



Southern **GARDEN TRAIL:** **The JC Raulston Arboretum**

REVEL IN FALL'S OTHER SUNFLOWERS AND THE IMPRESSIVE YEAR-ROUND DIVERSITY OF THIS NORTH CAROLINA GARDEN THAT CARRIES ON A FLOURISHING LEGACY.

BY Claire Pool | PHOTOGRAPHY BY John O'Hagan AND COURTESY OF JC Raulston Arboretum



From magnificent oaks to ruby-hued Japanese maples and golden ginkgos, bask in the shade of trees planted by renowned horticulturist J. C. Raulston. (Opposite) The arboretum's "Air Bee & Bee" pollinator hotel is a testament to Raulston's influence, carried on by a faithful community of volunteers.

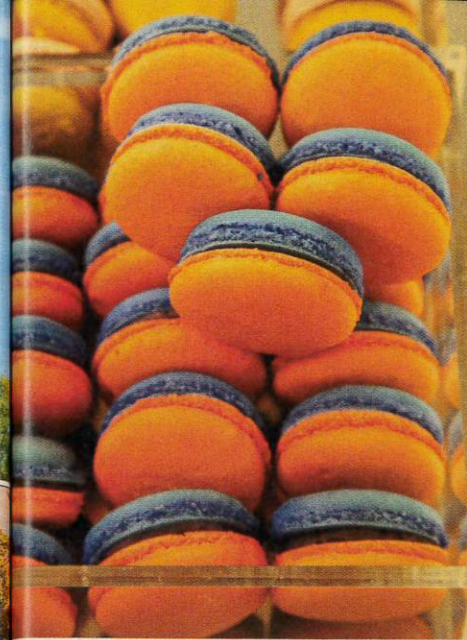


As you stroll the streets of Raleigh in the cooler months, a profusion of pink blossoms beckons you toward the abundant grounds of the JC Raulston Arboretum, home to exquisite flora that epitomize horticulturist J. C. Raulston's mantra: "to plan and plant for a better world."

"In his will, he left money for one of his favorite trees, the Japanese flowering apricot, to be planted around the city," says Mark Weathington, director of the JC Raulston Arboretum. "What we do still directly flows from what J. C.'s thinking was at the time. He was incredibly influential in the 20 years he was here." Nearly 50 years after Raulston first arrived in Raleigh, the arboretum continues to support his original goal and influence the community.

An Oklahoma native, Raulston grew up on a farm and developed a love of and fascination with all aspects of nature. Before settling in Raleigh, he attended schools in his home state and Maryland, then he traveled to Texas and Florida to further his research. In 1975, he joined North Carolina State University as a professor in the department of horticultural sciences, where he soon established the NCSU Arboretum, later renamed in his honor.





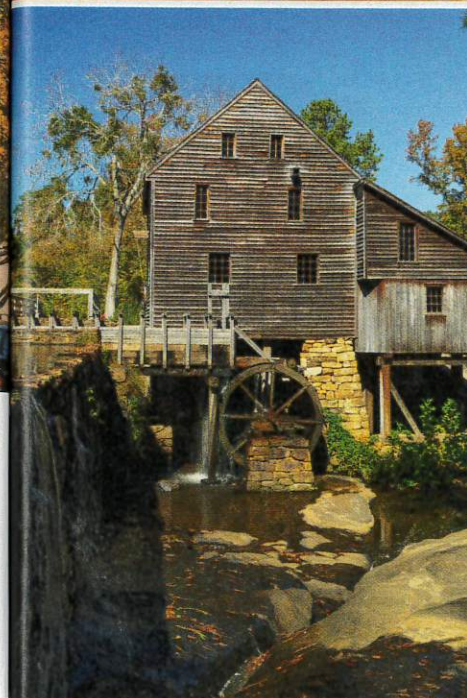
Raulston's greatest priority was the diversification of the American landscape, with a focus on built environments, suburbia, and other densely populated living areas. His work revolved around broadening a concept he coined as the 40/90 rule, stating there are only 40 plants that make up 90 percent of a particular region. "If you went to any nursery or garden center, you would see the same 40 plants at each location," says Mark. Craving more diversity, Raulston encouraged nurseries and gardeners to expand their selections in order to increase the variety of their regions.

