

## **Day trip escapes from Dublin to Co Wicklow Partner Gardens**

What about a summer day trip from Dublin to some marvellous Wicklow Partner Gardens west or south of the city?

Making an early start west from the city through Tallaght, you could visit Jimi Blake's **Hunting Brook Garden**, then on to **June Blake's Garden** nearby and finishing 15 minutes further on with a tour of the **RHSI Russborough Garden** and some well-earned refreshment. Jimi Blake's internationally known, flamboyant, ever-changing 20-acre garden holds one of Ireland's largest plant collections. Whilst his sister June Blake's very individual 3-acre country garden with its exciting bold herbaceous borders, beautiful stone buildings and more offers something delightfully different. The volunteers working in the lovely RHSI Walled Garden at Russborough are always really appreciative of those who come to view the fruit of their labours in this beautifully evolving garden. The excellent Russborough Cafe is the final reward!

Further south from Russborough, deep in the heart of Wicklow, is the almost secret **Patthana Garden** in Kiltegan village. A true panorama of colour and artistry, from the packed courtyard around the old granite house, to the upper terrace and then out to the newly created Torc garden....

Heading south from Dublin on the northern outskirts of Bray is the 1780 walled garden of the charity **Festina Lente**. The restored ornamental gardens have huge community involvement with beautifully kept allotments, formal gardens and ponds which are a designated sanctuary for terrapins. Just south of Bray are the magnificent 17th-century classically French-designed gardens of **Kilruddery**. Set in the 200-acre estate are extensive woodlands, the famous long ponds, formal, sunken and walled

gardens and beautiful yard buildings including a large converted granary cafe.

Further south along the M11, in the village of Ashford are the 20 acre **Mount Usher Gardens**. These beautiful Robinsonian style gardens set along the banks of the river Vartry are home to a superb and important collection of shrubs and trees- many of them champions. There is also extensive informal woodland and riverside planting. Just half a mile away at Rossanagh is the romantic **Dower House** and garden. With a charming formal white garden, a wildflower meadow and a great variety of unusual trees it has deservedly been described as one of Wicklow's finest gardens. Enjoy your days out in Co Wicklow!

Run by the OPW (and not an RHSI Partner Garden!) are you aware that **Kilmacurragh**, Ireland's second Botanic Garden after Glasnevin, is just about 6 miles further south? Do look it up and make a point of visiting these superb (free) gardens sometime.

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