



Norfolk County's Botanical Garden Receives Early Christmas Gift - 2016 Best Botanical Garden "Whistling Gardens Recent Accolades Establishing Roots - Growing Garden Agri-Tourism"

(Wilsonville Norfolk County, Ontario Canada) – Nestled in a cozy hamlet, the national and international garden community is 'blooming' with curiosity and new accolades as the beauty and agriculture value of Canada's newest privately owned botanical garden, Whistling Gardens was named 2016 Best Garden.

Toronto Star Real Dirt Columnist/National Garden Writer/Author of eight books, Sonia Day www.soniaday.com/ published her 2016 Best and Worst In Gardening List naming Whistling Gardens as "Best Botanical Garden: Whistling Gardens in Wilsonville, Norfolk County, ON. If you haven't been yet, go next May/June, when thousands of peonies are in bloom. Carved out of farm country by a crazy guy with a vision — Darren Heimbecker — this very different garden is attracting worldwide attention. Be sure to check out Heimbecker's take on the fountains of Versailles (whistlinggardens.ca)". <https://www.thestar.com/life/2016/12/02/the-best-and-worst-in-gardening-this-year.html>

Botanical Garden Creator/Designer/Owner Darren Heimbecker and his wife Wanda are beaming with pride, "It's captivating, so many influential, well-respected horticulture professionals and institutions are taking an interest in our small, seasonal family owned botanical gardens noting the merit of our collections and life's work. It was significant for us to host a tour earlier this year upon Sonia Day's request to learn more about our inspiration, creation and plant collections with an article to soon follow. She visits so many gardens each year with more resources, and represents a very well-respected voice as a multi award winning Author, Speaker and Garden Columnist with Canada's largest newspaper."

"We strongly believe smaller communities need to work in a collaborative effort. We've been working with our Norfolk County economic development department since day one, and reached out to over 50 local businesses establishing cross promotional relationships as we co-brand our garden is located in Norfolk County Ontario's Garden a catchy phrase we can't resist. There's solid value for our entire community when national headlines include even part of it," share The Heimbeckers. "There's a lucrative market with solid potential for our area based on research published in The Garden Experience Municipal World article."

http://canadagardenroute.ca/cg/files/Municipal_World_Garden_Tourism_Article_May2014.pdf

According to the 2013 book Garden Tourism by Dr. Richard Benfield, the world's leading authority on the subject, "More people visit gardens in America than go to Disneyland and Disney World combined, and more than visit Las Vegas annually, making garden tourism one of the largest sectors in the tourism market." Canada has its own share of this significant market. The most recent Travel Activity and Motivation Study (TAMS) Report (commissioned by federal and provincial tourism minis - tries) states that, in any given two-year period, a whopping 27 million adult Canadians and Americans visit the spectacular gardens of Canada while on an out-of-town trip of one or more nights. In his book, Dr. Benfield tells us that garden tourism will see major growth in Canada until 2025, as baby boomers leave their gardens and travel for garden experiences."

New opportunities are on the horizon, as a January 2017 North American Garden Magazine visit is in the final planning stages, which would feature Whistling Gardens for an upcoming winter garden article. Recent developments also include the American Peony Society now includes Whistling Gardens on their International Garden Destination Map as the collection has now increased to over 1,000 varieties to be revealed for the first time in the spring of 2017, recognized as North America's largest public collection. Since the botanical gardens 2012 inception, Whistling Gardens has greeted well respected garden industry experts from all over the world, as their remarks are shared from articles, guest book entries and testimonials:

Sonia Day (National Award Winning Columnist/Author, Toronto Star)

...a remarkable enterprise and extraordinary accomplishment... best botanical garden of the year!...

Marjorie Harris (Garden Writer/Designer, Globe and Mail)

... wonderful design and layout... so many unusual varieties ...

Kathy Renwald (Garden Writer, Hamilton Spectator)

...inspired collections... (architectural) features give the botanical garden a fairytale charm

Dr. Feng (Peony Research Director, Beijing Botanical Gardens)

...probably the most complete and largest peony collection I have ever seen

David Michener (Curator, Nichol's Arboretum, Univ. Of Michigan -National Peony Collection)

...by far - the largest peony collection in North America. KUDOS!

Tom Cox (Owner, Cox Arboretum, Georgia)

...this place is just incredible, a real joy to visit

Bill McNamara (Director of Quarryhill Botanical Gardens, California)

...Wow, nothing is left out, incredibly diverse

John Massey (Multi Award Winning Horticulturalist and Queen's Jubilee Medal Recipient for Gardening Excellence, England)

... a national gem, major achievement and brilliant design

John Mitchell (Alpine Supervisor, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, Scotland)

... the conifer varieties are astounding, incredible project... really enjoyed the alpine garden

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For more information, artwork and interviews please contact:

Wanda Heimbecker, Whistling Gardens Ltd. 698 Concession 3, RR #1 Wilsonville, ON N0E 1Z0

P: 519-443-5773 Fax: 519-443-4141 E: info@whistlinggardens.ca www.whistlinggardens.ca FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/Whistling.Gardens

TWITTER:<http://twitter.com/#!/WhistlingG>

Located in Norfolk County "Ontario's Garden"

GARDEN AWARDS & RECOGNITION: 2016 Best Botanical Gardens – Toronto Star, Sonia Day National Canadian Garden Columnist/Multi Award Winning Author

Canada's Best New Garden Experience – Canadian and International Garden Tourism Awards

Sustainable Tourism Ambassador of The Year Award – Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation in partnership with Norfolk County

VOTED: Top 10 Amazing Places of Norfolk County / Readers Choice Award: Best Local Tourist Attraction/Best Wedding Facility