

NEW BOOK DETAILS CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM HISTORY

Hinchcliff highlights ornamental gardens in illustrated 'tour de force'



AILSA FRANCIS

If you have lived in Ottawa for any length of time, you will know the Central Experimental Farm.

You may not know it well, but have a sense of it as you drive by the spectacular peony, lilac and daylily plantings along Prince of Wales Drive or under the elm trees that create a canopy along the National Capital Commission Scenic Driveway.

But the Farm is much more than that.

If you are a gardener and have an interest in our horticultural history or have grown Preston lilacs, Rosybloom crab apples, explorer roses or varieties of weigelas, forsythia and mock orange,

then you will need to pick up a new book that gives an overview of the farm and its relevance to us today.

Richard Hinchcliff has been a member of the Friends of the Farm for years, working behind the scenes as editor (and subsequently, assistant editor) of the group's quarterly newsletter, as well as director of communications. He has produced a tour de force in both words and pictures called, *Blooms: An Illustrated History of the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm* (\$35).

Published by local Sanderling Press in partnership with the Friends of the Farm, this 304-page book is lavishly illustrated with Hinchcliff's own photos as well as many historical images of the buildings, landscapes and personalities that define the Farm.

This beautifully designed book has something for everyone and outlines the significance of the

Farm clearly and with great love.

Hinchcliff has said that although he "never helped directly in taking care of the gardens or Arboretum," he "felt that another way to help take care of them was to make as many people aware of what we have at the Farm and how important they are to our heritage."

The book comes at a time when Agriculture Canada is poised to give a long-term lease to the Government of Ontario to build a hospital on 25 hectares of the Farm. But the Farm has been under threat before, with the loss of ornamental horticulture research in the late 1980s and the resulting disarray and lack of

ON SALE AT...

Blooms: An Illustrated History of the Ornamental Gardens at Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm can be purchased online at: friendsofthefarm.ca/boutique/blooms-an-illustrated-history/ or from Perfect Books, Books on Beechwood, Octopus Books, Singing Pebble Books, Chapters (Rideau Street), Lee Valley Ottawa.

"people power" to maintain the gardens.

In this book, Hinchcliff presents an optimistic view, describing how new partnerships were formed in the 1990s with the creation of Friends of the Farm — the body of hard-working and determined volunteers who have galvanized the re-birth of the existing gardens there — as well as the creation of new ornamental gardens.

These gardens give visitors examples of how to create their own small-scale ornamental gardens that embrace the concerns of the 21st century, namely the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, the Organic Demonstration Garden and the Hosta Garden.

It is soul-enriching to hear about the many individuals, both staff and volunteers, past and present, who made this heritage site what it is today, from William Saunders to Peter Elliot, James Fletcher to Trevor Cole, William Macoun to George Vorauer, Isabella Preston to Joan Speirs, Percy Saunders to Mary Pratte, Arthur R. Buckley to Sharon Saunders and Pauline McColl, and Felicitas Svejda to Jan Phillips.

This year marks the 130th birthday of the Farm and this book is a must-read (and must-enjoy) for everyone who cares about its past and its future. Bravo.

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