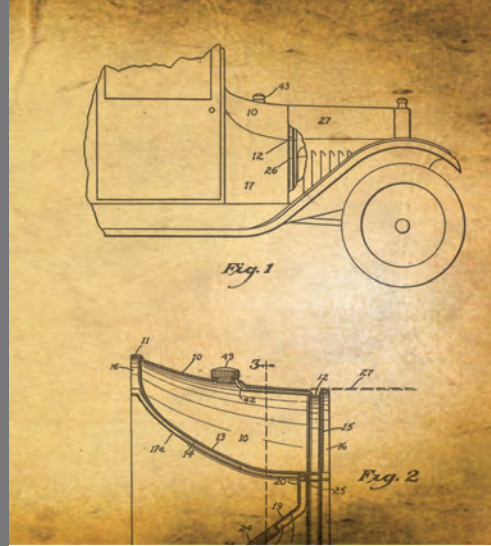




EDISON and FORD winter ESTATES



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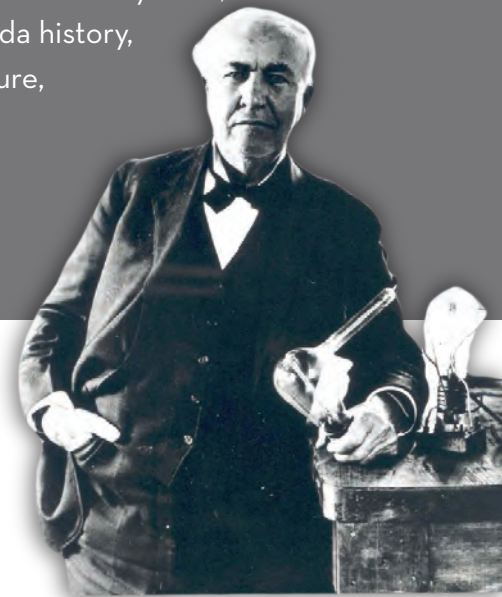
2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33901
239.334.7419 - www.EdisonFord.org



Edison and Ford Winter Estates (EFWE) is the internationally known winter home site of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.

More than 220,000 visitors walk through the location each year from all around the globe. The site is situated along the Caloosahatchee River in Fort Myers, Florida and offers visitors a taste of history, science, art and nature – all in one place!

The mission of EFWE is to educate the public and inspire an inventive spirit by interpreting and preserving the innovations, legacies, artifacts, gardens, homes, laboratory, and other structures of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, emphasizing Florida history, science, horticulture, and the arts.



QUICK FACTS

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

- Includes the winter estate homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, Edison guest house, caretaker's houses, study, concrete swimming pool and adjoining tea house, botanic research laboratory; and the 15,000-square-foot museum full of inventions, artifacts and theater
- More than 20 acres of botanic gardens, including demonstration gardens for Florida native plants, succulents and butterfly gardening, and beautiful trees and plants from all around the world

- A short drive to Sanibel Island and Fort Myers Beach
- Approximately 30 minutes from Southwest Florida International Airport
- ADA accessible with wheelchairs available
- Free parking
- Not-for-profit 501c(3) corporation



RESTORATION INFORMATION

- Historic site restored to 1929 landscape
- \$13 million in restoration and development within the last decade
- \$1 million in restoration to the botanic research laboratory



MOST NOTABLE AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- National Stewardship Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- National Garden Clubs' Historic Preservation Award
- The property is an official project of "Save America's Treasures"
- Florida Historic Landmark
- National Register Historic Site

- The Edison Botanic Laboratory is a National Historic Chemical Landmark
- Society of American Travel Writers, Phoenix Award
- The Holiday Nights event was chosen by the editors of “USA Today” as one of the “10 Best Historic Homes for the Holidays”
- The American Bus Association designated Holiday Nights as one of the “Top 100 Events in North America” in 2016

HOURS OF OPERATION

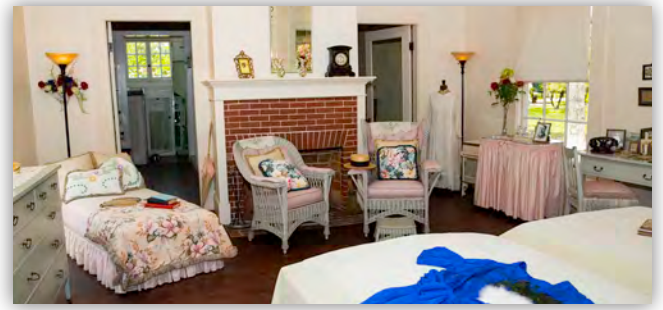
- Open 363 days a year (closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day), from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Open until 9 p.m. during the month of December for the annual Holiday Nights event

