About The Trustees

Founded by esteemed landscape architect Charles Eliot in 1891, The Trustees has, for more than 125 years, been a catalyst for important ideas, endeavors, and progress in Massachusetts. As a steward of distinctive and dynamic places of both historic and cultural value, The Trustees is the nation’s first preservation and conservation nonprofit, and its landscapes and landmarks continue to inspire discussion, innovation, and action today as they did in the past. We are supported by members, friends, and donors, and our more than 115 sites are destinations for residents, members, and visitors alike, welcoming millions of guests annually.

The public gardens protected and cared for by The Trustees are a living documentary of Massachusetts horticulture and design traditions. Each property blends great scenic beauty, important ecological habitat, and nationally renowned buildings and gardens with plantings that range from rare native species to one-of-a-kind cultivars. Their masses of color, texture, spatial arrangement, and seasonal diversity consistently surprise and impress.

We invite you to explore these inspiring places as they grow and change throughout the seasons and the years. Many have undergone significant restorations in recent years, thanks to the generosity of Trustees members and supporters. Ranging in size from one to 165 acres, Trustees Public Gardens provide opportunities for quiet reflection, artistic inspiration, and the joy of exploration and discovery for individuals and families alike.

Fun Fact

Many of our gardens were developed during the so-called “Country Place Era.” From about 1890 to 1930, wealthy Americans showcased their travels and taste by drawing inspiration from European garden design, and transformed their rural land holdings into summer retreats.

IMPORTANT: Please check opening times and accessibility information for each of these locations at thetrustees.org before venturing out for your visit.
This National Historic Landmark began as a family summer cottage, lived in for two generations by the Choate family. Starting in 1926, Mabel Choate and renowned landscape architect Fletcher Steele created Naumkeag’s striking Modern romance and artistic hues of the Colonial Revival. Located on the site of the former summer home of accomplished political scientist and professor Arthur Banks and his family, this reservation features open fields (which had been a family golf course), a “pinetum” with more than 80 specimen conifer trees, perennial gardens, a cranberry bog, a 2.5 miles of wooded trails, and fields of wildflowers.

Not to be missed: locals have a tradition of taking annual photos in front of the magnificent ash tree that has stood just beyond the gardens for over 250 years—walking it change and grow along with their families.

The Stevens-Coolidge Place

In the early 20th century, Helen Stevens and her husband John Gardner Coolidge, a diplomat, turned this family farm into a Colonial Revival-style summer retreat with the help of preservation architect Joseph Everett Chandler. Strongly influenced by French design themes, they added the walled rose garden, greenhouse, serpentine brick wall, and potager. The working fields, orchard, and woodlands served as a pastoral backdrop to the formal gardens. Today the gardens feature a specimen ash tree, an early 20th-century rose and perennial collection, herbs, vegetables, annuals, and a pick-your-own cut flower garden.

Not to be missed: The magnificent ocean views from the top of the Grand Alleé.

For a detailed look at each of the Trustees’ gardens and the reservations that house them, visit thetrustees.org/gardens or the individual property pages on thetrustees.org.