Virtual vistas are beautiful in the lower Hudson Valley

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The Open Days Program of the nonprofit Garden Conservancy allows visitors to see some of the best private gardens in the country, most of which are open just one day a year.

Sadly, some of the most beautiful gardens will not be seen this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Garden Conservancy has canceled its Open Days and educational programs through June 15.

"We remain hopeful that Open Days for the remainder of the season will be able to go forward, but continue to rely on guidance from federal and state authorities, as well as our hosts and ambassadors, to determine the necessity of any additional cancellations," the Garden Conservancy noted in a statement.

Meanwhile, fans can stay connected via In My Garden: A Visual Diary, which features behind-the-scenes updates from members of Open Days and preservation communities around the country. A companion website page has been created at:


The Garden Conservancy will also be publishing a special 66-page book celebrating "25 years of Open Days" in early June.

Here's a look at some of the gardens highlighted by the Garden Conservancy in the past:

Ice Pond Farm

In his long and colorful borders, former Olympian and skating commenter Dick Button has planted an unusual mix of classic English cottage garden plants combined with wilder things you’re more likely to see in a meadow.

Button is one of the founding gardeners for the Garden Conservancy’s Open Days program, first opening to the public in 1995.

There are 13 spots with water in his garden, including fish ponds, barrels, a pig trough, fountains, and the namesake ice pond at the very bottom of the valley.
Vistas

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behind the 1840s farmhouse.

Dappled Berms, Poughkeepsie

This lush one-acre garden is such a surprise, tucked into a ho-hum 1950s suburban neighborhood. If you garden with mature trees and lots of shade, this garden is a must-see, with more than 315 different hosta cultivars (all labeled) spread among the many beds and man-made berms. Dappled Berms is one of 25 gardens featured in the recently published book by Linda O’Keefe, “Inside Outside: A Sourcebook of Inspired Garden Rooms.”

Ellen and Eric Petersen’s garden, Standfordville

Like many exuberant gardeners, Ellen Petersen said her Dutchess County garden got bigger every year. She has been gardening here since 1981. Highlights of her garden include a meadow of Sporobolus heterolepis (prairie dropseed) that frames a sculpture by Vivian Beer, container and native plantings, and lots of annual and perennial sunflowers. The garden was included in Jane Garmey’s book “Private Gardens of the Hudson Valley.”

Clove Brook Farm, Millbrook

The garden at Clove Brook Farm, which flows around an 1830s Greek Revival farmhouse, was designed by P. Allen Smith in collaboration with potter Christopher Spitzmiller in 2014. It was featured in the July 2015 Country House issue of Architectural Digest. Allen chose topiaries, Japanese willows and white “Phantom” hydrangeas to accent the front perennial beds and create a focal point. The horseshoe-shaped layout begins with two long, mixed perennial beds toward the front, and the additional rectangular beds include a mix of flowers and vegetables planted to bloom seasonally.

Stonecrop Garden, Cold Spring

Originally the home of Frank and Anne Cabot (Frank Cabot is the founder of the Garden Conservancy), Stonecrop became a public garden in 1992. The display gardens cover an area of about 12 acres and incorporate a diverse collection of gardens and plants including woodland and water gardens, a grass garden, raised alpine stone beds, a cliff rock garden, perennial beds, and an enclosed English-style flower garden. Additional features include a conservatory, display alpine house, a pit house with an extensive collection of choice dwarf bulbs, and systematic order beds representing over 50 plant families.

Innisfree, Millbrook

Innisfree, in Millbrook is considered by some to be one of the best gardens in the world.