VISITOR TOUR OPTIONS

- **Self-Guided Tours** offer visitors the opportunity to experience EFWE at their own pace. Site maps are provided in English, French, Spanish, German and Chinese. The maps highlight areas throughout EFWE with historical information. Narration in English, German, French or Spanish is available with the new app and through a phone number.
- **Guided Tours** are led by enthusiastic, knowledgeable site historians and include information about the lives of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, their families and friendships. The tour includes newly discovered information about the laboratory and the scientific research that was conducted here.



- **Inside-the-Homes Tours** take guests on an up-close, personal peek inside regularly closed-off areas of Edison's and Ford's homes. Visitors walk through rooms not seen on any of the other tours, allowing a much more intriguing, in-depth experience. This specialty tour is offered in a small, group format allowing time for questions and discussion.



- **Inside-the-Lab Tours** provide a comprehensive program focused on Edison's botanic research laboratory, a National Historic Chemical Landmark. This specialty tour allows further learning about the operation of the historic laboratory firsthand from the curators who performed the restoration. Visitors walk through areas inside Edison's laboratory that are normally closed.

- **Garden Tours** include a horticulturist-guided walk through more than 20 acres of botanic gardens. A behind-the-scenes tour of the propagating nursery also is included. Available by appointment.

- **Group Tour Options**

- Historian-Led Guided Tours
- Self-Guided Tours
- Private Guided Tours
- Behind-the-Scenes Tours
- Group Tours with Lunch Packages
- Holiday Nights Tours



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Numerous programs for adults and children are available throughout the year. Summer and other school-break camps are very popular with local children. Many painting and gardening-related classes are offered for adults. Special programs and presentations are offered periodically.

MEMBERSHIP

Several levels of both individual and business memberships are available. Individual memberships include free admission to EFWE and discounts on retail items and programs, plus free admission to hundreds of museums and botanical gardens around the country through a reciprocal program.

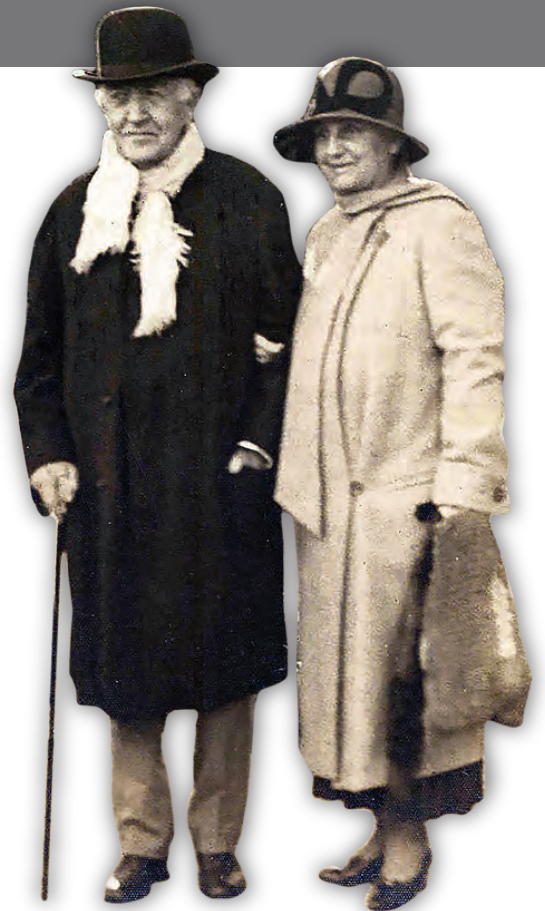


RETAIL AREAS

- Edison Ford Museum Store
- Historic Ford Cottage Shoppe
- Garden Shoppe
- Edison Ford Shoppe at Edison Mall (off site)

MAJOR SPECIAL EVENTS

- Holiday Nights
- Clothesline Quilt Show
- Antique Ford Car Show
- Music Performances
- Garden Festivals



PRIVATE EVENTS

- Wedding ceremonies, receptions, bridal luncheons, teas and showers
- Corporate event space available (indoor and outdoor)
- Lunch and tour packages
- Business meetings



