



# Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival

## **A Summer Garden Celebration Finding “Tour Worthy” Gardens**

Non-profits who seek gardens for the Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival have several ways to connect with potential property owners who are willing to open their gardens for your benefit.

- Begin early. Do not wait until May to try and find gardens. Start talking to people in the fall and early winter.
- Start with your base. Ask your board members to either open their garden or ask friends who have nice landscapes. Send them the criteria below so that they’ll know that it’s not just Hydrangea plants that make a garden tour worthy.
- Contact local garden clubs, put up notices at area libraries or garden centers, post on the Cape Cod Gardening Facebook group, and spread the word through your personal contacts and networks. You know people who know people, so keep asking everyone you know.
- Put out a call for gardens in your nonprofit’s newsletter and on your website. Post the criteria below so that people will understand what makes a garden “tour worthy.”

### **Criteria for A Tour Worthy Garden**

Some homeowners are willing to share their gardens during the annual Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival but wonder if their yard would be of interest to visitors. They are wise to ask since those who tour gardens *do* expect something beyond a few Hydrangeas and the average backyard, no matter how much the owner loves it.

Here are a few guidelines for deciding if you should offer to open your landscape. Note that no garden will have all of these features, and even one of these might be enough to make a yard “tour worthy.”

- An abundance of flowers in July. People love seeing gardens in bloom, no matter what type of flowers they are. You don’t even have to have a great deal of Hydrangeas.

- Outside living spaces. Fire pits, attractive patios, gazebos, tree houses, outdoor kitchens and other garden “rooms” are always of interest.
- Plant collections. Do you have large plantings of conifers, hosta, roses or hydrangeas? If you’re a collector with a passion for a particular type of plant, that is appealing.
- A beautiful view or sense of place. If your property is on the water, or has a particularly special Cape Cod feel, people enjoy seeing how the landscape flows into that vista or reflects this seaside location.
- Edible landscaping. A large vegetable garden or herbs are always of interest, especially if they are beautiful and well-tended.
- Art and ornaments. Yards that make use of garden ornaments, from traditional to repurposed and funky, can be a draw. Tourists like to visit local artists’ gardens.
- Unusual architecture or charming outbuildings. Yards and gardens that compliment the structures are pleasing. Think delightful cottages, unique sheds, gazebos or greenhouses.
- Huge and grand or preciously small. An unusually large landscape or a very tiny jewel-box garden could be interesting to the public.
- A particular theme or philosophy. Native plant gardens, pollinator gardens, deep shade gardens, container plantings, or other niche landscapes attract visitors.

In addition to any of the above attributes, a garden might have features that solve problems or are especially unique. Both amateur and professionally designed or maintained landscapes are welcomed.

Again, although this festival is organized under the umbrella of our signature plant, the *Hydrangea*, it’s not necessary for a garden on tour to contain these shrubs. Make a note in the garden’s description that “Although there are no hydrangeas on this property the gardens are notable because of x, y, and z.”

If you would like one of the Hydrangea Festival organizers to see your garden and give you feedback about whether it belongs on the tour, please contact Greta at the Cape Cod Chamber.