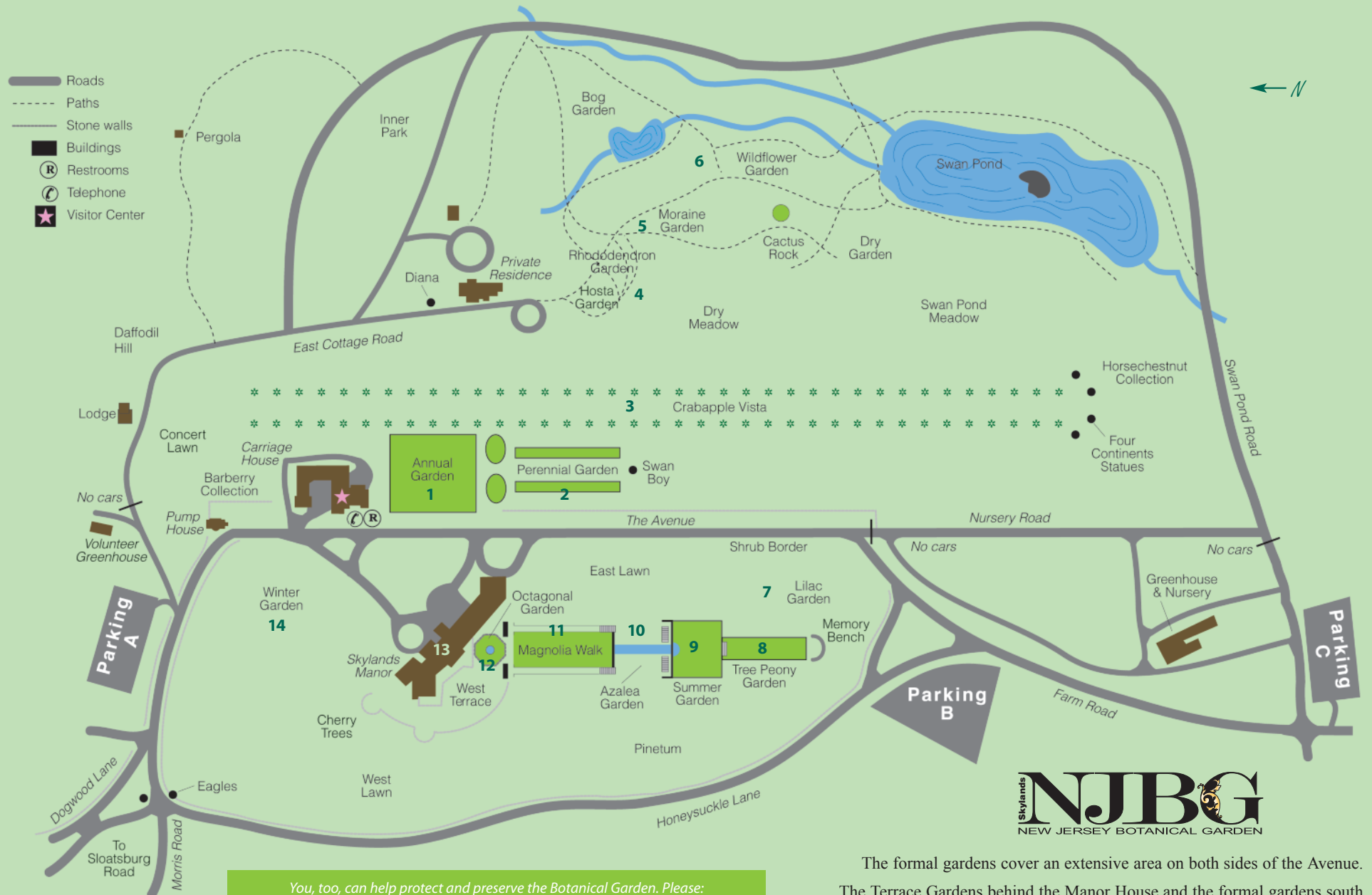


The New Jersey State Botanical Garden at Skylands



You, too, can help protect and preserve the Botanical Garden. Please:
NO BALLS, FRISBEES OR LAWN GAMES • NO PICNICS • NO PETS
 Skylands is a carry-in, carry-out State Park facility.
 Please carry your trash back out with you and dispose of it properly.