He began by acquiring trees and shrubs from wherever he could find them and planted them at the arboretum, often ignoring peers who claimed certain flora wouldn't grow in Southern conditions. Plants deemed a success were sent to nurseries to be sold, while others were propagated and sent cross-country to other

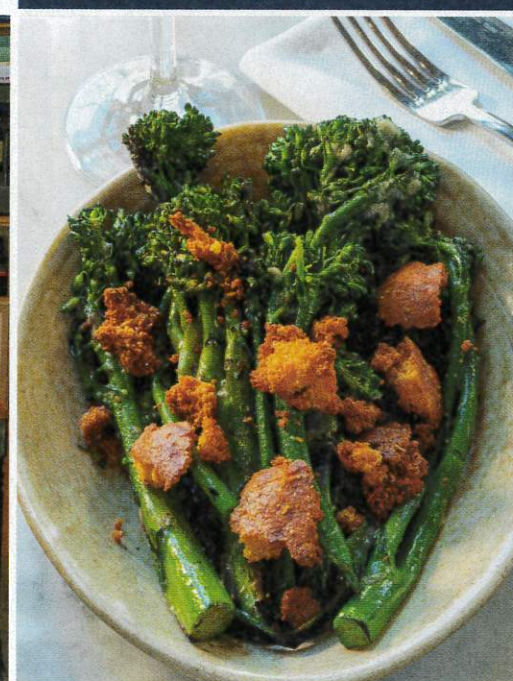
horticulturists for experiments on their own grounds. Now, as a result of his research, big-box stores offer even greater plant diversity than specialty garden centers in the 1980s.

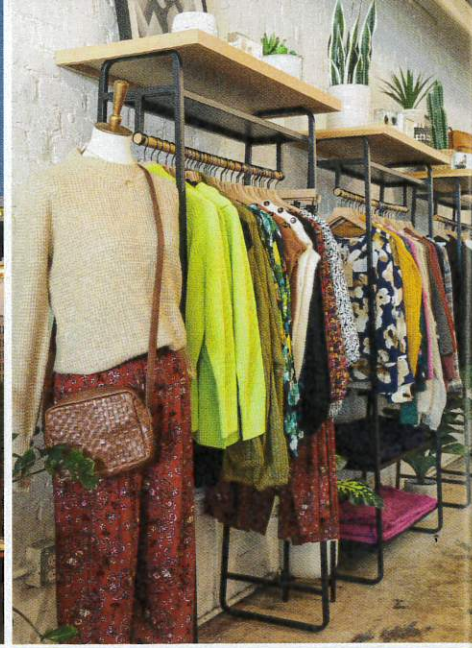
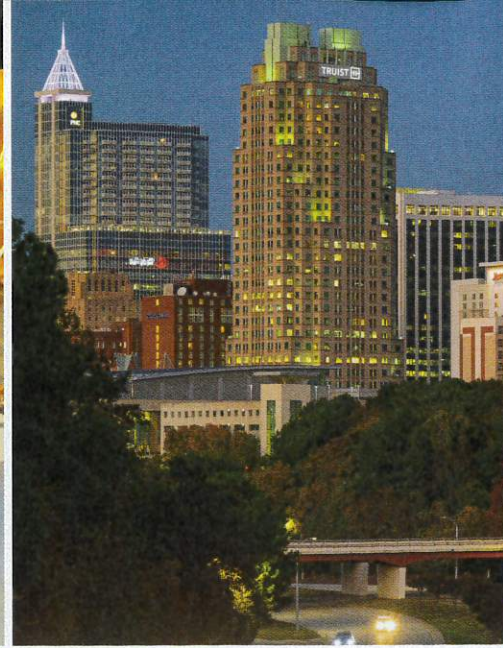
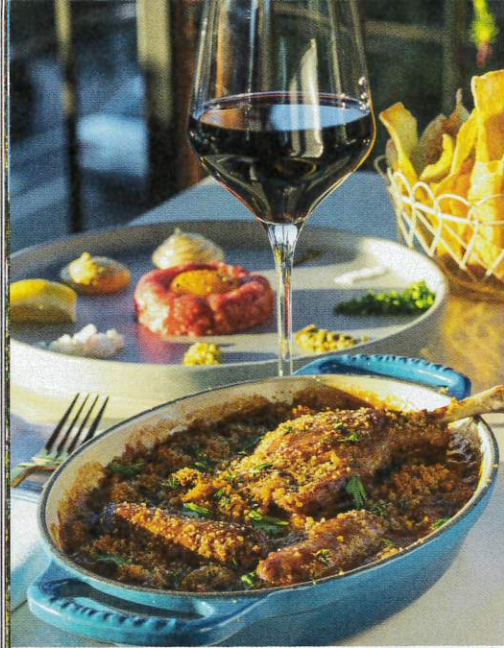
Raulston's impact not only on North Carolina but also across the United States and beyond is an honor and accomplishment the arboretum proudly boasts. "He was so amazing at inspiring people, but he was also so good at connecting the right plants with the right people," Mark says.

