

Photo Permit FAQs

How do I make a reservation?

You'll need to complete an online application form through our [website](#). After you submit the form, someone from our special events team will review your application and contact you regarding availability and payment. Please note that it may take a minimum

How far in advance do I need to make a reservation?

We require at least one week to process your photo application. The booking office is closed on weekends. You can only finalize a photo shoot Monday - Friday. Please reach out to us during our business hours.

Can I come for one hour and pay a different rate?

Our Portrait Photography Permits are not timed. The rate is the same regardless of how much time you need for your photo shoot.

Where can I get ready for my photoshoot?

Unfortunately, we do not provide a changing room. Clients must arrive camera-ready. The bathrooms in the visitor center are not available to get ready for your photo shoot.

Can I have a quick ceremony or elopement and take pictures after?

We do not allow marriage ceremonies on the grounds as we have a dedicated events space that clients must book in advance. After you secure a suitable venue off-site, please apply for a permit to take wedding photos at Duke Gardens.

Do I need a permit for a proposal shoot?

If you plan to use Duke Gardens as the location for your proposal, and you have a designated photographer within your party to capture the moment, you will need to apply for a permit. Please note: We cannot reserve a private space for proposal shoots and the Gardens will be open to the public during your photo shoot.

Photo Permit FAQs

Are props permitted?

We have a [list of props](#) that are not allowed in the gardens. Please include a short description of the props you are considering in your photo application. Asking about props in your application does not mean they will be approved.

Is my photographer included in the group count?

Yes. The photo permit covers up to 5 people including your photographer. This rule also applies to the 6-10 people.

Do we need to pay for parking?

Yes. Parking is not included in the permit fee. Clients must be prepared to pay for parking. To save time, please download the [PaybyPhone](#) app before arriving.

Can I film or take a promotional video with my permit?

Videography and commercial photography require additional permission 30 days in advance from Duke Gardens and the university. Please see [this page](#) for more information.

During your photography session, please note



No drones



No commercial film



No music or
sound equipment



No smoking
or vaping



Do not climb trees,
stand on walls,
rails or fountains



Do not hang, drape, or leave items
on benches, trees or walls