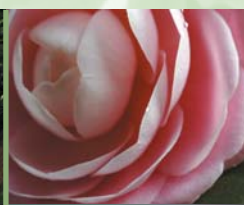
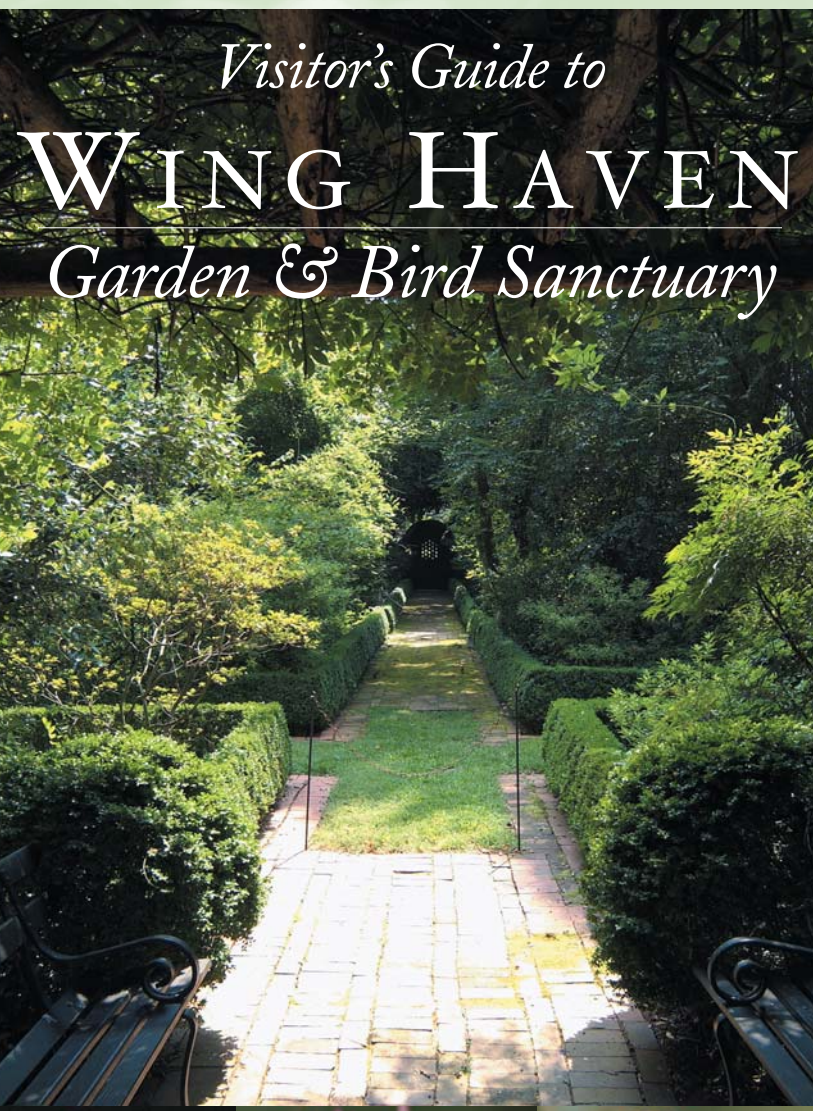


*Visitor's Guide to*  
**WING HAVEN**  
*Garden & Bird Sanctuary*





# Visitor's Guide to Wing Haven

Wing Haven has been a special part of Charlotte since its creation by Elizabeth and Edwin Clarkson in 1927. The gardens, enclosed on all sides by brick walls, encompass almost three acres in the heart of Charlotte and include lovely vistas, formal gardens, and woodland areas. Throughout, the emphasis is on plantings for birds and other wildlife—providing cover, nesting sites, food, and water. Plaques and statuary, integrated into the garden walls and paths, reflect the spirit and beauty of Wing Haven and its creators.



The Clarksons gave the gardens to the Wing Haven Foundation in 1970, and now its Board of Directors is responsible for maintaining this lovely spot in keeping with the Clarksons' spirit and intent. When Elizabeth Clarkson began to plant her garden, she used the materials that were widely available. A number of those plants are not native to the Southeast and now considered to be 'invasive'. Although the Foundation is charged with preserving the garden as it was created, the decision has been made to choose natives and non-invasives whenever it is appropriate.

*Visitors are welcome in the garden on Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Tuesday 3 pm - 5 pm and Wednesday 10 am - noon. To help our garden grow and provide a true haven for our feathered friends, we suggest a donation of \$5 per non-member adult. Guided tours for groups are available on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and can be arranged by calling Wing Haven at 704.331.0664.*

- Allow at least one hour to tour the garden.
- Follow the white arrows, matching the numbers on the arrows with the numbers on the guide.
- Please stay on the brick paths, do not pick any of the plants, do not smoke or litter, and refrain from using cell phones.
- Please be careful on the paths. The bricks can be very slippery.