SOCIAL MEDIA



EdisonFordFL



EdisonFordFL



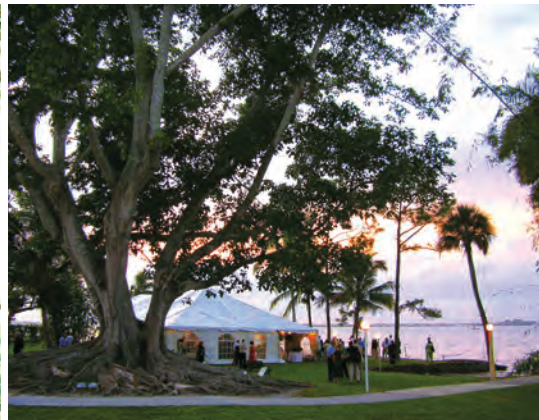
EdisonFordFL



EdisonFordFL

WEBSITE

EdisonFord.org





THEN AND NOW

"There is only one Fort Myers, and 90 million people are going to find out."

– Thomas Edison

In the late 1800s, Fort Myers was a small town with a population of only 349 people and McGregor Boulevard was a dirt cattle trail. Little did the local residents know that their small town was about to change and one day the property owned by Thomas Edison and Henry Ford would be known around the globe as a world-class tourist destination.

Thomas came in 1885 (not married yet at this time) and bought the property, then honeymooned with Mina in 1886. At that time, the railroad didn't reach the city, so travelers either arrived by boat or horse and buggy. The Edisons traveled from Jacksonville on trains and steamer boats to the mouth of the Caloosahatchee. They found a piece of land along the river with bamboo growing and since Edison was experimenting with bamboo for lightbulb filaments, it is believed that this is one of the reasons he was interested in the property.

Edison purchased 13.5 acres for \$2,750 and set to work on designing a winter vacation home for him and his young wife. Completed in 1886, the home would come to be known as "Seminole Lodge" – after the local Native American tribe – and was where the Edisons spent dozens of winters.

Many friends and famous visitors dined with the Edisons over the years, including President-elect Herbert Hoover, the Colgate and Kellogg families and even the Athletics baseball team. John Burroughs and Harvey Firestone were regular visitors, as was Henry Ford who first visited in 1914 and purchased the neighboring estate two years later.

Edison, Ford, Firestone and Burroughs were avid explorers and enjoyed camping in the wilderness. The four vagabonds, as they called themselves, took many trips together. On the first excursion, Edison, Ford and Burroughs traveled into the Florida Everglades. These trips were not only opportunities for the men to relax, hunt and fish, but also to collect plant samples that would be used in their rubber research.

