

RBG's prized iris collection in full bloom

Weekend iris and peony celebrations at Royal Botanical Gardens' Laking Garden include live entertainment and tours

Burlington ON, June 14, 2019 — Visitors to Royal Botanical Gardens' (RBG) Laking Garden will be mesmerized by brilliant colour combinations as its iris collection has reached peak bloom. Visitors can also explore the peony collection and perennial borders while enjoying live entertainment, guided tours, and presentations at the RBG Discovery Cart.

"You really have to come to RBG and immerse yourself in this collection to gain a full sensory experience that iris can provide," said RBG Curator of Collections, Alex Henderson. "We have over 1,000 iris displaying an array of brilliant colour and the fragrance is truly captivating."

Planted in 1947, the iris collection was RBG's first herbaceous collection of importance with the main focus on tall bearded iris. There are approximately 250 species of wild iris found around the world and several are planted here. The name iris derives from Greek meaning rainbow, referring to the wide variety of flower colors found among the many species and cultivars. RBG's collection includes award-winning bearded iris and hundreds of others including miniature bearded, dwarf bearded, intermediate bearded, border bearded, tall bearded, Siberian, spuria and wild species iris.

The garden also features a broad selection of tree and herbaceous peony cultivars, as well as several ancestral wild species. The Greeks referred to peonies as 'the Queen of all herbs' while the Chinese considered them 'the King of all flowers'. Over time, peonies have been used ethnobotanically as a medicinal plant, as a spice, for making tea, as a perfume and the seeds were even used as jewelry.

Peonies are divided into three groups. Herbaceous peonies, which die back to the ground each winter, Tree peonies, which are one- to two-metre tall woody shrubs that bloom ahead of their herbaceous cousins, and the latest introduction of Intersectional (Itoh) hybrids, a cross between the two. The herbaceous peony collection is predominantly on the lower terrace near the gazebo while tree peonies are found on the upper terrace.

About Laking Garden

RBG's Laking Garden (located at 1260 Spring Gardens Road, Burlington) is set on a fertile terraced plain, formerly a market garden, and is home to RBG's herbaceous perennial collections. The belvedere at the end of the path offers a panoramic view over the entire garden. This garden, overlooked by a small cottage, offers the visitor an insight into the depth and breadth of perennial plants.

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For a full schedule of activities, please visit www.rbg.ca/senses

Check out this video on RBG's Iris collection from June 7th www.rbg.ca/iris

To book a media tour with an RBG horticulturist, or for more information, contact:

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