HOURS OF OPERATION & ADMISSION RATES

Hours of Operation
Daily 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Special Extended Hours for Magic Christmas in Lights, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.: November 27 – December 31, 2020. Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Days.

Museum Home Tours
Daily beginning each day at 9 a.m. Tours are given every hour on the hour until 4 p.m. The last ticket is sold at 3:30 p.m.

Special Extended Hours for Magic Christmas in Lights, 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.: November 27 – December 31, 2020. Last ticket is sold at 8 PM. Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Days.

Admission Rates

*MCIL (Magic Christmas in Lights)
Children (ages 5-12)

Gardens and Home Package
Adults: $22.00      * MCIL Adults: $25.00
Children: $14.00     *MCIL Children: $14.00

Gardens Only Package
Adults: $14.00      *MCIL Adults: $16.00
Children: $8.00      *MCIL Children: $8.00

No charge for children 4 and under
Group Rates available for groups of 20 or more

* Admission Rates & Hours of Operations prices subject to change unless guaranteed through reservation.
2020 SPECIAL EVENTS

Winter Camellia and Cold Hardy Annual Displays
Dates: January 2 – February 29, 2020
• See Bellingrath’s famed Camellias and an interesting winter garden filled with the blooms of ornamental kale, mustard and cabbages, pansies and violas, primroses, cyclamen, tulips, daffodils and hyacinths.

Winter Wednesdays
Dates: January 8 – February 26, 2020
• Join us on Wednesdays in January and February for special programs. Topics include gardening, history and the collections in the beautiful Bellingrath Museum Home.

Mobile Area Orchid Society’s 43rd Orchid Show and Sale
Dates: February 28 – March 1, 2020
• Mobile Area Orchid Society members will display their best orchids and will be available to answer questions and provide tips on growing and caring for orchids. Vendors will also be selling orchids, supplies and accessories.
• Hours: Noon-5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Spring Azaleas
Dates: March 1-March 31, 2020 (dates may vary depending on the severity of the winter)
For precise times of the azalea blooms, please check Azalea Watch at bellingrath.org.
• Enjoy the blooms of more than 250,000 vibrant azaleas in an explosion of color throughout the 65 acres of Bellingrath Gardens.
• Hydrangeas, Easter lilies, fuchsia, geraniums, wave petunias, cape daisies, delphiniums and more will be featured throughout the Gardens.

27th Annual Festival of Flowers
Dates: March 26-29, 2020
• Join us at Providence Hospital’s Festival of Flowers, the largest outdoor flower show in the Southeast, which will feature garden displays, art exhibits, gardening seminars and vendors. Make a weekend of it! Spend a day at the Festival and a day at Bellingrath Gardens and Home. For information about special group packages to attend both, please call 251.459.8727 or email bellingrath@bellingrath.org.

Easter Egg Hunt and Breakfast with the Easter Bunny
Date: Saturday, April 4, 2020
• Hop on down to the Gardens for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. There will be special hunts for toddlers and older kids as well as prizes, candy, activities and pictures with the Easter Bunny.
• Join us for the 6th Annual Breakfast with the Easter Bunny in the Magnolia Café.

Easter Sunrise Service
Date: Sunday, April 12, 2020
• As the sun rises over Bellingrath Gardens and Home on Easter Sunday, join us for a special Sunrise Service on Live Oak Plaza. The service will begin at 6:30 a.m. and is open to everyone in the community. An offering will be collected to benefit Family Promise of Coastal Alabama, an organization that helps homeless families. There is no admission charge from 6 to 8 a.m. on Easter Sunday. A hot breakfast will be available for purchase in the Magnolia Café after the service.
27th Annual Camellia Classic Open Car Show
Date: Saturday, April 18, 2020
- Stroll among hundreds of classic and vintage automobiles displayed on the Great Lawn at the Mobile Bay Mustang Club’s 27th Annual Camellia Classic Open Car Show. Snacks and lunch will be available to purchase on the Great Lawn and in our Magnolia Cafe.

Rose Bloom Out at Bellingrath
Dates: April 13-30, 2020
For precise times of the blooms, please check Rose Watch at bellingrath.org
- Tour the Bellingrath Rose Garden during its first bloom, which features more than 35 varieties of All-American Rose Selections and more than 2,000 roses.