## THE CLARKSON HOME

248 Ridgewood Ave

The home was designed while the Clarksons were engaged to be married. Mrs. Clarkson was living in Texas at the time and never actually saw the home or property before they were married and ready to move in. It was one of the early houses built in the development replacing treeless, red clay fields. The Clarksons remained in the home until late 1988. Today the house is used as a reception area for visitors. Restoration of the house began in 1990 with the aim of retaining the look and feel of the home when the Clarksons lived here.

## THE FRONT GARDEN

In the front garden a sundial made in England in 1705 keeps perfect time for this latitude. English Laurels (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Nandina (*Nandina domestica*) line the foundation. The summer-blooming blue Plumbagos (*Plumbago auriculata*) that fill the pots on either side of the door are replaced with the fragrant Winter Daphne (*Daphne odora* 'Aureomarginata') when cold weather arrives. The Wintersweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*), Japanese Flowering Apricot (*Prunus mume*), and Leatherleaf Mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*) provide color and fragrance in winter. The racemes of yellow flowers on the Mahonia are followed by clusters of blue-purple berries that are readily enjoyed by the Catbird and Mockingbird in late April. The Evergreen Clematis (*Clematis armandii*) forms an arch over the walk to the driveway and blooms in late winter. The climbing rose (*Rosa* 'Climbing Old Blush') at the entrance to the driveway was propagated from one planted by Mrs. Clarkson's mother in Texas in 1888. Many different herbs are planted within the limestone block wall and cascade over the brick that surrounds the raised beds. These beds contain English Boxwood (*Buxus suffruticosa*) and the Fairy Rose (*Rosa polyantha* 'The Fairy'). Pink Radiance Roses (*Rosa grandiflora* 'Pink Radiance'), Climbing Pinkie (*Rosa polyantha* 'Climbing Pinkie'), and pink Rain Lilies (*Zephyranthes grandiflora*) in the beds between the street and sidewalk provide color all summer. The beds surrounding the sundial are lined with a small white Rain Lily (*Zephyranthes candida*).

## ENTRY GARDEN AND EDUCATION BUILDING

The entry garden has taken the place of the original driveway. The plantings that flank the side door of the Clarkson home include English boxwood, Pyramidal Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Pyramidalis'), Sweetbox (*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis*), and White Periwinkle (*Vinca minor* 'Alba'). The walls on either side of the driveway are covered with Climbing Hydrangea (*Hydrangea petiolaris*), and an espaliered Sweet Bay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) and Carolina Jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) anchor the wall to the left of the walkway. The 'Green Mountain'

Boxwoods in the large terra cotta pots to your left are known for their cone-like growth habit. Sweetbox (*Sarcococca confusa*) and Florida Leucothoe (*Leucothoe populifolia*) are planted in the shade of the Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) just outside the entrance to the Education Building. Located at the end of the driveway, this building serves many purposes—a meeting place for Wing Haven programs and a place for visitors to view a 12-minute video on the Clarksons and Wing Haven. This video is a wonderful introduction to the garden and its creators. Restrooms and water fountain are also located here. The windows in the back of the building look out into the White Garden.

⇒ **Follow the white arrow through the gate to enter the garden.**

Two large *Elaeagnus* (*Elaeagnus pungens*) arch over the entrance to the garden; in autumn its fragrant flowers perfume the garden. In the niche opposite this gate is a charming statue of Saint Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower. She carries roses in her hands and looks out over the space formerly used as a rose garden. At one time there were 300 roses planted here. As the trees matured it became too shady for them so the majority of our roses were moved to another part of the garden. We have kept the plantings of the fragrant 'Perle d'Or' (*Rosa polyantha* 'Perle d'Or'). A Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster lacteus*) and American Elder (*Sambucus canadensis*), both excellent sources of food for the birds, are included in the plantings to the left. You will notice that beautiful statuary and plaques are an integral part of the garden and give the visitor an insight into the spirit of Elizabeth Clarkson.

⇒ **Follow the arrow to the right along the brick path.**

## 2 THE UPPER GARDEN PATH

The basic design of Wing Haven is a double cross surrounded by a series of paths. This path goes around the perimeter of the Upper Garden. From it you will see the garden from several vantage points. Along this path are several different ground covers: Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*), English Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Violets, Dwarf Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*), Sweet Box (*Sarcococca humilis*), Christmas Ferns (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), Periwinkle (*Vinca major* and *Vinca minor*), and Winter Creeper. The *Elaeagnus* has been trained to cover the arbors and provides food, cover and nesting sites. Other plantings along the Upper Garden path include Camellias

## 1 SAINT THERESA PATH





### WING HAVEN BENCH

3

(*Camellia japonica*), Mahonias, Nandinas, Bush Clover (*Lespedeza thunbergii* 'Albiflora'), a Japanese Quince (*Chaenomeles japonica* 'Jet Trail'), Mock Orange (*Philadelphus coronarius*), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and Chinese Flowering Crabapple (*Malus x atrosanguinea*). The Camellias in this part of the garden include the following cultivars: 'Bernice Boddy', 'Debutante', 'Chandleri elegans', and 'Christmas Cheer'. Elizabeth Clarkson planned and planted this area in the 1930s; its basic design has not changed.

