



# Historic Virginia Gardens: Preservation Work of The Garden Club of Virginia, 1975-2007

*Margaret Page Bemiss*

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For more than seventy-five years, The Garden Club of Virginia has undertaken garden research and preservation work at numerous historic sites across the Old Dominion, restoring and creating beautiful landscapes for the education and enjoyment of all, from backyard gardeners to design professionals. Historic Virginia Gardens documents in breathtaking fashion this important contribution to the Commonwealth's botanical and architectural heritage. Picking up where an earlier volume, dedicated to the period from 1930 to 1975, left off, this new book brings the Club's work from the period 1975 to 2007 to life through a graceful and informative text by Margaret Page Bemiss, a host of historical and contemporary drawings, extensive native and heritage plant lists, and 125 splendid new color photographs from the award-winning garden photographer Roger Foley.

The gardens highlighted here range in location from the Eastern Shore to Blacksburg, and date from the seventeenth century to the twenty-first. Margaret Bemiss describes not only the preservation of the gardens, but also each place, its builder, and its historic context. Giving the reader a fuller understanding of why each particular garden or landscape was worth restoring or re-creating, Bemiss explains the site's significance, in Virginia's rich history as well as in the history of gardening and landscape design. In addition to Foley's photographs, each narrative is also accompanied by bird's-eye-view drawings and site plans for the gardens, along with working drawings of garden buildings, furniture, fences, and gates. Of particular interest to practicing gardeners and garden historians is the comprehensive list of native and imported plants that were utilized in the gardens. The significance of the projects, from George Washington's Mount Vernon and Gari Melcher's Belmont to the Prestons' frontier home in Blacksburg and Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, make this book of interest not only to gardeners and landscape architects, but also to anyone with an interest in American history.

Historic Virginia Gardens is sure to find a treasured place on the library shelf beside its predecessor, which was praised by the Virginian-Pilot as a "book [that] will please any gardener, be it a group restoring grounds around a shrine or a suburbanite pondering whether to plant phlox or periwinkle along the front walk."

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