Evening Garden Stroll to celebrate National Public Gardens Week
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020
- National Public Gardens Week is celebrated nationwide to promote the important role of public gardens in promoting environmental stewardship and awareness. Stroll through the Gardens after hours and enjoy gardening demonstrations, refreshments, and special discounts on new spring merchandise in our Gift Shop.

Mother’s Day Evening Garden Concert
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2020
- The Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra and Bellingrath Gardens and Home present their annual Mother’s Day Evening Garden Concert at 5:30 p.m. Enjoy a late afternoon of music in the beautiful surroundings of the Gardens! Guests are encouraged to bring a picnic supper.

Wonderful Wednesdays
Dates: Wednesdays from June 3 to July 29, 2020
- Who knew Wednesday could be so wonderful? Every Wednesday, enjoy a special program about Bellingrath Gardens and Home, gardening, local history and nature. Topics include summer gardening, horticultural production techniques and the collections in the Bellingrath Home. Topics include gardening, the Home collections, local history and nature.

Mr. Bellingrath’s Birthday
Date: Thursday, August 6, 2020
- Walter Duncan Bellingrath was born August 6, 1869. Celebrate Mr. Bellingrath’s 151st birthday with us as we offer free Gardens admission for local residents (Mobile and Baldwin Counties).

Boo at Bellingrath
Date: Saturday, October 24, 2020 • 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Dress up your little goblins and enjoy a day of Halloween fun at Bellingrath. The Gardens will be decorated with spooky and fun inflatables. There will be plenty of treats and trinkets from area organizations and businesses for trick-or-treaters to enjoy. Guests are also invited to enjoy culinary delights from local food trucks.
57th Annual Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemums

Dates: November 1 – November 30, 2020
For precise times of the blooms, please check Mum Watch at bellingrath.org, beginning November 1.
• See America’s largest outdoor display of chrysanthemums. Garden mums are featured in the floral borders, containers and terraces of the Gardens. See fantastic cascade mums on bridges, balconies and in baskets in the fall colors of red, yellow, bronze, orange and white throughout the Gardens.

25th Annual Magic Christmas in Lights

Dates: November 27 to December 31, 2020 (Closed December 25th)
• Enjoy one of the most popular holiday events in the Southeast. Stroll through the Gardens to view 3 million twinkling lights in 15 scenes with more than 1,100 custom designed set pieces. Tour the Bellingrath Home decorated in its holiday finery. Extended hours until 9 p.m. There will be photos with Santa each night through December 23. Complete your holiday shopping in the beautiful Bellingrath Gift Shop!
Event prices apply. Ticket sales open on bellingrath.org on November 1, 2020.

(Unless otherwise noted, regular admission prices are charged to attend special events.)
ANNUAL BLOOMING SCHEDULE

JANUARY
Camellias, Cyclamen, Dianthus, Dusty Miller, Flowering Kale and Cabbages, Parsley, Pansies, Paper White Narcissus, Swiss Chard, Violas, Winter Berries

FEBRUARY
Camellias, Ornamental Kale and Cabbages, Pansies, Parsley, Japanese Magnolia, Swiss Chard, Taiwan Cherries, Tulips, Violas

MARCH
Enjoy the blooms of more than 250,000 vibrant azaleas in an explosion of color throughout the 65 acres of Bellingrath Gardens. For precise times of the azalea blooms, please check Azalea Watch on our website.
Azaleas, Delphinium, Dianthus, Easter Lilies, Flowering Kale and Cabbages, Fuchsia, Gerbera Daisies, Hydrangeas, Marguerite Daisies, Pansies, Petunias, Tulips, Violas

APRIL
Bellingrath's award-winning Rose Garden is among the many highlights of the season.
Angelonia, Begonias, Cape Daisies, Delphinium, Dianthus, Easter Lilies, Fuchsia, Hydrangeas, Marguerite Daisies, Pentas, Petunias, Roses, Sunpatiens, Verbena

