



Media Release

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Canadian Garden Tourism is Seizing the Moment

The International Garden Tourism Conference will take place in Victoria

Victoria, BC – The Canadian Garden Council is pleased to host, for the first time in Canada, the International Garden Tourism Conference from November 1st to November 4th in Victoria.

Originally intended to occur in 2021, the International Garden Tourism Conference is convening more than 80 delegates from 12 countries, who represent over 40 public gardens, in Victoria, often referred to as Canada's 'Garden City.'

"We're excited to bring the conference to Canada's Garden City. It's a unique place that not only hosts some of the world's most beautiful gardens but is also a hub for international tourism, as recently acknowledged by Condé Nast," says Ibo Gülsen, Chair of the International Garden Tourism Network.

"The Canadian Garden Council is delighted to host delegates from around the world, providing a unique opportunity to showcase our gardens and their respective destinations," says Alexander Reford, President of the Canadian Garden Council and Director of the Reford Gardens. *"Canada is exceptionally well-positioned to 'Seize the Moment' and further develop garden tourism, given its abundant world-class public gardens that are fully prepared to welcome both domestic and international visitors."*

Throughout 2022, public gardens quickly rebounded, becoming the first attractions to return to pre-pandemic crowd levels, and they maintained their status as the most frequented destinations by international travelers. This trend has persisted into 2023.

The International Garden Tourism Conference is a cornerstone of the industry, offering a platform for delegates to explore topics related to serving visitors, collaborating with the tourism sector and harnessing the advantages of tourism visits. Additionally, the conference will feature the presentation of the Canadian, North American and International Garden Tourism awards.

"This conference comes at a crucial juncture, as it's increasingly clear that Garden Tourism has achieved remarkable numbers in 2023, possibly making it the most sought-after tourism activity in North America," says Dr. Richard Benfield, author of the forthcoming book titled, 'Critical Issues in Garden Tourism.' *"The conference is poised to not only affirm this remarkable success, but also lay the groundwork for addressing the novel and demanding challenges that garden tourism currently confronts."*

The International Garden Tourism Conference has been endorsed by the American Public Garden Association, the Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens, the Australian Garden Council, the International Association of Horticultural Producers, the North American Japanese Garden Association, Communities in Bloom, Gardens BC, Destination BC and supported by Destination Greater Victoria, The Butchart Gardens, Pacific Northwest Transportation Services, Lee Valley Tools and Air Canada.

For more information, visit <https://gardentourism.org>.

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