

# NEWFOUNDLAND VACATION • HOMES



## **Wild and Windblown: Nature's Gardens**

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### **Excerpts from the Article**

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Just as modern tastes are calling for wild blueberries, wild salmon and free-range chicken, the taste in gardens is leaning towards the wild as well, for many of the same reasons.

First, there is only one force at work. These gardens are Mother Nature's handiwork, and no one else has muddled with the design or the input. Everything is naturally occurring and self-sustaining and raised without the intervention of cultivation or chemicals. Most of these gardens are remote pockets of idyllic peace, virtually untouched by man and far removed from noise, pollution and traffic. Plants and trees are indigenous, many of them having survived and thrived for centuries. These gardens are a promise of continuity and regeneration.

There's no denying the beauty of the cultivated garden, and some of the world's most satisfying visual delights can be found, for example, in the graceful contours of the Palace Het Loo gardens in Holland or Sissinghurst in England. But the wild garden is a different kind of experience, one lacking in artifice but brimming with untrimmed energy.

Here are six of the world's best places to visit Mother Nature's wild gardens, from those that promise the bounty of spring lupines to those that offer the almost hidden delights of Arctic orchids:

#### ***Skerwink Trail, Newfoundland***

Selected as one of the best hiking trails in the world by Travel + Leisure magazine, the Skerwink is the perfect meeting of land and sea. Craggy cliffs tower over a sinuous coastline that curves through this Canadian eco-zone called the Boreal Shield, and the views out to sea are vast. There's nothing between you and Ireland but many kilometres of water. Plant life along the 5.3-kilometre trail varies widely as the terrain moves from the scrappy lichen and tenuous bushes that cling to the cliff edge to boreal forest and undisturbed wetlands. There are no barriers between you and the cliff face. Walking farther inland is less treacherous, if occasionally muddy. The rewards, though, are abundant. Peggy Fisher, who with her husband John runs The Fishers' Loft Inn near the entrance to the trail, walks the Skerwink almost daily. "One of my favourite times of the year is June when parts of the trail are covered in white flowers -- labrador tea, star flowers, bunch berry, woodland violets and bakeapple. At the same time lady slippers are in bloom; rhodora and sheep laurel a little earlier."

On the forest floor and along the edges of ponds can be found bog rosemary, high bush cranberry, baneberry and wild sarsaparilla.

*You can enter the Skerwink from Port Rexton, about a 250-kilometre drive from St. John's. The trail can be hiked in two hours, but most find that to really absorb the beauty, and to enjoy a picnic, four to five hours is better. Fishers' Loft: 1-877-464-3240; <http://www.fishersloft.com>. For more information about the Skerwink Trail, visit <http://www.thediscoverytrail.org>.*

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Continued on next page