The Renaissance Gardens of Italy

June 10-19, 2027

A 10-day study and travel abroad experience for Extension Master Gardeners and their garden-loving guests.

About This Course:

Our goal is to expand Master Gardeners' knowledge in ornamental horticulture, landscape, and garden design in a historical context. We'll visit and study such notable historic gardens and sites as the Medici Villas Castello, Petraia, and Boboli as well as the Villa Gamberaia in Florence, Villa Garzoni in Collodi, Villa Lante in Bagnaia, Villa D'Este in Tivoli and the Villa Medici in Rome. Other sites include the Sacro Bosco (Park of the Monsters), Ninfa Ruins Garden, Landriana Gardens and the Borghese Gallery in Rome. Free time in Florence is included. Participants are encouraged to extend their stay in Rome for additional personal sightseeing at additional cost.

Program Policies:

Registration is only open to participants in a Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Program (one sponsored guest permitted). Enrollment will be limited to 25 total (Master Gardeners and guests). Twelve spaces in the class are prioritized for Purdue Extension Master Gardeners and program alumni in the first round of applications.

Advanced Master Gardener Training hours will be credited to those Purdue University Master Gardeners who complete the required reading assignments. Master Gardener participants may also earn volunteer service hours upon their return by sharing what they've learned with others.

Instructors from the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture:

Dr. Mike Dana
Emeritus Professor



Ms. Karen Mitchell
Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist



Dr. Dana and colleagues have organized and conducted Master Gardener International Continuing Education Travel programs since 2005, exploring England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy and the Netherlands.

Presented by:
Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
Master Gardener Program
International Programs in Agriculture

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Villa Lante at Bagnaia



What's Included (Land Package only):

- Two full-time Purdue instructors
- Bilingual Tour Manager escort
- Transport in Italy via private motor coach
- Comfortable (AC) hotel accommodations throughout (double occupancy, single supplement at additional cost.)
- Hotel breakfast daily, 6 lunches, and 7 dinners
- Admission to 12 gardens and sites
- Motorcoach driver and group meal gratuities
- Introductory program, study guide, local guides at some sites
- Travel health and accident insurance (this is not "trip insurance")

What's Not Included:

- Airfare
- Personal items (passport fees, laundry, alcoholic beverages)
- Hotel gratuities
- Some lunches, some dinners and other incidental expenses.
- Transport to/from airport in Rome to/from hotel
- Trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1) Due to the historical and horticultural nature of the sites visited, full accessibility at these sites cannot be guaranteed. Each day, there will be substantial walking and sometimes, the climbing of steep stairs and / or slopes without handrail.

2) Participants must be able to function independently on free days and at public events.

Preparatory Reading (distributed to participants just prior to commencement of course):

The Renaissance Gardens of Italy - Landscape & Garden Study Guide

Additional Suggested Reading:

- Any brief history of Italy, eg.: Duggan, ***A Concise History of Italy*** or Lintner, ***A Traveller's History of Italy***
- for a garden overview: Laras, Ann, ***Gardens of Italy***
- for a really deep dive: Lazzaro, Claudia, ***The Italian Renaissance Garden***

Itinerary:

(*Meals Included B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

Wednesday, June 9 - Travel toward Rome

Thursday, June 10 – Arrival in Rome, walk to the airport hotel. Free time to relax and/or explore Fiumicino or taxi to the nearby ruins of Ostia Antica. Welcome/ get acquainted gathering for dinner and course introduction.

