

Shades of Green

Columbia Bottom Conservation Area, St. Louis

GREEN GARDENS

One of Missouri's most precious green gems is the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. Founded in 1859, this historic landmark

is today world-renowned for its botanical collections and research. The nearly 80 acres of out-of-this-world gardens and structures include an indoor tropical rain forest, children's garden, Victorian garden and Japanese garden.

GREEN HOUSE

A few miles away is Missouri Botanical Garden's EarthWays Home, a circa 1800s three-story Victorian residence renovated to showcase today's most energy-efficient systems, recycled products and waste reduction practices. A tour of this property is a fascinating way to get good ideas for using readily available materials and practices to maximize the resource efficiency and sustainability in your own home and landscaping.

EAT YOUR GREENS

For more than 200 years, St. Louis' open-air Soular Market has been peddling the greenest of goods. Today, nearly 100 vendors provide fresh produce, meats, fish, poultry, baked goods and spices. An increasing number of

restaurants in the metropolitan area rely on such local food producers to create unique seasonal dishes from ecologically sound and sustainable foods, often identifying their local sources on the menu (King Louie's, Terrene and Riddle's Penultimate Café and Wine Bar, The Renaissance Grand Hotel to name a few). The restaurant at Schlafly Bottleworks goes one step further by serving up meals using ingredients fresh from its own garden and farmers market.

GOLF GREENS

With challenging and beautiful tees and fairways and impeccably maintained bentgrass greens, the Innsbrook Resort Golf Course has been lauded by both *Golf Digest* and *Sports Illustrated*. This resort in Innsbrook is also a friend to Mother Nature; it has been certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for practices that protect the natural beauty and wildlife. Another Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, Eagle Springs Golf Course in St. Louis, offers avid and novice golfers alike the chance to experience splendid playing in a spectacular environment.



GEORGE DENNISTON

Soulard Market, St. Louis



GRAPES AND GREEN PASTURES

Follow the green vineyards of the Hermann Wine Trail as it takes you to seven wineries, 20 miles along the Missouri River from Hermann to New Haven — each stop offering something unique and wonderful. (The Vintage Restaurant at Stone Hill, for example, has award-winning wines and an award-winning quiche made from locally produced ingredients.) Spend the night in one of the scores of bed and breakfast inns in the Hermann area or venture south to Little Berger and stay at the restored guest house at century-old LaBoube Farms. Next morning, take a country drive through fields of corn and soybeans and goats and cows to LaBelle's Heartland Creamery, where fresh, cold milk in old-fashioned, environmentally friendly glass bottles awaits.

Henry Lay Sculpture Park, Louisiana



Cropping up in Northeast Missouri
**Hermann Farm,
 a demonstration
 German-settlement
 working farm on the
 Missouri River.**

GREEN KITCHEN

Under a green roof planted with succulents and grasses, the new Saint Louis Zoo Animal Nutrition Center is quite an interesting place. Inside, massive meals for zoo residents are prepared in a state-of-the-art kitchen; outside, garden herbs are grown and gathered for nutritional garnish. Oversized windows allow human visitors to watch these critter meals being prepared while picnicking on their own meals in an animal-themed topiary garden. The U.S. Green Building Council has awarded this structure Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification.

GREEN BEAUTY ROUTINE

Learn the secrets of a green beauty regimen with a visit to the home of Bee Natural all-natural skin care products. You'll find demonstrations, workshops and ample supplies of these body-pampering products at the Bee Naturals shop in the charming river town of Clarksville.

and the growth of the community. At North Main and Fountain City Road. Year-round. Free. www.DeSotoRailroadMemorial.org. ☺

Harvest Arts Gallery, Workshops and Studio EUREKA 636-938-7667, 104 W. Frisco St. In a 120-year-old Colonial home. Featuring works from the Best of Missouri Hands. Resident artisans demonstrate their work. Gardens are wheelchair accessible. Tue.-Fri., 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sat., by appointment. Smoking outdoors only. Year-round. Free admission. www.HarvestArts.com.

