**Botanical Garden**

**Definition of Botanical Garden:**

A **botanical garden** or **botanic garden**is a [garden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden) dedicated to the collection, [cultivation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardening), preservation and display of a wide range of plants labelled with their [botanical names](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botanical_name). It may contain specialist plant collections such as [cacti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cactus) and other [succulent plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succulent_plant), [herb gardens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herb_garden), plants from particular parts of the world, and so on; there may be [greenhouses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenhouse), [shade houses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadehouse), again with special collections such as [tropical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical) [plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant), [alpine plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpine_plant), or other [exotic plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exotic_plant). Visitor services at a botanical garden might include tours, educational displays, [art exhibitions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_exhibition), book rooms, open-air theatrical and musical performances, and other entertainment.

The botanic or botanical garden is an educational institution for scientific workers and general public or layman to awake and enlightened interest in plant life.

The botanical gardens are of immense value not only to botanists, home gardeners, nurserymen, horticulturists, landscape gardeners and foresters but also to millions of national and international tourists.

The botanical gardens should have morphological gardens to display seed dispersal in plants; genetics or breeding garden to display the laws of heredity and a taxonomic garden to display plant families. There should be a fruticetum, arboretum, a section of economic plants; green houses and nurseries for propagating and cultivating exotic, end genetic and delicate plants.

A botanical garden is an institution for botanical research, especially on the native flora of the region. There should be an herbarium, library, photographic studies, lecture pavilion and recreational facilities. In fact, all the fundamental and applied aspects of botany come within the purview of botanical garden and it becomes the centre of cultural activities of the region in which it is situated.

**History of Botanical Gardens:**

The gardens are as old as civilization. Man had begun to cultivate plants in gardens, to supply himself conveniently with food, to provide drugs, or to grow beautiful flowers. Even very primitive tribes engage in vegetable gardening and often, surprisingly, flower gardening.

In the ancient civilization gardens were prominent features of the grounds of temples or palaces, as well as of the homes of the nobility. The number of plants cultivated by the ancient Egyptians was a source of wonder to neighbouring peoples. The “Hanging Gardens” of Babylon are counted among the wonders of the ancient world.

With the Renaissance and the widening of men’s horizons, the art of gardening prospered as a result of new enthusiasm. Bizarre and valuable plants from the newly discovered lands brought a new zest for plant introduction.

The sixteenth century herbalists, as we have seen, acquainted the world with hundreds of plants, many of them growing in gardens. A mounting interest in the growing of flowers for beautification of grounds around homes led to the introduction of species from the parts of the world.

The interest in learning that led to the establishment and development of the great universities resulted likewise in the establishment of botanical gardens in connection with the schools.

In India the botanic gardens existed at a very early date probably as early as 546 B.C. The famous Indian physician Jivaka Komarabhacca who flourished during the region of King Bimbisara of Magadh (modern Bihar) from 546 to 494 B.C. made intensive survey of the medicinal plants of India.

These gardens have been in existence throughout India for thousands of years and have been repeatedly mentioned in ancient Sanskrit literature. They functioned as the botanical gardens of the Old World.

The botanical gardens reflected the growth of human culture of the regions in which they were situated today, and reflect the glory of a nation or of a country. The Indian history, which runs through thousands of years, we find that these gardens flourished with the rise of different dynasties and dwindled away with their fall.

During the progress of Mughals, East India Company, and British, botanical gardens prospered and with their fall, the garden decayed. Now with India’s independence, they are again coming up. A network of botanical gardens has come up and are functioning throughout the country with intensive botanical activity.

**Functions of Botanical Gardens:**

The botanical gardens are the natural source of science and culture.

**The functions of gardens are following:**

1. The botanical gardens can provide first hand data to identifying a plant in its live state.

2. Botanical gardens act as out-door laboratories.

2. Initiate studies on the tropical and temperate ecosystems and their biota, before they are lost to science and preserve such systems.

3. Serve as centres of gene pools or germ plasm bank of wild relatives of economically important plants.

4. Establish Nature centres and youth Museums to focus attention on destruction of tropical and temperate ecosystem, environmental degradation.

5. Maintain less attractive and abandoned ornamental plants.

6. Train city arborists in the plantation of trees in urban areas.

7. Collaborate university and others to conduct research in environmental biology etc.

8. Organise educational programmes to create environmental awareness among children students and train teachers in environmental education.

9. Centres of conservation of endangered and rare species.

10. Botanical gardens provide living plant materials for research.

11. They serve as pollution indicator centres by growing pollution – susceptible plants.

12. Most of the economic plants were originally introduced and distributed to the other parts of the world through botanic gardens.

13. Inspire poets, literato’s etc. by providing aesthetical pleasure.

14. Serene site for relaxation. The gardens provide a suitable environment for relaxation and relieve the body and the mind of the stress and strain.

15. Garden therapy for eye-sight, mental-stress etc.

16. People of advance—age find a great solace in lovely gardens.

17. Gardens also arrange flowers shows, put on displays seasonal plants, flowers and plants of unusual interest.

18. The landscape gardens are becoming quite popular and land a great charm to the adjoining building like libraries, museums, sports ground etc.

19. Conserve the flora and fauna in natural habitat.

20. And finally, the botanical gardens are the centre’s for recreation and aesthetic beauty.

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**Important Botanic Garden:**