MAY
Acalypha, Angelonia, Begonias, Caladiums, Calibrachoa, Cape Jasmine, Coleus, Firecracker Cuphea, Hibiscus, Mexican Heather, Morning Glory Bush, Pentas, Petunias, Roses, Scarlet Sage, Southern Magnolia, Shrimp Plants, Verbena, Zinnias

JUNE
Allamanda, Angelonia, Caladiums, Cape Jasmine, Coleus, Crepe Myrtle, Crotons, Dragon Wing Begonias, Frangipani, Hydrangeas, Gardenias, Milkweed, Morning Glory Bush, Pentas, Roses, Shrimp Plants, Salvias, Southern Magnolia, Spiral Ginger, Star Flower, Sunpatiens, Tropical Hibiscus, Zinnias
JULY
Allamanda, Angelonia, Bottlebrush and Bottlebrush Ginger, Chenille Plant, Coleus, Copper Plants, Crepe Myrtles, Frangipani, Mandevillas, Pentas, Roses, Tropical Hibiscus, Zinnias

AUGUST
Allamanda, Angelonia, Bottlebrush, Chenille Plant, Coleus, Copper Plants, Crepe Myrtles, Lantana, Mandevillas, Pentas, Roses, Shrimp Plant, Tropical Hibiscus, Zinnias

SEPTEMBER
Allamanda, Copper Plants, Encore Azaleas, Firecracker Cuphea, Mexican Sages, Roses, Salvias, Tibouchina, Tropical Hibiscus, Vinca, Zinnias

OCTOBER
Allamanda, Cape Honeysuckle, Celosias, Copper Plants, Dianthus, Garden Chrysanthemums, Hibiscus, Roses, Salvias, Sweet Cream Marigolds, Tibouchina

NOVEMBER
Hundreds of colorful, four-foot-long cascades of chrysanthemums are displayed on bridges and balconies, in baskets and containers through the Gardens. This show is the nation’s largest Outdoor Chrysanthemum display.

Cassia, Dianthus, Dusty Miller, Forsythia Sage, Pansies, Sasanqua Camellias, Zinnias

DECEMBER
Cyclamen, Dianthus, Flowering Kale and Cabbages, Kalanchoes, Pansies, Poinsettias, Violas

Bellingrath Gardens and Home
12401 Bellingrath Gardens Road • Theodore, Alabama 36582
251.973.2217 • 800.247.8420 • bellingrath.org
Operated by The Bellingrath Gardens and Home Foundation, a charitable, not-for-profit organization.
FACT SHEET FOR BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME

- Bellingrath Gardens and Home is open 362 days a year, closing only on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Days, and is open from 8 AM – 5 PM, except during Magic Christmas in Lights (Day after Thanksgiving through New Year’s Eve) when the Gardens remain open until 9 PM.

- Bellingrath Gardens and Home encompasses approximately 900 acres along the Fowl River. Sixty-five acres are cultivated with annual blooms and continuous color.

- Guests may enjoy a tour of the Bellingrath Home, the Rose Garden, Asian-American Garden, formal garden terraces and The Dwight Harrigan/ExxonMobil Ecological Bayou Boardwalk.

- Special events and weddings are held throughout the year on the property.

- Walter D. Bellingrath was Mobile’s first Coca-Cola bottler.

- Bellingrath Gardens was originally known as Belle Camp and intended to be a fishing camp for Walter D. Bellingrath.

- Walter D. Bellingrath and Bessie Morse Bellingrath opened their Gardens to the public for the first time on April 7, 1932. A major traffic jam ensued and admission was charged thereafter for maintenance of the Gardens.

- The 10,500-square-foot Bellingrath Home was completed in July 1936. It features all of its original furnishings from Mrs. Bellingrath and was designed by architect George B. Rogers.

- Bessie Morse Bellingrath died in 1943 at the age of 64. Walter D. Bellingrath died in 1955 at the age of 86.

- Walter D. Bellingrath founded the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation at the age of 80. The foundation was created to maintain Bellingrath Gardens and Home “as a fitting and permanent memorial” to Mrs. Bellingrath. Excess funds benefit scholarships at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Ala.

