

### History

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.

- Founded over 80 years ago.
- Revered worldwide for its extensive 400 acres of display gardens.
- Protects and stewards over 2300 acres of environmentally sensitive lands and diverse ecosystems that connect the Niagara escarpment to Lake Ontario.
- Granted a provincial mandate in 1941 for the development of four areas of focus: Conservation, Education, Horticulture and Science

### AODA

The purpose of the AODA is to develop, implement, and enforce Accessibility Standards in order to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians by the year 2025.

RBG is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service to our visitors in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated whenever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by, or on behalf of RBG.

RBG is committed to providing employment services that follow the principles of dignity, independence integration and equal opportunity.

### AODA Compliance

#### Customer Service Standard

RBG established a Customer Service Accessibility Policy in 2011. All employees are trained in Accessible Customer Service.

Accessible customer service initiatives include:

- Call ahead contact numbers, including a toll-free number, to obtain accessibility information prior to visit.
- Bell Relay service for people who are deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing.
- Complimentary admission for caregivers of persons with disabilities
- Participation in the Access 2 Entertainment Program administered by Easter Seals Canada.
- Service animals permitted.
- RBG welcomes the use of assisted devices.
- A limited number of wheelchairs are available.
- Installation of green accessible mats in key gardens (Laking / Hendrie) for wheelchair accessibility
- Assessment of RBG gardens for accessibility to inform future changes / decision.

### Information and Communication

The RBG website is compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA and includes an Accessibility Page to assist visitors as they plan their visit. Ongoing updates will ensure visitors are aware of accessible features.

All education programs materials/brochures include contact information for accessibility needs.

Visitors are encouraged to participate in the Feedback Process and Survey. Feedback can be submitted by phone, email, in-person, or fax on paper or electronic forms.

The Manager, Visitor Experience reviews feedback and recommends action plans, as necessary.

RBG will strive to:

- Develop all marketing and communications through the lens of AODA.
- Make information available to visitors in alternate formats upon request.
- Stay updated on new technologies related to AODA.
- provide appropriate training to staff in new accessible formats as needed.

Public Emergency Response information is available at Kiosks and the Information Desk of RBG Centre. RBG will strive to provide alternate formats if requested.

### Built Environment

- RBG Centre main entrance and kiosk is fully accessible.
- Accessible parking is available at every garden.
- Accessible parking at all trail heads, except Rock Chapel. Nature trails are not currently fully accessible as topography of the lands creates excessively steep grades in almost all cases.
- Notices of temporary service disruptions are included physically at the site of the disruption, on the website, on the automated phone service and in local newspapers (long term disruptions).

### Recent Updates

- Hendrie Parking lot picnic area with an accessibility access added to the picnic area.
- Princess Point parking lot with accessibility to seasonal outdoor washrooms and picnic areas
- Princess Point trail main loop with surfacing improvements and two accessible viewing platforms added.
- Completion of an accessible trail connection from the Teaching Garden parking lot, into Churchill Park and the Westdale Ravine nature trail trailhead at Marion Ave
- Multiple washroom improvements at RBG Centre
- Accessibility improvements in the Mediterranean Greenhouse
- Installation of an accessible and permeable surface in the Scented Garden at Hendrie Park
- Installation of accessibility ramps at the NIC front entrance

### Future Plans

- Accessibility connection between the Arboretum grounds and the RBG Boathouse/waterfront.
- Accessibility connections between Laking Garden, Hendrie Park, and Hendrie Valley
- Accessibility connection and access to escarpment edge views and reconstruction of the Rock Chapel Parking lot
- Full update/replacement of RBG visitor information signage to meet AODA standards
- Installation of automatic door opening system at the NIC

### Accessibility Standards Employment

RBG's focus is on removing barriers in employment including:

#### Recruitment

Equal access to recruitment and selection processes

- Accessibility statement on career website, and communication materials
- Communication on job postings
- Advising candidates of accessible accommodations for interviews.
- Job posting and job description information is made available in alternate formats and accessible communication supports upon request.

Accessible formats and communication supports for employees.

- RBG will work with employees to provide accessible formats and communication supports upon request. Example: Performance Management processes.

#### Emergency Response Plan

- RBG will work with employees to provide a modified workplace emergency response plan upon request.

#### Individual Accommodation Plan

- RBG will make every reasonable effort to accommodate employees on an individual basis. Accommodation plans will be documented.