The Clarksons were sitting on this bench when they named their garden. Large American Boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*) flank the bench and from it one views a long lovely vista of the garden from front to back. Elizabeth Clarkson created vistas such as this one in combination with more intimate "rooms" within the garden.



Clipped English Boxwood line the vista in the upper part of the garden. In the flowerbeds Japanese Weeping Cherries (*Prunus subhirtella* var. *pendula*) and Southern Indica Hybrid Azaleas (*Rhododendron* 'George L. Taber' and 'G. G. Gerbing') flourish in the spring, and Resurrection (*Lycoris squamigera*) and Crinum Lilies (*Crinum americana*) bloom in summer. The many trees and shrubs in this area provide year-round interest as well as food and cover for the birds throughout the

seasons. It was here, in the 1950s, that Dorothy Doughty observed the Yellow-Rumped Warblers in the blooming cherry trees. This inspired the design of the Warblers that she modeled for Royal Worcester's "American Bird Series." The male and female Myrtle Warblers on the mantle of the Clarkson home are the first pair made by Royal Worcester of this species.

### LION'S HEAD FOUNTAIN

4

This fountain reminds us of the importance of moving water in attracting birds. Water at Wing Haven is supplied by two wells. All birds use water, winter and summer. Robins and Wood Thrushes use water to make mud with which to build or line their nests. Plantings around the fountain include the Cast-Iron Plant (*Aspidistra elatior*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), and Christmas ferns; the Stautonia (*Stautonia hexaphylla*) vine softens the wall around the fountain. The Ligustrums (*Ligustrum lucidum*) in this part of the garden have grown into trees and provide much food for the birds in winter when other berries are gone or damaged by the cold. Throughout the winter months flocks of Cedar Waxwings and Robins visit

the garden to feed on these berries.

The buildings on the right are used to protect potted plants and herbs that would be killed or damaged by the winter cold. Along this path is a lovely border of Lenten Roses (*Helleborus orientalis*) and Mondo Grass. Note the placement of the terra cotta urn to the right of the path; the lines of the pot echo the gentle curve in the path. This is one of several unique terra cotta pieces in the garden. The path to the right leads to our nursery shop that is operated by volunteers; their spring and fall plant sales are an important source of funding for the garden.

## 5 COLD FRAME AND NURSERY

Beyond the dripping birdbath, the large Doublefile Viburnum (*Viburnum plicatum* var. *tomentosum*), the Viburnum x. Carlcephalum, and the Pear (*Pyrus communis*), you will notice the hardy vines and tangles on your left. The vines which provide cover and nesting areas for the birds include Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Wild Grape (*Vitis labrusca*), Chinese Wisteria (*Wisteria chinensis*), and Catbrier (*Smilax rotundifolia*).

⇒ **Turn right and walk toward the arch in the brick wall.**

This path was named for Toyohiko Kagawa, a Japanese Christian social reformer and philosopher who was the author of poetry, essays, religious works, and stories. A poem by Kagawa, which was one of Elizabeth Clarkson's favorites, is on the marble plaque.

Enjoy the long view that crosses the entire width of the garden. The camellias planted in this area include 'Nuccio's Pearl', 'Dr. Tinsley', and 'Lady Vansittart'. The Azalea on either side of the path is 'Lady Mulberry.' It has beautiful soft lavender blooms in spring.

This is a favorite spot frequented by birds and animals. Mrs. Clarkson once observed 22 Goldfinches bathing in the small pools of this delightful area. The Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Autumn Fern (*Dryopteris erythrosora*) and Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) are found here, and such wild-flowers as Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*), False Solomon's Seal (*Smilacina racemosa*), Turtlehead (*Chelone lyonii*), Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Foam Flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), Horsetails (*Equisetum hyemale*), and Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). Shrubs in this area include the Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), and

## 6 BIRD PLANTINGS

## 7 KAGAWA PATH



## 8 FROG HOLLOW



## WOODS AREA

9

Deciduous Azalea (*Azalea arborescens*). Note the Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) that softly frames the statue of the young children. Sit quietly on the low tile benches here and enjoy!

Here we leave the brick paths for the naturally wooded paths. On the left is a thicket of Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Mahonia, Hollies, and Eleagnus. This thicket also shelters Frog Hollow and offers the birds areas for nesting and cover.