Six Flags St. Louis EUREKA 636-938-4800, 4900 Six Flags Road. A multifaceted entertainment experience featuring more than 100 rides, wooden and steel roller coasters and live stage shows. Hurricane Harbor Water Park is free with Six Flags admission. I-44, Exit 261. April-October. \$45; children shorter than 49 inches, \$30. www.SixFlags.com. ☺

Wild Canid Survival and Research Center EUREKA 636-938-5900, Beaumont/Antire Road. Endangered wolves are born and reared for reintroduction in the wild; African wild dogs and swift foxes live in packs within natural enclosures. Evening campfire programs about how wolves communicate. Reservations required. I-44, Exit 26. June-March. \$8-\$15. www.WolfSanctuary.org. ☺

AVA Goldworks HANNIBAL 573-221-1928, 211 Center St. Unique goldsmithing gallery specializing in jewelry made on-site, designed by award-winning designers. Pieces are brought to life by a Jewelers of America Certified Master Bench Jeweler. Year-round. Free admission. www.AvaGoldworks.com.

Alliance Art Gallery HANNIBAL 573-221-2275, 201 N. Main St. Historic bank building location for the serious art collector or browser. Take home an original painting, photo, piece of jewelry, pottery, unique wooden drum, weaving, or handmade purse that will become a treasured gift.

Ayers Pottery HANNIBAL 573-221-6960, 308 N. Third St. Watch an artist at work and then take home a piece of America's Hometown. Free admission.

Mark Twain Riverboat, Hannibal



Shades of Green

CHRIS CAMPBELL

The Green Roof, Kansas City Central Library

GREEN GARDENS

Stroll the paths of the Comanche Acres Iris and Water Gardens in Gower during the Spring Iris Festival and be awed by 17 acres of blooms in 2,500 varieties. Stride the three trails of the Missouri Arboretum on the campus of Northwest Missouri University in Maryville and see 125 species among 1,300 trees. Or head to Kansas City to Ewing and Muriel Kauffman Memorial Garden to while away the time on two acres packed with pools and fountains, vintage and modern perennials, seasonal annuals, pathways, pavilions, pergolas and a conservatory.

UP ON THE GREEN ROOFTOP

The endearing and energy-smart green roof atop the classical Kansas City Central Library is a must-see. This innovative mixed-use plaza integrates native plant gardens with triangular skylights and green glass walk-on pavers. Green is also the theme for the Kansas City Convention Center's new expansion, where clerestory windows bring natural daylight and sweeping views into the ballroom space. These and other integrated sustainable strategies have earned the structure U.S. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver certification.

GREEN ACRES

An irresistible array of roadside greenhouses, orchards, vineyards, wineries and markets will beckon you at every turn as you drive along scenic Route 24. Fill up a picnic basket along the way! Take a cooler and head north to the hip Shatto Milk Company, a family-owned dairy farm offering tours and a luscious selection of flavored milk—chocolate, strawberry, banana and root beer to name a few—bottled in environmentally friendly glass.

GREEN GROCERS

Farm-fresh fare makes its way to metro Kansas City's City Market, where folks have been shopping since 1856. The market is especially lively on weekends when more than 140 farmers from throughout the region join weekday merchants in offering an astonishing variety of fresh produce, meats, seafood, flowers and specialty foods. Don't be surprised to see the chefs of local restaurants shopping here. Many in the metro region are dedicated to creating dishes made from local ingredients; Cafe Sebastienne and Lidia's are among them.

HOLIDAY GREENS

Evergreens take center stage each year during Arrow Rock State Historic Site's traditional holiday event, the Hanging of the

Greens. Garlands made with fresh, fragrant evergreen branches are hung along the historic village boardwalk while everyone joins in holiday caroling.

GOLF GREENS

Named one of *Golfweek's* Best Courses You Can Play in Missouri, Shoal Creek in Kansas City is graced with rolling, tree-lined terrain with large undulating bentgrass greens and roughs framed by native prairie grasses. Adams Pointe Golf Course, in Blue Springs, is a challenging course of wetland areas, stone-lined ponds, native prairie grass, bentgrass greens and fairways—and it's certified as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for its high degree of environmental quality.



GREEN LODGING

Kansas City's historic Quarterage Hotel is making history again with its transformation into the "green" Q Hotel + Spa. In-room recycling, earth-friendly cleaning products, energy-efficient systems, a hybrid shuttle vehicle and the availability of guest bicycles are among the features that have earned the attractively renovated property official Eco-Room status.

GREEN BEAUTY ROUTINE

Bittersweet Boutique in Liberty is nationally known for its body-care products of natural ingredients, created to satisfy both body and soul. You can browse and buy these delightfully indulgent products online, but better to experience one of the shop's Saturday Studios.