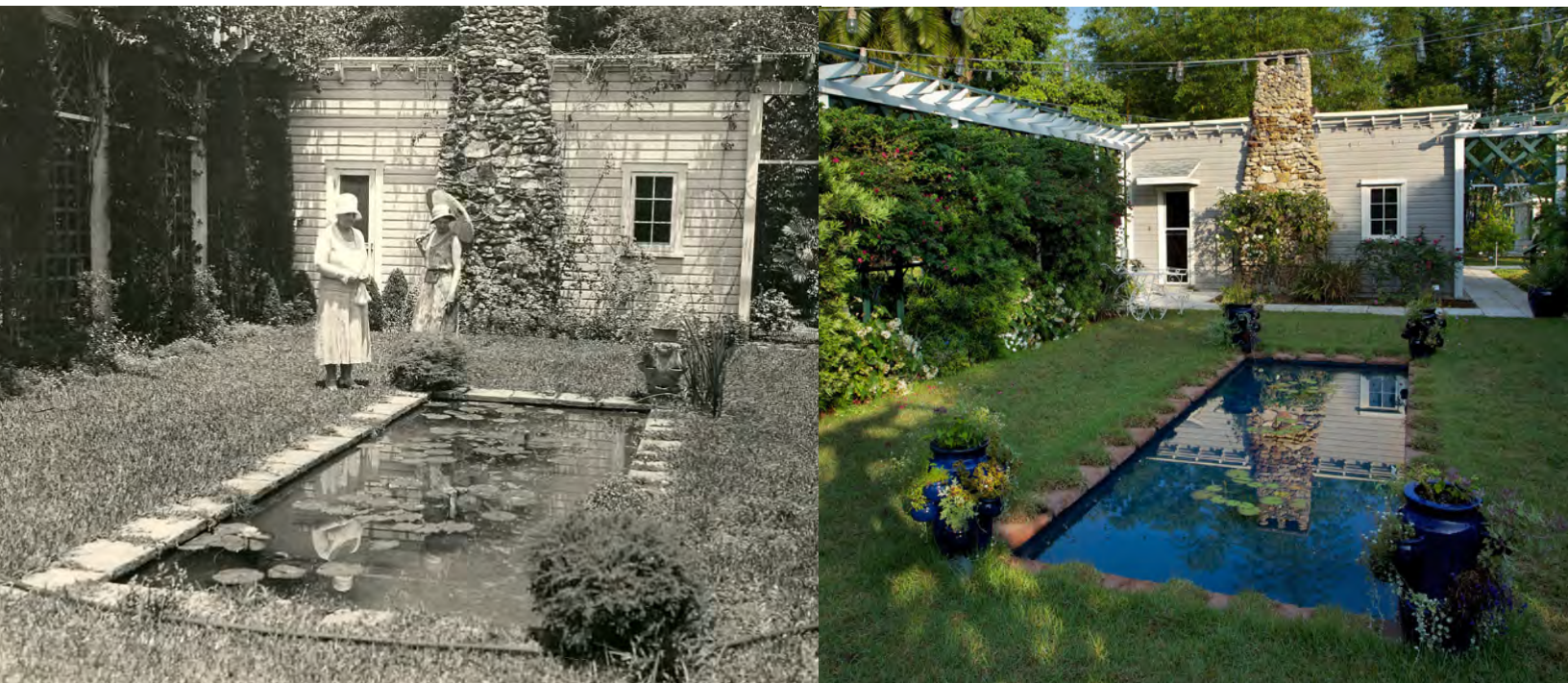
The quest for natural rubber was Edison's last major research project. In 1927, Edison, Ford and Firestone formed the Edison Botanic Research Corporation. More than 17,000 plants were tested while searching for one that would provide enough latex to supply the United States in an emergency. Out of all the plants and trees tested, goldenrod was found to be the most promising. A dried example of this giant plant is on display in the Fort Myers laboratory.

The lab was built in 1928 and was operational until 1936 when the rubber research project was transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It includes a chemical processing area, grinding room, machine shop, dark room and office space. The lab has since been restored, and in 2014 the American Chemical Society designated it a National Historic Chemical Landmark. The lab today looks as though Edison and Ford never left. The original glass test tubes and equipment sit atop lab tables and allow for visitors' imagination to picture the men hard at work.



All of the historic structures, including the homes, gardens and other buildings have been restored to the 1929 time period.

Visitors can imagine what it was like back then as they meander through 20 acres of gardens and marvel at the towering Banyan and Mysore Fig trees.



Touring the homes, museum, lab and gardens offers a fun and educational experience for all ages. There are events each month, so local visitors can always see something new. Memberships are available and enable guests to visit an unlimited number of times throughout the year and even include free admission to many other museums and gardens across the nation.

Site historians give guided tours daily and offer inside-the-lab and inside-the-homes tours at special times throughout the year. There also is an app that visitors can listen to if they prefer to take a leisurely, self-guided tour.

While visiting, guests will see Thomas Edison's and Henry Ford's winter estate homes, Edison's guest house, the caretaker's homes of both inventors, Edison's study, the 15,000-square-foot inventions museum, the botanic research laboratory and the swimming pool complex.

Highlights of the gardens include the award-winning Moonlight Garden, one of the world's largest Banyan trees, the Mysore Fig, Clara Ford's rose garden and hundreds of other botanicals. Behind-the-scenes garden tours are offered by appointment and include the propagating nursery where staff horticulturists propagate heirloom plants from Edison's gardens.

Annual events include the Garden Festival, held each November and February; the "Grow Fort Myers" garden event and car show each spring; Edison's birthday party, held in February; Ford's birthday celebration on July 30; a quilt show in the fall; and Holiday Nights runs from the day after Thanksgiving through December. In addition, new exhibits open throughout the year.

Education opportunities for both adults and children are available, including painting and scarf-making classes, summer and school break camps, homeschool programs and early learning classes.

Today, EFWE is a not-for-profit 501c(3) corporation. The site has received many awards. It is a National Register Historic Site, a Florida Historic Landmark and the botanic research laboratory is a National Historic Chemical Landmark. It was also awarded the National Stewardship Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is an official project of "Save America's Treasures."



A lot has changed since Edison first arrived. His inventions and experiments continue to educate and spark the curiosity of more than 220,000 people from around the world that visit this historic site annually.

