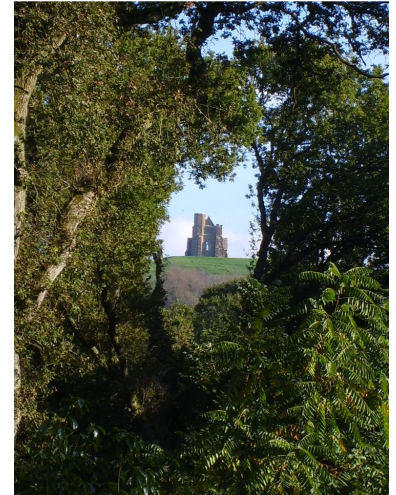# A Garden to Visit   DORSET: Abbotsbury

Abbotsbury Sub Tropical Gardens on the Dorset coast behind the Chesil shingle beach, is a great place to visit at the end of the traditional gardening year when you want to eke out a little bit more from the year's gardening experience before winter sets in proper.

And this garden gives you that extra lift – vibrant colours, full borders of luxurious exotic and tender plants, architectural shapes, cascading and arching plumes, fragrant blooms and dense, jungly canopies and tree tops.

A trip to Abbotsbury, in the right weather, can feel like a day trip to visit the gardens of Tenerife or Madeira.
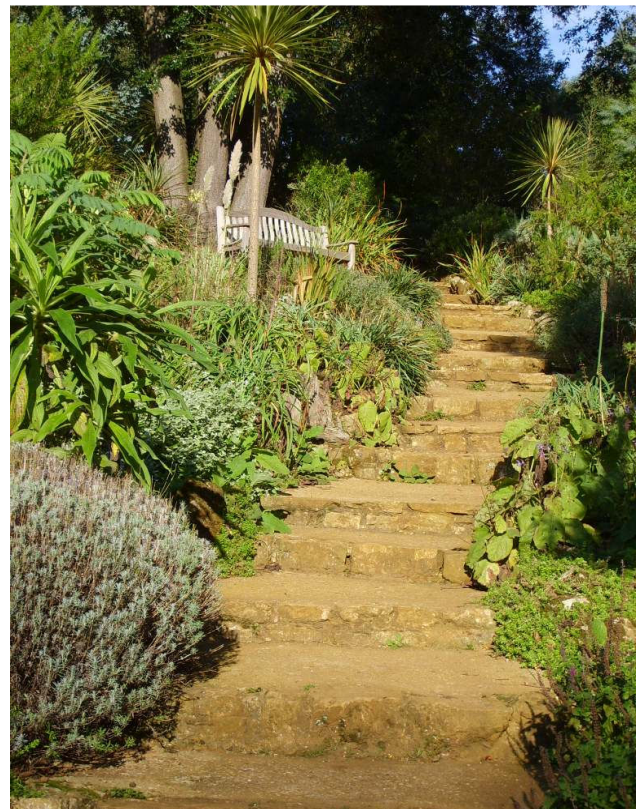
If you time your visit around Bonfire Night (November 5th), then you can also see two gardens for the price of one – you can make a return visit at dusk to see the garden again - this time, floodlit in magical colours.

Early autumn is a great time to visit Abbotsbury – as with many tender exotics, these plants can take a while to get going at the beginning of the growing season in our latitudes but really come into their own providing bursts of colour, fragrance and amazing shapes and forms throughout autumn and well into early winter.

For me, Abbotsbury Sub Tropical Gardens restores my faith in the ability of the more tender exotics to withstand our southern British climate (especially after recent wet summers and cold winters).

The key to Abbotsbury's success is the confidence and adriotness in the planting design. The borders are thickly planted and much is made of island beds with strong architectural planting to create a vocabulary – full stops and exclamation marks regularly punctuate this garden and break up the lawn areas.

The garden is nestled in a narrow combe and a new Magnolia walk allows you to come up for air and break the spell for a moment with a breathtaking view from a cliff top all along the Chesil beach.

Directions: Bullers Way, Abbotsbury, Nr Weymouth, Dorset DT3 4LA   01305 871387
www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk/gardens