

## 09

COX ARBORETUM AND  
GARDENS METROPARKKEY AT-A-GLANCE  
INFORMATION**LENGTH:** 2.9 miles**CONFIGURATION:** Loop**DIFFICULTY:** Easy**SCENERY:** Formal gardens, ponds,  
creeks, woods, and wetlands**EXPOSURE:** Sun and shaded**TRAFFIC:** Heavy**TRAIL SURFACE:** Paved, gravel,  
and soil**HIKING TIME:** 1.5–2 hours**DRIVING DISTANCE:** 1 hour north  
of Cincinnati**SEASON:** Year-round**ACCESS:** April 1–October 31, 8 a.m.–  
10 p.m.; November 1–March 31, 8  
a.m.–8 p.m.; closed Christmas and  
New Year's Day**MAPS:** USGS Dayton South; Cox  
Arboretum MetroPark User's Guide  
and Map**WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE:** Paved  
portions**FACILITIES:** Restrooms and drink-  
ing water inside Zorniger Education  
Center**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Cox Arbo-  
retum and Gardens MetroPark  
(937) 275-PARK or (937) 434-9005**SPECIAL COMMENTS:** Plan to spend  
time wandering through the gar-  
dens and at the observation blind.

## IN BRIEF

Cox Arboretum and Gardens MetroPark is one of several gems of the Five Rivers MetroParks system. The arboretum includes gardens, display gardens, and water features and holds classes in gardening and nature. The accessible paved trail weaves through many of the planted and watercourse areas.

## DESCRIPTION

Located near the intersection of interstates 75 and 675 off Springboro Pike, Cox Arboretum offers a beautiful retreat in the 189 acres of formal plantings, forests, and meadows.

Arboretum does not adequately define this place. In addition to the enormous variety of tree plantings, several display gardens and watercourses—such as the Woodland Wildflower Garden, Butterfly House, The Bell Children's Maze, and Conservation Corner—provide educational opportunities as well as beautiful landscapes.

The hike begins at the Zorniger Campus. This beautiful glass and stone building houses the office, meeting rooms, restrooms, and a nature shop. Before you start your hike, take a moment to explore the inside of the Zorniger Education Center, including the nature shop. Several brochures on nature and gardening topics are available at the information desk.

GPS Trailhead  
Coordinates

UTM Zone (WGS84) 16S

Easting 0738110.4

Northing 4393161.6

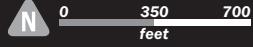
Latitude N 39° 39' 18.42"

Longitude W 84° 13' 28.64"

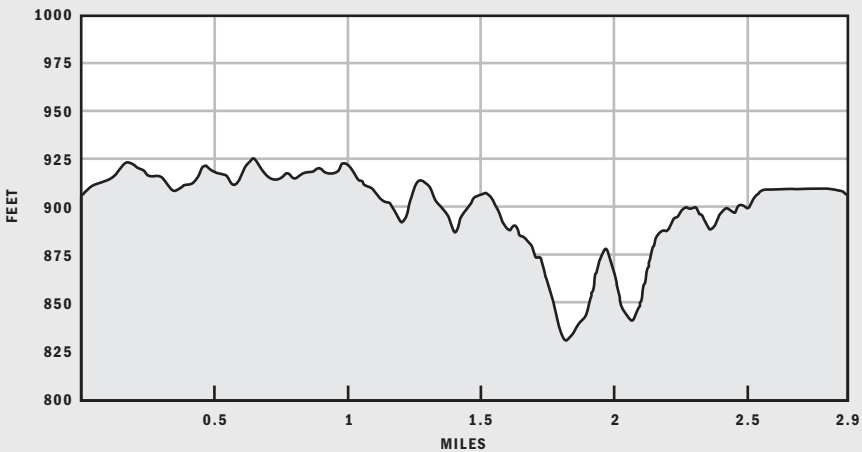
*Directions* →

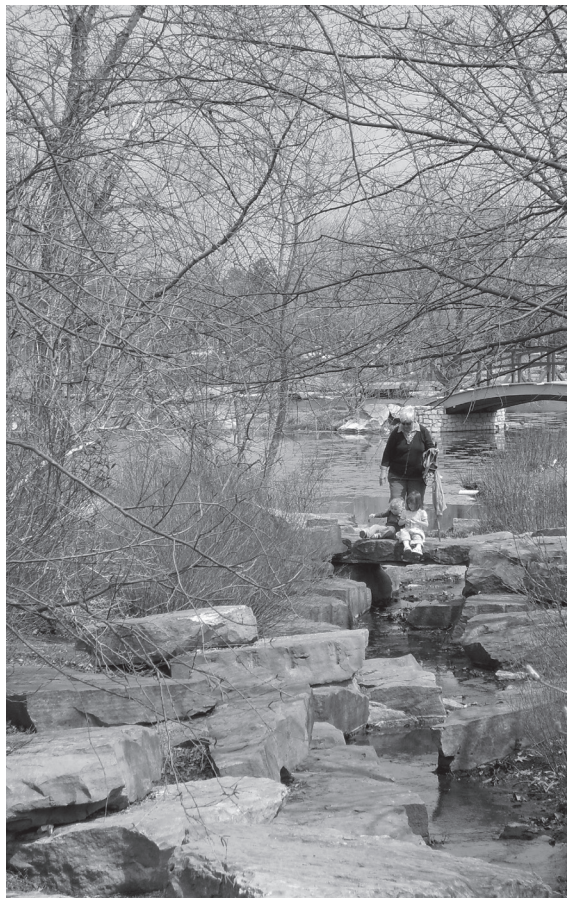
**From Cincinnati, take Interstate 75 north toward Dayton and take Exit 44/Miamisburg Centerville. Turn east (right) onto Miamisburg Centerville Road and travel for 0.3 miles. Turn north (left) onto Springboro Pike and travel 1 mile to the entrance for Cox Arboretum on the west (left) side of the road.**