Continuing on approximately 15 feet, to the left, is a groundcover of Canadian Ginger (*Asarum canadense*). Throughout the woods, in early spring, look for Jonquils (*Narcissus sp.*), Scilla (*Scilla campanulatus*), Snow Flakes (*Leucojum aestivum*) and such wildflowers as Dog Tooth Violets, Trillium (*Trillium sp.*), Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*), and Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*). Summer brings a profusion of ferns, while Camellias brighten the winter scene. A planting of our native Hercules' Club (*Aralia spinosa*) provides purplish black fruit just in time for autumn migration. The vigorous Leatherleaf Viburnum (*Viburnum rhytidophyllum*) to your right bears small creamy white flowers in spring.



## 10 FIREPLACE

The fireplace was built by the Clarksons for their young friends—nieces, nephews, scout groups and schoolchildren—to enjoy. Note Mrs. Clarkson's clever use of flue tiles as an economical solution for seating. The dark green foliage of the Creeping Fig (*Ficus pumila*) softens the lines of the fireplace. This area is now used as a gathering place for children's activities or for anyone to sit and enjoy the wildlife.

## SAINT FRANCIS PLAQUE

11

This beautiful bronze plaque is an original. During World War II the Clarksons invited servicemen on leave to spend time with them. A card, announcing a Natural History subscription as a gift from one of the men, had this etching of St. Francis with the birds and animals. Mrs. Clarkson had a sculptress mold the plaque in plaster and then sent it to the Gorham Company in New York to be cast in bronze.

The view from this plaque to the front of the garden exhibits the use of less formal, unclipped Boxwood in the woods leading to a clipped hedge in the more formal portion of the garden. As you proceed down the wide brick path to the steps, be sure to observe the woodland pathways planted with Ferns, Hostas, and Lenten Roses. On your left you'll see the thorny Hardy Orange (*Poncirus trifoliata*). Its fragrant flowers are followed by small, orange-like fruit.

The woodland path leading off to the right is lined with native ferns and wildflowers. If you're visiting the garden in early spring, you may notice Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Native Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), and several varieties of Trillium (*Trillium sp.*). Camellias of different varieties planted in the 30's and 40's form the backdrop for this path.

This interesting tree is a native of Southeast Asia. The straight green trunk reaches approximately twenty feet before it branches. Some of the leaves are 12 inches wide. The flowers are small and greenish, rather insignificant looking, but the mature seed pod is very beautiful. The bed of mixed perennials includes Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium fistulosum*), Japanese Anemone (*Anemone x hybrida*), Money Plant (*Lunaria annua*), Purple Cone Flower (*Echinacea purpurea*), fragrant Phlox (*Phlox paniculata* 'David') and Kalimeris. To your right is a Sweet Olive (*Osmanthus fragrans aurantiacus*) which bears fragrant orange flowers in early autumn.



The Clarksons found such pleasure sitting here watching the chipmunks play and birds chase each other that they named these their "laughing benches." This garden bench made to Mrs. Clarkson's specifications is now a model

for benches throughout the garden. These sit under a cedar pergola, one of several in the garden, covered with Chinese Wisteria.

**12** JAPANESE  
VARNISH  
OR CHINESE  
PARASOL TREE  
(*Firmiana  
simplex*)

**13** THE  
LAUGHING  
BENCHES



## WHITE GARDEN AND WILLOW OAK

14 This intimate space was originally planted with a dozen white roses and included an outdoor sitting area with a hammock and chairs. The furnishings have now been replaced with white-flowering plants. In 1989 a border of White Sasanquas (*Camellia sasanqua* 'Setsugeki') was planted to enclose the area. Additional plantings that have white interest or blooms include creeping Gardenia (*Gardenia radicans*), Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Alice'), Pee Gee Hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora*), Variegated Japanese Privet (*Ligustrum japonicum* 'Variegatum'), Japanese Anemone, Flowering Quince (*Chaenomeles japonica* 'Jet Trail'), Lenten Rose, and the white flowering Periwinkle (*Vinca minor* 'Miss Jekyll').



The St. Francis birdbath that looks out over the central axis of the garden was a gift from Mrs. Clarkson's mother on the occasion of their first wedding anniversary. Although the original was damaged, the existing birdbath is an exact replica.

The Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*) that towers over the garden was a small tree when the Clarksons came here as a bride and groom in 1927. This oak is a favorite tree of Charlotte and is often confused with the Water Oak (*Quercus nigra*). The general size and shape of the leaf is different and the foliage of the Water Oak remains green longer than other oaks. Most amazing, however, is the

tiny size of the acorn of the Willow Oak.