- The Bellingrath Gardens and Home Foundation was created in 2004 to further support the maintenance and operations of Bellingrath Gardens and Home. All donations received are used for improvements, capital projects and to go towards the endowment fund.
THE STORY OF BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME

In 1903, Walter Duncan Bellingrath began Mobile’s first Coca-Cola bottling operation. His franchise spanned a 100-mile radius, which he covered single-handedly at first. It was not uncommon to see Mr. Bellingrath walking the train tracks between small towns because he lacked the train fare. His perseverance and warm personality won him many customers and his hard work made him a tremendous success.

By the time the United States became initiated in World War I, Mr. Bellingrath’s Coca-Cola Bottling Company was a major business operation in Mobile. This success, compounded by sugar shortages during the war, took its toll on Mr. Bellingrath’s health. In 1917, he was advised by his physician to buy the Fowl River property he had been admiring, to balance his hectic work schedule with needed rest and relaxation.

By this time, the Bellingraths’ home in Mobile on Ann Street was known for its beautiful garden, which the couple graciously allowed drivers to enjoy during the spring. The collection of azaleas was the city’s largest and Mrs. Bellingrath began bringing cuttings down to her husband’s fishing camp, which had been named Belle Camp. The conditions were ideal and each spring the collection became more spectacular.

After an extensive European tour of gardens, the couple decided to get professional assistance in the design of their property in 1927. They hired George B. Rogers, Mobile’s most prominent architect. Rogers worked continuously on developing the property, as well as the couple’s home, until his death in 1945. His plan for the Gardens is still being enjoyed today.

In the spring of 1932, the Bellingraths opened their property along the Fowl River up to a Depression-weary public for a day of azalea gazing. The response was phenomenal, as the roads between Mobile and the Gardens became one long traffic jam. The astounded couple decided to open the Gardens permanently, while charging a fee to assist in their care and upkeep.

The Gardens began to expand as azaleas and camellias were shipped in from across the South. In Mobile, Mrs. Bellingrath was known for her generosity in paying tremendous sums for plants from individuals’ gardens. The higher demand for the plant normally meant a higher price Mrs. Bellingrath was willing to pay.

The Bellingraths had no children, but they enjoyed the company of their young nieces and nephews. As both were from large families, the need for extra guest rooms moved the couple to have George B. Rogers design a guest house in 1939. The building also contained a large garage, an intimate Chapel and a laundry. Since 1967, the garage space has served visitors as the Delchamps Gallery of Edward Marshall Boehm Porcelain. The collection is the largest of its type open to the public and contains a wide variety of wildlife art created by the veterinarian turned sculptor.

After Mrs. Bellingrath died in 1943, Mr. Bellingrath continued the couple’s plans for their beloved Gardens until his own death in 1955. Mr. Bellingrath had not only created a tribute to the region’s natural beauty, but had also contributed much to his community.

Mr. Bellingrath’s obituary listed numerous accomplishments, in addition to creating Bellingrath Gardens. He had been a staunch member of the Mobile Chamber of Commerce, even writing at least two checks to cover annual deficits. He served as the director of the Mobile Community Chest, as well as its President. A Deacon and benefactor at his church, Central Presbyterian, Mr. Bellingrath was also an ardent supporter of Mobile’s Rotary Club and the Mobile Infirmary.
In the business community, he was well respected as the president of the National Mosaic Tile Company, Lerio Corporation, Mobile Warehousing Inc., and was one of the four founders of the Waterman Steamship Corporation. He was a director of the First National Bank of Mobile and the Mobile Press Register, Inc.

The Bellingrath-Morse Foundation

At the age of 80, Mr. Bellingrath created the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation to perpetuate the existence of his beloved Home and Gardens for future generations to enjoy. The Foundation is also set up to further the efforts of three church-related colleges: Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn.; Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Ala. Mr. Bellingrath’s church, Central Presbyterian, as well as that of his wife’s family, St. Francis Street Methodist, are also beneficiaries of the Foundation. These institutions receive approximately 85% of the Foundation’s earnings.
WILLIAM E. BARRICK  
*Executive Director Emeritus of Bellingrath Gardens and Home*

William E. Barrick received BS and MS degrees from Auburn University and a PhD in Landscape Horticulture from Michigan State University.

After graduation, he served as an Assistant Professor in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Florida. He was Executive Vice President and Director of Gardens at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga., for almost twenty years before becoming Executive Director of Bellingrath Gardens and Home in November 1999.