GREEN POWER

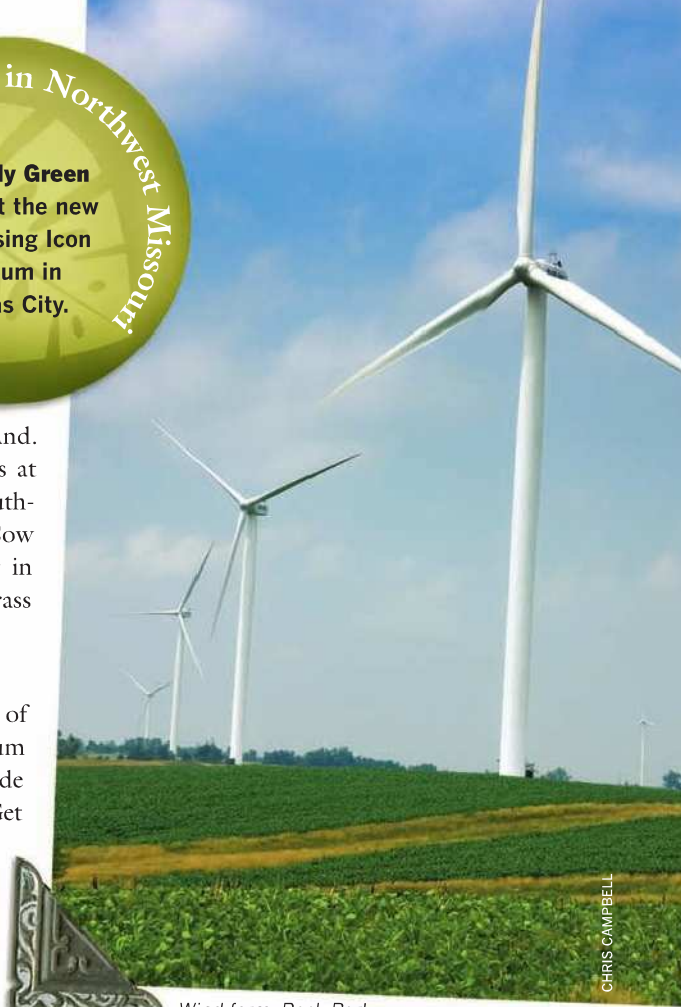
The modern white wind turbines at Loess Hills Wind Farm make the city of Rock Port the first 100 percent wind-powered community in the nation. Erected on agricultural lands within the city, the turbines

connect directly to high voltage lines, producing enough energy to meet its entire annual electricity demand. Look for other wind turbines at Conception Wind Farm in Southwest Nodaway County, Cow Branch Wind Energy Center in Atchison County and Bluegrass Ridge in Gentry County.

GREENBACKS

Tour the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City's Money Museum and see millions of dollars inside the region's largest cash vault. Get creative and redesign the nation's currency or test your strength by lifting a \$400,000 gold bar. You can keep your own money in your pocket though; admission is free.

Cropping up in Northwest Missouri!
The Jolly Green Giant! At the new Advertising Icon Museum in Kansas City.



Wind farm, Rock Port

CHRIS CAMPBELL

J.C. Penney Museum and Boyhood Home

HAMILTON 816-583-2168, 312 N. Davis St. The J.C. Penney Museum presents the life and career of the great entrepreneur. Museum tour includes a 20-minute video. Penney's home is restored to its late 19th century appearance. Year-round. Donations appreciated. ☺

1827 Log Courthouse

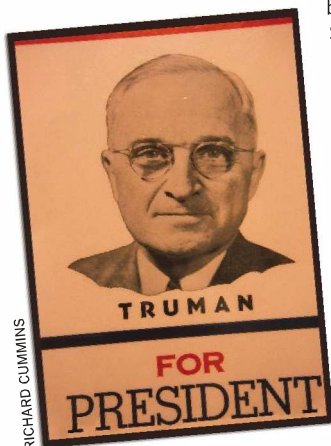
INDEPENDENCE 816-325-7111, 107 W. Kansas St. First courthouse in Jackson County, later private residence. In 1932, became courtroom of Judge Harry S. Truman. Year-round. Free. ☺

1859 Jail, Marshal's Home and Museum

INDEPENDENCE 816-461-1897, 217 N. Main St. Jail once housed Frank James, Jesse's brother, and William Clark Quantrill. Federal-style house was home for county marshal until early 1930s. April–December. \$5; seniors, \$4.50; ages 6–17, \$2. www.jchs.org. ☺

Adventure Oasis Water Park

INDEPENDENCE 816-325-7370, 2100 S. Hub Drive. Aquatic area includes lazy river ride with waterfall, family play pool, six-lane lap pool with diving area, open flume ride, enclosed tube slide, raft slide, sundeck,



RICHARD CUMMINS

bathhouse and concession area. \$8–\$9; age 65+ and students, \$6–\$7; family, \$22–\$25.

