



For Immediate Release – Agriculture/Economic Development/Business/Tourism/Destination Attraction

## Norfolk County Horticultural Attraction "Whistling Gardens" Wins National Award "2013 Canadian New Garden Experience of The Year"

(March 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 Wilsonville, Ontario Canada) It has been less than one year since the gates opened for Canada's newest horticultural attraction, Whistling Gardens. A privately owned botanical garden and retail garden centre, Whistling Gardens is nestled in the bountiful countryside of Norfolk County, "Ontario's Garden". Our industry peers in the Canadian and international garden tourism communities have indeed noticed!

This month at the 2013 Canadian and International Garden Tourism Awards held in Toronto, the Canadian Garden Tourism Council in conjunction with the Garden Tourism Conference, Canadian Nursery Landscape Association and American Public Gardens Association honoured Whistling Gardens with the prestigious "2013 Canadian New Garden Experience of The Year" Award! Recipients from around the globe traveled from as far as Japan, Portugal, Italy and Australia.

Unaware of their nomination, Whistling Gardens owner, Darren Heimbecker and his wife Wanda were speechless when notified of the award. "Words cannot express our gratitude in being selected to receive this honour and business endorsement from our industry peers."



**For more information on the 2013 Canadian and International Garden Tourism Awards, see attachments:** 2013 Garden Tourism Awards Press Release, Darren Heimbecker Award Photo and Award Logo

### WHISTLING GARDENS BACK STORY & 2013 SNEAK PEEK:

Owner, designer and builder Darren Heimbecker has been working diligently on the development of Whistling Gardens for the past 6 years while managing the retail and wholesale operations. It has been a 30-year dream that became a reality on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2012.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> year was very rewarding, offering a great learning experience as 4,823 local garden enthusiasts and globetrotters from 9 countries came to visit! For the 2013 season, we are excited to announce the expansion of our gardens, plant collections and fountain displays.

Spring 2013 at Whistling Gardens will be ushered in with just approximately 16,000 flowering crocus, daffodils, hyacinths, tulips and other bulbs. This is a start to a spring campaign that will eventually see in excess of 100,00 flowering bulbs every spring. Our musical fountains are also

expanding; mark May 18<sup>th</sup> 2013 in your calendar as we introduce the new fountains in the Amphitheatre. Approximately, 116 fountains (*we have more than doubled since 2012*) will be choreographed to music introducing the largest computer programmed fountain display in any garden in Canada!

Our new aviary is slated to display its first Peacocks and Swans. Many Plant/Horticultural and Floral Design Workshops have been added to our programming schedule to compliment our Wellness sessions (Yoga, Meditation and our new Crystal Bowl Purifying). Partnerships allow us to now offer prescheduled private garden massages (RMT), introduce our new Horticultural Therapy Program and our Norfolk Arts Centre Creative Workshops Series returns by popular demand! Holiday specials, garden centre gift certificates and Botanical Gardens Season Memberships offering new cost saving benefits continue in popularity. Weddings, tour groups and special celebrations continue to keep us on the move.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Unlike most botanical/horticultural institutions in Canada, we do not receive any government funding. In fact, Whistling Gardens is one of the only Botanical Gardens in Canada that does not receive government funds. We are grateful for the community support we have received, the goodwill of many visitors, groups, guidance from Norfolk County officials, as your support allows the gardens to function at their current capacity. Our plant collections (over 4,000 different plants) are among the best in the country and we are proud that our conifer collection is now the largest public collection in the world with over 2,400 unique specimens. Our collections of Asian Maple (*Acer*), Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus*), Beech (*Fagus*), Ginkgo (*Ginkgo*), and Magnolia (*Magnolia*) and many other rare species and varieties rival any collection in Canada. Working with several nurseries, new plants are being tested at Whistling Gardens for future commercial introductions, ornamental use, disease resistance and hardiness. By 2016, we hope to have a specimen of every single native tree species in Ontario. The perennial collections are expanding greatly and in 2013 an additional 1,100 perennials will be added to the gardens.

Visit our new events calendar to view our 2013 programming schedule or LIKE us at [www.facebook.com/Whistling.Gardens](http://www.facebook.com/Whistling.Gardens) to receive the news first. More surprises on the way!

**On behalf of our Whistling Gardens team, we thank you for sharing our passion and *imagine....together we will continue to grow "your gardens" into a premier horticultural destination in Canada for all to enjoy.***

For more information, to schedule an interview, or media site tour contact:

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Join us on FACEBOOK: [www.facebook.com/Whistling.Gardens](http://www.facebook.com/Whistling.Gardens)

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

Directions WG GPS: 42° 59' 55.95" N, 80° 17' 50.32" W or <http://whistlinggardens.ca/directions.php>

Located in Norfolk County "Ontario's Garden"

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