Dr. Barrick is a Past President of the American Public Garden Association, Past Chairman of the American Horticultural Society, 1994 recipient of the Arthur Hoyt Scott Horticulture Medal and the 2012 Governor’s Tourism Award from the Alabama Tourism Department. In 2015, he was honored with the American Horticultural Society’s Liberty Hyde Bailey Award and Auburn University’s College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni Award for the Horticulture Program.

Dr. Barrick has served on the board of Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau since 2000 and currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Board. Additionally, he serves on the board of the South Mobile County Tourism Authority as a founding member and Chairman of this organization. Most recently, he was appointed by Governor Robert Bentley to the Alabama Coastal Advisory Committee.

He currently serves on the board of the Providence Hospital Foundation and the Downtown Mobile Alliance board, and is a member of the Rotary Club of Mobile. He is a past member of the Infirmary West Advisory Board, the Advisory Committee of Spring Hill College, the Visiting Committee of the University of Mobile, the Visiting Committee of Longwood Gardens, the Advisory Committee for the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., and the College of Agriculture Advisory Committee of Auburn University.

He is the author of the American Horticultural Society’s “75 Great American Garden Plants,” co-author of the American Horticultural Society’s “Southeast SmartGarden Regional Guide” and a contributing writer for “How to Achieve A Heaven on Earth.” He is a graduate of Leadership Georgia, Leadership Mobile and Leadership Alabama.

Dr. Barrick retired in July 2019. He and his wife, Jessica, are members of Dauphin Way United Methodist Church and are involved in several cultural organizations in the community.
THOMAS C. MCGEHEE  
_Museum Director of the Bellingrath Home_

Tom McGehee has served as the Museum Director for Bellingrath Gardens and Home since January 1994. In that capacity, he oversees the 15-room Bellingrath Home and its collection of decorative arts and antiques as well as its archives. He also maintains the Delchamps Collection of Boehm Porcelain.

McGehee currently serves as president of the Rotary Club of Mobile and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Magnolia Cemetery, the Friends of the Alabama Governor’s Mansion, and the Friends of the History Museum of Mobile. In 2012, he was named Rotarian of the Year. He served for 21 years as chairman of the Tree Commission for the City of Mobile and recently ended his third term as secretary of the Victorian Society in America, headquartered in Philadelphia. He is a longtime member of Government Street Presbyterian Church, where he recently completed a term as Clerk of Session.

In 1996, the City of Mobile’s Historic Development Commission awarded him the Elizabeth Gould Award for his research into architect George B. Rogers as well as Mobile’s lost architectural heritage. He is a 1997 graduate of the Newport (RI) Summer School conducted by the Victorian Society, a 1999 graduate of the Winter Institute of Decorative Arts held at Winterthur, a 2000 graduate of the Cooper-Hewitt’s French Decorative Arts Studies in Paris, a 2001 graduate of the London Summer School conducted by the Victorian Society, and a 2008 graduate of the Attingham Trust Summer School held in the United Kingdom, as well as the first Attingham Trust Study of the London Town House, held in 2010.

Since 1997, McGehee has been a regular lecturer for the Roads Scholar program (formerly Elder Hostel) hosted by the University of South Alabama, and has conducted walking tours of Mobile’s historic districts and Magnolia Cemetery.

His “Ask McGehee” column has appeared monthly in Mobile Bay Magazine for more than a decade and it has regularly won the annual Readers’ Choice Award. He also serves as editor for the Magnolia Messenger, the newsletter for the Friends of Magnolia Cemetery, which is published three times a year. Since 2016, he has appeared weekly in the “Lost Mobile” series on “Gulf Coast Today” on WPMI-TV.

McGehee is a native of Bronxville, N.Y., and a graduate of the Bronxville School and the University of Georgia, where he earned a BA in journalism with minors in business and history. He is married to the former Lucile Rutherford Smith of Monroeville. His daughter, Megan, currently lives in Athens, Greece.
CHARLES E. OWENS
Nursery Manager and Manager of Maintenance

Chuck Owens is the Nursery Manager and Manager of Maintenance for Bellingrath Gardens and Home, where he has been employed since 1998. Before coming to Bellingrath Gardens, he worked for many years in the landscape installation and maintenance industry and in his family’s recreation/amusement business.

