



Ohio Sports and Recreation Horticulture Itinerary

Central Ohio is a prime destination for people who love to stay active while enjoying spectacular natural scenery and stellar gardens.

DAY ONE:

Columbus, Ohio's capital and largest city contains some of the most respected horticultural institutions in the Midwest. It's also positioned within an hour's drive of many of Ohio's outdoor recreation hotspots.

Franklin Park Conservatory (<http://www.fpconservatory.org/>) offers botanical collections, gardens, waterfalls and educational programs designed to foster life-long learning and appreciation of plants. The Conservatory features a Victorian glass house and 73,000 square feet of greenhouses situated in a 90-acre park. Experience the Himalayan Mountains, a rainforest, desert and Pacific island water garden inside the glass house. Franklin Park is the only botanical garden to own a signature collection of Dale Chihuly's glassworks and is known for its interesting art exhibits and events. Enjoy a guided tour of this majestic preserve, boasting more than 2,000 species of plants, specialty collections of hostas, daffodils, daylilies and the popular rose, herb, and woodland theme gardens.

Then make a stop at the **Columbus Topiary Garden** (<http://www.topiarygarden.org/>) for a respite from the hustle and bustle of downtown Columbus. With skyscrapers serving as a backdrop, this peaceful park is the only topiary interpretation of a painting. You'll see Seurat's famous *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of la Grande Jatte*, complete with topiaries of 54 people, eight boats, three dogs and a monkey.

Just northwest of downtown, **Chadwick Arboretum** (<http://chadwickarboretum.osu.edu/>) is a 60-acre site that boasts one of the most varied collections of vegetation in the state. It houses woody and tropical plants, wildflowers, perennials and more than 400 cultivars of annuals adjacent to Ohio State University's Schottenstein Center, where the Buckeyes play basketball.

The Ohio Governor's Residence and Heritage Garden

(<http://www.governorsresidence.ohio.gov/home.aspx>) is the perfect place to get an overview of Ohio's natural wonders. This Jacobean Revival style house was built in 1925, and its grounds feature native plants in gardens representative of Ohio's diverse ecosystems including a cranberry bog, formal prairie, Lake Erie sand dunes and more. Tours, available by appointment, include the public rooms of the residence and gardens.

After a day of exploring Columbus' botanical sites, an evening out in the **Arena District** (<http://www.arena-district.com/>) will reveal other types of recreation. When Nationwide Arena is not hosting the Columbus Blue Jackets National Hockey League team, it provides the venue for concerts, performances and other special events. Dozens of fun, laid-back restaurants and plenty of beautifully manicured parks make it a great destination.

The Lofts (<http://www.55lofts.com/>) is a boutique hotel offering the best in comfort and location - directly between downtown and the Arena District.

DAY TWO:

From Columbus, make your way north to Ohio's wild Mohican Country. This area is home to an impressive estate garden, a naturalist's experimental farm and miles of pure, unadulterated wilderness to explore by foot, pedal or paddle.

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The **Kingwood Center** (<http://www.kingwoodcenter.org/>) in Mansfield is a 47-acre estate garden is known for its spectacular display of 35,000 tulips of every shape, size and color blooming from late April to early May. Built in 1926, the 26-room French Provincial home is surrounded by lush, historic gardens, and contains dozens of other varieties of plants, inside and out.

The former home of Pulitzer Prize-winning author/conservationist Louis Bromfield, **Malabar Farm State Park** (<http://www.malabarfarm.org/>) in Lucas remains a working farm devoted to conservation and sustainable agriculture. Tour the grounds, experience the visitor education center, and visit the Big House where Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were married in 1945. With 12 miles of hiking and bridle paths and ample opportunity for winter sports, this park combines horticulture with outdoor adventures.

Spend the rest of the day hiking, canoeing or cycling through the vast wilderness of **Mohican State Park** (<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/parks/mohican.htm>) in Loudonville. Towering hemlocks and old growth white pines line 13 miles of paths, and more than 15 varieties of native ferns hide in sandstone crevices. Waterfalls, rushing rivers and scenic ridges await your discovery.

Stay at **Landoll's Mohican Castle** (<http://www.landollsmohicancastle.com/>) in Loudonville for a touch of luxury in the wilderness. A fanciful medieval structure is set among a lush area of forest, and will delight both admirers of nature and comfort.

DAY THREE:

For a day of spectacular Appalachian scenery and golf course greenery, Muskingum and Licking counties are the place to go. Learn about sustainable gardening, play a round or two of golf on some of the nation's best courses, and indulge in the luxury of a hotel that also is an arboretum.

Longaberger Golf Club (http://www.longaberger.com/cgi-bin/bv/destinations/dest_category_landing.jsp?BV_UseBVCookie=Yes&channelID=-1610622049) in Muskingum County's Nashport was named as one of only 16 five-star courses in the country by Golf Digest. For a special treat, play a round on this pristine course. For another world-class golf experience, travel southwest along Route 146 to Zanesville's **EagleSticks Golf Club** (<http://www.eaglesticks.com/page/152-4283.htm>). This course's thickly wooded fairways and constant elevation changes will make for a memorable game.

Next, travel southeast to Philo. **Blue Rock Station** (<http://www.bluerockstation.com/>) is a home built for energy independence and environmental sustainability. The grounds offer many opportunities to explore organic gardening, and feature fruit orchards, an herb garden, English cottage gardens and greenhouse for year-round vegetable production. Active visitors will want to take a llama trek through the rugged landscape filled with old growth forest, lush undergrowth and spectacular shale formations.

A few miles west along I-70 in Newark is **Dawes Arboretum** (<http://www.dawesarb.org/>). Its remarkable cypress swamps, a renowned bonsai garden and the world's largest lettered hedges are among the highlights of this 1,150-acre site. Japanese gardens are at their peak in spring and the holly gardens are best viewed in winter.

Finally, bed down for a comfortable night at **Cherry Valley Lodge** in Newark (<http://www.cherryvalleylodge.com/>). It's the only U.S. hotel to house an arboretum. This magnificent collection of more than 2,000 plantings and some 400 species recaptures the tradition of wandering in the woods or through a garden to discover botanical treasures.

**For more sports and recreation experiences and events in central Ohio, visit:
Ashland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau** (www.ashlandohio.com/cvb)
Experience Columbus (www.experiencecolumbus.com)

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Greater Licking County Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.lccvb.com)

Mansfield/Richland County Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.mansfieldtourism.com)

Zanesville-Muskingum County Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.visitzanesville.com)