## THE HERB GARDEN

15 Mrs. Clarkson used the lovely Oriental Boxwood (*Buxus* sp.) to establish the classical design of the Herb Garden. She installed 500 plants—bought for six cents each—to create the clipped hedge. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) anchors each of the four quadrants that have been separately planted with Medicinal, Culinary, Fragrant, and Biblical herbs. The gates were designed by Mrs. Clarkson and made by a local iron works many years ago. The sundial, a wedding gift to the Clarksons, keeps perfect time on a sunny day. A large Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis japonica*) planted just outside the medicinal quadrant provides vibrant fall color as well as winter interest and fragrance. The red-orange flowers of the Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) brighten the summer landscape. An excellent fruit-producer, the Pomegranate provides food for the Mockingbird well into the winter. A fragrant hedge of Anise-Trees (*Illicium parviflorum*) separates the Herb Garden from the neighboring woods.

This path is named for the fountain at its end, and its plantings provide excellent examples of shrubbery and groundcovers that thrive in dry shade. To the left Barrenwort (*Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulfureum') and Sweet Box (*Sarcococca humilis*) provide evergreen ground cover. The shrubby Sweet Box (*Sarcococca confusa*) flourishes on the right. Both forms of the Sweet Box have fragrant clusters of white flowers in late winter, followed by glossy black fruit. In spring the careful observer will notice the small but fragrant white flowers of the Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) tucked beneath its umbrella leaf. In September-October watch for the scarlet-red fruit of the Hearts-a-Burstin' (*Euonymus americanus*). The ferns lining the path include the Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Netted Chain Fern (*Woodwardia aveolata*), Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), and Christmas Fern.

## 16 THE CHRISTMAS PATH AND MADONNA FOUNTAIN



The Madonna and Child relief is a copy of a brightly colored Italian ceramic plaque that hangs in the Clarkson's kitchen. The seal beneath the Madonna was designed by Mrs. Clarkson and depicts seven doves representing the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

⇒ **Turn left and walk toward the wide brick path.**

In early spring white, pink and blue Scilla (*Scilla campanulatus*) bloom to the left of the path.

At the bottom of the lower path is the statue of St. Fiacre, patron saint of gardeners. Born in Ireland in the 7th century, he founded a monastery in France where he was revered for his healing herbs and the vegetables he raised to feed the poor. St. Fiacre is always depicted with a spade and the fruits of his labor in his hands.

## 17 SAINT FIACRE AND THE LOWER PATH

The vista from St. Fiacre to the front wall is called the Lower Path. Christmas Ferns, Mayapples, and Lenten Roses flourish on either side of the path. To the left is a beautiful Bottlebrush Buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*) and Leatherleaf Viburnum underplanted with pink Cyclamen (*Cyclamen coum*, *Cyclamen hederifolium*) that bloom in the fall. In late summer one can also see the Red Spider Lilies (*Lycoris radiata*) blooming on either side of the path. Looking beyond the woods, the vista is framed by a pair of white Crape Myrtles (*Lagerstroemia* 'Natchez'). English Boxwood and pink and white Azaleas border the lower garden path. Varieties of Azaleas include: 'Coral Bell', 'Pink Pearl', 'White Matti Pan', 'Snow', and 'Kaempferi'.



## WOOD DUCK BOX AND POND



**18** The large rocket-shaped birdhouse and a small shallow pond can be seen to the right of the Lower Path. Both of these are here for raising Wood Ducks. The Clarksons began their experiences with Wood Ducks in the fifties when given a pair that nested successfully. Female Wood Ducks usually return to the vicinity of hatching to nest, and they returned to nest at Wing Haven for many years. The hen uses down from her breast on top of the sawdust in the box to make a soft nest for her 12 to 15 eggs. She lays an egg a day with incubation beginning when her clutch is laid. Young stay in the nest overnight (sometimes longer). The hen calls from the ground below the nest until the ducklings respond by leaping from the nest. Since September 1989 when Hurricane Hugo devastated the garden, no Wood Ducks have been seen at Wing Haven

The dead trees or “snags” that you see here and throughout the garden are left for the birds to use for nesting and food as decay begins. Carolina Chickadees (*Parus carolinensis*), Tufted Titmice (*Parus bicolor*), various species of Nuthatches (*Sitta sp.*), and Woodpeckers particularly enjoy searching for insects and worms in the dead wood.

⇒ **Turn right just below the arbor.**

## BIRD BATH

**19** Please be careful by the birdbath, for the bricks are always slippery from the energetic bathing of the birds. Although this is only one of many birdbaths, it seems to be the most popular in the garden. As you travel down the path towards the front of the garden, take a moment to enjoy the fragrant, reddish-brown blossoms of the Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) on your right. A beautiful specimen of the Tea Camellia (*Camellia sinensis*) is on your left; the leaves of this plant provide the tea of commerce. Look for its small white flowers in September-October.

## WHITE GATE

**20** The white gate once led into a rose garden used only by Mrs. Clarkson as a cutting garden for roses. The gate is framed by a pair of white wrought iron benches and two large Debutante Camellias (*Camellia japonica* ‘Debutante’).

