

Oak Spring Garden Foundation

1776 Loughborough Land
Upperville, VA 20184
OSGF.org

Overview

Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring Garden is a prestigious estate an hour west of Washington DC, showcasing the life and legacy of a self-taught horticulturist and garden designer. Her exquisite attention to detail and love for plants is reflected in the garden's various features, from the iconic 'Mary Potter' crabapple tunnel to the many intimate garden rooms lined with espalier pears. Mellon's influence extends beyond her private estate to notable projects like the White House Rose Garden and the restoration of Louis XIV's kitchen garden at Versailles.

Key Highlights

- **Heritage and Design:** Oak Spring Garden embodies Mellon's refined approach to gardening. She drew inspiration from French gardening styles, evident in her passion for topiaries, espaliers, and her renowned crabapple allée.
- **Gardens:** The estate features a diverse array of gardens each designed to please the senses and enhance the beauty of the estate.
- **Oak Spring Garden Library:** Home to a collection of over 19,000 rare books, manuscripts, and artworks dating back to the 14th century, the library stands as a testament to Mellon's lifelong dedication to botany, horticulture, and landscape design.
- **The Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF):** Founded by Mellon in 1993, the foundation promotes scholarship and public dialogue on the history and future of plants, gardens, and landscapes through research, workshops, and conferences.
- **Conservation Efforts:** The foundation prioritizes sustainable land management practices, including the cultivation of heirloom vegetables and fruits at the Biocultural Conservation Farm.

Garden Features

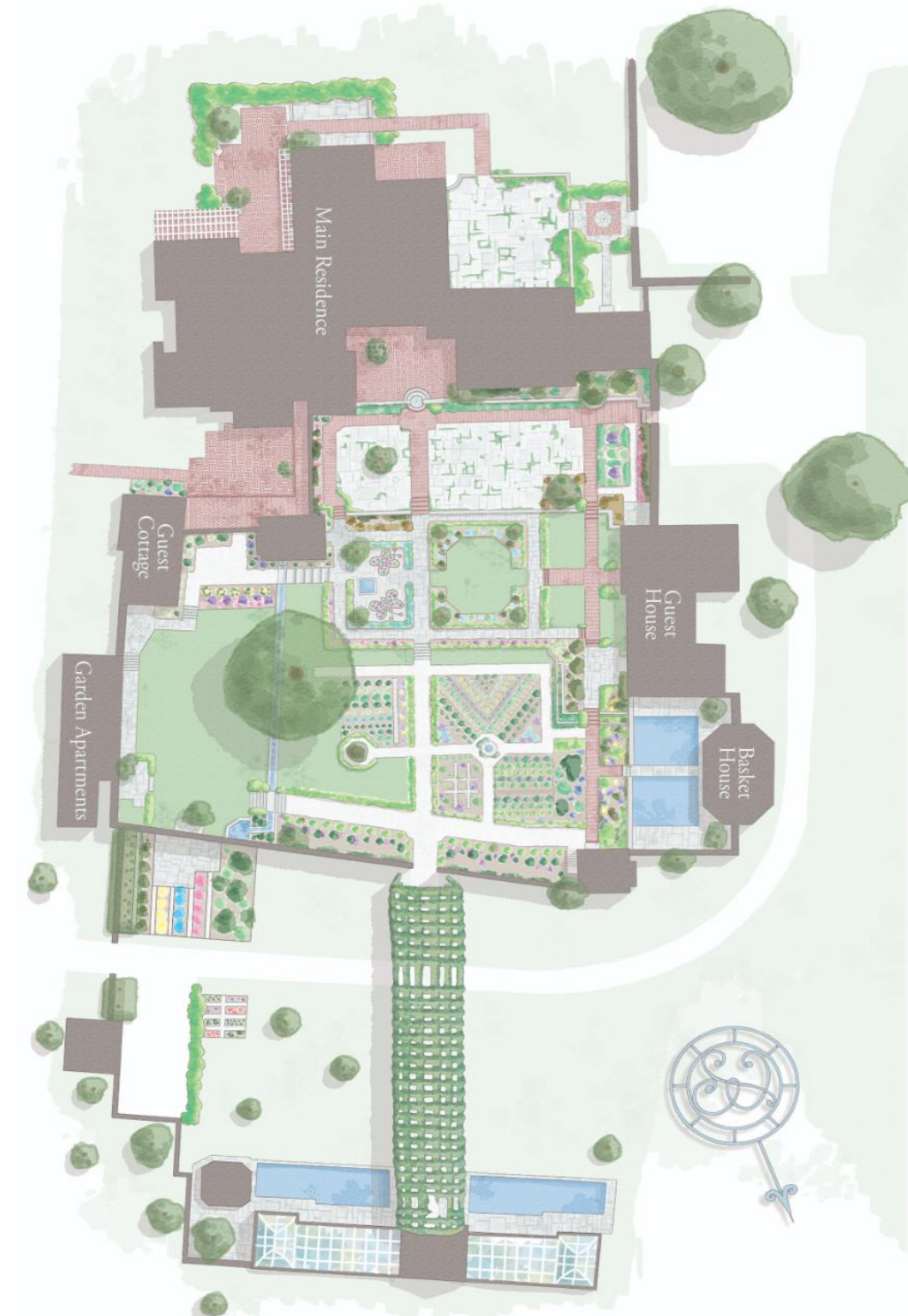
- **Espaliers and Stepovers:** The low espalier of apple serves as a formal element around larger beds, while stepovers are knee-high espaliers from traditional French gardens.
- **'Mary Potter' Crabapple Tunnel:** A stunning feature, developed by Arnold Arboretum in 1945 and planted in the 1960s, forming a lush connection between the formal gardens and greenhouse.
- **Butterfly-Shaped Beds:** Two charming beds in the shape of a butterfly on the patio beneath carefully pruned Trifoliolate or Hardy Orange trees create key focal points in the garden.
- **Unique Gardens:** Explore a variety of specialized gardens, including the Tea Garden for herbs, a Croquet Lawn, a Butterfly Garden, and other areas designed for specific purposes.
- **Eliza Moore Greenhouse:** The glasshouse is a haven for Mellon's signature topiaries and diverse plant collections, such as citrus, figs, and cyclamen.