Bingham-Waggoner Estate

INDEPENDENCE 816-461-3491, 313 W. Pacific. Built in 1852, on the 1846 alignment of the Santa Fe Trail. Once owned by George Caleb Bingham, famed Missouri Civil War artist. Original furnishings and paintings. Tours offered daily. See Web site for event schedules. April–October; Christmas season tours. \$5; age 62+, \$4.50; ages 6–16, \$2; younger than 6, free; group rate, \$4.50. www.BWESate.org. ☺

Chicago and Alton Depot

INDEPENDENCE 816-325-7955, 318 W. Pacific. Built in 1879. The last train through Independence on the C and A line was April 14, 1960. The first floor is restored to an 1890s working depot; the second floor Station Master's residence is complete with 1890s furnishing. April–October. Donations accepted.

Children's Peace Pavilion

INDEPENDENCE 816-521-3033, 1001 W. Walnut St. Unique interactive children's museum that houses more than 25 exhibits that teach life skills. Year-round. Free. www.KidPeace.org. ☺

Community of Christ International Headquarters

INDEPENDENCE 816-521-3045, 1001 W. Walnut St. Spectacular buildings,

pipe organ recitals, tours and history exhibits. Hands-on peace museum for kids. Year-round. Free. www.CofChrist.org. ☺

Cool Crest Family Fun Center

INDEPENDENCE 816-358-0088, 10735 E. Route 40. The 7,000-square-foot arcade features video games and redemption games for the entire family; four 18-hole mini-golf courses; an eatery featuring pizza, ice cream and more; batting cages; go-karts; and an indoor climbing playground. Year-round. \$3.50+. www.CoolCrest.com. ☺

Listings continue on page 40.



Historic Courthouse, Independence

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

Shades of Green

Jefferson Farm and Gardens, Columbia

GREEN GARDENS

A variety of gardens dot Missouri's Central Region. One of the most expansive is Powell Gardens in Kingsville. In addition

to its stunning formal gardens and sculptures, Powell has a nature trail leading to the garden's "wild side," winding past ponds, through woods, and into meadows and pockets of prairie. The city of Columbia has both the immaculately groomed Shelter Gardens as well as the sprawling campuswide Botanic Garden at the University of Missouri. Flowers, pools and walkways grace the Carnahan Memorial Gardens outside the Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City. And 400 varieties of roses scent the air at the historic Chance Garden in Centralia.

GREEN ACRES

Some farms just love it when folks stop in for a visit. Walk-About Acres in Columbia is one such place. This family farm, packed with everything from peacocks and pheasants to goats and greenhouses, offers visitors of all ages a hands-on farm experience. Evening Shade Farms in Osceola invites visitors to see how their natural body products are made with ingredients lovingly raised

on the property: garden beds overflowing with fragrant flowers and herbs, goats providing rich creamy milk and bees furnishing nourishing golden honey.

TRAILS OF GREEN AND GRAPES

A healthy section of the 225-mile Katy Trail State Park threads through Missouri's Central Region. A hike or bike along this scenic trail is exhilarating — and it leads to some truly splendid places. Stop at Rocheport to picnic among green treetops at Les Bourgeois Winery, one of the four wineries on the Missouri River



Missouri Highland Farm, Jamestown



Art Inside the park, Jefferson City



Wine Trail. Or swerve onto the MKT Nature and Fitness Trail into Columbia for a bite to eat at one of the city's green-minded restaurants, such as Main Squeeze or The Wine Cellar and Bistro, where menus boast fresh and locally grown foods.

GREEN DREAMS

On the Katy Trail, overlooking the Missouri River in Boonville, is the grand and "green" Frederick Hotel. This 105-year-old hotel has recently been lovingly restored in a way that retains its historic charm, while treating guests — and the environment — to some pleasing features. Guests enjoy luxurious modern amenities, while the environment benefits from the extensive use of recycled materials, energy-efficient

fixtures and earth-friendly cleaning practices, all of which helped earn the property membership in the Green Hotels Association.

