Welcome to Nymans. Explore the expansive ever changing gardens.

How to get around

On arrival we recommend visiting our welcome centre to find out more about what’s on each day, then head towards Lime Avenue. From here you can explore Woodland Trails or follow the path round to the House and Garden.

The Gardens

Nymans is a garden of experimentation and innovation, established by Ludwig Messel in 1890. The first head gardener was James Comber in 1895 with only four successors up until the present day. Internationally well-known, the formal gardens cover 33 acres and are a great British landscape. Experimentally, Nymans is famous for the way it has attempted to recreate the garden as it existed in the Messel family’s time.

The garden was created around the expeditions of famous plant hunters such as Frank Kingdon Ward, George Forrest and Harold Comber and features outstanding specimens from China, Nepal, Tasmania, Chile, South Africa and New Zealand. The June Border, Rose Garden, Sunk Garden, South African meadow and famous Summer Borders represent Nymans’ distinctive blend of formality and informality to perfection.

The Messels made Nymans special and we hope you will visit us throughout the year where there is always a hidden flower waiting to be found.

Top Garden

Flowering from early June until late autumn, the deep herbaceous borders are crammed with a range of flowers and shrubs. Fragrant and colourful the Top Garden has something to offer each season from snowdrops in winter to delicate poppies in summer and is home to a wonderful collection of trees, some dating back to 1905.

Wall Garden

The wall garden has something to offer the whole year round from dazzling floral displays in the summer borders, where we plant around 6,500 annuals, to breathtaking spring flowering Magnolias and Camellias. Nymans also has an important collection of Chilean plants which are found around the edge of the Wall Garden.

Green gardening

As you walk around the garden today, you may notice some of the things we do to reduce our carbon footprint. Rather than using mains water we collect rainwater in our nursery to water our plants. The nursery itself is organic in every way and if you happen to find our compost area it will tell you about how we produce 44 tonnes of organic matter a year.

The House

The House at Nymans was devastated by fire in 1947 leaving most of the building a ruin. The remaining rooms saved from the fire, are small and intimate, and are displayed almost exactly as they appeared when Anne, Countess of Rosse, lived in them from 1979 to 1992. In the Gallery upstairs you will find a changing programme of exhibitions ranging from contemporary art to the history of the Messel family. The Gallery is open every day (with the exception of changeover days). The house opens every day (except for Sunday mornings and during the winter conservation week) from March to the end of October. During the winter conservation week the house is closed.
Woodland trails
Your guide around the Woodland

Choose your route

Please wear suitable footwear.
Paths are mostly muddy.
Three short circular walks that can be enjoyed all year: three numbered posts, these will help pinpoint your location on the map but do not always follow in sequence.

Short walk – pink arrows ¾ mile 1.2 km.
Passes through the arboretum, enters ancient woodland with veteran trees, the path dips into the valley with a glimpse of the running stream below and rises again with seasonal wild flowers and fungi, returns to the garden past the owl sculpture. This walk includes steep gradients and uneven ground.

Centenary walk – blue arrows 1 ½ miles 2.4 km
Passes through the arboretum, enters ancient woodland, follows the Conifer avenue, down to the lake, past the kingfisher sculpture, past the cottage and back around to the garden past the owl sculpture. There are a few slopes and areas that can be muddy after rain.

Millennium walk – orange arrows 2 ½ miles 4km
Passes through the arboretum, past the toad sculpture, through the bluebell woods, passes the tallest tree and follows the end of the Conifer avenue down to the lake. Then visits the bird hide, crosses the bridge, passes through the wildflower meadow, follows a mediaeval track and borders the cascades. It then joins the path up to the cottage and on back to the garden past the owl sculpture.

To get the most out of your visit and best protect these beautiful woods we recommend:
• Keeping to the main footpaths
• Wearing appropriate footwear and clothing for the weather and conditions
• Considering the distance and time needed for your walk
• Be aware there are no welfare facilities beyond the car park
• Keeping dogs under close control, take note of seasonal requests and clear up and remove their waste
• Please avoid trampling or picking the wildflowers or fungi

You can purchase a Nymans Woodland Guide and map from reception which gives a wealth of information about the area, its key features, history and more detailed inventory of the walks.

Amphibians
The toad and stag beetle show how important dead wood is as a habitat, far beyond the life of the tree where the decaying trunk will support other life for years to come.

The kingfisher
The regal kingfisher sits above three-spined sticklebacks by the lakeside and is far easier to spot than real ones flashing by.

The owl
The two owls are perched high in the canopy, the dead oak trunks on which they stand provide homes for woodpeckers, bats and many insects.

Rich wildlife
Nymans Woods is a fine example of ancient Wealden woodland and a rich wildlife reserve. We also have an unusual ‘Atlantic’ flora, which means that the woodland floor, stream sides and sandstone outcrops support plants, ferns and mosses rarely found in the south east of England. All this has led to the woods being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Beyond the formal gardens, explore the estate’s 250 acres of woodland.

To the left, beyond the formal gardens, explore the estate’s 250 acres of woodland.

Weather
Today: Orange
High: 15°C
Low: 10°C
Wind: North

Beyond the formal gardens, explore the estate’s 250 acres of woodland.