The Oak Spring Garden Foundation

- **Mission:** To share Bunny Mellon's resources and ideas, supporting fresh thinking and bold action on the history and future of plants, gardens, and landscapes.
- **Programs and Events:** Offers fellowships, residencies, short courses, and workshops on horticulture, arboriculture, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Community Outreach:** Engages with the local community through educational programs, workshops, and initiatives that promote the importance of plants and gardens.
- **Sustainable Land Management:** Stewarding land and natural resources according to conservation easements established by Mellon, supporting sustainable agriculture, and preserving biodiversity.

Legacy and Influence

- Historical Impact: Bunny Mellon's contributions include designing the White House Rose Garden and advising on other illustrious gardens worldwide, such as the Manoire du Jonchet.
- Artistic Vision: Her influence extends beyond horticulture to her unique collections of rare books, manuscripts, and artworks, as well as her dedication to supporting scholarship and learning.
- Philanthropic Impact: Mellon's guiding principle of "noblesse oblige" underscores her commitment to giving back and supporting the public good.



Formal Garden map, courtesy of Max Smith and the Oak Spring Garden Foundation

Blandy Experimental Farm - State Arboretum of Virginia

400 Blandy Farm Lane
Boyce, Va 22620
blandy.virginia.edu

Overview

Established in 1926, Blandy Experimental Farm is a research facility and state arboretum managed by the University of Virginia. It was bequeathed by New York stockbroker Graham F. Blandy, who left his 712-acre estate to the University of Virginia for the purposes of research and education. Originally known as the "Tuleyries," the estate was once a private property where boys were educated in various farming practices. The farm's early director, Orland E. White, was instrumental in bringing trees from all over the world to study their adaptability to the region. His efforts laid the foundation for the diverse collection of trees and shrubs that exist today.

State Arboretum of Virginia:

- In 1986, Blandy Experimental Farm was designated the State Arboretum of Virginia, recognizing its significant contributions to botanical research and conservation.
- The arboretum boasts one of the largest collections of specimen trees and shrubs in the eastern United States, with over 5,000 living trees representing 200 varieties of conifers and 162 types of boxwood.

Research and Projects:

- Over the years, Blandy has been home to a wide range of research projects aimed at understanding plant biology, ecology, and environmental sciences. These projects have included studies on bumblebee foraging patterns, population structures of aquatic turtles, and the ecological consequences of human activities.
- Despite a period from 1965 to 1982 when research and classes were paused, Blandy experienced a revitalization in 1982 when it was established as an ecological field station. This shift brought new life to the farm and expanded its research and educational capabilities.

