

SELF- GUIDED WALKING TOUR



Approaching the gardens from the parking lot, you cross the great lawn that slopes downhill from the Yaddo Mansion, passing a fountain approximately 100 feet (30 m) long. The graceful marble statue at the center symbolizes Dawn and was imported from Milan.

Ionic columns support the iron grill gate at the entrance to the rose gardens. As you cross the marble sill, look above and notice Spencer Trask and Katrina Trask's initials molded in the glazed terracotta entablature. The ST/KT Gate, as it is known, is planted with ferns and hostas.

The rose garden is laid out on north-south/east-west axes, with the ST/KT Gate at the north. It is divided into four asymmetrical beds. During the Trask period, the garden borders were English box, and the garden was planted with Frau Karl Druschki, Radiance, Paul Neyron, and Marechal Niel roses.

In 1994, standard roses were introduced. Polyantha roses were planted at the base of the standard roses to simulate the early planting of dwarf roses. Since then new varieties have been added for a variety of colors and resistance to fungus and disease, such as Blaze and William Baffin. English box has been replaced with barberry.

Four Italian marble statues representing the seasons are stationed along the eastern edge of the garden. Spring holds flowers;

Summer, fruit; Fall, sheaves of wheat; and Winter, pinecones.

A statue of a youth in medieval attire, raising his arm toward the sky, is set in a nearby clearing. The statue is of Christalan — a name that combines the names of two of the Trask children, Christina and Alan — the hero of an epic poem by Katrina Trask and the embodiment of chivalry. William Ordway Partridge sculpted it in 1900 as a "memorial to the children of the house." The white myrtle around the base of the statue symbolizes innocence. Each of the Trask children's names is carved in the base.

Marble steps on the west side of the gardens lead to the balcony, pergola, and rock garden. Terracotta jardinières filled with geraniums line the steps.

A hedge of rugosa roses is on the main terrace above the rose gardens. The cultivars are original to the Trask's garden.

Small spruce trees in terracotta jardinières line the second terrace. The main feature of the balcony is a sundial inscribed with a poem by the Trasks' friend Henry Van Dyke. Here is the poem as inscribed, slightly modified from the published version:

*Time
is
Too slow for those who wait
Too swift for those who fear
Too long for those who grieve
Too short for those who rejoice
But for those who Love Time is
Eternity*

Around the sundial, marking the hours, is the motto "Hours Fly, Flowers Die, New Days, New Ways, Pass By, Love Stays."

The pergola, constructed of Ionic columns of glazed terracotta with a wooden trellis top, rises on the third terrace. It is 180 feet (55 m) long. In summer, it is covered by Blaze climbing roses and some older roses of unidentified variety.

The rock garden and allée, which runs between the gardens and the Mansion, are behind the pergola. The gate at the entrance to the allée is a glazed terracotta classical porch with Ionic columns. Terracotta jardinières filled with geraniums are arranged along the path.

The rock garden looked very different in the Trask period than it does today, when the hundred year-old pines create a dense overstory. The overall landscape reflects the Japanese influences that were fashionable at the turn of the twentieth century, though statues of figures from Greek mythology are present as well. Spencer Trask had the dolomite rocks brought to Yaddo from his own quarry. The terrace pattern is repeated. There are two terraces within the rock garden, each with a pool and sprayfountain. They are connected by a stream. A naiad and dolphin are in the lower pool. The plants are shade-loving woodland and rock plants. Paths meander through both of the gardens and the surrounding woodland.

