

History & Nature

The focal point of this park is a beautifully renovated, two-story house with elegant white columns and wrap-around porch. Surrounded by moss-draped live oaks and ornamental gardens, the Wesley house inspires visions of hoop skirts and landed gentry.

What was once the home of the William Henry Wesley family is now a place of tranquility. Yet 100 years ago the site was alive with mechanical and human energy. This was the hub of the Wesley Lumber Company, operating from 1890 until after World War I. Company holdings included a sawmill, planer mill and dry kiln with a dock to facilitate loading barges in Tucker Bayou for shipping lumber.

Wesley built his home near the mill in 1897 and his family lived there until 1953 when his wife, Katie Strickland Wesley died and it was sold with 10.5 acres. Ten years later Lois Maxon fell in love with the place and purchased it, converting the house into a showplace for her family antiques and heirlooms. Ms. Maxon developed the grounds as ornamental gardens and in 1968 she donated Eden Gardens to the State of Florida.

The park is home to seven distinct natural communities in addition to its developed areas. These communities, include scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, floodplain swamp, wet flatwoods, baygall, xeric hammock and maritime hammock. All are bordered to the north by Tucker Bayou. Naturally occurring fire has historically shaped these native communities.

Today, the main attractions are the ornamental gardens on the mansion's grounds. Camellias and azaleas offer colorful displays October through May with peak blooming around March. There is also a heritage rose garden, butterfly garden and reflection pond filled with Koi and lilies.

Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Eden Gardens State Park

181 Eden Gardens Road
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
(850) 267-8320

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- Entrance and tour fees are required.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are not allowed in the Wesley House and may be restricted in other designated areas. Where they are allowed, they must be kept on a six-foot hand-held leash and well behaved at all times.
- Alcohol and hunting are prohibited.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the park office.
- To schedule a wedding or other special event at Eden, please call (850) 267-8320.
- For information about joining Friends of Eden Gardens, visit FriendsofEdenGardens.org.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the park office.

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Eden Gardens State Park

A historic homestead under majestic moss draped oaks



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Eden Gardens State Park contains approximately 163 acres of land that was part of the historic Wesley homestead. In a setting of moss-draped live oaks, the 1897 mansion recalls a prosperous era before the virgin forests of longleaf pine and cypress were exhausted in this part of the state. The mansion, surrounded by lawns and gardens, has been restored and furnished with remarkable antiques. A reflection pool provides a glimpse back into time as camellias and azaleas provide colorful accents in the surrounding gardens.

This historic park depicts the history of the region as it evolved in response to the economic, cultural and social conditions that shaped and defined modern Florida.

Wesley House Tours: Guided tours are available hourly Thursday through Monday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A nominal fee is charged for tours.

Garden Trail: Complementary trail guides are located at the Fig Leaf Shop in the Wesley House. The trail winds around the edge of the property and highlights areas such as the rose garden, butterfly garden, camellia garden and Tucker Bayou.

Picnic, fish and relax by the bay. A picnic area with adjacent parking is available at the old mill site on Tucker Bayou.

Special Events: School of the Soldier (February), Camellias Fest (February), Easter at Eden and Christmas Candlelight Tours (December) are a few of the annual events. To book your own event such as weddings, picnics and family reunions, contact Eden Gardens.

