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You're Welcome
to **OUR GARDENS**

**ESCAPE
EXPLORE
DISCOVER
EXPERIENCE
PLAY
WANDER
LET LOOSE
ENJOY
LAUGH
CHILL
REMEMBER
& RETURN**

Garden Legend

-  Toilets
-  Disabled Toilets
-  Parking
-  Bus Parking
-  Refreshments
-  Hot Meals
-  Picnic Area
-  Disabled Access
-  Dogs Allowed
-  Plants for Sale

You're Welcome

From stately home grounds to simply elegant spaces, the gardens of Laois welcome you with an easy combination of substance and style. We're proud to present creations designed and nurtured by leading lights in Irish gardening including Arthur Shackleton, Mary Keenan, Tanguy de Toulgoët, and many more.

And through our Laois Garden Trail, you're invited to meet our gardeners in person, and get a real insight into their thinking, techniques, and talents.

With strong biodiversity and organic gardening to the fore, twelve wonderful gardens are ready to be explored. For some gardens, it's best to call ahead, while others are open all year round. Either way, you're assured of a warm welcome and an engaging tour. At every stop, you'll enjoy personal advice for your own specific garden queries, and recommendations for the next leg of your Laois Garden Trail.





1 EMO COURT & PARKLANDS

Marvel at one hundred acres of parkland with formal lawns, mature trees, and a nursery lake, all located against the backdrop of a beautiful 18th century estate.

Once the largest country estate in Ireland, Emo Court was built by the Earls of Portarlington and designed by eminent architect James Gandon. It's been in the care of the OPW for the last 25 years.

Out front, the Wellingtonia Avenue stretches for a mile, named after the sequoiadendron giganteum which line it. A beech walk behind the house leads to the 25 acre nursery lake and nearby, formal lawns adorned with yew tree walks, are overlooked by classic-inspired sculptures. In the arboretum, grass pathways meander through a variety of trees, covering up to 20 acres.

Tours of the house are also available. The restaurant is a perfect spot for refreshments or you can take a leisurely picnic in the parklands.

Open: May – Sept, Mon to Sat, 10am – 5pm | **Admission:** €7 per adult, season tickets available, groups by appt.
Address: Castletown, Co. Laois R32 KO68 | **T:** +353 (0)87 273 7883 / (0)87 272 8337 | **E:** gashgardens@gmail.com



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2 GASH GARDENS

Be inspired by this plant enthusiast's garden set in an enchanting location and created by an innovative dairy farmer with an extraordinary vision.

In the mid-1980s, dairy farmer Noel Keenan began transforming four acres of grazing farmland into a creative garden.

You'll find an imaginative blend of vibrant and unusual planting along with many fine specimen trees and shrubs. Water is evident throughout and the distinguishing aspect of the garden is a stone cavern, known as the Moon House, with a cascade tumbling past its circular window into a lily pond. As you sit on a low-level chair on the deck, overlooking the lily pond, you'll feel completely immersed in the plants, scents, life, and sounds of this beautiful garden.

This is a real treat for garden lovers, plant enthusiasts, or simply anyone looking for a peaceful and enjoyable day, surrounded by beauty and nature.





3 DUNMORE COUNTRY SCHOOL

Experience Dunmore Country School, an intensive working and teaching kitchen garden on one acre in the style of French ‘potager’ (kitchen garden).

This garden was established in 2005 by Tanguy and Isabelle de Toulgoët. As described by Tanguy himself, “it’s not quite a display garden but a garden in progress”. Tanguy is a strong believer in biodiversity and fascinating features of the garden include a medlar tree and a fruiting hedge, which is planted at a 45° angle.

Well respected in horticulture circles, Tanguy uses an array of proven techniques to produce an amazing range of herbs, fruits, and vegetables in an intensive and sustainable manner. It is also a bee-friendly garden where bee crops intermingle seamlessly with food crops.

You can visit the garden by appointment or book one of the intensive sustainable gardening, and natural beekeeping courses.

