

GUIDE TO THE

# ORNAMENTAL GARDENS

AT THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM

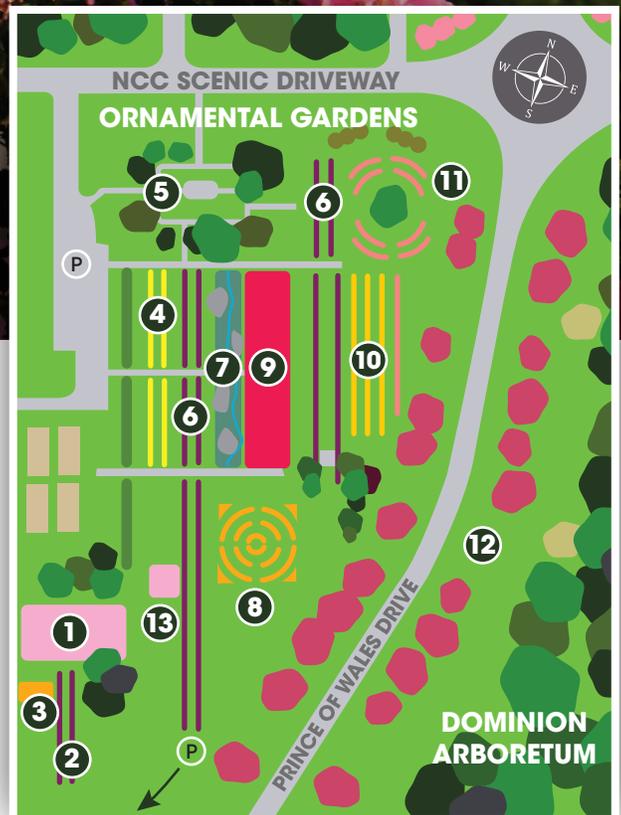
**THE CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM (CEF)** was created under the Department of Agriculture in 1886 with William Saunders appointed as its first Director. Its primary mandate was to assist farmers in the new Dominion. Testing of plants suitable for the Canadian climate helped gardeners. Today, the CEF is part of the re-named Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). In 1988, the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm (FCEF) was created, which sees volunteers working to preserve and enhance the Ornamental Gardens under the direction of AAFC staff.

Since the 1890s, the Ornamental Gardens have been displaying historic and new varieties of flowers and shrubs, and currently covers an area of approximately 3.2 hectares (8 acres).



Bldg. 72, Arboretum, Central Experimental Farm,  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C6 Canada | [INFO@FRIENDSOFTHEFARM.CA](mailto:INFO@FRIENDSOFTHEFARM.CA)

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- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Explorer Rose Garden              | 7 Rock Garden                           |
| 2 Preston Heritage Lilac Collection | 8 Iris & Daylily Garden                 |
| 3 Lycett-Lorrain Daylilies          | 9 Heritage Rose Garden                  |
| 4 Perennial Borders                 | 10 Annual Garden                        |
| 5 Macoun Memorial Garden            | 11 Peony Garden                         |
| 6 Lilac Walk (West & East)          | 12 Crabapples                           |
|                                     | 13 Ottawa Horticultural Society Pergola |

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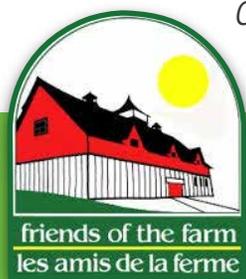
**1 EXPLORER ROSES GARDEN** In 1961, Felicitas Svejda, then a botanist with Agriculture Canada, began to develop winter-hardy and long-blooming roses. This garden honouring her was opened on July 29th, 2015. Various Explorer Roses can be enjoyed here. The rose garden's gazebo features panels donated by the Ottawa Horticultural Society (OHS) that commemorate the hybridization work of Dr. Svejda, Isabella Preston, and A.P. Saunders. *Bloom time: ~third week of June; repeat bloomers: ~third week of September.*

**2 PRESTON HERITAGE LILAC COLLECTION** Isabella Preston, the Farm's first female horticulturist, was hired in 1920 to start plant breeding that included Canada-hardy, late-blooming lilacs. In 2005, AAFC staff and volunteers of FCEF started the Preston Heritage Collection to honour Isabella Preston. The collection also includes lilacs developed by other Canadians — Drs. William A. Cumming, William R. Leslie, and Frank L. Skinner, all from Manitoba. *Bloom Time: ~first week of June.*

**3 LYCETT-LORRAIN DAYLILIES** Nearby is a small garden of daylilies hybridized by Douglas Lycett and Henry Lorrain of Orno, Ontario. These early introductions were donated by the OHS to foster more awareness of Canadian plant breeders. *Bloom time: ~mid-July through August.*

