

Gardens of the Isle of Wight

Rosemary Vineyard

Close to Ryde on the Isle of Wight's east coast, self-guided trails, wine talks and red and white wine tastings are on offer at the 30-acre Rosemary Vineyard, one of Britain's largest wineries. The newest of the Island's vineyards, Rosemary produces 60,000 bottles of wine and 12,000 of cider annually on its estate. It is also the UK's only olive grower!

Tel: 01983 811084.

www.rosemaryvineyard.co.uk



Morton Manor

Further south at Brading, Morton Manor combines award-winning gardens - it has won the Isle of Wight In Bloom competition six times in recent years and has been twice winner of Southern England in Bloom - with wine-growing on a smaller scale. Dating back to 1249, the manor boasts a huge collection of Japanese Acers and an Elizabethan sunken garden within a handsomely landscaped garden of mature specimen trees. White, red and rosé wines are produced in adjacent grounds and visitors can tour the vineyards as well tasting the wine in the manor's gift shop.

Tel: 01983 406168.

Call for latest prices and opening times



Adgestone Vineyard

Close to Morton Manor, on the south facing slopes of Brading Down, Adgestone Vineyard is one of Britain's oldest and follows in the footsteps of the Romans who produced wine on the 10-acre site two thousand years ago. Award-winning red, white, sparkling and rosé wines are produced here and are available in the gift shop and in the Isle of Wight's top restaurants, as well as in the Palace of Westminster.

Please check suitability for groups by phoning the number below.

Coaches drop-off point is a short walk from entrance.

Tel: 01983 402503.

www.adgestonevineyard.co.uk



Shanklin Chine

Moving further south, this world famous gorge is entered from Shanklin Old Village. Dropping 105 ft from the top of the cliff to sea level, Shanklin Chine is a natural fissure in the cliff, formed by water cutting through sandstone to the sea. The chine walk leads through a deeply shaded path winding down beside waterfalls to the shore and along the way there are more than 150 varieties of wild plants and many species of moss to discover. This is an attraction that caters for children as well. They are given a well-thought out routing plan, encouraging them to find signs along the way, which point out some of the most interesting rare plants and other points of interest.

Tel: 01983 866432.

Tel: Isle of Wight (01983) 866432
Fax: Isle of Wight (01983) 866145
www.shanklinchine.co.uk



Ventnor Botanic Gardens

Set on a 22-acre site abutting the southern coast, this is a must for garden lovers with a head-turning collection of familiar favourites and rare plants. It is all the more impressive when you consider that this was the site of a hospital for respiratory diseases, home to many TB sufferers in Victorian times and only converted to a Botanic Garden 27 years ago. The sub-tropical Undercliff area in which the Botanic Garden is located makes it an ideal environment for a rare collection of trees, plants and shrubs which are hard to grow elsewhere in the UK. These include the sweet-smelling clerodendron. There is also a temperate house with a selection of exotic plants. The garden's newest draw is a lottery-funded visitor centre with facilities that include interactive exhibition areas. There are plants for sale too.



Tel: 01983 855397.

Open: year round, dawn to dusk.
Admission free.

www.botanic.co.uk

Old Smithy

In the picture postcard village of Godshill, the Old Smithy is one of many beautiful cottage gardens (others belong to tea shops such as Willow Tearoom). This one is a landscape garden in the shape of the Isle of Wight, complete with models of places of interest. There's also an aviary stocked with exotic birds and a Cottage Herb Garden planted with both common and rarer herb varieties.

Tel: 01983 840364.

Open: 10am-5.30pm. March-October.
Admission free.



Mottistone Manor Gardens

Owned by the National Trust, Mottistone Manor, near the quaint village of Brook, dates back to the 15th and 16th centuries but its garden was laid out in the 1960s and 70s by Sir John and Lady Nicholson, who brought a Mediterranean influence to the styling. Its key attractions - colourful herbaceous borders, shrubs, flowering fruit trees, rose garden and sea views - have been enhanced by the National Trust's improvement scheme for the garden - sponsored by Wightlink as well as by a new planting scheme of evergreens, shrubs and trees on existing banks. There are plants for sale too.

01983 741020

www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Afton Park Orchard & Gardens

Set in seven acres at the foot of Afton Downs, this is a combination of an extensive apple orchard (with 150 apple trees), gardens, a plant nursery and a café serving natural produce. Annual Apple Days Festival on the last weekend in September.

Tel: 01983 755774.

www.aftonpark.co.uk



Osborne House Gardens

Queen Victoria's favourite home boasts the most impressive formal gardens on the Isle of Wight, with views onto the Solent from East Cowes. These include a recently restored walled garden and an attractive tree-lined walk to the Swiss Cottage, built as a spectacular Wendy House for the Royal Children.

Tel: 01983 200022

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/osbornehouse>



Butterfly World

Based at Wootton in the Island's north, Butterfly World is a sub-tropical indoor garden in which hundreds of exotic butterflies are flying freely. Attractions include Italian and Japanese Gardens.

Tel: 01983 883430.

www.butterfly-world-iow.co.uk



Naturally Wight

It's not just for its many cultivated gardens that the Isle of Wight is famous. More than half the Island landscape is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there are nature reserves and wildlife sanctuaries to visit in its forests and wetlands:

Newtown Estuary: The National Nature Reserve at north coast Newtown is a National Trust treasure with important habitats including mud-flats, salt marshes, ancient woodlands and meadows.

Free to wander, this is a place for birdwatchers and walkers, keen to spot unusual birds, wildfowl and more than 300 species of wild plants.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coastline/visit/wildlife.



Brading Marshes: There are views to this RSPB-owned bird sanctuary from a network of footpaths around Brading and Bembridge but keen walkers can join the guided Wildlife Walks that take place on selected Sundays (info: 01983 614878).

Forests and Woodland: A walk in Parkhurst Forest or Firestone Copse could bring you face to face with a red squirrel, a rare sight on the mainland but alive and kicking on the Isle of Wight. A new Red Squirrel Hide has been established at Parkhurst with the help of conservation body Island 2000 Trust, providing squirrel safari trails through some of the Island's best oak and pine trees. At Firestone Copse there's a large area of coppiced hazel to explore whilst the medieval forest at National Trust Borthwood Copse boasts fine oak and beech trees, sweet chestnut and hazel. Free to wander.

Some other wildlife-rich areas to visit include the leafy seaside village of Bonchurch, near-neighbour to Ventnor, with a village pond, which was once a quarry but is now a haven for rare dragonflies and butterflies, and the pretty woodland overlooking the sea at Fort Victoria County Park, near Yarmouth.