Open: All year, by appointment. Open days in summer months | **Address:** Abbeyleix, Co.Laois R32 W5W7

Admission: €5 | **T:** +353 (0)57 873 0146 | **E:** arthurshackleton9@gmail.com



WWW.ARTHURSHACKLETON.COM



4 FRUITLAWN GARDEN

Fruitlawn Garden combines very strong design with an eclectic selection of plants, including many that seed freely around the garden.

Created 20 years ago within an old farmyard, designer Arthur Shackleton has made a garden with something for everybody - from perennial borders to an oak copse and extensive fruit and vegetable garden.

Set within its walled space, the strong structure of yew hedges, hornbeam tunnel and box balls are in contrast to areas of relaxed planting where plants seed themselves freely. The orchard is set in a wildflower meadow.

Many of the plants are extremely rare, collected from gardens all over Ireland and the UK. Each of the different areas have distinct characters of their own from plain and simple to others more complex and buzzing with activity. You'll notice a constantly changing palette of textures and colours, with many combinations of plants and design to stimulate and inspire every visitor.





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5 CLONOHILL GARDENS

Visit a splendid garden, created by floral artist Enda Thompson-Phelan.

From the outset, you'll notice how the owner's artistic sensitivity is beautifully revealed through clever plant associations and use of natural stone and garden ornaments to sculptural effect. Visitors can enjoy a looped trail that begins at the woodland area where collections of trilliums, hellebores, and galanthus thrive.

Following on from that, the path leads to 'Jacob's Walk', a meandering gravel pathway framed by sandstone stables. This sunny colourful walkway also features many varieties of miniature hostas. An archway leads onto an open lawn area punctuated by colour themed borders, including a striking island bed of white Himalayan birch underplanted with Euonymus.

The sheltered walled garden overlooking the angling lakes has evolved from the original kitchen garden into an expression of the owner's creativity. It's fair to say surprises abound at every turn for the plant enthusiast.



6 GORTNALEE GARDENS

Just over half an acre of winding paths to explore, peaceful resting spots, and native woodland can be found in south Laois near the historic Donaghmore village.

Designed by Hazel Luskin Glennon in 2009 when she was challenged by her husband, the late Brendan Glennon to design a garden of 0.6 of an acre with no lawns for him to mow, she has turned a turnip field into a magical space!

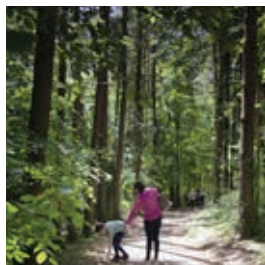
The gardens are colourful and intriguing with woodland and herbaceous areas. Hazel challenges visitors to explore every path without retracing their steps. And at every turn new delights and vistas are revealed.

The swing seat in the Wisteria-clad pergola is a favoured spot in the garden. And when sitting here, you can see several areas with different seasons of colour while the scent of the Wisteria adds to the experience.





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7 HEYWOOD GARDENS

Enjoy 50 acres of woodland, lakes, and formal gardens including the sunken garden designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Heywood Gardens were completed in 1912, and consists of 50 acres of gardens, lakes, woodland, and architectural features. The gardens are set on a hillside looking south-east over a sweep of undulating country which takes in amazing views.

Composed of four elements linked by a terrace that ran along the front of the house, the garden centrepiece is the sunken Lutyens' Garden designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, dating from 1912. A pond with turtle fountains is surrounded by a range of plants including peony, miniature iris, bergenia, anemone, and many more.

You'll find many lakes and acres of woodlands to explore. And these are home to lots of architectural features, including gothic gates and artificial ruins.

Open: All year, Mon to Fri, 10am – 4pm, guided tours by appointment | **Admission:** Donations at visitor's discretion
Address: Abbeyleix, Co Laois R32 PNP3 | **T:** +353 (0)57 873 1325



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8 SENSORY GARDEN AT DOVE HOUSE

Relax at a calm and peaceful oasis
designed to stimulate all five senses.



Previously a Brigidine Convent, this two acre site was planted in 1996 by a talented team of people with intellectual disabilities and continues to be maintained by service users of Dove House in Abbeyleix. The aim of the garden is to make visitors more aware of their five senses – touch, sound, smell, sight, and taste.