The formal gardens cover an extensive area on both sides of the Avenue. The Terrace Gardens behind the Manor House and the formal gardens south of the Carriage House Visitor Center offer an easy and delightful walk. Hiking trails on the perimeter are marked by standard trail blazes. Please do not venture onto marked hiking trails without a trail map.

Self-Guiding Tour

New Jersey State
BOTANICAL GARDEN
 Ringwood State Park



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
 Department of Environmental Protection
 Division of Parks and Forestry
 State Park Service



Welcome to Skylands!

You're about to discover the Garden State's hidden jewel.

From the delicate shades of a tiny wildflower to the vibrant colors of massed annual plantings, Skylands is a place of beauty in any season.

Here you can wander amid the elegance of formal gardens, or along gentle paths winding through the woods.

Skylands is also a safe haven for unusual plant species from around the world. The garden protects and preserves these plants as their natural habitats are changed forever by progress.

Enjoy your visit to Skylands, the New Jersey State Botanical Garden.



The Carriage House Visitor Center



The Pump House

The Garden of the Garden State



The NJBG/Skylands Association is a member-supported non-profit organization of volunteers founded in 1976 to help the State of New Jersey preserve and restore the gardens and Manor House, and to develop programs for public education and enjoyment throughout the year.

Volunteers are always welcome.

973-962-9534

NJBG/Skylands Association
 P. O. Box 302 • Ringwood, NJ 07456

njbg.org



For more information:

Ringwood State Park
 1304 Sloatsburg Road
 Ringwood, NJ 07456
 973-962-7031

This brochure is made possible through your generous donations to the NJBG/Skylands Association. No tax dollars have been used.



Skylands History

The New Jersey State Botanical Garden is the heartland of a property that Francis Lynde Stetson (1846-1920) assembled from pioneer farmsteads here in the Ramapo Mountains. Stetson named his country estate “Skylands Farms” and maintained a stylish mansion of native granite, a working farm with more than thirty outbuildings, gardens and a vast lawn that also served as a nine-hole golf course. A prominent New York lawyer, incorporator of railroads and the U.S. Steel Corporation, he entertained such friends as Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, Ethel Barrymore and J.P. Morgan here at Skylands. He was a trustee of the New York Botanical Garden and chose Samuel Parsons, Jr., a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted, to lay out his estate.

Parsons, founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects and New York City parks commissioner, designed the grounds, drainage systems and roads. He later used photos of his Skylands work, including Swan Pond, to illustrate his book, *The Art of Landscape Architecture, Its Development and Its Application to Modern Landscape Gardening*, a definitive text (1915).

Skylands was sold in 1922 to Clarence McKenzie Lewis (1877-1959), an investment banker and also a trustee of the New York Botanical Garden. When Mr. Lewis purchased the property, he set out to make it a botanical showplace. The Stetson house was torn down, and the current Tudor mansion of native granite was built on the site.

Lewis engaged the most prominent landscape architects of his day, the firm of Vitale and Geiffert, to design the gardens around his new summer home. Feruccio Vitale (1875-1933), who specialized in private estates, included among his clients John Wanamaker. Alfred Geiffert (1890-1957) designed Rockefeller Center, the grounds of Princeton University, and the National Gallery of Art. Photos of their work illustrate an Encyclopedia Britannica article on landscape architecture.

Most of the trees now framing the house were planted at that time, including the magnificent copper beeches. Lewis stressed symmetry, color, texture, form and fragrance in his gardens. He wanted to appeal to the senses. For thirty years, Lewis collected plants from all over the world and from New Jersey roadsides. The result is one of the finest collections of plants in the state. Lewis had over 60 gardeners working in peak seasons.

