

In Your Garden

The Changing Seasons at Monet's Garden

By Robert Blake

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Wisteria on the Japanese Bridge

Claude Monet (1840–1926) was a French artist and a leading member of the Impressionist group of painters. **Jennifer Carter**, who has visited Monet's Garden at Giverny in Normandy on six occasions, gave an enjoyable illustrated talk to the Gardeners' Club on how the garden changes during the seasons. It is the most visited garden in the world, attracting some 650,000 visitors per annum, and is open daily from March to October. Monet moved to Giverny in 1883 and from about 1890 he began to paint series of pictures of one subject. His own 2.5 acre walled garden provided ample material including the inspiration for the famous 'Waterlilies' series.

Springtime allows one to see the structure of the garden made up of many long paths with hooped climbing frames straddling them. The beds either side are full of tulips such as 'Purple Peony', the nearly black 'Queen of the Night' and the yellow spiky 'West Point'. Drifts of self-seeding Forget-Me-Nots nicely fill in the gaps between the tulips. Espalier apples and pears on the walls are coming into flower and the lily pads in the large pond are just beginning to appear.



House and Tulip Bed

By early summer the garden is transformed with pink and yellow borders full of Clematis, Phlox, Iris and mainly red and pink roses, many of which climb over the hoops and on wire frameworks at the top of tall poles. The Japanese bridge is covered in flowers from a Wisteria planted by Monet. By June/July the lily pond is in flower against a backdrop of Astilbes lining the edge, together with Monet's tall weeping willow. He painted the pond at many different times of the day, showing how the colours and reflections alter with the changing light conditions.

By autumn tall Helianthus colonise the borders along with Dahlias, dancing Cosmos, Colchicum (autumn crocus) and Aster frikartii with its lavender-blue, daisy flowers. Nasturtiums line the front of the borders and wander across the paths to join each other, providing a carpet of colour which is particularly striking in the 'Grand Alley' leading up to the house with the hoops covered in climbing roses. You will not see any variegated plants as Monet considered they distorted the colours. Words cannot adequately describe the beauty of the garden but you can find many superb photographs on the internet. Jennifer ended by pointing out that an adjoining garden at the Museum of American Art is a good example of the formal style of design, which many American artists visit to paint each year.



Grand Alley in the Autumn