

# Favorite Places

## Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve

820 Reidville Rd. (John B. White Sr. Blvd)  
Spartanburg SC, 29304-2337  
phone: 864-574-7724, web: [www.hatchergarden.org](http://www.hatchergarden.org)



This is long overdue. Hatcher Garden is one of my favorite places on the planet! I met the Garden's name sake years ago and he helped foster the love of greening in me. Mr. Hatcher's passion and dedication are inspiring. He spent part of his life in Indiana and had visited Chicago so we had a connection beyond Spartanburg. He and his wife bought land and dedicated it to gardening and outdoor education. Admission to the oasis they created is free; but donations, memberships, and dedications are encouraged.

Mr. and Mrs. Hatcher have passed on, but they left the garden in capable hands. Joe Mullinax, an old drumming buddy of mine from way back, runs the garden. Jeff is the outstanding horticulturalist tending the 10 acres of annuals, perennials, dwarf conifers, native plants, natural woodlands, and volunteers.

Hatcher Garden has some nice hilly trails that will give a good 30 minute work-out if you wind through the woods. Some of the best displays are in spring with the magnolias, cherries, and wildflowers. However, the garden has beautiful features in all seasons.

### Hatcher Garden Waterfall & Ravine:

View of waterfall from ravine steps and view of ravine steps from bridge.





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## GARDENS & GAZEBOS

The entrance and first portion of the garden feature plants and designs that homeowners can use in their landscape. Winter jasmine, clerodendrons, voodoo lilies, coneflowers, canna lilies, and Natchez crepe myrtles are just some of the botanical highlights.

After parking, you can enter the gardens through an arbor with a large climbing rose sprawling overhead. The path goes around several planting beds with perennials and seasonal annuals.

The best annual display is usually in front of the gazebo, which is a welcome place of respite during summer when the southern Sun is so angry.



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## FOUNTAINS, FLOWERS, AND FEATHERS

There has recently been a great deal of work done on the hydrology of Hatcher Gardens. There have always been ponds and sloughs, but Joe is overseeing massive improvements in drainage and environmental quality. The pond by the gardens (with the beautiful redbud backdrop) was revamped with a fountain and canal linking it to other pools in the woods. The natural flow through the pools and down the ravine has been augmented to give the waterfall a little more oomph!

The canal provides the perfect habitat for marginals, like elephant ear and Japanese iris. Surrounding the woodland ponds are bald cypress, oak leaf hydrangea, and sweet gum. The path passes by most of the pools and a couple bridges take you over small creeks and drainage channels.



Nature is all around. Butterflies are everywhere. Honeybees are active even in winter, visiting the mahonias and camelias. In summer the shallow, brackish, upland pools are alive with minnows, water striders, frogs, and ducks. The biggest pond at the bottom of the hill may also have turtles. We've seen wading birds, raptors, and one garter snake too. I'm sure many other animals, especially birds, visit quite regularly. The woodland deck and gazebo are great places to sit back and take in the avian action.



## WOODLAND PRESERVE



**Top:** Miscanthus in perennial bed  
**Middle:** Sarah beside paperbush  
**Right:** Toadhole in big, old tree

The woodland preserve is my favorite part of Hatcher. Oaks, tulip trees, sweet gums, and pines tower overhead. The lower canopy, too tall to be considered understory, consists of yellowwood, hemlock, southern magnolia, and araucaria (or maybe cunninghamia).

The true understory is thick with camelia, dogwood, oak leaf hydrangea, aucuba, mahonia, and azaela. Hatcher also has one paperbush, *Edgeworthia chrysantha* tucked away in a small grotto. The rare paperbush blooms in mid to late winter with fragrant, yellow, pendulous bells.

Native wildflowers (see below), hellebores, butcher's broom, hostas, exotic ferns, and primroses add multi season color and interest to the forest floor.

The woods resemble the native habitats of Spartanburg. Of course, Hatcher is more lush and floriferous than Camp Croft; but the topography and overall feel is classic southern woods.

About halfway in there is a fantastic deck built on the side of a hill. The perfect spot to reflect and gather your thoughts as the towering trees shelter you from the stress out-

side. Careful. The serenity, soft breezes, and bird songs can be a time trap.

A short distance from the deck is the ravine waterfall combo. You can see it from the path, but walk down the stone steps to get a good look. This also give you a close view of the haunted tree with the big scary hole. A giant magical toad lives under the tree. If you go in hole and capture the toad, you either get 3 wishes or a bunch of spider bites. Good luck.



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## NATIVE WILDFLOWERS

The Hatchers were years ahead of the native plant movement. The woodland features trilliums, trout lilies, bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpit, woodland phlox, mayapple, wild ginger, rue anemone, crippled crane fly orchid, wild columbine, foam flower, etc... The sweet Betsy trillium are a foot tall and nearly as wide as dinner plates!

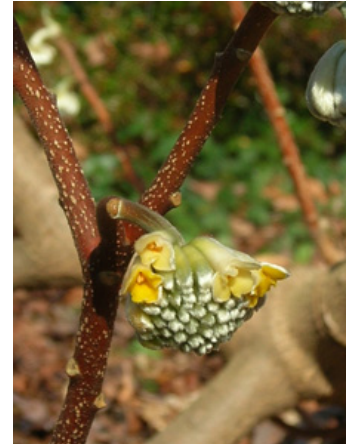


## STEWARDSHIP



**Left:** Foam Flower  
**Bottom:** Trillium and Rue Anemone  
**Right:** Paperbush buds opening

Forty years ago this verdant mini-forest was a series of gullies with soil depleted by cotton farming. The Hatcher's planted thousands of tree and shrubs to remediate the area.



Although it is not entirely native, Hatcher Woodland Preserve is great example of habitat restoration. If we all decided to take stewardship of a couple of acres, we'd have a healthier, greener land.

You can literally follow in Hatcher's footsteps by volunteering labor or expertise. Others can help Hatcher continue to teach and preserve with donations.

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## NEW SIGNAGE

The sign is titled "A Place For All Seasons" and provides information about Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve. It includes a portrait of Mr. & Mrs. Hatcher, a map of the gardens, and illustrations of various plants and animals. The text on the sign describes the garden's history and its role as a public space for inspiration and education.

General info and map of gardens

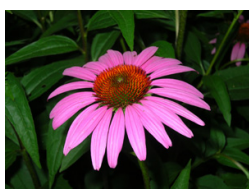
Portrait of Mr. & Mrs. Hatcher

Representative species of plants and animals

Story of Hatcher Garden's beginnings

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## SPARTANBURG'S BEST GARDEN



If you are in the area, make a point to visit Hatcher. Sign the guest book and say "what's up" to Joe. Walk the woods, then sit on the bench next to the bald cypress dedicated to my great-grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Esther Owens Henderson. Once you leave don't forget to ride by the Beacon for an artery-clogging chili-cheeseburger-a-plenty. Enjoy.