⇒ **Enter this gate to view the Rose Garden and follow the path to your right.**

## ROSE GARDEN

**21** This garden was designed and planted in 1994 to showcase old or antique roses—species or cultivars in existence before 1920. The roses were chosen for their beauty, fragrance, historical significance and general resistance to disease and insects. They are lovely and can be cared for without the use of chemicals—a vital part of Wing Haven’s maintenance program as a bird sanctuary and wildlife habitat.

The design of this garden echoes the feel of Wing Haven with its pools, bird baths, brick-lined grass paths edged with Boxwoods, and the abundance of bloom in primarily pink and white. Note the Pyramidal Boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Pyramidalis') that anchor the quadrants of the garden. The small pool in the center of the garden is surrounded by white Rain Lilies.



Just beyond the Rose Garden wall, one can see the back of 260 Ridgewood Avenue. This building houses the administrative offices of the Wing Haven Foundation as well as a Resource Center for children and adults. The backyard of the property is our Children's Garden—a dynamic learning space in which children can explore and experience plants and wildlife. ⇒**Enjoy the Rose Garden, then exit through the white gate and turn right.**

In leaving the Rose Garden, take a moment to enjoy the vista that passes through the Main Garden to the pierced brick window at the end of the Kagawa Path.

Muscadine Grapevines (*Vitis rotundifolia*) tangle through the Mulberry tree (*Morus rubra*), Privet (*Ligustrum amurense*), and over the cedar arbor. This type of vine thicket is essential to a wildlife sanctuary. A planting of our native Arrow-wood (*Viburnum dentatum*) provides cover, and its blue-black berries feed many species of birds.

This is the reflecting pool seen from the dining room windows. Beneath the windows is the feeding area where birds, Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*), and Chipmunks (*Tamias striatus*) come to enjoy a variety of foods. Depending on the season they may feast on sunflower seed, thistle, safflower seed, peanut butter-oatmeal mixture, oranges or a millet mixture. A bed of Algerian Ivy (*Hedera Algeriensis*) provides the perfect hiding place for the shy chipmunks. This particular ivy came from Robert E. Lee's tomb in Lexington, Virginia.

The pool is surrounded by a variety of flowering trees and shrubs that include Japanese Weeping Cherries, the double flowering pink Kwanzan Cherries (*Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'), Japanese Apricot (*Prunus mume*), Debutante Camellias, Savannah Hollies (*Ilex x attenuata* 'Savannah'), a pale pink Nadan Cherry (*Prunus serrulata* "Nadan"), and Pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira*). The mirrors set into the brick wall below the pool

## 22 THE GRAPEVINE PATH

## 23 THE OVAL POOL



bring additional depth to this enclosed space. The four terra cotta pots on the edge of the pool are exact replicas of the originals.

## MORNING CAROL 24

This is a favorite poem of visitors. Enjoy the Lower Garden vista that traces your steps back to St. Fiacre.

## THE MAIN GARDEN 25

As you pass between the pergola and Clarkson home to enter the main garden, an arbor covered with white Akebia (*Akebia quinata* 'Alba') shelters the path. Between the pergola and upper terrace are a Chastetree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) and a large Fragrant Osmanthus (*Osmanthus fortunei*). Mrs. Clarkson brought the Chastetree from Texas as a cutting in the early 1930's. In 2000 the National Register of Big Trees recognized this particular specimen as the largest of its species growing in the United States. In June the Vitex is covered with 6" racemes of violet flowers. By autumn the tree is filled with Cardinals and Sparrows feasting on its seeds.



A tall Privet hedge encloses this formal garden room on three sides. The large American Boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*) on each side and Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*) in the back corner soften the straight lines of this space. The Pink Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) was planted as the focal point of the main garden about 1930. Mrs. Clarkson tied bricks to its branches to encourage its open shape. In winter white Pansies (*Viola x wittrockiana*) line the beds on either side of the garden; in warm weather the pansies are replaced with white Begonias (*Begonia semperflorens*). Throughout the summer months the long borders are filled with shades of pink, blue and white—a cool palette that brings welcome relief from our heat. The blooming plants include Roses, white Althea (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Diana'), Crinum Lily 'Cecil Hoodysell', Butterfly-bush (*Buddleia davidii*), hydrangeas (*Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' and *Hydrangea macrophylla*), fragrant Ginger lily (*Hedychium coronarium*), Pink Spider Flower (*Cleome spinosa*), and large pots of Plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*) that winter in the cold frame. Pots of annuals add color throughout the garden.

Hummingbird feeders and the mealworm bowl bring numerous species of birds to the kitchen door year round. Pots of Slender Deutzia (*Deutzia gracilis*) sit on each side of the terrace pool, and a fragrant Confederate Jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*) grows along the steps. Plantain-lilies (*Hosta plantaginea* 'Royal Standard') and Japanese Holly Ferns (*Crytomium falcatum*) are planted in the bed below. The marble statue at the small terrace is a replacement for the original statue that had deteriorated through the years.