Vibrant plants appeal to the sense of sight, while wind chimes and a humming stone engage the ears. There are also scented plants and many with interesting textures. This is a garden with a history, which provides the visitor with a peaceful haven of contemplation alongside spiritual and sensory nourishment.

The fruit and vegetable gardens stimulate taste while aromas take centre stage in the scented garden, which is planted with scented geraniums, scented roses, philadelphus, oregano, and more.





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9 BALLINTUBBERT GARDENS

Wander 14 acres of living garden-rooms surrounding an 18th Century Georgian manor house.

This residence was once home to such literary greats as Poet Laureate Cecil Day Lewis, Sebastian Shaw, and Sir John Hurt. The gardens at Ballintubbert form a series of living garden-rooms arranged symmetrically around the simple Georgian house.

Explore the Sir Edwin Lutyens-inspired sunken garden with Gertrude Jekyll-style planting, lose yourself in the yew cloisters, and revel in the Arthur Shackleton-designed garden nestled near the side door. You can also relax in the secret garden before exploring the woodland walks and newly established Bee-tropolis Biodiversity space.

With a firm grip on our history, we look to the future as we work towards becoming the first 'Certified Organic Ornamental Garden' in Ireland and ensure that our planting schemes are adapted to cope with the fluctuating Irish weather conditions.



10 CHARIS GARDEN

Stop off at this small-scale organic market garden, situated on a small holding of one acre at Ballyadams House.

Although not a show garden, you'll find Charis Garden in the heart of pastoral Laois farmland, close to the site of Ballyadams Castle. Biodiversity and beauty are weaved beautifully together with vegetable crops nestled amongst the rainbow colours of crimson clover, camelia, phacelia, sunflowers, clematis, amongst others. The garden also hosts a stock of native Irish bee colonies.

Growing season extends from mid-April to the end of October while two polytunnels and a series of outdoor plots keep visitors stocked with the finest fresh, local, and seasonal vegetables.

In summertime, the sights and sounds of the market garden in full flow is a truly lovely experience.

A tour of the garden is available on request while on-site classes and workshops in organic gardening may be arranged with Jeremy Haworth, head gardener.

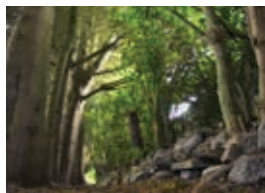


Open: All year, by appointment, school groups welcome | **Admission:** €5

Address: Stradbally, Co. Laois R32 PK19 | **T:** +353 (0)87 283 6771 | **E:** selousgarden@yahoo.com



FACEBOOK: @SELOUS-LODGE-GARDEN



11 SELOUS LODGE GARDEN

Discover why this garden is a haven for biodiversity and see how natural planting has delivered such a positive impact on its surroundings.

Selous Lodge garden is an informal biodiversity garden and native wood, measuring about one acre, surrounding a Victorian cottage in Stradbally.

Designed and created by the owner, work began on the house garden in 2009 and the wood in 2015. The wooded area contains a selection of IUCN-threatened and vulnerable listed trees. The majority of plants in the garden areas have been planted to support the biodiversity of the area.

This garden is designed with climate change in mind, is low maintenance, and embraces readily available plants, adaptable to any home-garden environment. The ambition is also to encourage the planting of trees whether large, medium, or small as well as pollinator and insect-friendly plants for all gardens.



WWW.CASTLEDURROW.IE



12 CASTLE DURROW

Savour 50 acres of lush lawns, colourful borders, green parkland, wild forest, meandering river, and plentiful orchards.

The beautiful mature gardens in Castle Durrow were started by the Flower family over 300 years ago and individual areas overflow with their own identity, feel, and character. At the back, the courtyard room is filled with hundreds of fragrant David Austin roses while the walled garden, including the orchard, is home to old fruit trees and inhabited by ducks and chickens. The sunken garden retains its own distinct character.

Through the main corridor, you step into the working kitchen garden. You can then follow the meandering path by the recently restored Ha-Ha flanked by spring, summer and autumn bulbs, towards the Victorian grotto.

The pleasure garden was planted with specimen trees that are now in their full glory while bluebells and wild garlic grow in the springtime along the River Erkina.



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