Education and Outreach:

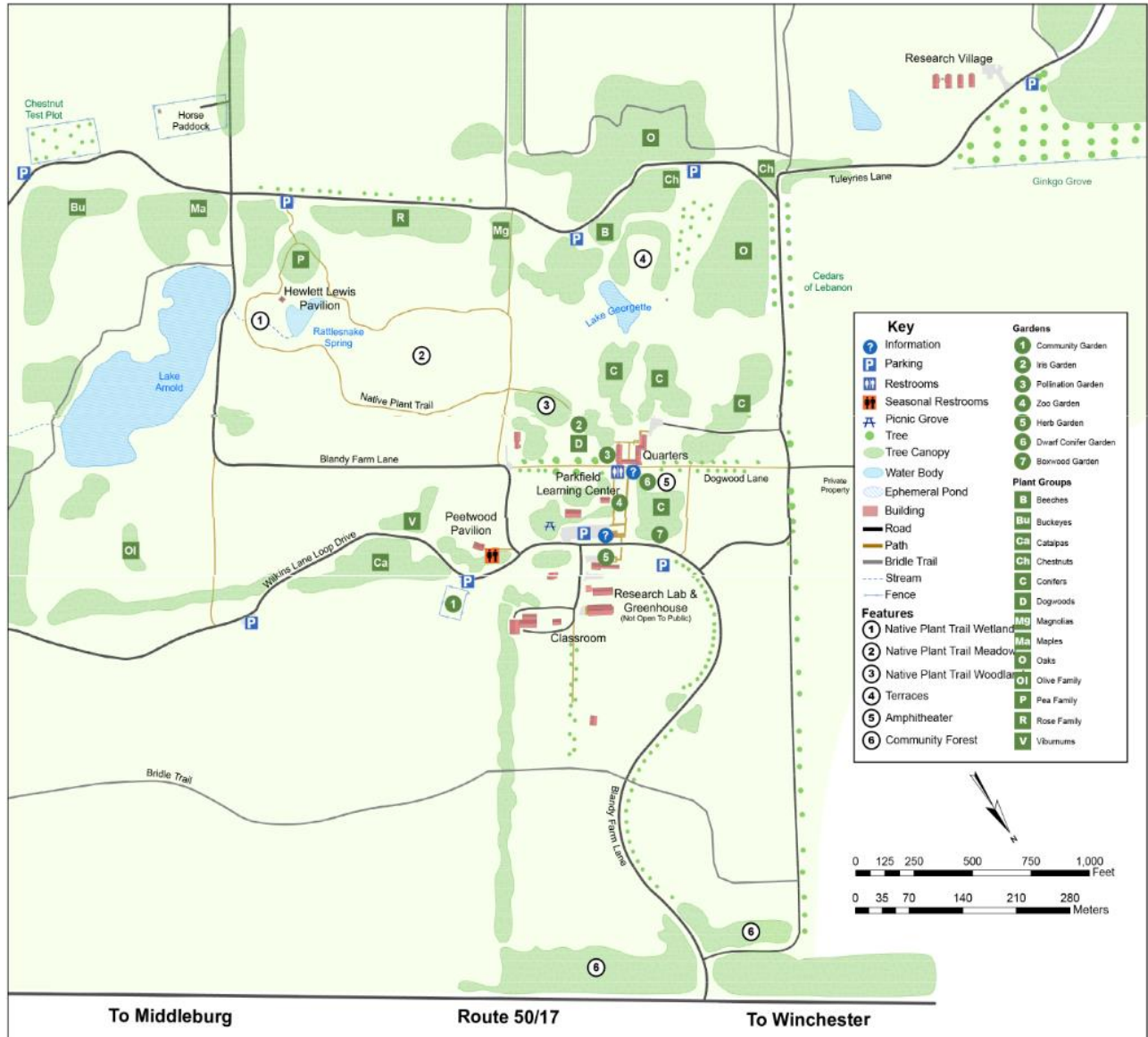
- Blandy Experimental Farm is committed to environmental education and outreach, offering a variety of programs for students, teachers, and the general public. These programs include K-12 field trips, teacher workshops, and summer camps.
- The farm also hosts community events such as the Firefly Festival, which provides opportunities for people of all ages to learn about and appreciate the natural world.

Community Involvement and Events:

- In addition to educational programs, Blandy hosts annual events like the Garden Fair, Plein Air at the Arboretum, and birding walks. These events attract visitors from across the region and support the farm's mission of research and education.
- Blandy also offers opportunities for community members to get involved through clubs focused on nature appreciation and exploration, including book clubs, sketch groups, and birding clubs.

Visitor Information:

- Blandy Experimental Farm is open year-round, from dawn to dusk, and admission is free. Visitors are encouraged to explore the farm's trails, gardens, and educational exhibits.
- Guided tours and interpretive signage provide insights into the farm's history, research, and natural features. Visitors can also access resources such as plant identification guides and audio recordings about specific trees.



Grounds Map, courtesy of University of Virginia