



carlow garden trail



blooming gardens and great houses

The gardens of Carlow are a spectacular show of nature. Blessed with a lush, gently undulating landscape, the county is speckled with grand estate houses, formal gardens and extensive parklands and forests waiting to be discovered.

And as we are all eager to get out and about again they make for a really great day's entertainment in relaxing and spacious surroundings. There are so many great places to explore, from the fabulous Altamont Gardens and Plant Sales Area to the gothic mansion and walled gardens of **Duckett's Grove** and the stunning **Huntington Castle and Gardens**. Then there's Ireland's largest garden centre, **Arboretum Home and Garden Heaven** in Leighlinbridge, the inspiring **Delta Sensory Gardens** in Carlow Town and a number of **owner gardens** where visitors can meet and learn from some of the best gardeners countrywide.

As Ireland's big house capital, Carlow offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy some of the great manor houses that once dominated the cultural, social and agricultural life of the county. Beyond the impressive facades of these ancestral homes, visitors can walk in the footsteps of fascinating historical figures and take in the sumptuous splendour of some of the most significant homes in Irish history. Whether you're strolling through beautifully landscaped historical gardens or marvelling at interiors that have survived for centuries, you'll be swept away by the magic of these very special Carlow treasures.

There are nineteen great gardens, garden centres and forest parks on the Carlow Garden Trail for you to enjoy. Here's a taster of some of them to plan your gardening break this year – visit www.carlowgardentrail.com for more details including information on great accommodation options. Make sure to check for current opening times on the individual websites and social media pages of each premises.



plan your very own trip – option 1: tullow, clonegal and myshall



Altamont Gardens and Altamont Plant Sales, Tullow, Co. Carlow R93 N882
t: 059-9159444 w: www.carlowgardentrail.com

Start off your day with a visit to Altamont Gardens – this gem is often referred to as the most romantic garden in Ireland. You can't fail to be charmed by the glistening lake and weaving paths adorned with an amazing variety of rhododendrons, rose bushes and colourful shrubs. Grand oak trees over 200 years old are spotted around the estate, while Irish yews line the formal Broad Walk interspersed with violas, roses and a collection of plants creating a dramatic blaze of colour.

An unmissable highlight of a visit to Altamont Gardens is Altamont Plant Sales, with an extensive range of herbaceous perennials and one of the finest collections of shrub roses, available year round. The delightful on site café provides comfort and refreshments in beautiful surroundings, so make sure to include some time for a relaxing stop there.

OPENING: January 1st – December 31st. June – Sept. 9 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. seven days per week. Please check website for opening times and further details.



Huntington Castle and Gardens, Clonegal, Co. Carlow Y21 K237
t: 053-9377160 w: www.huntingtoncastle.com

A fifteen-minute drive from Altamont Gardens is Huntington Castle where visitors can step into another world. This 17th century house is a treasure trove of historical architecture and objects, while the gardens have so many interesting aspects. From the French lime trees bordering the avenue to the ornamental lawns and fish pond, each is a destination worth visiting in themselves and the perfect place for a family stroll.

Once you have explored the gardens, head back to the castle where a guided tour of the house provides a window into both its fascinating past, and the lives of the family who call the castle home today. Originally built in 1625, many generations of the family added various extensions and details, resulting in the creation of a truly unique and interesting building. Afterwards take a well earned break in the tea rooms with a range of refreshments and light lunch options. To get the full Huntington experience stay the night in one of their beautiful castle rooms.

Winner of Georgina Campbell Breakfast of The Year Country House 2020.

OPENING TIMES: May – September 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily. House tours 2, 3, 4 and 5 p.m. daily. Please check website and social media pages for further details.



The Meadows, No. 7 The Meadows, Myshall, Co. Carlow R21 CF43
t: 059-9157530 w: www.carlowgardentrail.com

For a different experience consider a visit to the garden of renowned painter Philippa Bayliss, a ten minute drive from Huntington Castle. Situated on about a third of an acre this garden is a revelation, with Philippa more than happy to share her gardening experience with visitors. In front of the house there are plantings of pampas grass, miscanthus, orange fennel, fox gloves, heathers and catmint while the back features an informal hedge of shrub roses and some interesting trees interspersed with mostly herbaceous plants, set into gravel. A visit to The Meadows demonstrates what can be achieved in a small space with a small budget and limited time, and will certainly inspire others in similar situations to create something of beauty.

OPENING TIMES: March – September, 12 – 5 p.m. daily with the exception of Thursday. Please check website and social media pages for further details.



