University of Alberta Botanic Garden Backgrounder

The Garden
The University of Alberta Botanic Garden (formerly the Devonian Botanic Garden) is a 97 hectares (240 acre) property, located in Parkland County, 15 minutes southwest of Edmonton, Alberta, near the town of Devon. The largest botanic garden in Alberta, the garden is home to a collection of over 8,000 actively managed plants, as well as extensive natural areas. Display areas include annual and perennial borders, water features, extensive Herb and Alpine gardens, Native Peoples Garden, Sensory Garden, peony, lilac, lily and primrose collections, hardy rose collections, desert gardens, plants of Alberta collection, fruit and vegetable gardens and more. Three indoor showhouses (including a Tropical Plant and Butterfly House, Arid Plant House and Temperate Showhouse) and the Kurimoto Japanese Garden, a beautiful 5-acre garden, are popular highlights.

In April 2017, a gift in excess of $25 million from His Highness the Aga Khan was formally announced, for the design and construction of a major signature garden at the University of Alberta Botanic Garden, to be officially opened in spring of 2018. With secluded forest paths, wide, stepped terraces that change with the seasons, geometric water features that stream into wetlands and a spectacular orchard of local plants, the 4.8-hectare (11.86 acre) Aga Khan Garden will be an amazing experience for area residents and visitors alike.

The University of Alberta Botanic Garden was named the 2014 Botanical Garden of the Year by Canada’s Garden Tourism Council, and won the 2013 Emerald Award for excellence in environmental education.

The UABG is a unit of the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Alberta.

History
The UABG was established in 1959, with a donation of land to the university by the late Colonel Sandy Dyde, a prominent Edmonton lawyer. In ensuing years, the land was developed as a botanic garden and field laboratory. In the 1970s, after the garden was severely damaged by floods, a donation from the Devonian Foundation (which ceased operations in 2000), along with funds raised by the Friends of the Garden, helped to repair the damages, create a system of canals and ponds, construct a headquarters building and purchase more land. In recognition of the donation, the name was changed to the Devonian Botanic Garden, with an agreement to maintain the name for 25 years. In March, 2017, the garden changed its name to the University of Alberta Botanic Garden, to reaffirm its ties with the University.

With the opening of the Kurimoto Japanese Garden in 1990, the garden opened its gates to visitors on a daily basis, spring through fall. Today, over 75,000 people visit the garden annually, from nearby and around the world.
Education Programs
Over 100,000 school children have taken part in the Garden’s award-winning environmental education programs. In the award-winning Kids-in-the-Garden field trip and Green School programs, children spend anywhere from a day to a week outside with UABG naturalists, engaged in a hands-on study of the natural world. The garden also offers adult continuing education year-round, with courses in horticulture, landscape design, arts, crafts and personal wellness. In addition, a Master Gardener Certificate Program provides year-long, intensive training for horticulture professionals and serious hobby gardeners.

Special Events
The garden offers special events throughout the year, attracting visitors with children’s events, art exhibits, musical performances, horticultural events and cultural events such as the Japanese Spring Festival. In December, the garden opens for three evenings for Luminaria, where thousands of candles light the paths of the Japanese Garden in a breathtaking display, an annual event treasured by thousands of visitors.

Research
The UABG is the site of research on topics as diverse as fungal associations, mosses, forest fires, bat and frog monitoring, and oilsands and wetland reclamation. The UABG is part of a global network of botanic gardens working to understand and preserve biodiversity, and is a partner in the Millennium Seed Bank at Kew Gardens in England, the largest plant conservation project in the world.

Visitor Information
The Garden is open daily to visitors starting May 1. Services include a gift shop, outdoor patio café, regularly scheduled tram tours and group discounts. Much of the Garden is accessible to wheelchairs and strollers on an extensive brick pathway system. Minimum recommended visit duration is two hours, though a longer visit is suggested in order to enjoy more of the extensive features of the garden.

For more information, contact:

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