

June 2008

## **Extension Solutions for Homes and Gardens**

by Paul J. Pugliese

“Visiting Public and Historical Gardens: For Summer Vacations and New Garden Ideas!”

Here’s a great summer vacation idea you may not have thought about trying before. If you are looking for a vacation on a budget and lots of beautiful scenery, consider visiting public and historical gardens in your travel plans. This is always a great excuse to get outdoors, hike, breathe fresh air and of course borrow (or steal) some new landscape and garden ideas. Also, a weekend vacation may be as close as Atlanta, Rome, or even Athens, Georgia. Visiting public and historical gardens can introduce you to new plants and trees that you may not have seen before. Often, botanical gardens and arboretums even have “theme” gardens that are fun and entertaining for children (and big kids) of all ages.

Examples of theme gardens include sensory gardens that have interesting plants with various tastes, colors, textures, sounds, and smells. Other theme gardens focus on mimicking certain climates such as tropical gardens or succulent (cactus) gardens. Others may focus on certain cultural gardens such as Japanese tea or bonsai gardens. There are also herb gardens, culinary gardens, vegetable gardens, water gardens, children’s gardens, butterfly gardens, shade gardens, rose gardens, native plant gardens, rain gardens, and drought tolerant (or xeriscape) gardens to name a few.

Public and historical gardens can also come in every possible shape and size such as state botanical gardens and arboretums that could entertain some folks (like me) all day long. Also, there are many examples of small demonstration or trial gardens that give you a taste of local garden possibilities and plants best adapted to a particular area. Many state Universities have excellent teaching and educational gardens that are open to the public. Just about every state University has its own version of a botanical garden or arboretum. This might also be a good excuse to see some of your favorite college football stadiums or soak up the local college town atmosphere. It might even be a good excuse to expose your teenager to a favorite college campus.

So, with all of these great vacation ideas, why not soak up some sunshine, learn something new, and try something different than your usual beach vacation? The Cherokee County Master Gardeners have a local demonstration garden called “The Teaching Garden” if you want to get your feet wet and start your new hobby with garden vacations. This demonstration garden, located behind the Cherokee County Senior Center on 1001 Univerter Road in Canton, is open for guided tours from 10am to 11:30am on the first and third Thursday of each month and to groups upon request. Master Gardeners are available on these days to assist with your gardening questions. Admission to the garden is free. The gardens are open to the general public for self-guided tours daily from 8am to 5pm. For more information about The Teaching Garden and other local gardens, visit our website: [www.ugaextension.com/cherokee/TheTeachingGarden.html](http://www.ugaextension.com/cherokee/TheTeachingGarden.html)

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Pictures from The Teaching Garden, Canton, GA:

