

EARLY SUMMER GARDENS OF ABERDEENSHIRE
June 3 – 8, 2024



Crathes Castle, National Trust for Scotland

You are invited to join **The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA** for a five-night tour of the magnificent gardens of northeast Scotland led by Paddy Scott, founder of Discover Scotland's Gardens.

We will visit privately-owned gardens nurtured by the same families for centuries and will have special access to important houses, designed landscapes, and plant collections cared for by the National Trust for Scotland, Scotland's largest conservation organization.

Aberdeenshire is known for its fairytale castles and gently rolling countryside. Located in the shadow of the Grampian Mountains, the region features a unique micro-climate that offers challenges and rewards alike for gardeners and garden lovers.

Our tour is scheduled for June, when the days are long and the gardens at their most vibrant and fragrant. While we can't promise anything, Aberdeenshire is regularly named Scotland's sunniest city!

Highlights of our visit include:

- **Pitmedden Garden**, which contrasts a 17th-century design inspired by Le Notre's Vaux-le-Vicomte with a contemporary reinterpretation of a parterre garden by British landscape architect Christopher Beardshaw

- **Haddo House**, an elegant Georgian manor designed by William Adam featuring opulent Victorian interiors and a terraced garden
- **Castle Fraser** and **Crathes Castle**, two of Scotland’s most evocative and enchanting tower houses, which date back more than five centuries
- Angus’s **House of Pitmuies**, considered to be among the best private gardens in Scotland
- The acclaimed walled garden at **Dunninald Castle**, another private home, entered through the marvelous wrought-iron Union Gate with its design of roses, thistles, daffodils, and shamrocks

Our tour features:

- Accommodations at **Douneside House**, a four-star hotel located within seventeen acres of gardens dating from the early 20th century. The family’s story is one of self-made fortune followed by incredible tragedy and resilience during World War II
- A welcome reception at **The Georgian House**, a Robert Adam-designed townhouse in Edinburgh’s iconic Charlotte Square, with a private after-hours tour
- A celebratory last night at the five-star **Waldorf Astoria – The Caledonian** in Edinburgh, with a farewell dinner in the elegant Versailles Suite
- Special access to the **National Trust for Scotland**’s landscape and curatorial team

FITNESS LEVEL: This trip involves walking for extended periods, sometimes over uneven surfaces.

ABOUT THE TOUR LEADER: **Paddy Scott** followed a successful career in business and consulting by becoming chief executive of Scotland’s Gardens, a well-known charity that raises funds by opening private gardens to the public. He also was one of the founders of Discover Scotland’s Gardens, a business dedicated to marketing Scotland’s gardens to the world. For the last seven years, Paddy has been using his unparalleled knowledge of Scottish gardens to organize tours for garden enthusiasts from the United Kingdom, United States, and beyond.

NOTE: Because our tour starts the morning of Monday, June 3, we encourage participants to arrive in Edinburgh prior to that day to explore this UNESCO World Heritage city. Of particular interest may be the Royal Botanic Garden (www.rbge.org.uk) and Edinburgh Castle (<https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/>). There are many hotels in Edinburgh, but they do book quickly. We recommend the Waldorf Astoria – The Caledonian or the nearby Kimpton Charlotte Square, situated in the New Town’s most celebrated square.

The National Trust for Scotland will host travelers who have arrived in Edinburgh for a private tour and welcome reception at The Georgian House on Charlotte Square the evening of Sunday, June 2.

GLOSSARY OF INCLUDED MEALS AND REFRESHMENTS

B = Scottish Breakfast L = Lunch T = Tea or coffee R = Reception D = Dinner

ITINERARY

Monday, June 3 | Edinburgh, Angus, and Aberdeenshire

L, T, R, D

Our luxury coach collects participants at the Waldorf Astoria – The Caledonian in Edinburgh at 9:30AM for the journey north to **House of Pitmuies**, a lovely Georgian manor on land that has been home to generations of Ogilvies, Mudies, and Lyells since the late 1500s.



The gardens at Pitmuies are frequently considered to be among the best private gardens in Scotland. Set in a designed landscape of 40 acres, the property boasts a double walled garden – a kitchen garden and a formal flower garden – dating back to at least 1780.

Below the house, a series of three rose terraces are linked by stone steps to the central fountain and pond. The garden is known for its long delphinium borders, which stretch the length of the terraces and have been grown in the garden since the 1920s.



The old grass tennis court is now planted with a central roundel sprouting stately spikes of Bear's Breeks (*Acanthus mollis*), foxtail lilies, and galtonias around a modern slate sculpture by the celebrated Joe Smith and his daughter Jenny. Other highlights include a Pictish stone cross and cherry and beach trees.

We will have lunch at Pitmuies, then travel about 20 minutes to **Dunninald Castle**, a family home with a castle and gardens designed by Scottish architect James Gillespie Graham in 1824. Dunninald features an acclaimed walled garden set in a planned landscape of woods and wild garden. The walled garden is located a short walk from the house, at the end of a beech avenue planted in 1670, and is accessed through the marvelous wrought-iron Union Gate. Its design of roses, thistles, daffodils, and shamrocks represents each of the four home nations. The wild garden features snowdrops, daffodils, and bluebells seasonally.



Following tea at Dunninald, we continue on to **Douneside House**, the family home of the MacRobert family until Lady MacRobert's death in 1954 and now a four-star country house hotel. After checking into our rooms for the next four nights, our group will meet at 7:15 PM for drinks in MacRobert's Reply Bar followed by dinner in the Conservatory. *Drinks and wine with dinner throughout your stay may be charged to your room account.*

ADDRESS: Douneside House & Health Club, Tarland, Aberdeenshire AB34 4UL
TEL.: +44 (0) 13398 81230
WEB: <https://dounesidehouse.co.uk>



RESERVED FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS:

We have reserved Classic Rooms in the main house and two one-bedroom apartments a short walk from the main house in the Casa Memoria building. Classic Rooms offer views of the Aberdeenshire countryside and hotel's beautiful grounds. The Casa Memoria apartments have been transformed into contemporary guest apartments, each with its own patio and views across the lawn or onto a private garden. All rooms range in size and style and showcase an innovative classic-contemporary design that combine the property's remarkable heritage with Scottish tradition and modern luxuries. All rooms have an *en suite* bathroom with a walk-in shower.



UPGRADE OPTION

Upgrade to a Deluxe Room (*subject to availability*) with spectacular views to the front of the house and over the Howe of Cromar. Generous in size, these rooms feature a Super King bed and antique furnishings, and come with a host of luxury amenities, including a flat-screen TV, hospitality tray, luxurious toiletries, a free-standing bath and walk-in shower.



Upgrade Supplement: \$800 for 4 nights

Tuesday, June 4 | Aberdeenshire

B, L, T, D

This morning, we will enjoy a garden tour at **Douneside House**. The gardens were laid out by Sir Alexander and Lady MacRobert in the early 20th century. There are seventeen acres of botanical treasures including an infinity lawn to the front of the house that looks across the Aberdeenshire countryside and Grampian Mountains. In addition to roses and perennials planted by the house, there is an extensive walled garden with flowers for cutting and a large selection of vegetables for the hotel. Other landscape highlights include rock-pool gardens and a small arboretum for growing a collection of ornamental trees from around the world. The MacRobert Trust runs a horticultural training program for up to four students annually, and the gardens are accredited as a Royal Horticultural Society Approved Learning Centre.



Leaving Douneside, we travel by coach to **Leith Hall** for lunch followed by a tour of the garden and house, a typical Scottish laird's residence brimming with family treasures spanning ten generations. Leith Hall was built in 1650 and was the home of the Leith-Hay family for nearly three centuries. The house was used as an auxiliary hospital in World War I and has been in the care of the National Trust for Scotland since 1945.

Leith Hall, which sits on a 286-acre estate, is noted for its scenic gardens arranged in stages, each sheltered by a wall or hedge and with its own special character. The gardens contain flowering trees and shrubs, roses, fruit, vegetables, and ornamental grasses. A small stream winds its way through the gravel paths and stone crevices. At the top of the garden, near the curved stables that date from the 18th century, is the circular Moon Gate to the old turnpike road, once the main thoroughfare to Aberdeen. There are two nature trails, each about two miles long; the gardens also contain two ponds and a birdwatching site.



From Leith Hall, we return to the Douneside House to relax before dinner.

Wednesday, June 5 | Aberdeenshire

B, L, T, D

This morning we travel just over an hour to our first stop, glorious **Pitmedden Garden**.



Pitmedden is known for its formal parterre garden, which dates back to 1675 when it was originally laid out by Sir Alexander Seton. His head gardener had designed gardens at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh and was influenced by Le Notre's designs for Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles. Pitmedden's walled garden contains almost six miles of clipped box hedging, forming elaborate parterres in a masterpiece of intricate patterns filled with fragrant flowers.

In the 1950s, Pitmedden was gifted to the National Trust for Scotland, which restored the garden based on 17th-century plans after it had been plowed up to grow vegetables during World War II and used as a kitchen garden for over 100 years. Pitmedden's Great Garden therefore is not only a spectacular design, but also an early example of landscape design restoration.



In 2021 the upper terrace parterre was re-imagined for the modern world with a fresh, sustainable garden designed by British landscape architect Christopher Beardshaw. A biodiverse, species-rich meadow weaves and drifts, offering changing patterns and colours. More on the recent redevelopment of the garden may be found in the article below: <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/redeveloping-the-great-garden-at-pitmedden>

We depart Pitmedden for the short drive to another National Trust for Scotland property, **Haddo House**, for lunch and a tour of both the magnificent house and its delightful garden.



Stately and striking, Haddo House was designed in 1732 by Scottish architect William Adam (father of Robert Adam) and underwent an opulent remodelling in the 1880s. As a result, Haddo contrasts the clean elegance and swooping lines of the Georgian style with a luxurious Victorian interior. Its extensive art collection includes paintings by Sir Thomas Lawrence and James Giles; family portraits trace generations of Gordons, who played a huge part in Scottish history. Haddo House served as a maternity hospital during World War II, when over 1,200 babies were born on the property.

The house is surrounded by an 18th-century terraced garden, the impressive culmination of William Adam's collaboration with landscape designers, artists, and the Gordon family. The current layout of the upper terrace garden was designed in the early 19th century



in a French or Italian style. It is an outstanding example of its type in the region and an almost intact survival. Detailed records and day books explain the work of the garden in the mid 1800s; together with paintings and archival records, the Trust has great insight into the period plantings and development of the formal design.

The seasonal planting reflects entirely the period and style of the mansion house. To the north side of the terrace is the *dot dash* garden, which has small and intricate beds in the



style of high Victoriana. A small collection of rare and endangered conifers are housed on site as part of the International Conifer Conservation Project through the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. The approach to the house from the west culminates in sweeping formal lawns that have now become home to internationally recognized populations of rare and endangered waxcap fungi.

The wider designed landscape is dominated by feature trees and the impressive avenue of lime trees that constitutes the Scot's Mile, stretching 1.25 miles to a statue and plinth on a hill.

Leaving Haddo House, we return to Douneside House for dinner.

Thursday, June 6 | Aberdeenshire

B, L, T, D

We begin our day at **Findrack**, a glorious country house garden that has been redeveloped over the past few years. Situated at 700 feet above sea level, Findrack features a partial walled garden with circular lawns surrounded by herbaceous borders. A terraced garden with an octagonal pond sits beside the house, while a charming streamside garden with a wonderful selection of water-loving plants is nearby. Poppies abound, and there is a beautiful view of nearby Clachna Ben, a magnificent granite hill.



We will have lunch in East Cevdly before continuing on to **Castle Fraser**, one of Scotland's largest and most impressive Baronial tower houses.



The garden and estate were largely designed by Thomas White, a pupil of Capability Brown. A traditional walled garden is laid out as it was in Victorian times and includes specimen trees, herbaceous borders, a medicinal border, and fruit and vegetable plots. The sundial at its center dates to about 1795. The estate has ancient trees, some perhaps 400 years old, and many of the trees in the landscape are the same as those planted in the 18th century. There is a rhododendron garden planted underneath towering conifers, which adds color in springtime.

Following our visit, we will return to the hotel with time to relax before dinner.

Friday, June 7 | Aberdeenshire and Edinburgh

B, L, T, D



This morning we check-out of Douneside House before traveling to **Crathes Castle**, another classic Scottish tower house in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, to tour its internationally renowned walled garden.

