
SUNNYSIDE THYMES

Volume 31, Issue 2

“Helping Others Grow”

February 2022

Botanical Gardens to Love

It is February in Indiana and not much happening in the garden. Some of you may be getting the itch to go south in search of sun and temperatures above 40 degrees. If you plan to travel in February or early March there are a couple of jewels for you to enjoy along your way if your travel takes you down the I-75 corridor and Florida's east coast. Neither of these is a botanical garden in the strict definition of the term but are instead demonstration gardens which have some of their offerings labeled in accordance with botanic garden “rules”. They are, however, balm for a winter weary soul.



GIBBS GARDENS

As you travel south of Chattanooga on I-75 you will be within a few miles of Ball Ground, Georgia. Located in the north Georgia mountains, Gibbs Gardens has 20 million daffodils of 200 varieties on 50 acres which bloom over a six week period beginning in mid February, weather cooperating. My last visit was on March 5th in 2018 and they were well into their bloom season. The wooded hillsides are breathtaking as they come into view as one strolls along the many paths. The garden comprises 220 acres of seasonal displays besides daffodils, including daylilies, water lilies, maples and roses. There is also a 40 acre Japanese Garden winding along a gurgling stream. The small restaurant and outside seating area are currently closed due to Covid restrictions. Before going it would be a good idea to check their website (www.gibbsgardens.com) to insure the daffodils are indeed blooming. Something new since my last visit is that all tickets must be bought on line but have no specific date and can be used on any day of the year when they are open. (Check their website for details.)

CUMMER MUSEUM GARDENS

Shortly after entering Florida on I-75 one will come to the junction with I-10 which crosses the state from east to west. Taking I-10 to Jacksonville will give you access to either I-95 or US 1 to continue your journey to the really warm spots along Florida's east coast. Take a minute to check out another gem of a garden in

Jacksonville. The gardens at the Cummer Museum of Art along the St. John's River near downtown are a complete surprise well worth a visit even if art galleries are not your cup of tea. Only 3 acres but packed with loveliness, this Italianate garden is formally laid out around two rectangular reflecting pools with an arched pergola on the river which is draped with wisteria in late spring. Azaleas will be profusely in bloom in February and an enormous live oak tree is covered in moss, ferns and bromeliads along its many branches, some of which touch the ground. Seasonal displays of perennials bring color to the garden throughout the year. Covid has made visiting the gardens more difficult by requiring advance ticket purchase (\$10) on line. Please see their website: www.cummermuseum.org