When Mrs. Clarkson came to Charlotte in 1927 a garden with hedges and borders and trees was her all-consuming desire—the birds were just a lovely part of the garden's background. During a lengthy illness that forced her to spend many days in bed or, weather permitting, on a cot in the garden, she became passionate about the birds. In an article published in Audubon in

1945 she wrote, "Up to that time all plants and shrubs and trees had been selected for their contribution to the garden picture, but from that moment when I suddenly became interested in birds, each addition was weighed also from the 'bird's point of view,' and bird baths, feeding stations, suet baskets, and hummingbird feeders became garden necessities."

Over the years many species of birds have been spotted in the garden. The following is a listing of the birds that visitors to Wing Haven are most likely to see in the garden.

**American Robin** (*Turdus migratorius*) Although the American Robin is a permanent resident of our region, large flocks visit the garden in winter particularly when severe weather arrives in the North. The Robin has a slate gray back, red breast, yellow bill, and white eye rings. The American Robin eats both fruit and invertebrates. Earthworms are important during the breeding season, but fruit is the main diet in winter. Robins eat different types of food depending on the time of day; they eat earthworms early in the day and more fruit later in the day. At Wing Haven the Robins enjoy a variety of fruits and monopolize the bird baths in the Rose Garden.

**Brown Thrasher** (*Toxostoma rufum*) A large bird, about 10 inches in length, the Brown Thrasher has bright rufous upperparts and its belly is pale buff with brown streaks; it has haunting yellow eyes, a long, curved bill, and a long, graceful tail. A resident of deciduous thickets, woodland borders and brushy fields, the Brown Thrasher gets its name from its habit of "thrashing" about on the ground looking for insects in the leaf litter. In spring they feed primarily on insects and spiders and, during the summer and autumn, are often found eating wild fruit. The Brown Thrasher will come to the feeders at Wing Haven for mealworms and suet.





Carolina  
Chickadee

**Carolina Chickadee** (*Poecile carolinensis*) A small, short-billed bird, the Carolina Chickadee has a black cap, black bib, and white cheeks. Its call “chick-a-dee-dee-dee” suggests its name. This tiny omnivore feeds readily on insects, spiders, seeds, and fruits. At Wing Haven we spot this year-round resident at the mealworm bowl as well as other feeders. The Chickadee’s natural habitat consists of deciduous and mixed deciduous/coniferous woodlands; they nest in cavities of dead trees or rotten branches and will readily use nest boxes.

**Carolina Wren** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) Singing with one of the loudest voices per volume of bird, the Carolina Wren’s “tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle” is a familiar song at Wing Haven. This small brown songbird has prominent white eye stripes and is often seen with its tail held upward. The Carolina Wren feeds on insects and spiders and requires moderately dense shrub or brushy cover. Its nest is a domed cup with a side entrance and can be found in tree cavity, vine tangle, or an artificial site such as a mailbox or planter.

**Downy Woodpecker** (*Picoides pubescens*) The smallest and most common of the Eastern Woodpeckers, the Downy Woodpecker has adapted to life in our city parks and gardens. It is a small (6 to 7 inches long), black and white woodpecker with a broad white stripe that runs down the center of its back and has a very short bill. The male has a small patch of red on the back of its head. The Downy feeds on insects—wood borers, beetles, ants, spiders, aphids and scale insects—and some wild fruit. It clings to the trunk or branch of the tree to dig out beetle grub or to flake off bark to get at an insect cocoon or batch of insect eggs. It may move along the tree in quick jerky hops or flit to the outer branches in search of food.

**Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*) spends much of its time on the ground so it is easy to find and recognize—the bird’s distinctive double-footed, backward hop, repeated often as it searches for food below bird feeders and among the leaf clutter, makes it unmistakable. The male has a black hood and back, rufous sides, and white underparts. The female is similar, but less brightly colored than the male—the black parts replaced by dark brown. Its song is made of several introductory notes followed by a loud trill, “drink-your-teeeee.” The Towhee is a year-round resident at Wing Haven and enjoys our dense brush and thickets in the garden.

**Gray Catbird** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) A summer resident that returns to Wing Haven in mid-April just as the mahonia berries ripen, the Catbird announces his/her arrival with its very chatty song, often punctuated by a cat-like “mew.” The Catbird is quite handsome and sleek—both male and

female are approximately 9 inches long, slate-gray in color with a small black cap, a touch of chestnut under the tail, and black cat whiskers. The Catbird prefers to nest close to the ground in dense thickets and makes its nest out of twigs, vines, weeds, and a lining of fine rootlets. The catbird lays 3 to 6 eggs per brood and will have two broods, sometimes three, per season. The young leave the nest when they are 10 to 15 days old. The Catbird feeds on fruit and insects. Its young are fed a diet entirely of insects.

