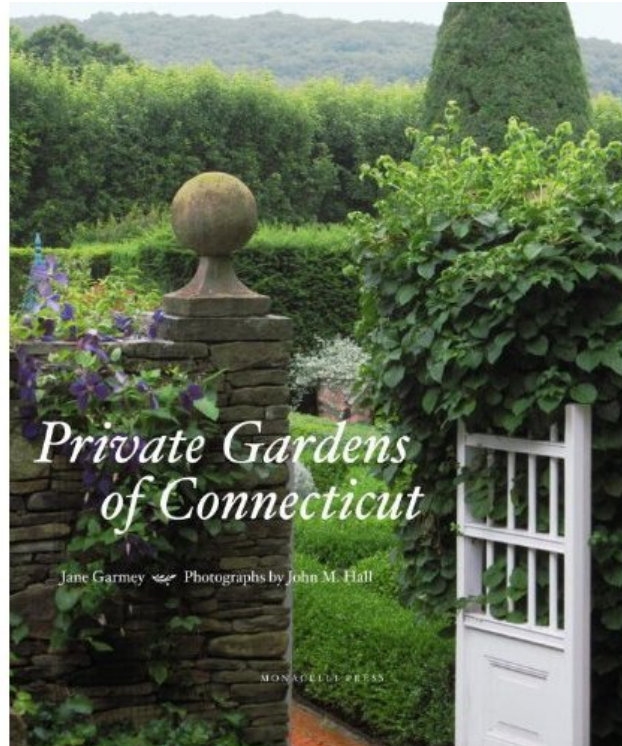


Private Gardens of Connecticut

Jane Garmey

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Jane Garmey : Private Gardens of Connecticut before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Private Gardens of Connecticut:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Private Gardens of Connecticut By Averil norman I am a hands-on, keen gardener. I found this book to be exquisite in every aspect. The quality of the publication, the script and the photography are excellent. I enjoyed the variety of the gardens - some were inland, some were coastal and others were a mixture of both. Each garden illustrated was unique in design and style. I have no hesitation in recommending this beautiful achievement to any person who enjoys landscapes and gardens. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Paul CV good product and service 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful book By Cet Bought this book as a gift for my sister - a master gardener who lives in Connecticut - she loved it! The pictures were beautiful and she enjoyed reading about what was done in gardens around her part of the country.

Connecticut is uniquely rich in beautiful landscape, encompassing more than six hundred miles of serene shoreline along Long Island Sound, untold acres of open farmland, and the rolling hills and lakes of the famed northwest corner on the New York/Massachusetts border. The varied topography and microclimates have given rise to an unusual range of gardens. Twenty-eight are presented here, a rare and privileged glimpse of the private retreats of prominent members of the fashion, design, arts, and business communities. Some are grand in scale, others exceedingly modest, but all have been cared for and tended with great love. None of these gardens was made overnight and many have

taken years to come to fruition. The garden of the Greek god Adonis may have one day blossomed and fruitful were the next, but not any of the gardens featured in this book. In an engaging and highly anecdotal text, Jane Garmey tells the story of the creation of the gardens and the pleasure the owners take in them while John Halls magnificent photographs of sumptuous flowers and luxuriant foliage bring them to life

"Private Gardens of Connecticut celebrates the beauty and bounty of summer and gives us something to look forward to and contemplate." *New Haven Register* "[John] Hall's photographs do unfold in a way that one has a sense of strolling through each garden." *Hartford Courant* "I have always quietly believed that Connecticut should be renamed The Gardening State for the sheer number of impressive gardens on its varied landscape. This book confirms that belief. [It is] written with remarkable insight and lavishly illustrated with photos." *Moffly Media* "Garmey . . . has an autodidacts curiosity, which is reflected in the thoughtful text that is filled with the sorts of juicy bits that you normally only pick up on a garden tour." *Rural Intelligence*