The Burnett family, who lived in the castle for over 350 years, had roots in the area dating back to 1323 when Robert the Bruce granted them nearby land. Alexander Burnett built the Crathes Castle in the 16th century—an intricate maze of turrets, towers, oak panels, and painted ceilings, many of which survive beautifully to this day. The approach to the castle and garden is through a magnificent avenue of trees dating from before 1880.



The garden has been worked continuously by the Burnett family and then the Trust over the past five centuries. Some of the ancient, softly sculpted yew topiary and hedges were planted as early as 1702.

Sir James Burnett and his wife Sybil designed the walled garden in the early 20th century; Sybil was recognised as

an important gardener by contemporaries in Scotland and beyond and influenced planting design in many gardens. It is divided into eight individual rooms, themed by color, with pools, fountains, an historic doocot, themed borders, roses, and many unusual plants.

In July 2023, the Trust celebrated the opening of the restored Rose Garden. A specially commissioned sculpture will lie at the heart of the design, radiating eight new beds that replicate the petals of a stylized Jacobite Rose. The *Petresphere*, created by local stonemasons, is a scaled interpretation of the Towie ball: a mysterious and intricately carved, palm-sized Neolithic ball currently in the care of The National Museum of Scotland. Decorated with delicate swirls in black, fine-grained stone, it is the finest example of 430 similar objects mostly unearthed across Aberdeenshire.

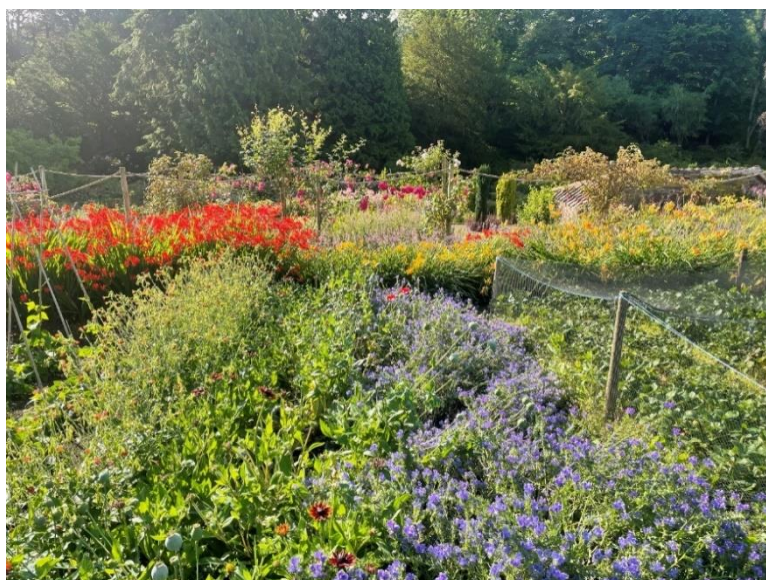
Mesolithic pits recently discovered at Crathes offer evidence that people were living on the land from at least 9000 BC, and the foundations of a Neolithic Timber Hall show settled farmers were working the land from about 4000 BC. The new sculpture symbolizes the significant importance of Crathes stretching back millennia, from which the beauty of what we see today now flourishes.



Following lunch at Crathes Castle, we will continue by coach just over a half hour to our final garden, **Glenberrie House**.



Glenberrie is a private home that dates from the 15th century, with additions in the 18th and 19th centuries. It has very fine woodland and walled gardens set in beautiful location. Its traditional Scottish walled garden is set on a south-facing slope that has been cultivated continuously for 300 years and is divided into quadrants, separated by pole and rope rose borders. One wall is taken up with a large, 19th-century greenhouse filled with many species of potted plants and climbers including passionflowers, bougainvilleas, and figs. The woodland garden runs beside a burn.



Departing Glenberrie, we travel about two hours back to Edinburgh, where we will check in to the **Waldorf Astoria - The Caledonian** for one night. This evening we will gather for drinks in the Trianon Suite followed by a farewell dinner in the Versailles Suite.