# 09 Cox Arboretum and Gardens MetroPark



- Y** Yellow Trl.
- R** Red Trl.
- B** Blue Trl.





Cox Arboretum water courses

Walk around the Zorniger Education Center to the large, open area behind the building and the gardens come into view. The Monet Bridge arches over the water garden, complete with bronze sculptures.

Near the water is a large willow tree; walk to the left. As you continue on the trail, walk to the large, fenced-in garden with a huge gazebo. Step under the archway and enter through the swinging gate.

Follow the pathway to the right and walk around the back of the gazebo, taking in the variety of gardening ideas on display. The gazebo is also used as an outdoor classroom. Check with the naturalist

on duty for more information about gardening courses. Exit through the same gate you entered.

Turn left onto the trail and continue to lose yourself in the multiple planting areas. All plants are labeled, making it easy for you to identify them and keep track of what you might want to incorporate into your own backyard oasis.

At 0.3 miles, the trail intersects with another one. Take the trail to the left and head toward the small lake. A bench underneath a shade tree provides a nice place to rest and enjoy the views.

The signpost for the blue and yellow trailheads is located at 0.63 miles. The signpost markers for the trails are color-coded posts; you'll be following the blue and yellow trails. Another bench is at 0.71 miles before the trail begins to head downhill.

A service road crosses the trail at 0.82 miles. Continue on the blue and yellow trail, and at 0.5 miles you'll find another bench. At 0.86 miles, take the yellow trail to the left. Cross a bridge at 1.12 miles. Red oaks and cottonwoods dominate the forest structure, and you may note that the stream to the right is suffering from a significant amount of bank erosion.

After the bridge, very few saplings cover the forest floor. The next bridge is at 1.27 miles; you'll cross yet another one at 1.96 miles. At 1.98 miles, the yellow trail reconnects with the blue trail.

You'll find another bench just 170 feet from junction of the yellow and blue trails. Within 140 feet of the bench is a bridge. The large platform area overlooks a creek ravine at 2 miles. Take the blue trail down the steps and over the top of the creek. When you cross the creek, you can turn to the right and explore the creek's exposed bedrock and waterfalls before returning to the hike.

The trail heads uphill at 2.1 miles, just before the blue trail intersects with the red trail. Take the red trail to the left. Immediately the trail enters into an open prairie wetland area named Conservation Corner.

The goal of Conservation Corner is to educate people about the environment and protecting the land. This area is used to teach people to identify native plants and habitats and how to look for signs of wildlife. Conservation Corner contains tall-grass prairie, shrubs, oaks, and wetlands. Prairie plants include Indian grass, big bluestem, gray-headed coneflower, and bergamot. For a healthy ecosystem, this prairie is burned every three years to destroy the woody plants and nonnative species that would otherwise overtake the prairie plants.

An observation blind at 2.4 miles allows an excellent opportunity to stop and watch the wildlife in the small but thriving prairie wetland. You might see ducks as well as great blue herons. Throughout Conservation Corner are several active bluebird nesting boxes. Goldfinches, sparrows, and red-winged blackbirds are also busily going about their day.

The official trailhead and kiosk appear at 2.6 miles. At the official trailhead, turn left on the blue and yellow trail, follow it back into the formal planting areas, and walk toward the small pavilion. Take the trail to the right to stay on the blue and yellow trail.

When the blue and yellow trail intersect with the orange trail, take the orange trail to the right and then turn left to walk over a series of stone steps crossing the top of the waterfall area. Continue on the stone path near the watercourse.

This path leads back into the formal gardens near Monet Bridge. To the left of the Monet Bridge is the stone garden, which provides plenty of ideas on plants for rock gardens.

To learn more about horticulture and natural history, register for one of the many classes, programs, or seminars that are held here year-round.

## NEARBY ACTIVITIES

Need more hiking trails? Germantown and Sugarcreek MetroParks are nearby, and both offer fun hikes for families to enjoy. Dayton Mall, shops, and restaurants are off OH 725. If you like organic food, visit Health Foods Unlimited off OH 725 in the South Towne Shopping Center.