







Secrets of Secrets of

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Editorial Director: Wendy Lefkon
Senior Editor: Jody Revenson

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introduction

Disney Resorts are like life with a fresh coat of paint. They always seem just a little brighter, a little fresher, a little more colorful than the everyday world. The secret is not paint, however.

It is flowers.

From Fantasyland to Future World, Disneyland and Walt Disney World brim with flora. The Parks' magical gardens come in all shapes and sizes and play many roles. Some, such as the All-America Rose Selection Display Garden near the hub of Magic Kingdom Park at Walt Disney World, or the kaleidoscopic Victoria Gardens at Canada in Epcot's World Showcase, are attractions in their own right. Many more function as brilliant set designs, enhancing the exotic themes and evoking the far-off places of Disney's vast living stage. The seamless meshing of every detail may tempt visitors to take Disney's incredibly varied landscapes for granted. One wrong note, though, and the whole beautiful enterprise would suffer. Main Street, U.S.A., for instance, wouldn't be nearly so cheery without its vibrant hanging baskets.

Jungle Cruise without its jungles would be just another boat ride.

Disney's gardens serve practical purposes as well as imaginative ones. They bring shade to sunny California and Florida, screen private places from public ones, and create visual interest. The moods they generate are as varied as the flowers they contain, ranging from romantic to whimsical to nostalgic. In short, Disney's wondrous gardens accomplish what gardens everywhere do—only on a grander scale, for more people, and without an off-season.

Facts and figures hint at the vastness of Disney's gardens. Disneyland spreads across 160 acres, incorporating two distinct parks and eleven different lands, or areas. The Mickey Mouse floral parterre alone requires twenty-four thousand annuals a year. Even the grasses are impressive: the tiny lawns of Fantasyland's Storybook Land are planted with more than half a dozen different varieties, including Bermuda, blue sedge, dwarf reed,



Little Bunny Fountain grass, mondo grass, tufted hair grass, and zoysia.

Walt Disney World is even bigger, covering some four thousand acres of maintained landscapes and gardens. On these grow thirty-five hundred plant species—everything from common hothouse flowers to exotic specimens from every continent on Earth except Antarctica. Numbered among the collection are four million shrubs, some thirteen thousand roses (including more than one hundred different varieties at Epcot's famous rose walk alone), forty thousand ornamental trees, and scores of elaborate topiary sculptures, each one made up of as many as five hundred individual plants.

Perhaps the most impressive number of all is 650. That's how many professional horticulturists work to keep the gardens at Disneyland and Walt Disney World healthy and vivid. An eclectic and talented group, the horticultural staff includes arborists, irrigation specialists, bedding plant experts, orchid specialists, and pest management technicians. Each year at Walt Disney World, staffers artfully arrange more than three million annuals, nurture eighty-five hundred indoor plants, and produce four thousand brilliantly colored hanging baskets for display throughout the Magic Kingdom and other parks. They log 450,000 mower miles as they cut two thousand acres of turf, release 10.5 million beneficial insects to control plant pests, and experiment with hundreds of cultivars in an endless search for new and exciting plants.

Secrets of Disney's Glorious Gardens germinated in all that collective expertise.

Drawing on the experience of Disney's horticultural experts, the following pages serve as a hands-on guide as well as an armchair exploration of Disney's unforgettable landscapes. Packed with field-tested insights, growing tips, and ideas for Disney-style projects, the book aims to inspire as it explains. We hope it plants ideas that will help turn your own garden into a place of wonder and delight.