SEMINOLE LODGE

Around 1902, Mina Edison began referring to their winter home and the guest house as “Seminole Lodge.”

The two houses were built in 1886. Ezra Gilliland (Edison’s friend and business partner) originally resided in the guest house. Before she passed away in 1947, Mina deeded the entire estate (including original furnishings) to the City of Fort Myers for \$1.

The homes were designed by Alden Frink of Boston, Massachusetts – based on original sketches by Thomas Edison – and are representative of the Italianate and Queen Anne period styles. Pre-cut building materials were brought by boat from New England and assembled on site, and wood exterior materials were produced by the Kennebec Framing Company and the Stephen Nye Lumber Company of Fairfield, Maine. The homes cost \$12,000 each, including building materials and interior furnishings, and each one is 2,900 square feet.

In 1906, Edison purchased the home that originally belonged to Ezra Gilliland and it became his guest house. From 1906 to 1910, Edison renovated both homes, incorporating ideas representative of the Craftsman style. More spacious interior rooms were created and boundaries between interior and exterior spaces were diminished. Additionally, verandahs were extended to more than 14 feet wide and French doors and casement windows were installed.





During the main house renovation, the dining room became the library. The wall separating the living room and library was removed and built-in bookcases were installed. The kitchen area was removed from the wing section entirely. The downstairs includes the living room, library, den, and a half bath. The upstairs has three bedrooms and a bathroom. The extra wing has two additional bedrooms.

During renovations of the guest house, the area between the sitting and dining rooms was enlarged and a plate rail was installed around the walls. The downstairs includes a sitting and dining room. The upstairs includes three bedrooms and a bathroom. The extra wing has a butler's pantry, kitchen, laundry porch and dry storage room, plus three rooms and a bathroom were used as servant's quarters.

The furnishings reflect a casual lifestyle. They were purchased from Proctor & Company of New York, and some came from Edison's West Orange, New Jersey home, Glenmont.

There are 13 uniquely-styled brass electroliers throughout the homes that were patented and manufactured exclusively for the Edison Company.

EDISON CARETAKER'S HOUSE

The center gable-roof section of the Edison Caretaker's House was an existing structure on the land when Thomas Edison purchased the property from Samuel Summerlin in 1885. The cracker-style house was used as a stopover for cattle drivers moving herds down the old Wire Road (now McGregor Boulevard). Today, the house is one of the oldest standing structures in Southwest Florida.

Samuel Summerlin was the youngest son of Jacob Summerlin, one of the largest cattle owners in the state. In the early 1860s, Summerlin had a crude road constructed from Fort Ogden to Punta Rassa. He built shipping pens and a dock where boats went off to Cuba, hauling cattle. In 1878, Jacob bought the wharf and existing facilities at Punta Rassa from Captain F.A. Hendry, as well as 1,000 acres of land for cattle holding and moved the site. By 1880, Jake owned or controlled the cattle shipping throughout Southwest Florida. In 1883, the Spanish government placed a high tariff on imported beef. Jacob decided to sell all of his South Florida holdings to several sons, including Sam who stayed to continue the family business.



Sam purchased the section of land he eventually sold to Edison from Francisco Abril in June of 1879 for \$500. Edison purchased the property for \$2,750 and it is believed that the cracker house was built in the early 1880s.

