



Beautiful gardens that taste good, too

Flowers, plants – and bugs – are on the menus at these stunning gardens

by [Anne Kostalas](#)

Canadian gardens are known for their extraordinary beauty, and now you can eat your way through their delights from coast to coast.

At [Reford Gardens](#) in Québec (also known as Jardins de Métis), flowers and plants grown in the microclimate on the Gaspésie Peninsula, feature in a new range of jams, jellies and pickles. There are pickled daisy and daylily buds, jams scented with lavender and lemon basil and jellies from crabapples, mint and Labrador tea, a wetland plant with strongly flavoured leaves used as a tea by First Nations.

Chef Pierre Olivier Ferry at the Estevan Lodge in the grounds of the stunning gardens, uses these ingredients in his menu, which also includes locally sourced sea urchin, halibut and lobster. Other homegrown delights include purple sage butter, strawberry soup and geranium scented tart.

Reford Gardens were named after Elsie Reford, a keen gardener and plant collector who summered here from 1926 to 1958. The gardens, symbolized by the Himalayan Blue Poppy that Reford grew so well, are home to more than 3,000 species, cultivars and varieties of plants, both native and exotic. (Open June to September)

[Butchart Gardens](#) (pronounced butch-art) in Victoria, British Columbia is a National Historic Site of Canada with 55-acres of stunning floral gardens. The tradition of Afternoon Tea is still observed here with its sandwiches, sweet treats and the gardens' own blend of teas. You

can take the loose-leaf tea home with you. The gift store sells all four blends that are flavoured with rose petals, blackcurrant and blue cornflowers. Other garden edibles include the violet and pansy vinegar and local fireweed and wild flower honey. (Open year-round).

At the [Royal Botanical Garden](#) in Burlington, Ontario (just west of Toronto) there are several gardens that demonstrate how you can grow your own vegetables and herbs, from the Grandmother's Garden, filled with heritage produce, to the Veggie Village and Urban Edibles gardens. Take a stroll on some of the 31 trails through forests, fields and wetlands wrapped around the western tip of Lake Ontario and lunch at the Gardens Cafe in the RGB centre. Two top events include: the Lilac Festival in May featuring 700 varieties, and the Rose Festival in June and July. (Open year-round.)

At [Montréal Botanical Garden](#) you can try crunchy insects on your salad. This item on the menu of the Resto-bus is homage to the Insectarium and highlights the fact that entomophagy, the eating of insects, is seen by some as a solution to world hunger. The Botanical Garden features 75 hectares of gardens and greenhouses. The bus begins travelling through the Botanical Garden, Insectarium, Montreal Biodôme and Planetarium (known collectively as Montréal Space for Life) in May 2013. (Open year-round.)

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