In 1966, New Jersey purchased the 1,117 acres of Skylands from Shelton College, which had used it as a campus. The Honorable Robert Roe, then commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development, said, “I regard the preservation of this area of the state as essential and a foremost opportunity to meet the Green Acres objectives.” The Skylands Garden was the first property purchased under the Green Acres program. In March 1984, Governor Thomas Kean designated the central 96 acres surrounding the manor house as the State’s official botanical garden. It has been placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

1 Annual Garden

Like that in all the formal gardens at Skylands, the layout of this garden has not been changed from the original design. It is the only garden at Skylands in which the main plantings are annuals. The displays in this garden therefore change not only through the seasons, but also from year to year. Note the small Four Seasons statues in the corners, and the Fawns which anchor the Ovals. Some of the benches here and in other parts of the garden were given by NJBG/Skylands Association.



2 Perennial Border

NJBG volunteers have restored this area to Mr. Lewis’s original design. Here you will see a colorful floral display which changes with the seasons. This garden requires intensive cultivation.



3 Crabapple Vista

We have come to one of Skylands’ most spectacular attractions, the Crabapple Vista. In early May, a profusion of pink blossoms stretches a half mile up the gentle slope to the Lodge.

At the south end of the Vista is the horse-chestnut collection, and to the east is Swan Pond and the Meadow, a field for moisture-loving plants such as Flag Iris, as well as some of Skylands’ many varieties of willow. Higher parts of the meadow contain nut trees. The Vista marks the boundary between formal gardens to the west, near the manor house, and the informal and Wildflower gardens to the east, at the foot of Mount Defiance here in the Ramapo Mountains.

Along the eastern edge of the meadow note the planet signs for NJBG’s scale model Solar System, which stretches the length of the Vista. On this scale, the Earth is the size of a peppercorn.

4 Hosta/Rhododendron Garden

The fenced-in Rhododendron Garden also contains a large collection of hostas. These range in size from miniature to giant and sport various shades of blue, green, and yellow-gold foliage, along with white and gold variegations. Surrounding them is a splendid collection of mature rhododendrons and azaleas. This garden is at its best in late May and June.



5 Moraine Garden

New Jersey is home to many moraines, deposits of rock left behind by melting glaciers at the end of the last Ice Age. Mr. Lewis created this garden of mostly ground-hugging alpines which thrive on rocky slopes with water seeping beneath. Look for heather, sedums, gentians, dwarf conifers, and many low creeping plants.



6 Wildflower Garden

Winding wooded trails, stepping stone bridges and a frog-friendly Bog Pond make this part of the garden a favorite for youngsters. Native flowers and ferns are found throughout, with a beautiful display of Japanese primrose in late spring.

7 Lilac Garden

On the East Lawn, immediately adjoining the terraces, is Skylands’ extensive lilac collection. It contains over one hundred varieties.

This garden is at its best near the middle of May, although some species will continue their bloom into June. The lilac’s genus name, *Syringa*, is derived from the Greek word *syrix* for “pipe,” a reference to the hollow shoots. Lilacs belong to the olive family (*Oleaceae*) and therefore are related to white ash and privet. They are native to Europe and temperate Asia, where they grow as large shrubs or small trees.

Presumably, some lilacs predate Lewis at Skylands. Lilacs have been popular shrubs since Colonial times because of their ease of culture and their fragrant spring flowers. One of the first varieties to be recorded in Mr. Lewis’ plant accession books is *Syringa x persica*, which he procured in 1923. In 1928, the Japanese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata*), and the Chinese lilac (*Syringa x chinensis*) were purchased along with the French hybrids “Edouard André” and “Mme. Abel Chatenay.”



8 Peony Garden

The Memory Bench in the Peony Garden is encircled by Canadian hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*). Family ashes were to have been placed in small vaults on each side of the bench, but they never were. Vandals have stolen the bronze plates that covered the vaults.

The tree peonies here are native to western China. Unlike commonly known peonies, they are shrubby, with woody stems (in China, they are called King of Flowers). Background plantings of deciduous flowering shrubs include Weigela, Mock Orange, Kolkwitzia and Deutzia, which were popular in Victorian times.

