

LIVING

These gardens offer beautiful autumn sights

By [Claudine Ko](#)

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Flower designer Hanako Shimamoto has discovered this oasis in The Bronx.

Photo: Christian Johnston

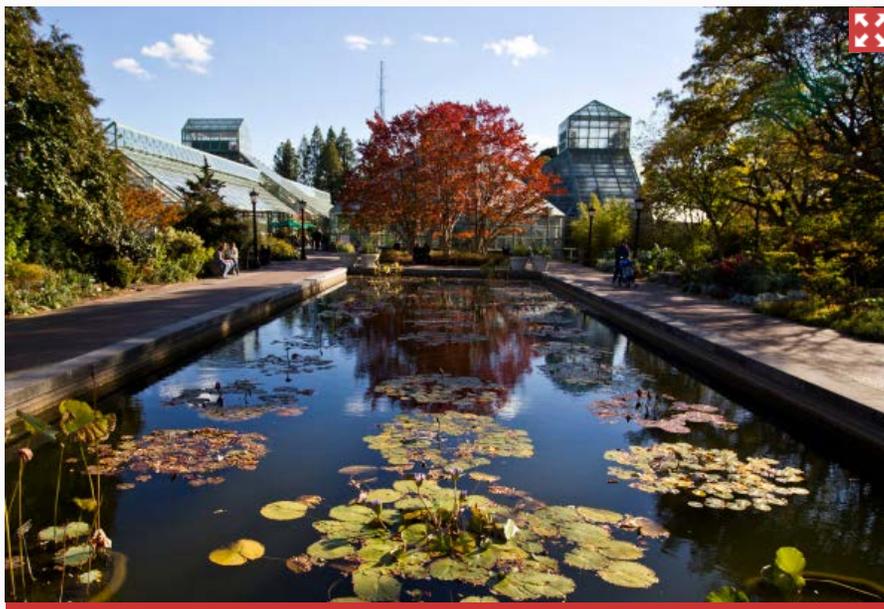
Spring and summer may seem like the ideal times to convene with nature and visit the many gardens in and around the city. But the colder months have their own special allure.

“Everybody gets really excited in the spring to be gardening, and it’s a really busy

time,” says Laura Palmer, deputy director for administration at the Garden Conservancy, which works to preserve America’s gardens. “But what we’ve seen over the last 20 years is more and more people enjoying gardens in the fall.”

Here are some of the best year-round local spots to see Mother Nature in action.

1 Brooklyn Botanic Garden



Visitors to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden will find serenity at the lily pool terrace.

Photo: Brian Zak/NY Post

150 Eastern Parkway

You don’t have to travel upstate to experience dazzling fall foliage, or jaunt across the Pacific Ocean for a peaceful meditation inside a tranquil Japanese-inspired garden. Just hop on the MTA and visit the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, which harbors 52 acres of everything from Italianate landscaping to an enclosed tropical forest filled with waterfalls, streams and even jackfruit trees.

Student Karolina Nesko, 21, and her entrepreneur boyfriend Dimitriy Skvortsov, 29, both from Bay Ridge, spent a recent Sunday afternoon at the BBG — their first time visiting. “In the city, everything is gray,” says Nesko, standing inside the warmth of the glass-paneled Steinhardt Conservatory. “Here it’s colorful and nice and bright. It’s a nice place to talk, he’s been telling me stories, and then we’ll probably find a place to eat.” Outside in the Native Flora Garden, Greenpoint

couple Sarah Hardman and Michael Swan stop alongside the Kettle Pond to take in the scenery. “It’s the perfect day,” says Hardman, 36. “I’ve been mostly impressed by the sky. It’s like being out in the country — you don’t see any buildings.” Adds Swan, 39, “It smells better than the rest of Brooklyn — fresher. And it’s not as crowded.”

Don’t miss: “Chase Away the Winter Blues” hourlong walking tours with guide Lynn Spevack, a licensed psychotherapist and guide Lynne Spevack, designed to relieve the winter doldrums First Sundays of the month through March.

Info: closed Mondays; admission, \$5 to \$10 (free during winter weekdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon); 718-623-7200; bbg.org

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The High Line



Visitors enjoy a stroll along the High Line during the city’s warm fall season.

Photo: Brian Zak/NY Post

Chelsea

The elevated path is a popular destination for a leisurely stroll amid an impressive display of finely landscaped flowers, trees, and shrubs as well as views of the Hudson and the cityscape. Super crowded in spring and summer, when the garden is in full bloom, the colder off-season can still be a welcoming time to stop by — with more room to snap a photo of a patch of wild bergamot seed heads (inset).