Mr. Owens is a native of Decatur, Ala., and a graduate of Auburn University in Landscape and Ornamental Horticulture. He is a member of the National Chrysanthemum Society and the Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Association. He and his wife, Amy, are members of Oyster Bay Baptist Church. They live on a small farm with their three daughters in the Rosinton community in Baldwin County, Ala., where they grow pecans, satsumas and other citrus.

BARBARA SMITH
Display Coordinator and Gardens Manager

Barbara Smith is the Display Coordinator and Gardens Manager at Bellingrath Gardens and Home, where she has been employed since 2000. Before coming to Bellingrath Gardens, she worked in interiorscaping in metro Atlanta.

Ms. Smith is a native of Douglasville, Ga., and attended college at Floyd College in Rome, Ga. She and her husband, Adam Moss, a retired lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Marines, live on Dog River and enjoy boating and participating in river cleanup events.
BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME TIMELINE

1869:  • Walter Bellingrath born in Atlanta, Ga., on August 6.

1878:  • Bessie Mae Morse born in Mobile, Ala., on May 20.

1903:  • Mr. Walter Duncan Bellingrath arrives in Mobile to take over ownership of Coca-Cola Bottling Company at the age of 34.

1906:  • Mr. Bellingrath marries his former stenographer, Bessie Mae Morse.

1918:  • The Bellingraths purchase the former Lisloy Club overlooking Fowl River, a 25-acre property. It was a former men’s fishing club, and occupied a pair of rough cabins that had housed sawmill workers in the early 1890s. The property becomes known as “Belle Camp.”

1922  • The Lodge, a structure to the south of the dining cabin, is rebuilt and enlarged with the help of architect George B. Rogers. It contains a living room with a beamed ceiling and brick fireplace, and three bedrooms. After the completion of the Bellingrath Home, the Lodge was used as a guest house by the Bellingraths’ nephews and nieces when they visited.

1926  • Electricity comes to Belle Camp with the addition of a generator.

1927  • Mr. and Mrs. Bellingrath tour Europe for several months. They are inspired by the beautiful estate gardens throughout Europe. Upon their return to Mobile, they hire architect George B. Rogers to create an estate garden.

1931  • Grotto is completed, along with series of runnels and fountains. Flagstones are obtained from downtown Mobile sidewalks. Mrs. Bellingrath paid for their removal and replacement with concrete, to the delight of City of Mobile officials.

1932  • Belle Camp is essentially complete. The Rockery, Mirror Lake and bridge, Summer House, Fountain Plaza and waterfront are in place.

1933  • Visitors flock to Belle Camp’s Gardens throughout the entire year. Mr. and Mrs. Bellingrath announce that the property will be open year-round beginning in 1934, with a $1 admission.

1934  • The Bellingraths ask George B. Rogers to design a permanent home for them at Belle Camp.
1935 • The Bellingraths and Rogers sign a contract on June 18.
  • Ground is broken for the 10,500-square-foot Bellingrath Home on the site of the north cabin. Rogers describes its exterior as “a mingling of French, English and Mediterranean influences.”
  • Contract signed with Lord and Burnham Co of Illinois for Conservatory to be constructed. Materials would be shipped November 5th.

1936 • The Bellingraths create the largest Rose Garden in the South.
  • The Bellingraths have their first meal in their new home on July 4, 1936.

1938 • The Bellingraths return from a visit to New Orleans on July 18 to find a crowd of more than 200 friends and well-wishers in their driveway. A bronze plaque and stone bench had been installed in their absence. It thanks them for opening their estate to the public and “their untiring effort for the up-building of the City of Mobile and this ‘Charm Spot of the Deep South.’”

1939 • A Guest House replaces the old garage. A wing of the new building contains a small Chapel.

1941 • Electric lines are installed.

1943 • Mrs. Bessie Morse Bellingrath dies at the age of 64 on February 15 in Hot Springs, Ark.
  • Mr. Bellingrath hires Mr. M. Thomas Brooks from Birmingham to design the Holly Garden as well as a Bird Sanctuary.