**House Finch** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) A medium-sized finch, the male House Finch has bright red on the head, chest, and rump; the female is brown and striped. Its bill is short and thick, with a rounded top edge. This year-round resident comes readily to feeders, and one is almost always present at the feeding station near the Oval Pool. The House Finch was originally a bird of the southwestern United States and Mexico. In 1940 a small number of finches were turned loose on Long Island, New York, and they quickly started breeding. Since that time they have spread across the entire eastern United States. The House Finch breeds in close association with people and often chooses a hanging plant or awning in which to put its nest.

**Northern Cardinal** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) His magnificent red plumage, large crest, and year-round song make the male Cardinal one of our most beautiful birds. The female is a handsome tan bird with red tail, wings, and beak. The Cardinal's song is a series of clear whistles, often described as "What cheer! What cheer! Pretty, pretty, pretty!" Cardinals feel at home at Wing Haven because of the many dense vines, shrubs, and evergreens that provide nesting sites, food sources, and winter cover. The Cardinal's heavy-duty beak is best equipped for eating seeds, but they will consume a variety of fruits and insects as well. They come to the feeder for black-oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, cracked corn, and peanut butter.

**Northern Mockingbird** (*Mimus polyglottos*) This medium-sized songbird with a long tail, gray back, whitish belly, and two white wingbars, is known for its long, complex songs that include imitations of many other birds. The Mockingbird's call consists of repeated, melodious phrases often poured out from a conspicuous place such as a treetop. During spring and summer the mockingbird feeds mainly on insects; however, during the winter months the bulk of its diet consists of fruit. It is not uncommon to spot the Mockingbird closely guarding a tree laden with berries throughout the winter.

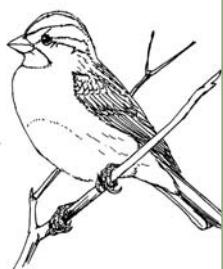
White-breasted  
Nuthatch



**Tufted Titmouse** (*Baeolophus bicolor*) With its pointed topknot and big, black eyes, the Tufted Titmouse is always a welcome sight at Wing Haven. This small bird (6”) has a gray back, whitish belly with a tinge of rust under each wing and a very large voice for its size. During the spring months, it whistles “peter-peter-peter” or an occasional “jay-jay-jay” during times of stress. Ever alert and inquisitive, the Titmouse is a woodland bird that gathers in small flocks with chickadees, nuthatches and kinglets during the winter months. Titmice feed on small insects—caterpillars, wasps, beetles, spiders and snails—as well as acorns, wild fruits, and nuts. They will feed on sunflower seeds, peanuts and suet placed in hanging feeders.

**White-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta carolinensis*) A small (5- inches long) gray bird with a black cap, the White-breasted Nuthatch has a white face and underside, and its beak is long and thin, an excellent tool for probing under bark. Its distinctive call is a very nasal “yank, yank, yank.” The Nuthatch is a year-round resident and is frequently spotted traveling between the Mulberry and the feeders near the Oval Pool. They nest in cavities or nest boxes and raise only one brood per season.

**White-throated Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) The beautifully haunting song of the White-throated Sparrow opens with a couple of clear notes followed by three quavering notes of different pitch. This brown-backed sparrow has a gray breast, pale belly, tan or white head stripes, a white throat patch, and a distinctive yellow spot between the eye and bill. The White-throated Sparrow winters in Charlotte—usually arriving from the North in late October and departing in April. This bird frequents the thickets and prefers to nest and forage for food at ground level where it feeds on insects, berries and weed seeds. At the feeder, it will choose cracked corn and peanut hearts.



White-throated Sparrow

If you are interested in attracting birds, butterflies and small wildlife to your garden, there are numerous resources available. The National Audubon Society ([www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)) and the National Wildlife Federation ([www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)) are excellent places to start.

*In this text, all references to specific plants and animals are listed using the commonly known names in capitals with the Latin names in parentheses. Every effort has been made to be consistent throughout the text.*

## **THE WING HAVEN FOUNDATION**

Wing Haven Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit organization responsible for the ownership and operation of Wing Haven. The Foundation received the gift of the gardens from the Clarksons in 1970. It is charged with preserving Wing Haven as a place “to maintain and develop sanctuary for wild birds and animals for the education of the general public; to establish and maintain the gardens for the benefit and enjoyment of the community; to educate the public on horticultural, and wildlife subjects and to stimulate interest in the beautification of the geographic area.

*The Wing Haven Foundation gratefully  
acknowledges the generosity of*



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### **IF YOU ENJOYED YOUR VISIT**

*Wing Haven depends on the contributions of friends to  
maintain the gardens and bird sanctuary.*

*Your support is encouraged and appreciated.*

## **WING HAVEN FOUNDATION**

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*Photography provided by Jeff Cravotta Photography*



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