

BOWERY / ALPHABET CITY / EAST VILLAGE, MANHATTAN

EAST VILLAGE COMMUNITY GARDENS

A MUSEENYC WALKING TOUR · FREE, AND NOT SPONSORED BY ANYONE

DISTANCE 2.5 miles	TIME 3 to 3.5 hours
STOPS 13	START Liz Christy Garden, E Houston St at the Bowery (F to 2 Av)
END 11th Street Community Garden, E 11th St near First Ave	MAP museenyc.com/tours/15-east-village-gardens/map

The East Village and the blocks around it hold one of the densest clusters of community gardens in New York, nearly all of them built by neighbors on rubble-strewn lots in the 1970s and 80s, and all of them free to walk into. The catch is the hours. Volunteers open the gates, mostly on weekend afternoons, and only from April through October. This route is timed for a Sunday: start at Liz Christy Garden at 1:30pm and every garden on it will be open when you get there. Come outside those hours and you will be looking through fences.

ROUTE CARD

Screenshot or tear off this page. Full detail for each stop follows.

1 Liz Christy Garden	8 Creative Little Garden
2 Le Petit Versailles	9 Green Oasis and Gilbert's Sculpture Garden
3 Parque de Tranquilidad	10 Francisco "Pancho" Ramos Community Garden
4 Orchard Alley	11 La Plaza Cultural de Armando Perez
5 El Jardín del Paraíso	12 Dias y Flores
6 6BC Botanical Garden	13 11th Street Community Garden
7 6th Street and Avenue B Community Garden	

GETTING THERE AND BACK

START F to 2 Av, or 6 to Bleecker St, then walk east on Houston St.

FINISH	L at First Ave, three blocks north. The 6 at Astor Pl is about 10 minutes west.
ALONG THE ROUTE	The F runs under Houston St. Crosstown buses: M21 on Houston St, M8 on 9th and 10th St, M14A/M14D SBS on 14th St.

Cutting it short

Every walk here has exits. Good ones on this route:

- After stop 2 (Le Petit Versailles): M21 bus west on Houston St, or walk back to the F at 2 Av.
- After stop 8 (Creative Little Garden): F at 2 Av, about 8 minutes south and west.
- After stop 11 (La Plaza Cultural): M8 bus west on E 10th St, or the L at First Ave, about 12 minutes.

THE WALK

1 LIZ CHRISTY GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday noon to 4pm, plus Tuesday and Thursday 6 to 8pm, April through October. The gate is on the north side of Houston St between the Bowery and Second Ave.

Every garden on this walk descends from this one. In 1973 Liz Christy and her Green Guerillas started seed-bombing the vacant lots of the Lower East Side, then got permission to clear this one at the Bowery and Houston. It became the first community garden in New York City. Inside is a pond with fish and turtles, a grape arbor, a grove of weeping birches, a dawn redwood, beehives, fruit trees and a wildflower meadow. Houston Street is right there and you stop hearing it.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72413, -73.99174

2 LE PETIT VERSAILLES

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: East along Houston St, past First Ave and Ave A, to between Aves B and C. The garden runs through to E 2nd St, with gates on both streets. About 12 minutes.

Or ride: M21 bus east along Houston St.

Heads up: Open Thursday to Sunday, 2 to 7pm. Earlier in the week it opens only as weather permits.

The garden on this walk where the art matters as much as the planting. A narrow brick path runs from the Houston Street gate to a small stage, and through the warmer months performers, filmmakers and artists show work there among the flower beds and an arbor-covered seating area. Before 1996 the lot was a car chop shop. See what is on the gate when you arrive.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72112, -73.98181

3 PARQUE DE TRANQUILIDAD

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Out the E 2nd St gate, east to Ave C, then north two blocks to E 4th St and turn right. The garden is between Aves C and D.

Heads up: Open Sundays only, 10am to 6pm.

Neighbors cleared these lots in 1979. About a third of the garden sits on the site of an 1887 synagogue, Chevra Bikur Cholim B'nai Israel Anshei Baranov, and nothing on the street tells you. The name is an accurate description: winding paths, planting thick enough to close over your head, and old seating the garden is slowly taking back. The quietest stop on this walk.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72179, -73.97967

4 ORCHARD ALLEY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: A few doors further east on E 4th St, toward Ave D.

Heads up: Open Sundays only, 9am to 7pm.

The name is literal: fruit trees over an actual lawn, which is rarer in these gardens than you would expect. Neighbors built it up a little at a time on an empty lot, and it still feels hand-made. Sit on the grass. On a Sunday, this garden and Parque de Tranquilidad a few doors down are reason enough to come to this block.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72129, -73.97846

5 EL JARDÍN DEL PARAÍSO

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Around the corner: the garden runs through the block to E 5th St, between Aves C and D. The address, and the main way in, is on E 5th St.

Heads up: Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to dusk. Closed Mondays.

Three-quarters of an acre, the biggest and wildest garden on the route: open lawn, birches, a pond where turtles sun themselves, and an octagonal treehouse built around a willow trunk in 2003 by the treehouse architect Roderick Romero, his first community project. Ten tenement buildings once stood on this land, and one of them was Allen Ginsberg's home in 1964 and 1965. The lots were cleared, and neighbors founded the garden in 1981.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72232, -73.97920

6 6BC BOTANICAL GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on E 5th St to Ave C, north one block to E 6th St, then left. The garden is between Aves C and B.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday, noon to 6pm.