GOLF GREENS

Golf Digest and *Golfweek* have both ranked Old Kinderhook in Camden-ton as one of the top courses in Missouri. The course's waterfalls, hills, trees, water hazards and elevation changes provide challenging terrain in a beautiful lake setting. Seasons Ridge at the Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, ranked high by *Golf Digest* and *Golfweek*, offers rolling hills, native wildflowers and dazzling views of the lake. At the Gustin Golf Course on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, play 18 holes in the setting of a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

Cropping up in Central Missouri
Jefferson Farm & Gardens, in Columbia, is an extraordinary property featuring a lake with a boardwalk and fishing dock, berry patch, wildflower meadow, orchard and a 700-foot terraced garden designed to reflect Thomas Jefferson's personal garden at Monticello. For kids to explore: a barn, a garden and a stream running between.

Farmers' Market, Versailles



Chance. It contains many varieties of flowers and more than 400 varieties of roses. Oriental influences are seen. On the National Historic Registry. Year-round. Free. Ⓡ

Gray Ghost Trail Civil War Markers

CENTRALIA 573-682-2272. Markers at the Centralia Massacre site on Railroad Street, the city square on Singleton Street and the Centralia Battlefield on the Rangeline Road site depict the Civil War events of Sept. 27, 1864. Year-round. www.MoCivilWar.org.

Prairie Queen Mural

CENTRALIA 573-682-2272, Allen and Railroad streets. Mural depicts events, places and people from Centralia's past: the Chance Gardens, the train depot, Civil War depredations and industrialist A.B. Chance. Year-round. Free. Ⓡ

Dorman House **CLINTON** 660-885-2121, 302 W. Franklin St. Built in 1852, this was the first two-story brick home in Clinton. Once the home of Judge J.G. Dorman, Udolphia Miller Dorman and their seven children. The building houses the Clinton Main Street office. Tours are given. Year-round. \$3. www.ClintonMoMainStreet.com.

Henry County Courthouse

CLINTON 660-885-6963, West Franklin St. Built in 1893. The building includes a mural and historic photos. The grounds feature time capsules, a 1920s bandstand memorial to veterans, a soldiers' memorial with life-size Civil War soldiers and a fountain once used for watering horses. Year-round. Free. Ⓡ

Henry County Museum and Cultural Arts Center

CLINTON 660-885-8414, 203 W. Franklin. Complex includes an 1886 Anheuser-Busch facility, a circa 1900 village, an original 1856 dogtrot log home and farmstead, an art gallery and an 1887 bank that is now a performing arts center. Closed Sun. April–December. \$3; younger than 12, free. Ⓡ

Tasty Tidbits



Ice Cream, Central Dairy, Jefferson City

One of the oldest and best-loved places in mid-Missouri to get ice cream is Central Dairy in Jefferson City. Stop in for a refreshing break at this old-fashioned ice cream parlor with more than 40 flavors to choose from. In the mood for a challenge?

Order the traditional banana split, served with six heaping scoops of ice cream, and see if you can finish it all.

Shades of Green

Mississippi River at sunset

GREEN GARDENS

Each spring, the 50 acres of the green Pinecrest Azalea Garden burst into breathtaking color. It all begins with the blooming of more than 300,000 jonquils each March, followed by azaleas in April and rhododendrons in early May. Of course you can't pick the flowers at this Oak Ridge garden, but you can take your pick of driving or walking paths to see them.

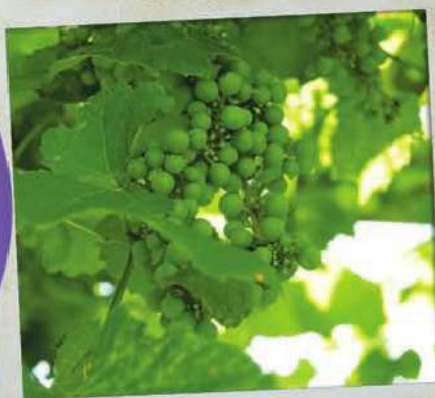
GREEN COUNTRY DRIVES

A stretch of land running south of St. Louis all the way to Sikeston is a culturally and ecologically rich region defined by the Missouri Regional Cuisines Project as the Mississippi River Hills. Here, along the Mississippi River and fertile country land that surrounds it, you'll discover a delicious array of Missouri wine and food products. Nested within the Mississippi River Hills is Route Du Vin, a



*Maramec Spring Park,
near St. James*

Cropping up in Southeast Missouri
Live, work and enjoy nature at the **Southeast Missouri State Technology Village**, an exciting new 400-acre mixed-use park. The site embraces the local agricultural flavor of Southeast Missouri while emphasizing development of plant science and environmentally friendly technologies. The village is expected to be completed in late 2009.



