

Antrim Castle Gardens – A Sensory Tour



A long time ago, in the Year 1573, a soldier named Sir Hugh Clotworthy, and his wife, Lady Marion, came to Antrim and built their Castle along the banks of the Sixmilewater. They had a son called John, who was to become the 1st Viscount Massereene and begin a long legacy of noble history spanning 13 generations.

Sir Hugh and his son John built their castle, which is known as Antrim Castle. It took them over 50 years to complete. It was a big, beautiful home that remained the family residence for many years, until it was sadly destroyed by a fire in the year 1922. The only remaining part of the castle is a stone tower, which was added in the 1840's. It is called the Italianate Tower.



Clotworthy House was built in the 1840's too. It was designed by a very famous architect at the time, Charles Lanyon. It originally was the family's stable block, but has been renovated into a visitor attraction. In the Courtyard is the original carving of the Massereene Wolfhound. It is over 400 years old, and is a tribute to the actual dog that saved Lady Marion from an attack by wolves. Feel how rough the texture of the stone carving is, due to the many years it has stood in the wind, rain and cold.

The ancient stone bridge which crosses the river was built around 1700. It is known as the Deerpark Bridge. From here you can see the Italianate tower which marks where the castle stood. Stand quietly and listen to the sounds of the birdsong and running water below you. If you're lucky, you may spot a heron or kingfisher, even maybe an otter.



The Long Canals are one of the original early features of the gardens. They date back to the late 1600's. Notice how straight they are with the paths, grass verges and lime hedges all running along in straight lines. This was very fashionable in those days. Have a look for the Mallard Ducks that stay on the canals. The drakes are boldly coloured and the females brown. How many of each can you see?

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The French-styled Parterre Garden is a special place where you can enjoy the amazing variety of flowers planted in the beds. Try and count how many different colours you can see and how many shapes you can find by looking down from the white pavilion. Butterflies, bees, beetles and bumblebees love all the different flowers, so keep an eye open for these flying insects.

Take a walk on the wild side by heading into the woodland areas. Under all these ancient trees you will discover an exciting world of sights, scents and sounds. Pay careful attention to the tiny details like the small wild flowers and the little mini beasts that the undergrowth is home to. Depending on the time of year you could find many different things like flowers, wild berries, wild mushrooms and a huge variety of creatures like squirrels, different birds, insects and even a shrew or hedgehog if you're very lucky. Stand quietly and let nature reveal herself to you.



If you have the time, why not ask a ranger to show you around and spend a few minutes telling you about the fauna and flora in the gardens. There are many interesting things we could learn like reading animal tracks and signs, working out the age of some of the trees and even going on a mini beast hunt or identifying shrubs and plants. Just ask at reception if a ranger is available.

Antrim Castle Gardens provides the ideal backdrop to learn about our history, our natural environment and to enjoy being outdoors in a safe environment. Feel free to ask if a ranger is available to accompany you and your friends or family on your sensory tour of the gardens.



**ANTRIM
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& CLOTWORTHY HOUSE