About the Author Jane Garmey is a noted garden writer and a contributor to the *New York Times*. Born in England, she is the author of *The Writer in the Garden*, *Great British Cooking: A Well-Kept Secret*, and *Great New British Cooking*. She lives in New York and in Cornwall, Connecticut. John M. Hall is a photographer and artist based in New York. He regularly collaborates with architects, interior designers, and garden designers for publication. His books include *Greek Revival America*, *Fresh Cuts*, *Designing Women*, and *Adventures with Old Houses*. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Introduction First, a confession. I am addicted to gardens. I love being in my own, but I also get enormous pleasure from going to other peoples, talking to them, smelling their roses, and listening to their plans. Its a pleasure I didnt know I was missing until I caught the gardening bug. That happened in the 1970s when my husband and I became the owners of a dilapidated eighteenth-century saltbox in northwest Connecticut. It came with a lot of untended grass and little else in the way of landscaping. Since my husband was preoccupied with the structure of the house, it seemed logical that the out-of-doors should be my responsibility. Knowing almost nothing about even the most basic principles of horticulture, I was hardly a willing recruit. I am English and grew up in England and, to my astonishment, I found my American friends assumed, that the English are born with a grasp of the subtleties of successful composting, knew how to prune, and could, of course, tell the difference between a rugosa rose and a hybrid tea. My pleas of ignorance were interpreted as false modesty and there was general disbelief when I tried to explain that neither of my parents were the least bit interested in anything to do with gardens. The only formative experience in horticulture I can remember was going with one of my auntsa passionate rosarianon a trip to Whipsnade Zoo to collect buckets of elephant dung with which to cover her roses. But back to my garden. It suffered not only from my lack of experience but also from the rigors of Connecticut's harsh winters and sweltering summers, and even the occasional hurricane. While my neighbors took these conditions in stride, my English friends were incredulous when I told them of dawn raids by hungry deer, surprise incursions by egg-laying snapping turtles, temperatures that dropped well below minus 10 in the winter, snow in April, and once even frost during the last week of May. But, somehow as I began to learn some of the complexities of gardening in a country with ten different hardiness zones, I got hooked and soon there was nothing I liked better than going to see gardens and learning from their owners how to work around the limitations of this unforgiving climate. So, when many years later the chance arose to do a book with my friend photographer John Hall about private gardens of Connecticut, I couldnt believe my good fortune. Connecticut is the third smallest state in America (ninety-five miles by sixty-five miles at its widest point), but its topography is surprisingly varied, stretching from the shoreline of Long Island Sound to the Litchfield Hills and from the suburbs of New York to well north of Hartford. Home of patriot Nathan Hale, actress Katharine Hepburn, writer Mark Twain, and composer Charles Ives, Connecticut is known for its insurance industry and its state flower (mountain laurel) but not particularly for its gardens, in spite of a rich garden history. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Greenwich emerged as a fashionable suburb of New York, and Connecticut's coastline began to attract a succession of summer visitors, including New Yorkers with power and money such as William Rockefeller (John D.s brother), Lewis Lapham, one of the founders of Texaco Oil Company, and Edmund Converse, the inventor and founder of U.S. Steel. These industrialists created vast estates with palatial European-inspired gardens, or chose American landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles Gillette, Fletcher Steele, Warren Manning, Beatrix Farrand, and Ellen Biddle Shipman to design their gardens. The gardens of one estate in Greenwich were so vast that more than fifteen gardeners were required to maintain them. Morton Plants Branford House near Groton boasted an astonishing sunken water garden with a circular fountain and mounded beds designed by landscape architect Guy Lowell. Eolia, the elegant summer mansion of the Harkness family, set on over 230 seaside acres of sweeping lawns at Goshen Point, a little south of New London, started out as an Italianate garden with colonnaded loggias but was later redesigned by Beatrix Farrand in the style of an English Edwardian garden. Sadly, most of these gardens have not survived, and many of the grand ones were turned into tennis courts or swimming pools in the 1950s. One of Beatrix Farrand's gardens was replaced with sod in order to make an outdoor seating area, while that of Standard Oil heiress Annie Burr Jennings ended up as a residential subdivision. Others literally went to seed after years of neglect as the expense of maintaining their labor intensive outdoor rooms became too great. There are some exceptions, the two most notable being Eolia, now Harkness State Park, and Hill-

Stead House in Farmington, both of which are open to the public today and give a sense of what that grand and lost tradition was all about. For this book, we were not, however, searching so much for historical gardens as for twentieth-century work. Inevitably, we have seen more gardens than we could possibly include and inevitably there will be those who disagree with the choices we have made. But, here, another confession is in order. This book was never intended to be a comprehensive survey of private gardens in Connecticut, but is instead a personal and often idiosyncratic selection. Our criteria were simple. We wanted to include gardens from as many parts of the state as possible and to focus on the wide diversity of styles from formal to small, contemporary, wild, and old-fashioned. Some of those we selected had never been professionally photographed while others had been published, and in some cases frequently. Some are open to visitors a few times a year through the Garden Conservancy's popular Open Day Program; others do not participate. Some are grand in scale, others exceedingly modest but all have been cared for and tended with great love. None of these gardens was made overnight and many have taken years to come to fruition. The garden of the Greek god Adonis may have one day blossomed and fruitful were the next but not any of the gardens featured in this book. As I crisscrossed the state searching out gardens, I was struck again and again by how essentially rural Connecticut still is. Even Hartford, its capital and second largest city with a population of 124,512, is tiny by today's standards. In spite of its small size, Connecticut's climate is tremendously variable, incorporating three different plant hardiness zones. Its landscape too is surprisingly varied, encompassing 618 miles of magnificent coastline, untold acres of glorious open farmland, and steep wooded hills. The one connecting thread to be found in every part of the state is, however, stone. Connecticut once had hundreds of quarries, although not many survive today. The stone from each was unique, a testament to the state's complex geology. Granite from Stony Creek in Eastern Connecticut became the base of the Statue of Liberty and was used in building New York's Grand Central Terminal, while rich chocolate-colored sandstone from Portland near Middletown was the most common building material of the nineteenth century and gave its name to many thousands of New York townhouses. Today, what we most notice are the miles and miles of long winding iconic stone walls that traverse the state and are such a poignant reminder of Connecticut farming. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these dry-stone walls were stacked and laid without the aid of any concrete mortar. Made to fence in animals, divide farming pastures, and delineate property lines, they were strictly utilitarian. Today they are one of the most distinctive features of the Connecticut landscape, their lyrical lines testimony to their mostly anonymous builders. Every garden in this book makes use of local stone in one way or another, be it for walls, pathways, or extending rock ledges, and whether intentionally or by happenstance, stone is incorporated into their overall design. Writing tends to be a solitary occupation so I feel extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to collaborate with a remarkably talented photographer. Seeing a garden through John's eyes, discussing what makes it unique, and deciding how and what to focus on has been an eye-opening experience. In writing about gardens, the seventeenth-century poet Andrew Marvell refers to their delicious solitude. That description holds true for all of the gardens in this book. They are personal and private in the best sense of the word, and to make each of them come alive to others, the camera must capture the garden's personality and the text reveal it. I hope that we have succeeded.