*Vineyard at Bolduc House,
Ste. Genevieve*

trail of wineries that weaves through the rolling farmland and vineyards of the French-settled region of Ste. Genevieve. The drive alone is a delight. But the trip would not be complete without stopping to savor the fruits of the vines. At Chaumette Vineyards and Winery, the grapevines themselves are used to infuse flavor into the smoke-grilled fare served at aptly named Grapevine Grill. At Ste. Genevieve Winery, partake of wine from locally grown grapes and fruits while immersed in a historic 18th-century French Colonial district.

GREEN GONE WILD

When the weather is warm, the color is green — all across the wilds of southeastern Missouri. And there are bountiful ways to enjoy it. Paddle the crystal clear waters of the Ozarks National Scenic



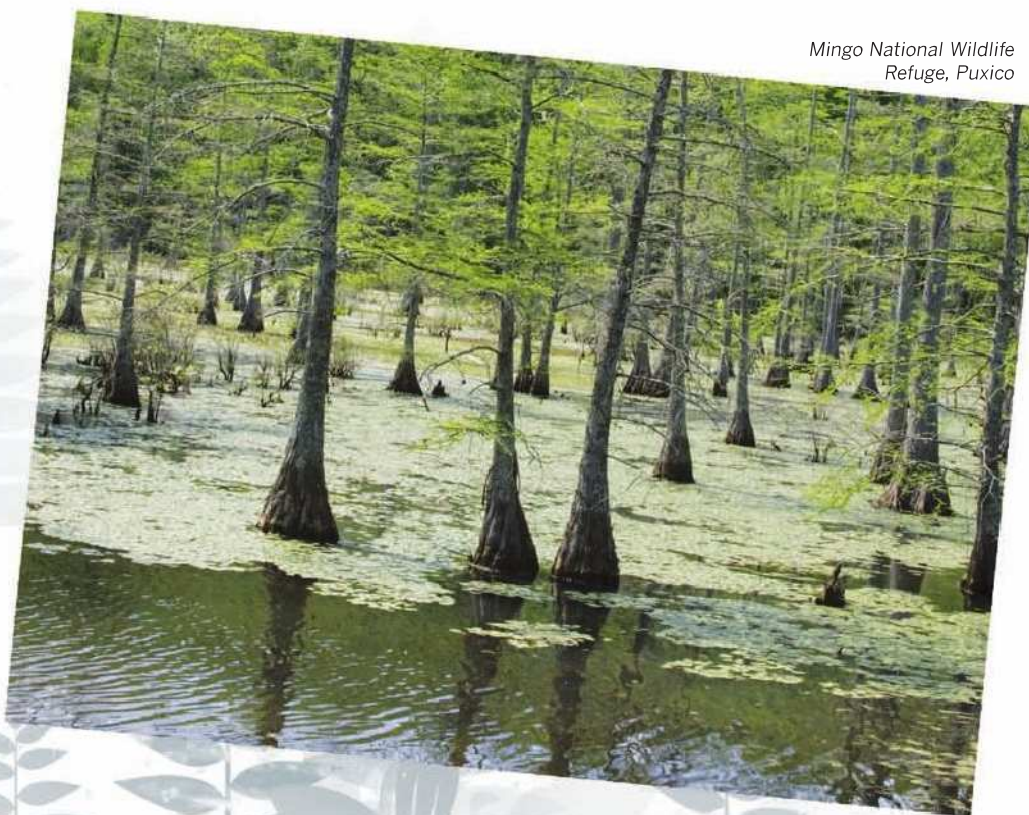
Riverway, hike the rugged Ozark Trail or set out on a quest to spy a rare Ozarks wild crocus. And what could be greener than a place known as the Irish Wilderness? This dense forest of oaks and hickory within the Mark Twain National Forest in Alton became popular in the 1800s when occupied by Irish immigrants. Here, Whites Creek Trail leads through dry creek beds, grasslands, glades and bluff country, then rewards with a breathtaking view of the Eleven Point River. Witness a spectacular display of

wild flora and fauna covering 7,730 acres of swamp and uplands from observation decks, walking trails and auto trails at the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Puxico.

