



## RAP GARDENS IN FOCUS

Explore Sites That Participate in the AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program

# America's Rose Garden at the American Rose Center

by Laken Burns

**A**MERICAN ROSE CENTER in Shreveport, Louisiana, is the largest park in the nation dedicated exclusively to roses. These gardens are home to thousands of species and cultivars of roses, highlighting the beauty and diversity of our national flower. As the national headquarters of the American Rose Society (ARS) since 1974, the 118-acre site features gardens of roses together with azaleas, camellias, and specimen trees, as well as sculptures and other focal points to maintain interest year-round.

### ROSES AND OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES

One such focal point is the **Windsounds Carillon Tower**, designed by architect Calvin Bishop in the 1970s. Other not-to-be-missed sites include the **Dudley Watkins Reflection Pool**, the **Rose Garden Gate pavilion**, and the **Hardtner Chapel**, a popular venue for weddings and memorial services.

Of course, the main draw of the gardens is the roses themselves. Blossoms of all shapes, sizes, hues, and growing habits can be found throughout the grounds. Visitors can stroll through beds of David Austin roses, miniature and miniflora roses, and Knock Out varieties, for example. A new garden showcases the 'McFarland' rose, named for J. Horace McFarland, who is honored as the father of the American Rose Society. Peak blooming season is from April to June, and then again in mid-September until late October.

As part of its mission, the ARS classifies and preserves roses. Its Modern Roses database currently includes over 37,000 registered roses.

**Top right:** Red 'Let Freedom Ring' and white 'Moonstone' hybrid tea roses make an eye-catching combination at the American Rose Center. **Right:** The Windsounds Carillon Tower is a signature feature of the garden.





**Top:** The colorful Buckeye District Garden is located near the entrance to the property. **Left:** The Rose Garden Gate Pavilion provides a convenient rest stop. **Above:** 'McFarland' is among many new selections on display.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In 2017, the American Rose Society embarked on a Great Garden Restoration project, which seeks to enhance the Shreveport gardens, educate visitors, and cultivate appreciation for the roses they are preserving. A major supporter of the project is rose company Jackson & Perkins, which provided the funding for the design of the new central display gardens. The design resembles four interlocking gears, allowing visitors to travel backwards in time while learning the history of the rose in America. Guests will begin with modern roses, progress into a second circle of 20th century species, shift into a third “gear” devoted to shrub-types, and complete their journey with old garden roses of Southern heritage.

The gardens will also take visitors into the future with the new American

Rose Center International Rose Trials, which will be sited around the Windsounds Carillon Tower. The interlocking gardens will open into new beds, including a section dedicated to Peace roses. The existing Asian gardens will be expanded, and there are plans to add a Children’s Garden.

The renovations are scheduled to be complete in 2022, just in time for the garden’s 50th anniversary and the 130th anniversary of the American Rose Society itself. Current president Bob Martin says that the ARS “hopes to achieve recognition that America’s Rose Garden is the most comprehensive and most beautiful rose garden in America.”

*Laken Burns is an editorial intern for The American Gardener.*

## Additional Information

### American Rose Center

8877 Jefferson Paige Road  
Shreveport, LA 71119  
(318) 938-5402. [www.rose.org](http://www.rose.org)

- Hours: April 1–October 31: Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Off Season: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Fees: Admission by donation.
- RAP benefits: AHS members receive free admission and free parking.

## HOW THE RECIPROCAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM (RAP) WORKS

This American Horticultural Society program is designed to encourage people to visit gardens, arboreta, and conservatories while traveling. As a current member, you receive free admission and/or other special discounts at more than 320 sites throughout North America! Here’s how to make the most of this member benefit:

- View the current list of participating locations and the RAP benefits they offer at [www.ahsgardening.org/rapgardens](http://www.ahsgardening.org/rapgardens). This list is also published in a booklet. To order, visit [www.ahsgardening.org/RAPGuideHelp](http://www.ahsgardening.org/RAPGuideHelp).
- Contact the garden to confirm the RAP benefits it offers. (Some sites may choose to enforce a 90-mile exclusion policy; if your zip code falls within that distance from the location, you would not receive the offered RAP benefits there.) Admission to special events may also be excluded.
- Present your current membership card at the admissions counter or gift shop to receive the RAP benefit(s) offered by that garden. Each card will only admit the individual(s) listed on the card. In the case of a family, couple, or household membership card that does not list individual names, the garden must extend the benefit(s) to at least two members; it is at the garden’s discretion to extend benefits to more than two individuals. Some gardens may require a photo ID.