ADDRESS: Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2AB
TEL.: +44 (0) 131 222 8888
WEB: www.thecaledonian.waldorfastoria.com



RESERVED FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS

Queen Deluxe Rooms, which average 20 sq. m./215 sq. ft., include room amenities like a Nespresso coffee machine, a flat screen TV, and a tastefully appointed bathroom with complimentary bathrobes and slippers and luxurious products. Enjoy complimentary access to the Waldorf Astoria Spa, featuring an indoor swimming pool with views on Edinburgh Castle, sauna, steam room, whirlpool and two gyms.

UPGRADE OPTION

Upgrade to a Premier Room, which offer a choice of one king (33 sq. m./360 sq. ft.) or two twin beds (26 sq. m./280 sq. ft.).

Upgrade supplement: \$120 for 1 night



Saturday, June 8 | Depart Edinburgh

B

Following a full Scottish Breakfast in the Grazing Restaurant, check-out or extend your stay.

EARLY SUMMER GARDENS OF ABERDEENSHIRE

June 3 to 8, 2024

TOUR INFORMATION

LAND-ONLY TOUR PRICE: **\$3,995** per person, double occupancy **\$795** Single Supplement

INCLUDED

- 5 nights' accommodation in hotels and rooms as indicated in the program: four nights at the four-star Douneside House in Aberdeenshire, and one night at the five-star Waldorf Astoria – Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh; including all city taxes

UPGRADE OPTION AT DOUNESIDE HOUSE:

Deluxe Room (*subject to availability*) with spectacular views to the front of the House and over the Howe of Cromar. Generous in size, these rooms feature a Super King bed and antique furnishings, and come with a host of luxury amenities, including a flat-screen TV, hospitality tray, luxurious toiletries, a free-standing bath and walk-in shower. Add-on supplement: **\$800 total for 4 nights**

UPGRADE OPTION AT THE WALDORF-ASTORIA – THE CALEDONIAN:

Premier Room, which offer a choice of one king (33 sq. m./360 sq. ft.) or two twin beds (26 sq. m./280 sq. ft.). Add-on supplement: **\$120 for 1 night**

- Scottish breakfast daily, tea / coffee breaks throughout, five lunches, one pre-dinner drink reception, and five dinners
- WiFi at all hotels
- Transportation by private coach throughout
- Entrance fees and donations for all sites featured in the itinerary
- Gratuities for guides
- A year's membership of The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA
- Accompanied throughout by Paddy Scott, co-founder of Discover Scotland's Gardens, and Kirstin Bridier, Executive Director of The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA

NOT INCLUDED

- International airfare and/or train fare to and from Scotland
- Airport transfers
- Accommodation on the evening of June 2 (to book on your own)
- Non-group meals, beverages, and activities
- Alcoholic drinks including wine with dinners (to be charged to each guest when ordered each evening)
- Gratuities for drivers
- Items for personal use, including phone and email charges, minibar, and laundry services
- Passport fees, if any

ITINERARY

Although The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA (NTSUSA), and Travel Muse Inc. and its ground operators will make every effort to adhere to the itinerary, on rare occasions it may be necessary to adjust arrangements due to circumstances beyond our control.

Should any activities not be available, substitution will be made to the best of our ability and no refund will be made. Any additional costs necessitated by such changes are the responsibility of the tour member. Please note there will be significant walking and standing.

TOUR COSTS

Prices are based on a minimum of 12 paying participants. Should the number of passengers fall below 12, certain program inclusions may be deleted. All amounts quoted with respect to charges for the tour and travel services are based upon rates in effect as of July 21, 2023. At the time of final payment, NTSUSA reserves the right to add any increased amounts arising from changes in taxes and from changes instituted by suppliers or caused by market conditions. All local/government taxes on hotels, meals, and services are included, in addition to normal gratuities to porters, waiters, and local guides. Rates are based on group participation, and there can be no refund for services or portions of the tour not taken. It is also understood and agreed that all excursions are optional, and refunds cannot be made to tour members who do not participate or complete the tour for any reason.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For questions about the tour, please email events@ntsusa.org or call 617-227-7500. For questions about registration and payments, please email meg@travelmuse.net, or call 617-480-0250.

TO REGISTER

Please visit this registration and payment link: <https://tri.ps/FE2f9>