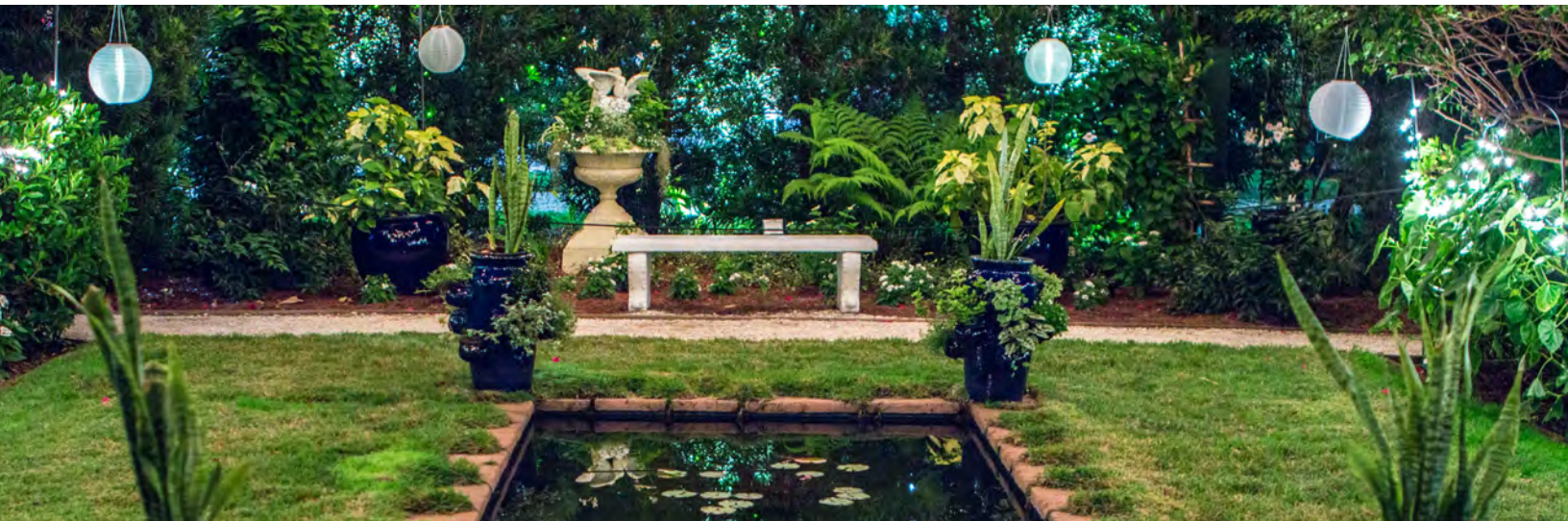
Edison planned from the outset of designing his tropical retreat to retain the "Summerlin House." He was prepared to move it if necessary, but was able to repair the home to be used for employees. In 1928, he added the L-addition with an apartment above and a car and tool storage below.



EDISON'S STUDY & MOONLIGHT GARDEN

Edison's study and the Moonlight Garden were added to the Edison estate in 1929. Together, they are located on the footprint of the original 1886 laboratory. Henry Ford moved that laboratory to Greenfield Village to become part of his collection of historically significant buildings, where it can still be seen today. To replace the lab, Ford financed the construction of the Moonlight Garden and Edison's study.

Pioneering female landscape architect, Ellen Biddle Shipman, designed the Moonlight Garden with blue and white flowers and a small pool to reflect the moonlight. Many of the flowers in the Moonlight Garden today mirror those planted there in 1929. The Moonlight Garden received the Award of Merit from the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2016.





THE MANGOES

Built in 1911 by New York entrepreneur, Robert Smith, “The Mangoes” (Henry Ford’s winter home) was purchased by Henry Ford in 1916 – two years after his first trip to Fort Myers. He purchased the 3,000-square-foot Craftsman Bungalow for \$20,000.



In 1928, Ford added two wings to the home. Distraught by Edison’s death in 1931, Ford eventually sold the estate to the Biggar family in 1945. In 1988, the family sold the property to the City of Fort Myers for \$1.5 million.

The downstairs includes a living room, dining room, butler’s pantry and kitchen. The upstairs has four bedrooms, bathroom and a sleeping porch. The north wing has two servant rooms and a bathroom. The south wing has a guest bedroom and a bathroom.

The furnishings showcased in the home today are antiques that reflect the period style and tastes of Clara and Henry Ford. The Wedgwood china on the dining table is a set of Clara Ford’s favorite pattern, “Columbia.”

SITE ACCESSIBILITY

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33901
239.334.7419 - www.EdisonFord.org

EDISON ESTATE

- 1 Start Self-Guided Tour here
Entry to historic homes and gardens
- 2 Fountain
- 3 Pool Complex
- 4 Caretaker's House
- 5 Edison's Study
- 6 Moonlight Garden
- 7-11 Edison Main House
- 12-14 Edison Guest House

FORD ESTATE

- 15 Car Exhibit
- 16-18 Ford House
- 19-20 Ford Cottage Shoppe/
Mysore Fig Tree

POINTS OF INTEREST

- A Welcome Booth
- B Ticket office and museum store
- C Museum (emergency shelter)
- D Laboratory/Banyan Tree
- E Garden Shoppe
- F Historic Research Gardens
- G Palmetum
- H Succulent Garden
- I Community Gardens
- J Security Station
- K Lily Pond
- L Coconut Grove
- M River Pavilion
- N River Walk
- O Orchid Lane
- P Clara Ford Rose Garden
- Q Ford Citrus Grove
- R Friendship Walk