9 Summer Garden

This lovely little garden was originally the site of a rose garden. Air stagnation caused by the yew hedges made maintenance difficult, and the roses were replaced by day lilies. Because they are disease resistant, day lilies need less care and put on a colorful show during the summer months. Other summer annuals planted here vary from year to year, and you can count on a cheerful daffodil display every spring.



10 Azalea Garden

Banks of azaleas and rhododendrons on both sides of the reflecting pool bloom in every conceivable shade. Hybrids include the white Boule de Neige (French for snowball), Pink Twins and the vivid red Nova Zembla. The Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* ‘dissectum’) at the head of the pool and the globose sourwood (*Oxydendron arboreum* ‘globosum’) are particularly striking in their crimson autumn foliage. In spring, look for the Double Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida* ‘pluribractea’). This garden room is also lovely in the summer, when colorful koi and water lilies grace the grotto and reflecting pool.

11 Magnolia Walk

The sweet bay magnolias in Magnolia Walk are unusual because of their number and size this far north (they are a southern species). Mr. Lewis planted them close to the house so that their sweet fragrance would drift into the manor windows in June. Note the many unusual shrubs on each side, including scented viburnums, honeysuckles and fragrant mahonias.

East of the walk is an unusual columnar form of the sugar maple, the Sentry maple (*Acer saccharum monumentale*). And to the west is a Kentucky coffee tree. Its bark and very thick branches are interesting additions to the winter landscape. Also here are the Japanese pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*), which blooms in August, and the fall-blooming golden-rain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata apiculata*).

12 Octagonal Garden

The rock garden surrounding the Octagonal Pool was designed so that small plants would be waist high, thus easily shown and maintained. It has been carefully restored, and its many dwarf plants are nicely displayed. Among them are *Sedum gypsicolum*, a creeping evergreen from Spain, the yellow-flowered *Friogonum flavum* from the mountains of the western United States, and monkshood (*Aconitum anthora*) from the Pyrenees.

The original yews between the stairways have grown out of proportion, but an Alberta spruce, also original, is still a fine specimen because of its slow growth. On the east side of the courtyard is the Chinese toon tree (*Toona sinensis*), which, because of its interesting bark, open crown and large white blooms, is an excellent companion planting with shrubs.



13 The Manor House

Designed in the mid-1920’s by the distinguished American architect John Russell Pope, whose works include the National Archives and the National Gallery of Art, the Tudor Revival Mansion was intentionally made to appear centuries old. Note the building’s weathered stone facade, and the sags and ripples in the slate roof. All stone was quarried on the estate.



14 Winter Garden

Lewis planted much of this garden in 1927-1928, but the red oak in front of the manor house library window overlooking the Winter Garden dates back to the 1890’s. At that time it was surrounded by Stetson’s nine-hole golf course. Mr. Lewis’s Winter Garden is a collection of forms, textures and colors to stimulate the senses in winter. Notice the golds, blues and reds among the many evergreens.

The east side of the Winter Garden is dominated by a weeping beech next to an upright beech that is a century old, planted by Stetson. The Japanese umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*) is one of the most distinctive and handsome conifers at Skylands, and was planted by Stetson sometime between 1891 and 1920. The densely conical, almost columnar appearance of the tree, and its bold dark green needles, attract great attention to this specimen. In its native Japan, the tree attains a height of 120 feet, but the specimen at Skylands is considered large for the Northeast.

Other interesting trees include an Algerian fir (*Abies numidica*), which was grown from seed in 1931. The tree attains a height of 70 feet in its native Algeria, where it can be found growing among Atlas cedars. The tree bears seven-inch purple cones which stand erect above the glossy green flat needles.

The Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), also a native of North Africa, is distinguished by its graceful appearance, erect cones and clusters of one-inch long needles borne on spur shoots. The Atlas cedar growing in the Winter Garden was purchased by Mr. Lewis in April 1928. The less-erect blue tree can be found next to the green form.