Liza Šimenc, 21, a dancer living in Chelsea, and frequent High Line visitor says, “I walk here all the time. I love to look at changing nature. I like it when it’s blooming, but I like the earth colors. And I bet it’s amazing in the winter, too.”

The High Line’s director of horticulture, Thomas Smarr, agrees: “Autumn continues to be a magical time in the garden. Just like spring, it is all about transitions of some plants blooming, changing leaf colors, and the fading life from the perennials, deciduous shrubs and trees as the plants focus on storing the energy collected all year into their roots.”

Don’t miss: Cherry-red fruits of the Winterberry holly or the bright yellow blooms of witch-hazel shrubs in the coming months.

Info: admission, free; 212-500- 6035, thehighline.org

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Manitoga



Visitors to the woodlands of Manitoga, in upstate Garrison, are encouraged to take hikes led by guides along specially built stone paths.

Photo: Christian Johnston

584 Route 9D, Garrison, NY

On a recent Saturday afternoon, Kate and Steve Esposito traveled from their home in Goshen, NY, to take a walking tour of industrial designer Russel Wright’s

former home, a meticulously built modernist house situated on 75-acres of lush woodland in Garrison, NY. American homes were filled with Wright's dinnerware, furniture and textiles throughout the early- to mid-20th century, but Wright, who believed in living in harmony with nature, paid particular attention to his garden. While he was alive, trees were carefully selected to be trimmed back, allowing for small view corridors forcing guests to look at specific images, like a section of the Palisades. So far the season's brisk weather has not been a deterrent for visitors.

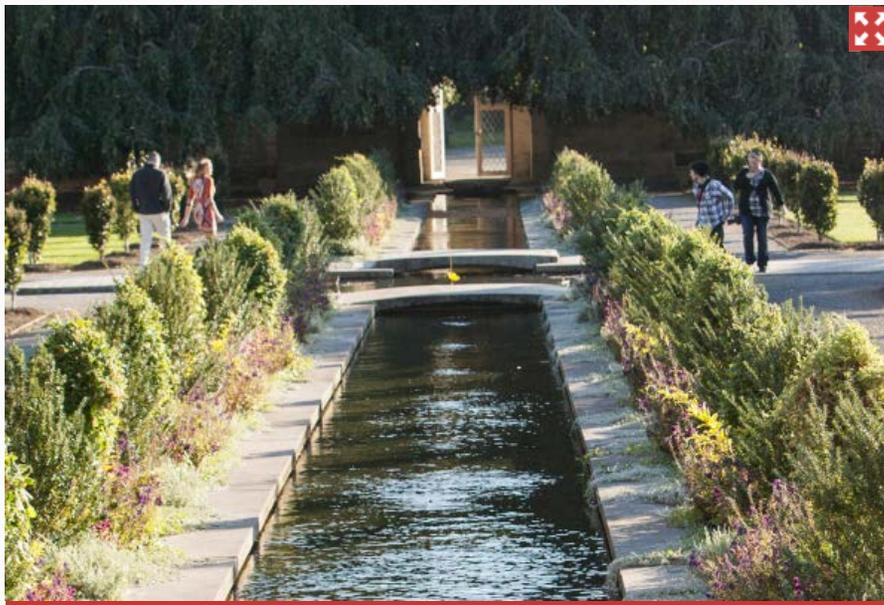
"A good garden never has an off time," says Esposito, a landscape architect. "Today is really different from a day in July. It's a great site, it's really indicative of the Hudson Valley." Added his wife, "We're going to come back next weekend and bring our dogs."

Don't miss: The "choreographed" rocks, including boulders strategically placed around the swimming hole so falling water makes distinctly pleasant sounds when landing on them.

Info: Metro-North to Garrison; taxi to Manitoga; admission: \$5, suggested donation; 845-424- 3812, russelwrightcenter. org

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Untermeyer Gardens



The Untermeyer Gardens was a huge attraction in the 1920s, but today, it's a little known gem.

Photo: Christian Johnston

945 N. Broadway, Yonkers

“If you like ruins or the mystery of a lost civilization like Pompeii, this will attract,” says Stephen Byrns, chairman of the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy.