Visitors who explore the nationally acclaimed garden today experience the diligent work the team at the JC Raulston Arboretum have put forth. "Last year, we distributed over 16,000 plants and seed lots to nurseries, members of the garden, and other botanic institutions," says Mark. With support from donations, members, and more than 300 active volunteers, the arboretum is primarily self-funded and open every day with free admission.



(Clockwise from right) The sights and sounds of North Carolina's capital are sure to invigorate your visit. Enjoy a delectable meal at Chef Ashley Christensen's Death & Taxes, where each menu item is cooked over a wood-fired grill. Toast to a wonderful trip at Wine Authorities, home to an impressive selection of bottles. Specialty lattes and breakfast favorites await at The Morning Times. The Historic Yates Mill County Park helps preserve the last operable water-powered gristmill in Wake County. For a midday pick-me-up, savor patisserie goodies such as macarons, bite-size cheesecakes, and baklava croissants from lucettegrace, then peruse So & So Books for your next great read.





(Clockwise from top left) Delight in the sumptuous modern French fare at Jolie, surveying a view of downtown from the rooftop. The Flourish Market is a local favorite for stylish apparel. The beautiful Heights House hotel garners allure from its Italianate-style features, which date back to the mansion's 1860 completion. Experience nearly 5 miles of breathtaking installations and landscapes at the North Carolina Museum of Art. At DECO Raleigh, shop for locally sourced mugs, spice blends, candles, and more. History and nature aficionados will appreciate an afternoon at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, followed by a tour of the historic Oakwood neighborhood and a walk through the 1785 Mordecai House (opposite). Round out your trip with a fantastic dinner at Crawford & Son (bottom left) and a box of handcrafted confections from Videri Chocolate Factory.



Their largest event of the year, Moonlight in the Garden, is open for seven nights in early November. Guests are invited to enjoy the property in a magical, dramatic encounter, as elaborate fixtures illuminate fields and cast a glow upon the delicate flora and majestic greenery. In addition to this extravaganza, the arboretum also hosts a half-day symposium twice a year called Gardening in the South, geared toward new gardeners or those less familiar with Southern terrain.

Visitors also enjoy exploring the Lath House, where young and tender plants are closely observed throughout various conditions. The constant rotation of plantings ensures there's always a different species to witness. Another fan favorite is the Color Trials garden, an official testing site for a multitude of newly cultivated plants and flowers. Their bountiful color is a stunning sight, and the fragrant scents of sunflower, hibiscus, speedwell, and more envelop the air this time of year.

Raulston made a lasting impression on Raleigh that will forever be remembered. "Our mission is to inspire the passion for plants and the natural world," says Mark. Among the delicate blooms of Raulston's favorite ornamental fruit tree and the evergreen plantings cared for by the arboretum's team, embrace a moment of quietude as you admire the plentiful beauty and natural magnificence left in his place.

For information, visit jcr.ncsu.edu.

