



Ohio Arts and Culture Horticulture Itinerary

Southwest Ohio is the perfect destination to combine a horticultural expedition with world-class artistic sites. Throughout the Miami Valley, dozens of brilliant gardens and thought-provoking museums show off the sophistication of the region.

DAY ONE:

It may be known as the birthplace of aviation, but Dayton has no shortage of amazing horticultural and cultural sites, which makes it a great place to begin your journey.

Begin your trip at the **Aullwood Audubon Center** (<http://aullwood.center.audubon.org>) in Dayton, a 350-acre nature sanctuary dedicated to the protection of birds, wildlife and their habitats. A prairie ecosystem supports many varieties of orchid, lily and sunflower, and a pond supports marsh marigold and irises.

The **Cox Arboretum and Gardens Metropark** (<http://www.coxarboretum.org>) features 189 acres of gardens and natural areas. Unique specialty gardens include the Bell Children's Maze, Edible Landscape Garden and the Conservation Corner. Take a walk down the crabapple allee, and let a butterfly alight on your shoulder at the butterfly house.

Next, travel to **Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum** (<http://woodlandarboretum.org/Intro.htm>), where artful monuments are combined with peaceful plantings. Founded in 1841, Woodland is one of the country's oldest garden cemeteries. More than 3,000 trees (many more than a century old) grace the arboretum's 200 acres of rolling hills. Numerous historic figures rest here including aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright, poet Paul Laurence Dunbar and writer Erma Bombeck.

In the tiny town of Clifton, a few miles east of Dayton, you'll find a stunning natural bower. **Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserves** (<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/dnap/location/clifton.html>) is one of Ohio's most popular preserves, featuring spectacular limestone formations, a chasm and miles of hiking trails. It has a stunning display of spring wildflowers such as the rare snow trillium, and nine miles of trails along the steep gorge offer views of hemlocks, ferns and wild columbine.

Yellow Springs (<http://www.yellowspringsohio.org/>) is a quirky college town just a few miles west of Clifton. The town's shops feature handcrafted jewelry, pottery, herbs, stained glass and more along the window box-lined main street – the perfect spot to pick up some artistic inspirations. Several restaurants offer imaginative cross-cultural cuisine.

After dinner, head back to Dayton and check into the historic **Doubletree Dayton Downtown** (<http://www.doubletree.com/en/dt/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=DAYLTDT>), just steps from the **Schuster Performing Arts Center** (<http://www.schustercenter.org/>), where you might catch a play or orchestra performance.

DAY TWO:

Before leaving Dayton, check out an esteemed art museum. Then travel south, stopping at an inspiring sculpture garden. Finally, make your way to Cincinnati to sample the culture the Queen City's museums and botanical gardens.

The **Dayton Art Institute** (<http://www.daytonartinstitute.org/>) is one of the nation's best small-city art museums, with a comprehensive collection incorporating 12,000 objects. Art from around the world and throughout history is highlighted in the galleries. Special exhibitions of international importance grace the institute's galleries regularly.

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After leaving Dayton, drive southwest to the town of Hamilton. **Pyramid Hill** (<http://www.pyramidhill.org>) is a 255-acre outdoor sculpture park, the only of its kind in the world. More than 50 larger-than-life sculptures adorn this park's beautiful natural setting, dotted with picturesque lakes and verdant plantings.

Now, head due south to Cincinnati, one of Ohio's cultural capitals. **Ault Park** (<http://www.aultparkac.org>), one of Cincinnati's premier urban green spaces, features formal English gardens, a stunning pavilion with a panoramic view of the Ohio River, the Trees for Your Yard Arboretum, and more.

Bookend your art- and flower- filled day with a visit to the **Cincinnati Art Museum** (<http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org>), another esteemed cultural institution. With more than 88,000 objects of art, this cultural palace features paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture, decorative arts and costumes.

With its high-end amenities and moderate rates, **The Millennium Hotel** ([http://www.millenniumhotels.com/MCIL.nsf/LU_HOTELDOC/118\\$\\$HotelDescription?OpenDocument](http://www.millenniumhotels.com/MCIL.nsf/LU_HOTELDOC/118$$HotelDescription?OpenDocument)) in downtown Cincinnati is a great value.

DAY THREE:

Take a day to discover all the art and horticulture Cincinnati (www.CincinnatiUSA.com) **has to offer.**

Begin your morning with a hot cup of coffee on the mist-enrobed paths of the **Hauck Botanic Garden** (http://dynamic.cinci-parks.org/cgi-bin/parks.cgi/park_desc?park_id=74). Cornelius J. Hauck planted 900 types of trees, evergreens and shrubs on this property and patented a new variety of lilac. Today the eight-acre site features a wildflower garden, daylily collection, hosta garden and All-American dahlia garden.

Next, make your way to **Krohn Conservatory** (<http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cityparks/pages/-3452-/>), a nationally recognized showcase of more than 3,500 plant species from around the world. The collection includes an indoor rainforest and waterfall, Tropical House, Floral Display House, and exceptional orchid and bonsai displays.

Now, head downtown to the cutting-edge **Contemporary Arts Center** (<http://www.contemporaryartscenter.org/>). This imaginative Zaha Hadid-designed structure was completed in 2003, and houses avant-garde rotating exhibitions featuring painting, sculpture, video and experimental art.

To get a more traditional view of the arts in Cincinnati, visit the **Taft Museum of Art** (<http://www.taftmuseum.org>), built in 1820 and restored to its Federal Era appearance. Inside, old master paintings abound, featuring Rembrandt, Whistler and Hals.

Finally, complete your art and garden trek with a comfortable night at the Art Deco **Hilton Cincinnati Netherlands Plaza** (<http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=CVGNPHF>).

Be sure to check out **Southwest Ohio's Nicholas Longworth Heritage Wine Trail** (<http://www.ohiowines.org/maps.htm>) if you have the time.

For more arts and culture happenings in the Dayton and Cincinnati areas, visit www.daytoncvb.com, www.CincinnatiUSA.com and www.cincynorth.com.