1950 • Mr. Bellingrath announces the formation of the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation. The Foundation is to maintain the Gardens and Home as a “fitting memorial to my wife.” The Bellingrath Home is to be opened to the public after his death.

1955 • Mr. Walter Duncan Bellingrath dies on August 8, two days after his 86th birthday.
  • Mr. George Downing becomes Chairman of the Board of the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation.
  • Mr. Frederick W. Holder is named General Manager. He is an early organizer of the Junior Miss Program (now Distinguished Young Women), which always includes visits to Bellingrath Gardens and Home.
  • Part of the Lodge is converted into a gift shop.

1956 • Property is officially named “Bellingrath Gardens and Home”; Home opens to public for tours.

1958 • America’s Junior Miss is established, with Fred Holder, manager of Bellingrath Gardens and Home, as its first president, and George Downing, President of Coca-Cola of Mobile and Executive Director of the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation, as its treasurer.

1963 • Construction begins on the new Entrance Building/Cafeteria.
  • The Lodge is demolished to make way for a new South Terrace Garden.
  • The first Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemums display is held. Stock plants for the cascade mums were obtained from Longwood Gardens in Kennent Square, Penn.

1964 • The South Terrace is completed.
  • The Entrance Building/Cafeteria and Pet Motel are completed.
  • The completion of the South Terrace, Rose Bridge, Pet Motel, and Entrance Building, now home to the Cafe and Gift Shop, is celebrated with an open house, attended by approximately 12,115 visitors.
1965  • Pat Ryan is hired as Assistant Landscape Engineer.
      • Work begins to turn the Bird Sanctuary into the Asian American Garden.

1967  • The garage is enclosed to become the Delchamps Gallery of Boehm Porcelain, displaying a collection donated by the Delchamps Family. The facility is dedicated on March 9, 1967. It would later be renamed after the Delchamps.

1977  • The Bellingrath Home is added to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

1978  • The Bellingrath Home is redecorated and featured on the cover of Southern Accents.

1979  • Hurricane Frederic strikes Mobile on September 12th. Bellingrath Gardens and Home is severely damaged. The damage is estimated to be over $6 million. More than 1,000 pine trees, 150 Live Oaks and 330 Water Oaks are destroyed by the storm. The Gardens would remain closed until March 1, 1980, when Bellingrath re-opened with a bulb show.

1980  • The public is invited to see the Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemum Show on November 23rd, free of charge.

1981  • Construction begins on the “Education and Information Center.” The project includes a picnic area and additional parking.

1982  • The Bellingrath Home is added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1992  • A ceremony is held in the spring to dedicate new, paved walkways and wheelchair ramps to provide access to both sides of Mirror Lake and the riverfront. The new surfacing was made possible by a grant from ExxonMobil Corp.

1993  • First Camellia Classic Open Car Show held in partnership with the Mobile Bay Mustang Club.

1995  • First Magic Christmas in Lights is held.

1996  • A&E program “America’s Castles” films a segment at Bellingrath Gardens and Home for its “Garden Estates” episode. Bellingrath is the only Alabama property to be featured.
      • The new Dwight Harrigan / ExxonMobil Ecological Boardwalk is dedicated.

1999  • “Good Morning America” show is filmed at Bellingrath Gardens with Charles Gibson and Diane Sawyer, a former America’s Junior Miss, and Faith Hill, who performs on the Great Lawn.
      • Dr. William E. Barrick is named Executive Director of Bellingrath Gardens and Home.

2000  • America’s Junior Miss Program returns to Bellingrath.
      • Magic Christmas in Lights show redesigned.

2003  • Advisory Board established.
      • The “Friends of Bellingrath” membership program is established.

2004  • Bellingrath Gardens and Home Foundation is established. Although the Gardens receive income from the Bellingrath-Morse Foundation, two-thirds of current operations are financed entirely by admissions, gift shop and restaurant sales, membership and donations.
      • Mobile Rose Society’s Show moves to Bellingrath Gardens and Home.
2004
- Mobile Youth Symphony performs for first annual Mother’s Day Concert.
- Azalea Trail Maid Reunion attended by more than 750 former Trail Maids.
- First Wonderful Wednesday programs held during the summer, including the Kids Kruise.
- Hurricane Ivan destroys Riverfront Pavilion, damages greenhouses and downs many trees.