**4 PERENNIAL BORDERS** An early perennial border was established in front of William Saunders' residence, located where the Saunders Building now stands. The current borders, developed in 1970, are typical of botanical gardens and contain new introductions and old favorites, allowing visitors to see specimens at their full maturity and appreciate the effectiveness of mixing colour combinations, different bloom types, and bloom periods. *Bloom time: ~early June through September.*

**5 THE MACOUN MEMORIAL GARDEN** W.T. Macoun was appointed Dominion Horticulturist in 1910. The garden, built on the footprint of his residence, has an upper garden, and a lower garden with a pond. It was designed by landscape architect Warren Oliver. Many of the perennials and shrubs are those Macoun favoured. At the east end is a memorial sundial featuring lily and iris motifs. At the southern edge is a giant American Plane tree, likely planted by Macoun in 1898. In 2018, OHS members, FCEF volunteers, and AAFC staff re-planted historical perennials in the northeast and northwest entrance to the garden. *Bloom time: ~June through September.*



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## 6 LILAC WALKS (WEST & EAST)

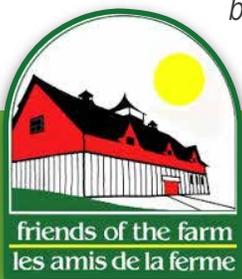
Lilacs have been present since the beginning of the Farm. South of the Macoun Garden are two rows of lilacs extending past the Perennial Borders. Another planting of lilacs extends past the Annuals Garden and the Iris and Daylily Garden. Originally planted in the early 1920s, the more-than 260 lilacs represent an impressive collection from around the world. In 2000, AAFC staff and FCEF restored these walks. *Bloom time: ~last two weeks of May.*

**7 ROCK GARDEN** This garden was first started in the 1930s. Between 1947 and 1952 it was redesigned by Warren Oliver. Since 2014, AAFC staff and FCEF volunteers have been rejuvenating this garden. Thanks to a generous memorial donation in 2018, the pond and the area around it were restored. *Bloom Time: ~early May.*

**8 IRIS AND DAYLILY GARDEN** In 2003, this area was designed by former AAFC Lead Hand Sharon Saunders to form a Victorian-style garden. Fourteen separate beds bring together a collection of Siberian irises, including ones bred by Isabella Preston between 1928 and 1939; the "Thorpe" irises, hybridized by Isabella Preston's friend Lady Byng; irises developed in the period from 1900 to 1940, in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and from 1980 to the present. The garden includes Dykes Medal winners, chosen by the American Iris Society (APS). The outer rings of the garden contain daylilies, representing the varied forms and colours of daylilies, and many recent introductions. *Bloom time: Irises ~mid-June to early July; daylilies ~mid-July to October.*

**9 HERITAGE ROSE GARDEN** The first roses were planted at the CEF soon after it was established, and rose breeders have been active on the site since around 1900. The Heritage Rose garden was a millennium project of FCEF volunteers and the AAFC staff. The rectangular beds in the northern half of this garden contain once-only blooming roses while the southern beds contain repeat bloomers.

*Climbers and pillar roses surround*



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*the rectangular beds. Also, the garden features ground-cover roses, English and ancient roses, as well as modern roses. Special plaques identify some of the historically important roses introduced at the Farm.*

*Bloom time: ~June; repeat bloomers, ~September.*

**10 ANNUAL GARDEN** The rectangular gardens south of the Peony Gardens are designed and planted by the AAFC garden staff. Grown from seed in the CEF greenhouses, the varieties are carefully selected.

Approximately 20,000 annual seedlings are set out each spring in planned patterns to showcase form, colour, and texture. The varieties and design in this garden change from year to year. *Bloom time: ~mid-summer through autumn.*

**11 PEONY GARDEN** William Saunders first brought peonies to the Farm in the 1890s. His son, A.P. Saunders, a founder of the American Peony Society (APS), was a prolific and influential peony breeder. The Peony Garden was redesigned and planted in 2001 by FCEF volunteers and AAFC. There are more than 600 peonies, comprising 400 varieties and over 100 Saunders' peonies, making it the largest collection of his peonies in North America. There is also a collection of Itohs, a cross between an herbaceous peony and a tree peony.

*Bloom time: ~last week of May to third week of June.*

**12 CRABAPPLES** The Crabapple trees, planted in 1940 along Prince of Wales Drive, showcase the Rosybloom series, hybridized by Isabella Preston. Preferring purplish foliage and deep rose flowers, she introduced 31 varieties of Rosyblooms, a name chosen by William Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist. They are named for Canadian lakes.

*Bloom time: ~third week of May.*

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