GOLF GREENS

Tucked in a clearing in the heart of Mark Twain National Forest are the impeccably groomed greens and fairways of Fourche Valley Golf Club. Spend the day on this Potosi course surrounded by Missouri pines, dogwoods and redbuds. Bring the family and spend the night at the YMCA of the Ozarks Trout Lodge, an old-fashioned family summer camp. By the way, southeast Missouri native Hale Irwin, World Golf Hall of Fame member, says of golf in Missouri, "I've played all over the world, and I can tell you no place offers the incredible variety from course to course like Missouri."

Mingo National Wildlife
Refuge, Puxico



Common Pleas Courthouse

CAPE GIRARDEAU 573-335-2802, 44 N. Lorimier. The 1854 courthouse overlooks the Mississippi River and Cape Girardeau. It played an important part in the city's history, from Indian Council days to the Civil War. The dungeon held Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. Year-round. Free. www.Courts.mo.gov. ☺

Conservation Campus Nature Center

CAPE GIRARDEAU 573-290-5218, 2289 County Park Drive. An auditorium, hands-on exhibits, research laboratory, aquariums, nature trails. No pets, horses, hunting, fires, jogging, bicycles, skates/boards or alcohol allowed. Tue.-Sat., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m. Year-round. Free. www.MissouriConservation.org/areas/cnc/cape. ☺

Country Shade Craft Mall **CAPE GIRARDEAU**

573-334-9535, 8 Plaza Way. Craft mall showcasing more than 100 craftspeople. Antiques. Full-service florist. Year-round. Free admission. ☺

Fort D **CAPE GIRARDEAU** 800-777-0068,

1 W. Fort St. Fort D was built in 1861. This intact, earthen fort is located four blocks south of Route 74 and Sprigg Street, west of the Mississippi River Bridge. The fort's grounds, featuring interpretive signage, are open dawn to dusk. Year-round. Free. www.VisitCape.com.

Glenn House **CAPE GIRARDEAU** 573-335-8533,

325 S. Spanish St. This Victorian house, built in 1883, exquisitely depicts life of that era. May-September, open Tue.-Sat., 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sun., 1 p.m.-4 p.m. March, October-November, weekends only. Special Christmas tours are offered. Group rates available. March-November. \$5; ages 6-12, \$2. www.GlennHouse.org. ☺

Great Murals Tour **CAPE GIRARDEAU**

800-777-0068, 100 Broadway. If you miss these murals, you miss Cape Girardeau. The Missouri Wall of Fame lines the riverfront

Art and Icons



"Mississippi River Tales Mural," Cape Girardeau

Cape Girardeau sits on the west bank of the Mississippi River, and the murals decorating the flood wall tell the story of the area. The 24 panels cover nearly 24,000 square feet and span the length of the downtown shopping district. Numerous other murals can be found throughout the city.

Shades of Green

Flowers in bloom

GREEN GARDENS

With a flower box in every conceivable location, Neosho indeed lives up to its moniker, Flower Box City. The granddaddy of all is the 66-foot railroad gondola car

Sandstone Gardens, Joplin



filled with trees, shrubs and flowers—reportedly the world's largest flower box. Should you be compelled to create your own home garden paradise, head to Sandstone Gardens in Joplin where European style gardens and greenhouses offer ample inspiration and shopping. In Springfield, the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden is a green oasis of serenity with lakes, waterfalls, lanterns, a teahouse and a moon bridge. The Xeriscape Garden in Springfield demonstrates quite beautifully the efficient use of water in landscaping.

GREEN LANDSCAPES AND GRAPES

While nature paints this Ozarks region a gorgeous green, the Ozark Mountain Region Wine Trail lines the landscape with green vineyards and a half-dozen wineries that swing open their doors for tantalizing wine tastings. As alluring as these rural regions might be, one need not venture into the wilds to enjoy nature. Both the Frisco Greenway Trail in Joplin and the Ozark Greenways trails in Springfield provide fresh air experiences at a city doorstep. After your



outdoor adventure, enjoy a meal at one of the several restaurants known for their creative use of fresh, locally produced foods, such as Clary's in Springfield.

GOLF GREENS

Branson Creek Golf Club in Hollister consistently shows up on all the hot golf lists: *Golf Digest's* most recent top 10 golf courses in Missouri, *Golfweek's* Best Courses You Can Play in Missouri, *Golf Digest's* Top Public Golf Course in Missouri and *Golf Digest's* Top 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses in America. You can play this challenging championship course for all the



above reasons or simply because it is the perfect excuse to immerse yourself in a beautiful Ozarks landscape.