Friday, June 11 – Travel by motor coach to Florence. Once situated at our hotel, you'll have the afternoon free to find lunch and begin getting acquainted with the Medieval charm of Florence, before returning to the hotel for dinner. (B, D)

Saturday, June 12 – We begin our exploration of Renaissance gardens with a guided visit to Villas Medici á Castello and La Petraia; suburban villas built to glorify the Medici dynasty. They exemplify the classic forms of the Renaissance Garden. After lunch, we'll shift to the Baroque with a visit to Villa Garzoni in Collodi (also the home of Pinocchio!) (B, L, D)

Sunday, June 13 – Our morning destination is the expansive Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace. After lunch we'll walk through an olive grove to reach the 17th century Villa Gamberaia, a quintessential Tuscan villa made famous in the early 20th century by Edith Wharton in her book ***Italian Villas and Their Gardens.*** Dinner on your own. (B, L)

Monday, June 14 – Free day in Florence to explore museums, shops, churches, and sights. Be sure to book ahead. (B)

Tuesday, June 15 – Our travels take us south to Tivoli near Rome. We'll explore the Villa Gregoriana gorge, have some lunch, and then revel in the terraces, sculptures, water organ and fountains of the Villa d'Este. Later, we head to our hotel in Rome. (B, L, D)

Wednesday, June 16 – Morning departure to Bomarzo to visit the mysterious Sacro Bosco sculpture garden, followed by the exquisite Villa Lante symbolizing the story of humanity from Mt. Parnassus to salvation through creativity and intelligence. (B, L, D)

Thursday, June 17 – We stay in Rome this day to enjoy the Villa Broghese gardens and the spectacular sculpture of the Borghese Gallery. In the afternoon, we'll tour the Villa Medici in Rome, the pinnacle of high Renaissance gardens. (B, L, D)

Friday, June 18 – Fast forward to the modern gardens of Ninfa set among the ruins of an ancient city, considered by some to be "the most romantic garden in the world"! In the afternoon, we'll stroll the horticultural garden rooms of Landriana. Dinner in Rome concludes our program. (B, L, D)

Saturday, June 19 – Depart for home or extend your stay on your own. We encourage everyone to spend extra days sightseeing in Italy. (B) [*Extending your stay in the program hotel in Rome will be available on an individual basis at additional cost*].

Ninfa Garden



Accommodations:

All 4-Star hotels, Fiumicino (one night), Florence (four nights), Rome (four nights).

Single Travelers:

We encourage all participants to travel with a companion. Program leaders cannot assist participants during free time or independent activities. Hotel roommates must be determined by individual participants; program leaders will not assist.

Refund Policy:

Fees, once paid, are NOT REFUNDABLE. Registrants are STRONGLY encouraged to purchase commercial trip cancellation insurance.

Program Cost:

- Hotel Single Occupancy $8000/person
- Hotel Double Occupancy $6700/person

Payment Schedule:

A $1000 per person deposit is due November 23, 2026. Balance of fee due Friday, Januray 22, 2027.

How to Apply:

Complete the on-line application form. MGs may sponsor one guest. Each person seeking a space in the program (MG or guest) should submit an application. Apply online at: https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/MGStudyAbroad/

Reservation / Registrations Process:

If applicant numbers exceed the 25 available spaces, reservations will be allocated initially via lottery. Twelve of the spaces in the program will be allocated preferentially to Purdue MGs and interns, their guests and to program alumni. The other spaces will be available to all applicants, also via lottery.

Access the application site beginning in November 2026. To be included in the initial space allocation, applications must be received by Monday, November 16, 2026. No priority will be given to early applicants. The allocation of available spaces via lottery will be made the next day. Applicants will be promptly notified via email of their status (allocated space or wait listed).

Once spaces are allocated, payment and subsequent communications will be personalized. Your allocated reservation will become a confirmed registration once your deposit is paid. You will receive an email directing you to a secure payment link managed by the Purdue Extension - Education Store. Deposits are due by Monday, November 23, 2026 and must be by credit or debit card.

Those applicants not initially allocated space will be placed on a wait list, prioritized via lottery among all remaining applicants, and notified accordingly. Should a cancellation or withdrawal occur an offer of available space will be extended promptly based on the established priority. The application form will remain open for applicants to add their names to the wait list.

Questions?

Contact Karen:
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