



## Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Richmond, Virginia

"Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden brings people and plants together. Located in Richmond, VA, the Garden encompasses more than 80 acres and is home to a richly abundant and diverse collection of plants and wildlife. A true "living" museum, the Garden provides a multi-sensory experience with hands-on opportunities to engage all ages and interests, especially children – the future stewards of our Earth."

**Green Statement:** "At its core, the non-profit Garden is focused on education and for more than 25 years has worked to raise awareness of our interdependence with the natural world. The Garden's mission underscores its commitment: 'We advocate for sustainability and stewardship of our planet.' "

The following examples of pollution prevention practices underscore the Garden's commitment.

**General Gardening Techniques:** Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden leaves select perimeter areas unmown to provide important wildlife habitat and to slow rainwater run-off. The Garden composts and uses best-watering techniques such as watering early in the morning to minimize evaporation and allowing water to drip from the hose right into the root system. The Garden's diverse horticultural collections (220 plant families and more than 276,000 plants) include natives which are especially beneficial to birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

**Water Management Plan:** The Garden recently had a water management plan designed for the purpose of developing and demonstrating best practices and sustainable strategies for water usage. Some good practices are already in place: the Garden collects rainwater from the roofs of its buildings and funnels it into an irrigation lake, collecting and recycling more than 2 million gallons of rainwater annually. In the Children's Garden, rain barrels are used. Horticulture carefully monitors and controls water usage. Gardens are being designed with water usage in mind, for instance the new Rose Garden uses underground drip irrigation and includes a constructed wetland at its base for filtration. As part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Garden is poised to set an example and be an educational resource.



**Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** Already practiced in the Children's Garden, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is moving toward Integrated Pest Management or IPM. IPM is an effective, environmentally friendly approach to pest management that relies on a combination of commonsense practices. The goal of IPM is to see a reduction of pests to acceptable numbers with the least environmental impact.

**Rose Garden:** The new rose collection reflects some of the newest and most genetically superior hybrids, bred for disease resistance, rebloom and fragrance. The majority of the cultivars are from nurseries in France, Italy, Germany and England, and most are new to the Virginia region. The selections have been carefully made with concern for environmental responsibility to minimize the need for chemicals to control disease and insects. The location of the Garden, on the hillside, should help in providing natural air movement, which will also aid in minimizing fungal diseases.

Conservatory: The Conservatory uses root zone heating to maximize efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Hot water circulates through rubber hoses that heat the soil so air temperatures can be held to moderate levels. The Conservatory is pesticide-free. The Garden uses Murphy's Oil, alcohol, and predator insects (Integrated Pest Management) in that building.

Children's Garden: Staff and young visitors help grow herbs for use in the Café and Tea House. Fruits and vegetables are harvested for the Central Virginia FoodBank. The Children's Garden also uses environmentally friendly materials that are long lasting and do not carry preservatives that would be harmful to children who come in contact with them. For example, the rampway to the Tree House is constructed of a WeatherBest, a recycled plastic product. The shingles on the Tree House are made of recycled rubber.

GardenFest of Lights (annual holiday event): Staff are replacing incandescent lights with LED holiday lights that are slightly more expensive, yet pay for themselves in the first year through electricity savings. For example, the electrical cost to light a holiday tree with LEDs is 13 to 17 cents per season compared to \$6 to \$10 for incandescent lights. Already, more than 25 percent of the GardenFest lights have been converted – totaling more than nine miles of LED strands in a 500,000-light display.

Meriwether Godsey (the Garden's in-house caterer): For group events, the Garden's caterer has substituted reusable tumblers for disposable plastic cups and uses fully compostable hot cups and napkins made of 100% recycled material. Food containers are made of a corn-based product.

Garden Shop: "Green" merchandise includes Rich Earth and Eco Pots, reusable tote bags and helpful gardening resources.

Lora M. Robins Library: Environmental stewardship is covered by a bounty of resources, including books for children.

## CORE ACTIVITIES for Green Attractions

**Recycling.** Virginia Green facilities must have highly-visible locations/containers that provide the opportunity for guests to recycle aluminum cans, plastic and glass bottles, or other disposable products purchased at the facility. Recycling of cardboard, plastic, paper, and composting of waste foods is highly encouraged as well. This facility pledges that they:

- Offer the opportunity for guests to recycle: glass bottles, plastic bottles, aluminum cans
- Also recycle: newspaper, office paper, toner cartridges, cardboard

**Minimize the use of disposable food service products.** The facility is required to minimize the use of disposable food service products and maximize the use of food service products that are recyclable or compostable in the food service area. When disposable food service items are used, the facility is encouraged to use products that are made from bio-based or renewable resources, and to provide for the collection / recycling/ composting of food service items disposed of on the premises. This facility pledges that they:

- Use disposable foodservice items that are made from bio-based, renewable materials (corn, bamboo, potato starch, sugarcane, etc.)

**Reduce solid waste.** The facility must be actively working to reduce its solid waste generation. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall solid waste costs

*Kitchen (or during meetings/events)*

- Have an effective food inventory control system to minimize waste

### *Office*

- Remove facility and staff names from junk mail lists when possible
- Reuse scrap paper for notes
- Make double-sided photocopies and avoid making extra photocopies
- Use electronic correspondence and forms when possible

### *Buildings and grounds*

- Use green cleaning products that are dispensed in bulk
- Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- Use integrated pest management (IPM)
- Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides in landscaping



**Use water efficiently.** The facility must have a plan in place and have taken steps toward reducing its water use. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall water usage and wastewater costs

### *Activities indoors*

- Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks

### *Activities outdoors*

- Have installed rain barrels
- Have installed drip line irrigation
- Maintain vegetative buffers around streams and ponds

**Conserve energy.** The facility must have a plan in place and have taken steps toward reducing its energy use. This facility pledges that they:

- Track overall energy bills

### *Heating and cooling*

- Regularly perform preventative maintenance on HVAC system
- Keep office doors and windows closed if HVAC system is on

### *Lighting*

- Use natural lighting

**Green Events Package.** The facility must offer a “green” or “environmentally-friendly” package for conferences, meetings and other events. Even if the facility only offers occasional, small events, at least recycling will be provided. This facility pledges that they:

- Promote the availability of “green meetings/conferences” in marketing packages
- Provide all facility rental information for our meeting spaces, including our new Meeting & Entertaining Brochure, electronically by email and on our website.
- Limit hard copy packets of information by offering them only for walk-in clients
- Offer and prefer electronic billing and payment collection.
- Provide visible recycling containers.
- Use china, silverware and linen napkins unless client requests otherwise.
- Require final guest counts 5 business days prior to event date to reduce waste.
- Promote the reduction of waste by not offering tablets or other paper products with our rental facilities and provide promotional hard copy materials only if requested.

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For more information on **Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden**, see [www.lewisginter.org](http://www.lewisginter.org) or contact Beth Monroe at [BethM@lewisginter.org](mailto:BethM@lewisginter.org) or (804) 262-9887, ext. 316.

**Virginia Green** is the Commonwealth of Virginia's campaign to promote environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of Virginia's tourism industry. **Virginia Green Attractions** have been thoughtfully planned and designed to minimize their impacts on the environment. This attraction has met the established "core activities" for **Green Attractions** and has committed to communicate its activities to its guests.

For more information on **Virginia Green** program, see [www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen) or [www.viriniagreentravel.org](http://www.viriniagreentravel.org).



Virginia Green is supported through a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, and the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

