

A fresh take on Spring from garden experts, with the launch of RBG at Home

RBG opens its virtual gates to celebrate the first blooms of spring and answer your gardening questions

BURLINGTON ON, April 17, 2020 – Spring has sprung and while Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) remains closed to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, RBG staff who are working from home have curated videos, photos and activities to connect people with nature in a new way, through *RBG at Home*.

“As gardening season begins, our lead horticulturists are eager to share their knowledge and help people with their gardening questions” said Jim Mack, RBG’s Head of Horticulture.

“Gardening, both indoors and out, is a great mental health benefit and staff are on hand to offer advice while highlighting the season’s signature blooms and providing educational resources. Our virtual gates are open, and we look forward to connecting with our community.”

Bring the Gardens into your homes through *Garden Views*, where RBG brings its collections and expertise to life through captivating images and video on its social media channels. *RBG at Home* also offers a diverse and entertaining lineup of online learning opportunities for all ages, including virtual programs, tours and multimedia experiences, providing refreshing respite and inspiration during these challenging times:

For Families

- At-home activities
- Nature-based videos
- Interactive video learning

For Teachers

- Curriculum-based activities, videos and worksheets
- Wetland resources to support inquiry and project-based learning
- Book a custom interactive virtual field trip for your students

For Lifelong Learners

- Nature and gardening-themed talks
- Educational videos and articles
- Gardening tips
- Book an interactive videoconference presentation

With the help of an anonymous donor, RBG now has an RBG COVID-19 Sustainability Fund to help create and deliver this online programming. All donations to this fund will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$10,000. Those looking to donate can visit www.rbg.ca/athome-donate.

Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is the largest botanical garden in Canada, a National Historic Site, and registered charitable organization with a mandate to bring together people, plants and nature.

– 30 –

To access *RBG at Home* and RBG's social media channels to view our blooms visit www.rbg.ca/athome

To arrange an interview with one of RBG's experts, please contact:

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Meet Some of RBG's Horticulture Experts

Jim Mack, Head of Horticulture



Jim has been the Head of Horticulture for the RBG since June of 2015, having worked previously in the United States over his 30+yr. horticultural career as Landscape Superintendent for the Cornell Botanical Garden (Cornell University, Ithaca, NY); Director of Horticulture for Lauritzen Gardens (Omaha, Nebraska), Grounds Manager for the Holden Arboretum (Kirtland, Ohio) and Manager/Horticulture Instructor for the Horticulture Technology program (Kent State University, Geauga branch campus).

Jim has a master's degree in Public Horticulture Administration from the University of Delaware through the Longwood (Gardens) Graduate Program and has undergraduate degrees in Ornamental Horticulture and Nursery Management from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and the SUNY Agricultural and Technical College in Alfred, NY, respectively.

Alex Henderson, Curator of Collections



Alex has studied horticulture and museological studies in his native UK, and curatorial practices for botanic gardens in the US. Alex began his career working in the landscape and nursery industries before moving into managing private historic gardens. Alex progressed to botanical gardens where he found his true passion for botanical horticulture and plant conservation.

In addition to his plant background, Alex worked for several years in the School of Horticulture at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. He was involved in the curriculum development and training of students for the Kew Diploma in Horticulture and managing the International Internship of Practical Horticultural Experience.

At RBG, Alex is part of the Horticultural Management team responsible for curating, preserving developing, managing, and maintaining RBG's plant collections and cultivated landscapes and is also involved with public programs, interpretation and displays with the horticulture student development program.

Jon L. Peter, Curator & Manager of Plant Records



Jon studied horticulture at the University of Guelph and at the prestigious Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture. With nearly 25 years experience in public gardens, Jon has worked at some of the finest botanical institutions in North America, including the Arnold Arboretum, The Morton Arboretum and New York Botanical Garden.

Jon is currently demonstrating his passion for plants as Curator & Manager of Plant Records at Royal Botanical Gardens, Ontario. Jon has been a regular guest on CBC's *The Goods*, a speaker for numerous organizations and professional proceedings and is an annual judge for various garden, nursery, municipal and green industry events including Canada Blooms.