2005
- First Balloon Glow in the Gardens held in the Fall.
- Hurricane Katrina strikes the Gulf Coast; damage in Gardens is minimal.
- Entry Building renovation completed.
- The Mermaid Fountain is restored.
- 10th Anniversary of Magic Christmas in Lights opened by Alabama’s First Lady, Mrs. Patsy Riley.
- A reunion of Bellingrath family members is held during Magic Christmas in Lights.

2006
- New Riverfront Pavilion completed.
- Winter Wednesday programs began.
- First Easter Egg Hunt held.
- First America’s Junior Miss “Breakfast at Bellingrath.”
- Gift Shop renovation completed.

2007
- 75th Anniversary Celebration held on April 7.
- First Easter Sunrise Service.
- The Dwight Harrigan / ExxonMobil Ecological Bayou Boardwalk reopens with 15 new educational interpretive panels.

2008
- The restored Rockery reopens.
- Self-guided educational programs established.
- Rose Garden Restoration plans completed.

2009
- New cell phone audio tour introduced.

2010
- Bellingrath Rosarian Linda Guy awarded American Rose Society Bronze Honor Medal.
- Rose Garden Fountain installed as part of a restoration project, thanks to generous donors.
- First Kids Gulf Discovery Day held on July 7.

2011
- Bellingrath portraits arrive, a gift from Central Presbyterian Church. The portraits are hung in the Bellingrath Home.

2012
- Dr. William E. Barrick receives Governor’s Tourism Award from the Alabama Tourism Department.
- Alabama Magazine’s “Best of Bama Awards 2012” honors Bellingrath with “Best Gardens in ‘Bama.”

2013
- 50th anniversary celebration of Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemums display.
- Better Homes and Gardens’ special interest publication, Country Gardens, features Bellingrath Gardens’ Fall Outdoor Cascading Chrysanthemums display.
2014
- USA Today includes Bellingrath Gardens and Home’s Magic Christmas in Lights on its list of the “10 Best Public Light Displays in America”; votes from online readers put Bellingrath in sixth place.

2015
- ConventionSouth magazine, a national multimedia resource for planning events held within the South and Caribbean Seas regions, includes Bellingrath Gardens and Home in its “2015 List of South’s Sizzling Attractions for Social Events,” a listing of 22 picture-perfect attractions located across 16 states. Bellingrath Gardens is the only representative for the state of Alabama.
- Dr. William E. Barrick receives the American Horticultural Society’s 2015 Liberty Hyde Bailey Award and Auburn University’s College of Agriculture Outstanding Alumni Award for the Horticulture Program.
- 20th anniversary of Magic Christmas in Lights. Opening Night is celebrated with fireworks.
- Bellingrath Gardens and Home receives the Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor.com, the world’s largest travel website.

2016
- Executive Director Dr. William E. Barrick is named Honorary Chairman of the 2016 Festival of Flowers.
- Bellingrath holds Greenhouse Tours on May 6 to celebrate National Public Gardens Day, an event to promote public gardens’ important role in leading environmental stewardship and awareness.
- Bellingrath Gardens and Home is inducted into the Alabama Tourism Hall of Fame at the 2016 Alabama Governor’s Conference on Tourism.
- First Boo at Bellingrath event held in October in the Gardens, replacing the evening Balloon Glow in the Gardens.

2017
- April 7: 85th Anniversary of the date that Walter and Bessie Bellingrath opened the Gardens to the public.

2018
- The Southeast Tourism Society selects Magic Christmas in Lights as a Top Twenty Festival Event Winner for the month of December.
- USA Today readers select Magic Christmas in Lights to the publication’s list of “Top 10 Best Botanical Garden Holiday Light Displays.”

2019
- Alabama Magazine’s “Best of Bama Awards 2019” honors Bellingrath with “Best Gardens in ‘Bama.”
- Magic Christmas in Lights is again included in USA Today’s nominations of “Top 10 Best Botanical Garden Holiday Light Displays.”
- In July, Dr. William E. Barrick retires and is named Executive Director Emeritus.