GREEN BUILDINGS

Yes, this region is abundant in places green by nature, but it's also "green" according to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification process. The Discovery Center of Springfield, an interactive children's museum designed to inspire a love of learning and an appreciation of our world, is an environmental lesson in and of itself with its LEED gold-certified building. Green in every sense of the word, the Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center in Joplin is surrounded by natural areas

World's Largest Flower Box, Neosho



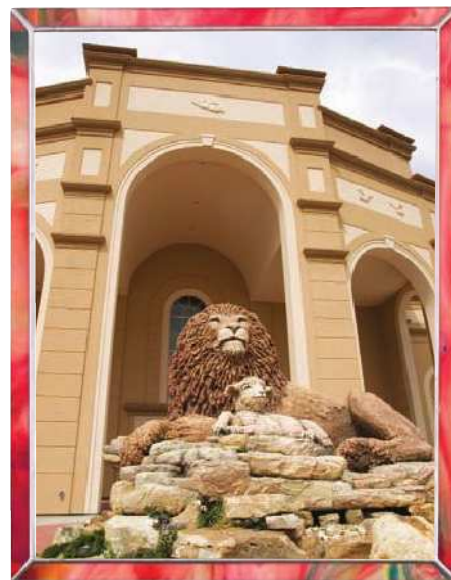
and is a LEED silver-certified facility with learning stations describing the building's energy-efficient and sustainable features. In Branson, Silver Dollar City, Showboat Branson Belle and White Water have each been designated Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries for their environmentally sensitive practices.

GREEN DREAMS

The Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale has earned the American Hotel and Lodging Association's valued Good Earthkeeping award for their earth-friendly operations—from welcome cards embedded with flower seeds for planting to the laundry facility that saves 10,000 gallons of water a day. Even the golf course has the Audubon Society signature. And, to top it off, it's all so gorgeous!

Cropping up in Southwest Missouri

Green projects are cropping up all over Springfield including a new visitor center in 2010 that will seek LEED certification upon completion. Springfield also received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant to redesign three structures into green buildings, including Buz Brewery, Juliette's Day Spa and The Commercial Club.



Sight and Sound Theatre, Branson

rotating roster of guest talent from the rich Branson entertainment industry. Performed at 11 p.m., at Grand Country Music Hall. See the Web site for details. Feb. 6–Dec. 18. \$15; ages 4–17, \$5; younger than 4, free. www.GrandCountry.com. Ⓡ

Branson Entertainment Hall of Fame

BRANSON 417-336-3263, 2206 W. Route 76. Historical displays; a timeline of Branson's entertainment history; interactive audio-visual stations; a video room and gift shop. Located in the Branson Mall. Group tours available. Year-round. Donations accepted. www.BransonEntertainmentHallOfFame.com. Ⓡ

Branson Family Fun Factory

BRANSON 417-332-2110, 2400 Route 165. Family oriented business located at the southwest corner of the Welk Family complex on Route 165. Mini-golf, 18-hole glow-in-the-dark course with four different themes. Laser tag, arcade and party room. Open late. Year-round. www.BransonFamilyFunFactory.com. Ⓡ

Branson Landing

BRANSON 417-239-3002, 100 Branson Landing. On the Lake Taneycomo waterfront, next to downtown Branson. Year-round shopping, dining and entertainment: more than 100 shops and restaurants; waterfront adventures; great special events and concerts; and a \$7.5-million water spectacular. Year-round. Free admission. www.BransonLanding.com. Ⓡ

Branson Landing Cruises

BRANSON 877-382-6287, 7 N. Boardwalk. The Landing Princess: sleek, luxurious motor yacht offering event and themed cruises for up to 150 guests. The Lake Queen: a modern paddle wheel vessel offering sightseeing, lunch and dinner cruises for up to 150 guests. At Branson landing. Year-round. \$20–\$23; ages 4–11, \$13–\$16; younger than 4, free. Food extra. www.BransonLandingCruises.com. Ⓡ

Branson Mill Craft Village

BRANSON 417-334-8436, 3300 N. Gretna Road. Indoor village with many vendors under one roof. Skilled artisans do live demonstrations daily. Also entertainment, sweets and a coffee shop. Year-round. Ⓡ

Listings continue on page 140.