



Submitted photo

A waterfall is pictured at Parrot Mountain and Gardens in Pigeon Forge. The wildlife sanctuary was named on Tuesday as one of 2021's Most Romantic Gardens in the U.S. The 2021 season opens March 7.

# Parrot Mountain recognized for sanctuary's romantic gardens

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PIGEON FORGE — One local attraction is proving that parrots and romance actually do go together.

Parrot Mountain and Gardens, a wildlife sanctuary in Pigeon Forge, was named on Tuesday as one of "2021's Most Romantic Gardens in the U.S." by LawnStarter.

"We certainly appreciate the recognition," said Fletcher Hollingsworth, owner and CEO of Parrot Mountain.

According to the announcement by the nationwide landscaping and pest control company, "We scoured dozens of romantic gardens, visited many of them over the years, and we factored in reviews from TripAdvisor and Wedding Wire."

Parrot Mountain was the only attraction in Tennessee named to the list.

Attractions in neighboring states recognized include Georgia's Atlanta Botanical Garden, Alabama's Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Kentucky's Whitehall House and Gardens in Louisville. Approximately 50 gardens nationwide were named to the 2021 list.

"In the spring, we bring in tropicals — palm trees, bromeliads," Hollingsworth said of the sanctuary's gardens.

The plants are wintered indoors so they can survive East Tennessee temperatures.

Located on approximately 33 acres off McCarter Hollow Road, Parrot Mountain is home to more than 70 birds. An open-perch system allows visitors to feed some of the birds and take photographs with them. The gardens are planted to attract butterflies, dragonflies and hummingbirds. Hollingsworth says about four acres are currently developed.

"In the Secret Garden, birds are flying free," said Hollingsworth.

Some of those birds are lorikeets, which are similar to hummingbirds in that they are nectar drinkers.

"You can take a cup of nectar, and they'll drink it out of your hand," Hollingsworth said.

The 2021 season opens March 7.

A new feature is a bird walk that offers more species of toucans.

Hollingsworth says that health safety measures remain in place

due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These include social distancing throughout the property, as well as wearing masks at all times indoors and when unable to social distance outdoors.

"We have hand sanitizing stations all over the park," said Hollingsworth, adding that the stations were prevalent before the pandemic due to the fact that guests often interact with some of the birds.

Weddings are temporarily suspended at the wildlife sanctuary due to the pandemic, but Hollingsworth says the attraction will again serve as a venue when it is safe to do so.

Parrot Mountain is located at 1471 McCarter Hollow Road, Pigeon Forge. Information is available at [www.parrotmountainandgardens.com](http://www.parrotmountainandgardens.com) or 865-774-1749.

LawnStarter's "2021's Most Romantic Gardens in the U.S." can be viewed at <https://www.lawnstarter.com/blog/studies/most-romantic-gardens-in-america/>.

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