

Your Western Kentucky Botanical Garden staff and volunteers have stayed busy this winter. Preparing gardens and features to welcome the thousands of anticipated 2018 visitors as we "Celebrate 25 Years of Growing"!

When you visit the Garden; please make sure to visit the Rose Garden. One of the first gardens established. It occupies approximately ½ acre in the center of the Botanical Garden's 13 ½ acre property .

In 1986, Congress proclaimed the rose as the national flower of the United States. Rose lovers feel the official recognition wasn't necessary. Our rose garden was a critical part of the founding Master Gardeners' dream. They wished to create a garden that would be the pride of western Kentucky; a place for community celebrations and education.

Roses: Visiting the Queen of Flowers

From the parking lot follow the Watkin's Alley paved path to the Admission [Direction] Sign. The Rose Garden is listed as #5 of the 28+ attractions listed there. Once you have your bearings, continue eastward on the path. You'll pass the Cottage in the Garden on the right and the Daylily Garden on your left. Just ahead you will see the Red, White, and Blue Garden.

Don't be distracted by the _____' metal Garden Basket and the Smart Solar Flower in the distance. They are newest additions to the 28+ attractions in the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden. You'll want to see them after you have seen the Rose Garden.

Okay, on to the Rose Garden. Turn right at the fork in the path. Now you should see the outside of the Rose Garden and the large formal white fence enclosing it. Keep walking south and notice the wooden trellised entrance. You can't miss it. It will be covered with the pink blossoms of the 'New Dawn' climbing roses planted there. This display is just the first of more than 175 roses that fill the air with their delicate sweet scents and countless colors. The Rose Garden features more than 75 rose varieties including hybrid teas, floribundas, miniatures, grandifloras, climbers, and shrubs. Old garden roses (also called heirloom or antique roses) are also on display. It's an alluring feast for the eyes and the nose.

Stop and Smell the Roses

Many of these varieties can be found in the 8 parterre design beds. The Betty Sue Hill Fountain, 3 tier baroque design, is a spectacular focal point. Stroll the Rose Garden or linger here for a while to enjoy the delight of aromatic flowering plants and bubbling water. The rectangular garden offers shady respite with 'Little Girl' Magnolia trees at each of the four corners. They shade the wrought iron benches for those who would like to rest a while and enjoy the variety of colored blooms and intense rose fragrance.

You'll find roses that were selected for their vibrant color, bloom size, hardiness, and fragrance. An historical rose; named the 'Apothecary Rose' or 'Galica Officinalis', is just inside the Rose Garden entrance. Romans planted these roses wherever their military campaigns took them. And medieval monasteries grew them in their beds of medicinal herbs; so the monks could gather them easily. The 'Apothecary Rose' flowers are not especially fragrant on the bush. But, become intense when they are dried. So, the 'Apothecary Rose' became the pre-eminent rose used for medicinal and culinary purposes.

Look for 'La France'. It's the first hybrid tea rose and made its debut in 1867. Today, there are more than 10,000 hybrid tea roses. You'll find a large planting of 'the light pink 'La France' rose on the northeast border of Garden. Bring a camera and a notebook to capture your inspiration.

What's your favorite rose? Do you like roses in the red range like 'Timeless' or 'Chrysler Imperial'? Maybe white like 'Iceberg' and 'French Lace'. Pink roses like 'Big Momma' and 'First Prize' are always popular. Just as popular are yellow roses like 'Sunsprite' and 'Midas Touch'. There's too many to list here but we are proud to say we have most of the roses listed by the World Federation of Roses Societies [WRFS] as 'World's Favorite Rose'.

Love and roses are deeply woven in history. Shakespeare mentions the rose more than 60 times in his writings. The rose has long been America's favorite flower from our earliest settlers. Come celebrate the rose with us at the Garden.

Hope to see you soon!

Testimonials:

"We have visited the Garden several times over the past year due to a variety of children's programs offered. We love it there! It's a hidden gem waiting for discovering. They hold a different activity on the first Saturday of each month appropriately called "First Saturday". Activities are free or have a very minimal fee. The Garden is full of volunteers who will stop whatever they're doing to answer questions and interact with guests. This past weekend we visited their Blooms, Barbecue, and Bluegrass During the Daylilly Festival. It was truly a treat to watch hot air balloons inflate to become they giants they are and take guests for a ride. We highly recommend!"

"Visiting a rose garden can be a magical experience. Beautiful lush blooms create stunning scenery and waves of wonderful fragrance. Butterflies are numerous, birds sing and bees zip around the flowers."

The Western Kentucky Botanical Garden is a proud member of long standing of the American Rose society.