

## Autumnal garden delights in every corner of Somerset

Autumn – ‘the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’, as the poet John Keats famously quoted, is a fantastic time to visit South Somerset. The apple orchards are rich with the smell of ripening fruit and the tang of fermenting cider. The mist hangs low over the Levels and the weather is often kind. It is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy South Somerset’s numerous gardens open to the public. Look out for Halloween events that may be taking place too. We recommend checking individual websites for opening times, accessibility information, whether sites are dog friendly, and latest events. You may also be able to use your RHS membership card on certain days.

### National Trust gardens are in abundance

In South Somerset, we are fortunate in having no less than four outstanding NT properties within half an hour’s drive of each other. Every NT garden offers a unique horticultural interpretation and is usually complemented by a tea room for welcome refreshment and a gift shop.

Stroll along the impressive main drive leading up to **Montacute House**, with its Elizabethan formal gardens, orangery, crinkly-crankly yew hedge, fountain, and walled formal gardens. The magnificent tree-filled parkland is a good place to walk your dog (on leads please).



**Middle Street, Montacute TA15 6XP**

**T: 01935 823289, [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/montacute-house](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/montacute-house)**

Enter **Barrington Court** grounds via its iconic apple orchard and over a small moat to enjoy a variety of borders and beds which were designed by renowned plantswoman Gertrude Jekyll. Famous for her White Garden, Jekyll used her skills to create different ‘rooms’ of colour for year-round interest and these have been faithfully maintained by the current gardening team. Make your way down a tree lined avenue to the popular Book Barn and other local craft workshops.

**Barrington, TA19 ONP, T: 01460 241938, [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/barrington-court](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/barrington-court)**

For peace and tranquility, **Tintinhull Garden** is a delight for anyone seeking a quiet refuge on a busy day. Small, neat walled gardens open out to an ornate long, reflective pond, complete with water lilies. Through a gate is a small arboretum that provides a circular walk.

**Farm Street, Tintinhull, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8PZ, T: 01458224471  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tintinhull-garden](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tintinhull-garden)**

**Lytes Cary** is different yet again. The ancient house is surrounded by beautifully laid out, manicured, formal gardens. There are also splendid circular waymarked walks with views around the edge of the estate.

**Near Somerton, Somerset, TA11 7HU, T: 01458 224471**

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lytes-cary-manor](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lytes-cary-manor)

### **Discover unusual blooms and wild beauty...**

To the east of the District, there are two unusual gardens of note. The gallery/art centre at **Hauser and Wirth** is open to the public and boasts an amazing, futuristic prairie garden, realised by Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf. Enjoy lunch at the Roth Bar & Grill.



Credit: Hauser & Wirth

**Durslade Farm, Dropping Lane, Bruton BA10 0NL, T: 01749 814060**

[www.hauserwirth.com/locations/10068-hauser-wirth-somerset/](http://www.hauserwirth.com/locations/10068-hauser-wirth-somerset/)

Nearby, on the road to Castle Cary, is **The Newt**. The extensive gardens and woodlands on the estate date back nearly 200 years and have been successively reinvented by extraordinary garden designers. The centrepiece is a walled garden concealing an apple tree maze. Explore themed gardens, bees and gardening exhibits, an extraordinary Roman Villa, and a deer park. Unlike at Hauser and Wirth, there is a joining fee, but once you are a member you have unlimited access for a year. In addition to a farm shop and café, there is also a garden restaurant but book in advance to avoid disappointment.

**Near Bruton BA7 7NG, T: 01963 577750**

[www.thenewtinsomerset.com](http://www.thenewtinsomerset.com)

**East Lambrook** is arguably it is at its best in early Spring, but it's always worth a trip to see the Manor Gardens 'a grand cottage garden on a domestic scale'. Designed by celebrated gardener and gardening writer Margery Fish, there is a good plant nursery offering a wide selection of herbaceous and perennial plants for sale.

**East Lambrook Manor Gardens, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5HH, T: 01460 240328**  
[www.eastlambrook.com](http://www.eastlambrook.com)

With the cathedral as the stunning backdrop, the fine **Bishops Palace Gardens** in Wells are not to be missed. Wander around the many herbaceous borders, admire the beautiful views of the gardens, moat, and further afield from the top of the ramparts, meander through the Arboretum. Admire the reflection of the cathedral in one of the well pools, and enjoy the contemporary Garden of Reflection. There is a rare plant fair in September.

**The Bishop's Palace Gardens, Wells, BA5 2PD, T: 01749 988111,**  
[www.bishopspalace.org.uk](http://www.bishopspalace.org.uk)

Approximately five miles from Chard, **Forde Abbey** embraces the spirit of Halloween with its annual pumpkin rolling event – popular with adults and children alike. The gardens and grounds are full of well-established trees that offer a feast for the eyes with their autumnal colours. Don't miss the 160ft fountain which, on sunny days, shimmers with rainbows. You'll find plants and gifts for sale too.



**Forde Abbey House and Gardens,**  
**Chard, TA20 4LU, T: 01460 220231** [www.fordeabbey.co.uk](http://www.fordeabbey.co.uk)

Credit: Forde Abbey

Situated on the outskirts of Taunton, **Hestercombe House and Gardens** offers Autumn 'fungal forays' amongst other activities for all ages in its extensive grounds. Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll were both involved in designing the Edwardian garden but you will also find Victorian and Georgian styles on show. A café/restaurant is on hand to offer lunches and teas. There is also a gallery in the house.

**Hestercombe Gardens, Cheddon Fitzpaine Taunton TA2 8LG, T: 01823 413923**  
[www.hestercombe.com](http://www.hestercombe.com)

Lying within the grounds of a medieval priory, **The Walled Gardens at Cannington** near Bridgwater are attached to Bridgwater College so serve both as a wonderful place to visit but also as a training resource for budding gardeners. A wide variety of planting schemes are laid out and there is a large greenhouse full of exotic and tropical plants. A small café provides refreshments.

**Church Street, Bridgwater TA5 2HA, T: 01278655042**

**[www.btc.ac.uk](http://www.btc.ac.uk)**

On a final note, it's always worth checking to see if any local **National Gardens Scheme (NGS)** gardens are open in the Autumn. There are many of them in Somerset and all of them are full of inspirational ideas for gardens, big and small. **[www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)**

**Don't forget to share your garden adventures with us when you are out and about by tagging us on our social channels with #visitsouthsomerset**

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TWITTER@VisitSSomerset**