobnuts and bright yellow azaleas. Book well ahead to explore the intimate South Cottage where Harold wrote and Vita cared for plants. Vita's writing room was in the Tower – climb to the top for panoramic views across the garden's sea of flowers, wider estate and beyond.

 **Website:** [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden)

**Open:** Year-round, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

**Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Sissinghurst Castle Garden is 50 miles (80km) east of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 1 hour by road.


#### 5. Pashley Manor Gardens, East Sussex

On the undulating Kent-Sussex border, Pashley is the model English country garden. There are colourful borders wrapped around immaculate lawns, willows draped over ponds, and a wisteria-draped manor house as the backdrop.

The garden is best known for its exuberant tulips, roses and dahlias – and there are annual festivals to celebrate each bloom. Walk through the garden 'rooms', each carefully themed around a colour. Many of the sculptures you'll come across are for sale. The ancient Kitchen Garden supplies the café – speaking of which, a cream tea feels like the perfect accompaniment to the timeless garden views!

 **Website:** [www.pashleymanorgardens.com](http://www.pashleymanorgardens.com)

 **Open:** Tuesday – Saturday, April – September. Limited dates in October.

 **Getting there from Gatwick airport:** Pashley Manor Gardens is 25 miles (40km) east of Gatwick. Travel time is approximately 1 hour by road.

#### 6. Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex

Herstmonceux's red-brick, 15th-century moated castle is a fairytale backdrop to its formal gardens. The castle itself is now an international study centre for Canada's Queen's University; limited tours of the castle are available, but the equally amazing themed gardens are more freely open to the public.

The raised concrete beds of the Apothecary Garden are filled with medicinal and culinary plants, and answers to questions such as 'how did Indian tiger



ON THE KENT-SUSSEX  
BORDER, PASHLEY IS  
THE MODEL ENGLISH  
COUNTRY GARDEN



## 9. Winkworth Arboretum, Surrey Hills

We've got Dr Wilfrid Fox to thank for this striking hillside arboretum. The dermatologist bought the land in Thorncombe valley in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, intending to experiment with the slopes' autumnal colour palette. He planted maples, oaks, liquidambers, azaleas and cherries – all species known for their remarkable autumn foliage. Since then, the National Trust has grown the arboretum into an internationally significant collection of more than 1,000 species of trees and shrubs.

Autumn may seem the obvious time to visit Winkworth, but there's something to see all year round. Magnolias, flowering crab-apples and swathes of bluebells flourish in spring. In summer, bugs zig-zag lazily over the lake and hills are blanketed with lush greenery. Curious witch hazel flowers brighten the colder months. Join one of the seasonal guided walks and workshops.

[Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/winkworth-arboretum](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/winkworth-arboretum)

[Open:](#) Year-round, excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

[Getting there from Gatwick airport:](#) Winkworth Arboretum is 25 (40km) miles west of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 50 mins by road, or 1 hour by rail to Godalming station then a 10-min taxi.

## OUR PARTNERS:

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### Surrey

[www.visitsurrey.com](https://www.visitsurrey.com)

### South Downs National Park

[www.southdowns.gov.uk](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk)

### Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

[www.surreyhill.org](https://www.surreyhill.org)

### West Sussex

[www.experiencesussex.com](https://www.experiencesussex.com)

### West Kent

[www.visitsevenoaksdistrict.co.uk/see-and-do](https://www.visitsevenoaksdistrict.co.uk/see-and-do)

### East Sussex

[www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/east-sussex](https://www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/east-sussex)

The information in this guide is intended to assist visitors in choosing suitable places to visit. Information has been curated and produced by the Gateway Gatwick Group in good faith. Details were correct at time of going to press (July 2019). Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information shown in this publication, the Gateway Gatwick Group does not accept responsibility or liability for any of the claims made nor the information stated, especially opening times and dates.

The project was produced and funded by the Gateway Gatwick Group. A tourism partnership designed to support the local visitor economy around Gatwick Airport. Contributing partners include: Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Coast to Capital, East Sussex County Council, Gatwick Airport, Gatwick Diamond Initiative, Experience West Sussex Partnership, Rural West Sussex Partnership, West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council), South Downs National Park Authority and Surrey Hills AONB and Enterprises.

Thank you to all that provided photos, in particular: Nymans – Lisa Davies

grass get its name?' If you've got more questions about Shakespeare, wander through the garden themed on England's most famous playwright. It's planted with trees, shrubs and flowers mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. There are also 300-year-old trees along the Chestnut Avenue, ancient bluebell woodland and falconry experiences to discover.

[Website: www.herstmonceux-castle.com](https://www.herstmonceux-castle.com)

[Open:](#) April – October, weekends only from mid-February.

[Getting there from Gatwick airport:](#) Herstmonceux Castle is 40 miles (65km) southeast of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour 10 mins by road, or 45 mins by rail to Polegate station then a 15-min taxi.

## 7. Leonardslee Lake & Gardens, West Sussex

Leonardslee is one of the finest Victorian woodland gardens in the country. Filled with rare and endangered species, the 95-hectare (240-acre) estate is especially magnificent in spring when the rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, magnolias and bluebells erupt in kaleidoscopic colour.

Look out for huge carp glinting in the seven ponds, deer roaming the estate – and the colony of wallabies that was first introduced by Sir Edmund Loder, a collector of rare wild animals who owned the estate from 1889 until 1920. The Dolls House Museum is a dizzyingly detailed miniature recreation of the Edwardian estate. For a truly English experience, take afternoon tea in the drawing room of the Italianate mansion as you admire views to the South Downs.

[Website: www.leonardsleegardens.co.uk](https://www.leonardsleegardens.co.uk)

LEONARDSLEE IS ONE OF THE FINEST VICTORIAN WOODLAND GARDENS IN THE COUNTRY

[Open:](#) Year-round excluding Christmas Day.

[Getting there from Gatwick airport:](#) Leonardslee Lakes and Garden is 10 miles (15km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 20 mins by road, or 20 mins by rail to Horsham station then a 10-min taxi.

## 8. West Dean Gardens, West Sussex

There have been gardens on this site since 1622, but it's the 19th-century gardens that have been boldly restored to the 21st century. Explore working Victorian glasshouses, a Walled Kitchen Garden plump with gooseberries, rhubarb and globe artichokes, and paths through parkland and the arboretum.

Highlights include the 100 metre (330ft) long Edwardian pergola, heady with the fragrance of magnolia, wisteria, clematis, rose and honeysuckle; look for horse molars embedded in the mosaic floor of the gazebo at its west end. Nearby is an award-winning sunken garden, frothy with purple alliums and pink roses; it's a contrast to the expansive lawns beyond. Take it all in over a glass of wine on the restaurant's terrace.

[Website: www.westdean.org.uk/gardens](https://www.westdean.org.uk/gardens)

[Open:](#) February – December.

[Getting there from Gatwick airport:](#) West Dean Gardens is 40 miles (65km) southwest of Gatwick. Travel times are approximately 1 hour by road, or 1 hour by rail to Chichester station then a 10-min taxi, or a 20-min bus.