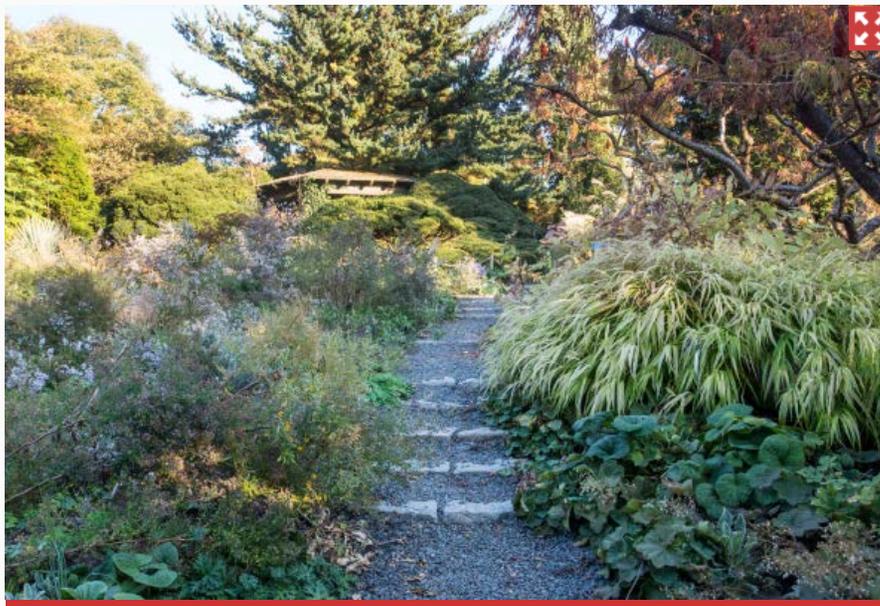
Manhattanite Delia Wang’s boyfriend brought her there for her 26th birthday last weekend. “Just walking in was magical,” says Wang of the Persianstyle landscaping in the walled garden, which includes reflecting pools, mosaics of Artemis and Medusa and 2,000-year-old monolithic Roman columns imported from Italy in 1915. “It’s like something from ‘Alice in Wonderland.’ ”

Don’t miss: The Temple of Love in the adjacent rock garden.

Info: Metro-North to Greystone or Yonkers; cab or No. 6 bus to garden; admission, free; 914-377-6450, untermyergardens.org

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Wave Hill



The Bronx’s Wave Hill offers beautiful views year round.

Photo: Christian Johnston

West 249th Street and Independence Avenue, The Bronx

Flower designer Hanako Shimamoto, 45, snapped photos from the tufts of perennial chives and spikes of maiden grass in the Wild Garden at Wave Hill. The Queens resident is a regular at the 28-acre Bronx sanctuary. “This is my hobby and

my oasis,” says Shimamoto. “It’s kind of sad, since winter is coming and summer is gone. The flowers start dying, but it’s a life cycle. The flowers go from vibrant and alive in summer, and the flowers and trees are very patient in the winter.”

“We encourage people to lie in the grass,” says Wave Hill’s Martha Gellens. “This is not a place where you’re not allowed to walk on the grass or touch plants. We want people to get up close and personal with nature, that’s our mission.”

Don’t miss: Hawks, bald eagles and other birds stopping to feed in the garden during migration.

Info: Metro- North to Riverdale or 1 train to West 242nd Street; admission, \$2 to \$8.; 718-549- 3200; wavehill.org

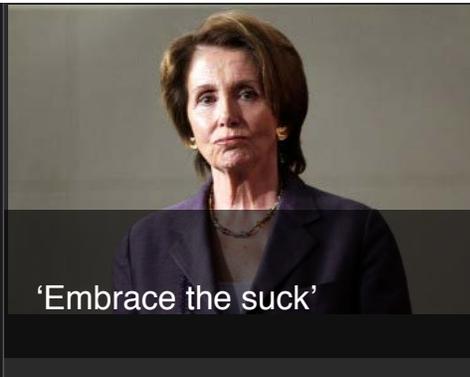
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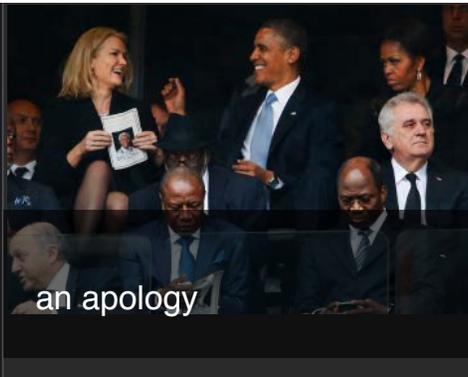
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