Hardymount Gardens, Tullow, Co. Carlow R93 XN24
t: 059-9151769 w: www.carlowgardentrail.com

Another fifteen minutes takes you to Hardymount Gardens, just outside Tullow Town. Owned by Mark and Justina McKeever, this wonderful walled garden over 2.5 acres, contains many unusual plants and flowers in the borders. The grass paths take you past a pond with lilies and fish to espaliered apple trees, Lobelia tupa, a pergola clothed with wisteria and underplanted with hollyhocks and foxgloves and on to a vegetable garden. A summer house in a sheltered corner provides a quiet area for rest and relaxation. Hardymount Gardens is a truly beautiful country garden.

OPENING TIMES: Daily 2 – 6 p.m. May to August inclusive. Please check website and social media pages for further details.

plan your very own trip – option 2: carlow, leighlinbridge and borris



Delta Sensory Gardens & Garden Centre, Strawhall Estate, Carlow R93 Y959 **t: 059-9143527 w: www.deltasensorygardens.com**

The stunning Delta Sensory Gardens is our starting point for day two of our Carlow garden tour. Delta is an oasis of peace and tranquility, with sixteen interconnecting gardens set on 2.5 acres. From the Waterfall Garden to the Rose Gardens and Willow Garden there's something for the whole family to discover at every turn. Consistently voted the number one thing to do in Carlow by Trip Advisor, the gardens have so much to offer during every season of the year. The gardens contain numerous water features including the famous Kugal, one tonne of pink marble floating on a cushion of water. Café Thyme attached to the gardens offers delicious lunches, tea/coffee and snacks while the garden centre stocks a range of shrubs, perennials and seasonal plants.

OPENING TIMES: Daily. Please check website and social media pages for opening hours and further details.



Enjoy guided tours (on selected days), a film of Duckett's Grove and audio tours during your visit.

Duckett's Grove Historic House and Walled Gardens, Kneestown (near Carlow Town), County Carlow R93 RF80

t: 059-9130411 w: www.carlowgardentrail.com

Once a grand mansion, Duckett's Grove is now one of the most photographed ruins in the country. And it's not hard to see why; it's magnificent towers and turrets make for an impressive silhouette. Once the centre of a vast estate, Duckett's Grove was home to the Duckett family in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1933, the interior of the mansion was sadly destroyed by a fire. What remains is a stunning Gothic exterior and two beautiful interconnecting walled gardens. In recent years the gardens have undergone an exciting restoration. Restored paths and the repaired sunken bridge plus plantings of oak, lime, hazel, spindle and laurel rekindle the spirit of the Georgian Pleasure Grounds.

OPENING TIMES: Gardens and ruined mansion daily, daylight hours.



Arboretum Home and Garden Heaven, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow R93 P9F4 **t: 059-9721558 w: www.arboretum.ie**

A twenty minute drive from Kneestown, via Carlow Town and the R448 takes you to Arboretum Home and Garden Heaven, Ireland's largest garden centre located on the outskirts of Leighlinbridge Village. This family-run business is a complete shopping experience – in addition to the five-star garden centre visitors will find beautiful interior furnishings, quirky gift ideas, Weber barbecues and accessories, ladies' fashion and kitchenware. Take some time out to relax and plan the next stage of your trip over some delicious food in the award-winning Rachel's Garden Café – where all food is made on site, using local where possible.



Afterwards visit Arboretum Inspirational Gardens, which feature a stunning display of colourful plants, shrubs, fruit trees and ornamental features. Designed to inspire visitors on planting schemes and solutions, the gardens offer endless ideas that can be easily recreated in gardeners' own homes. Families will enjoy exploring the African mud hut and spotting the friendly koi who reside in the Arboretum pond. There is an excellent children's playground and a maze adjacent to the Inspirational Gardens.

A short five minute drive takes you to Leighlinbridge – the Garden Village, where the local community has built and designed four beautiful gardens to commemorate various aspects of village life over the years. Both the village, winner of Ireland's Best Kept Town 2015 and the gardens are well worth a visit.

OPENING TIMES: Monday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., Thursday 9 a.m. – 8 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Bank Holidays 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.



Borris House, Borris, Co. Carlow R95 Y2T1

t: 059-9771884 w: www.borrishouse.com

Located twenty minutes from Leighlinbridge, Borris House is surrounded by 650 acres of lush woodland and gardens, giving it a secluded, otherworldly feel that transports visitors back in time. Stroll along the woodland paths, enjoy some of the beautiful specimen trees, view the original Stew Pond and on your way take in the original Victorian laundry, the restored granary and the 18th century Ice House. The lace garden which is set within the walls of the original laundry green illustrates the fascinating story of Borris Lace through its predominantly white colour palette.

OPENING TIMES: Open from mid-May to Mid-September most Wednesday – Fridays and occasional weekends. Please check social media pages for further details.