The most designed of the neighborhood gardens, and the one that earns the word botanical. Brick paths wander past peonies and climbing roses to a koi pond with a waterfall that took the members ten years to finish. The grape arbor hides solar panels in its vines, there is a sunken grotto, and the two-story toolshed doubles as a take-one, leave-one library. Find one of the hidden benches and stay.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72387, -73.98066

7 6TH STREET AND AVENUE B COMMUNITY GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on E 6th St to Ave B. The garden takes up the corner.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday 1 to 6pm, plus scheduled evening events.

More than 17,000 square feet, divided into individual beds of about four by eight feet, each one gardened by a different member, so no two steps look alike. The garden dates to 1982. From the late 1980s until 2008 it was home to Eddie Boros's Tower of Toys, a 65-foot wooden tower hung with things he found on the street. The tower is gone, but the garden still has a children's garden and puts on films, festivals and workshops.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72437, -73.98195

8 CREATIVE LITTLE GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Continue west on E 6th St, about halfway to Ave A. Look for the yellow gate.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday 1 to 4pm, and weekdays 1 to 2pm. Get here before 4pm.

Here since 1978, and run differently from most: there are no private plots, so members landscape the whole garden together, like a shared backyard. A fish pond, peach and cherry trees, a grape arbor, a Japanese garden and a gazebo, plus a chair swing and birdhouses tucked into the planting. It is a certified National Wildlife Federation habitat that is slowly becoming a woodland of native plants, which is why the birdsong here is so loud.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72467, -73.98256

9 GREEN OASIS AND GILBERT'S SCULPTURE GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Back to Ave B, north two blocks to E 8th St, then east past Ave C. The garden is between Aves C and D. About 10 minutes.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday, 11am to 5pm. The garden also lists Wednesday mornings on its own site.

Two gardens that grew up side by side from 1981 and joined in 1997. Normand Valle and Reinaldo Arana built Green Oasis, and next door Gilbert Ingram carved found wood and stone into sculpture and invited the neighbors in. Today it is one garden with a koi pond full of goldfish, beehives, a grape arbor, a gazebo, and trees that have had forty years to get enormous. Nuyorican poets performed here, and the garden still puts on theater and readings.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72401, -73.97739

10 FRANCISCO "PANCHO" RAMOS COMMUNITY GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West to Ave C, then north to E 9th St. The public entrance is on the east side of Ave C, between 9th and 10th St.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday, noon to 6pm.

Long known as the 9th Street Community Garden, and now named for Pancho Ramos, one of its members. Nearly 22,000 square feet of winding paths between plots and casitas, the small wooden houses the neighborhood's Puerto Rican gardeners brought to these lots. It waters itself from rain caught in a system of drains and barrels, and makes its own soil from compost.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72538, -73.97749

11 LA PLAZA CULTURAL DE ARMANDO PEREZ

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Directly across Ave C, on the corner of E 9th St.

Heads up: Open every day, 11am to 5pm: the most generous hours on this walk.

Founded in 1976 on rubble-filled lots, and the most public of the gardens: a stone stage, a gazebo, shady benches and an amphitheater built with the artist Gordon Matta-Clark from timber salvaged out of abandoned buildings. Early members worked with Buckminster Fuller on a geodesic dome here. The weeping willows planted when the garden began were rotting and came down in 2017; the neighborhood held a wake for them. The garden is named for Armando Perez, a co-founder of the CHARAS community center, who was killed in 1999. Check the gate for yoga, readings and festivals.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72531, -73.97872

12 DIAS Y FLORES

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: North on Ave C to E 13th St, then west past Ave B. The garden is mid-block. About 10 minutes.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5pm.

Founded in 1978, in the middle of a quiet, tree-lined block of 13th Street, with a membership of around sixty gardeners from all over the world. A fish pond, a rainwater collection system and a solar-powered fountain. It is one of the smaller gardens on the walk and one of the prettiest, the kind of place where you sit down and lose track of time.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72912, -73.97993

13 11TH STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on E 13th St to Ave A, south two blocks to E 11th St, then west toward First Ave.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday, noon to 6pm.

Finish here and sit down. Pines, flower beds and a shaded porch behind a wooden trellis gate, looked after by volunteers and held by the Manhattan Land Trust. It is a good place to decide where to eat, because First Avenue is a minute away.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72870, -73.98293

COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 3 \(East Village to LES\)](#) shares stop 7 here, the 6th Street and Avenue B garden, and passes through Tompkins Square Park, two blocks from stops 7 and 8. Walk this one on a Sunday afternoon for the gardens and Tour 3 another day for the history, or pick up Tour 3 at stop 5 (Tompkins Square) after stop 8 here.

WALKING NAVIGATION LINKS

Google caps a directions link at ten points, so the route is split. Open a segment on your phone and it starts walking navigation.

- [Stops 1–8](#)
- [Stops 8–13](#)

THE MAP

Open the MUSEENYC map for this walk at museenyc.com/tours/15-east-village-gardens/map. Every pin carries its own walking directions, transit alternative and notes.

- **Green pin** = open to the public.
- **Orange pin** = private, look from the sidewalk. Several are people's homes: no gates, no doorways, no photographing into windows.

The orange line is a straight-line guide between stops, not the walking route. Use the navigation links for turn-by-turn.

MUSEENYC

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