

COURTESY OF CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

**The South Carolina Botanical Garden contains several miles of pristine trails that wind throughout the 295-acre tract.**

# S.C. Botanical Garden ranked among nation's best

**BY ERIC SPROTT**
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CLEMSON — What began as a modest camellia preserve more than 50 years ago is now among the top college arboretums in the nation according to one prominent source.

The South Carolina Botanical Garden, located on the Clemson University campus, was ranked No. 21 in the nation in a list of the 50 most beautiful college arboretums by Best College Reviews, it was announced Tuesday.

Designated the Palmetto State's state botanical garden in 1992, the 295-acre garden — which doesn't charge admission and is open daily from dawn until dusk — traces it roots back to 1958, and it continues to prosper today.

"Being recognized as one of the best gardens in the nation is a great message to get out to the public," said Patrick McMillan, the host and director of the South Carolina Botanical Garden. "Our garden is unique in its connectivity and ability to illustrate what South Carolina is really all about from a natural standpoint."

Best College Reviews is an editorially independent college review journal, and more than a dozen arboretums in the Southeast made its top-50 list. Ratings were based on size of the arboretum, size of the collection, how long the garden has been established, opportunities for college students and connection with the community.

"So when any garden in the Southeast is honored, everyone feels a lot of pride, because we've all contributed something to each other's cause."

North Carolina's Coker Arboretum was second on the list — behind only Cornell's F.R. Newman Arboretum — while Georgia and N.C. State's arboretums didn't make the list.

The S.C. Botanical Garden, which includes the 70-acre Schoenike Arboretum, is home to a diverse array of trees and plants, many of which are extremely rare. It also contains two historic properties — the Hanover House and the Hunt Cabin.

The Bob Campbell Geology Museum, meanwhile, displays more than 10,000 rocks, minerals, fossils and artifacts. The garden also offers numerous cultural and educational programs for children and families throughout the year. Other points of interest include the duck pond, Camellia Garden, the Wildlife Habitat Garden, the Heritage Gardens and several miles of pristine nature trails.

"Our garden is such a rich resource," McMillan said. "All these facets come together to make us sort of a one-stop shop for learning about natural history and beauty in South Carolina."

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