

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Two decades in full bloom

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens' summer schedule celebrates 20 years of alpine floral passion

VAIL, Colo. (June 10, 2008) — America's highest botanical garden is preparing to celebrate its 20th summer season in full bloom. Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, in Vail's Ford Park, announces a schedule of free events and programs this season chock-full of activities recognizing two decades of inspired passion for alpine flowers and plants.

"We have much to celebrate at the Gardens this summer, and we want to share our 20th anniversary milestone with the community by offering an exciting calendar of events," says Ann Kurronen, the Gardens' executive director.

June marks the launch of three new cultural programs at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens:

- Yoga in the Gardens — Hillary O'Toole of H.O.T. Beauty Wellness instructs in the Gardens 9-10 a.m. every other Tuesday through Aug. 25.
- Art in the Gardens — Local artists demonstrate the techniques they use in creating their work. Photographer Jon Sheppard is on hand 3-5 p.m. Wednesdays, June 18 and July 2 and 16; the husband-wife team of Kevin D. Miles and Wendy Schaefer-Miles are in the Gardens for three days, June 28-30, creating an oil-on-canvas painting of the Gardens from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Denver artist Patricia Barr-Clarke demonstrates *en plein air* techniques with watercolors all day Thursday, July 18 and Friday Aug. 8; and on Sunday, July 27, and Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Vail's Elaine Kuntz offers her watercolor techniques for note cards.
- Music in the Gardens — In conjunction with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, the Gardens presents live performances by the Olympus String Quartet on Wednesday, July 16, at noon, the Hudson River Brass Quartet on Friday, July 25, at noon, and the Columbus Jazz Orchestra, led by trumpet virtuoso Byron Stripling, on Saturday, July 26, at 1 p.m.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens continues its commitment to education with programs on a variety of topics, including:

- Plein Air Class — On Friday, July 11, Joan North will conduct a class on painting outdoors aimed at building stronger, more convincing works.

- Birding 101 — On Monday, June 16, at 11:30, Jerry Fedrizzi of the National Audubon Society discusses the basics of birding and the equipment needed to observe common and rare species in Colorado.
- Booth Falls Hike — On Thursday, July 17, Betty Ford Gardens' horticulturist Nicola Ripley discusses wildflowers and invasive plants on a guided tour of the nearby High Country, sponsored by the Gore Range Natural Science School.
- Botanical Illustrations — Expert illustrators conduct a two-day class on Friday and Saturday, July 25 and 26, in conjunction with the Gore Range Natural Science School.
- “Best of Must-Have Garden Tools” — Joe Lamp'1 of the popular PBS television series “Garden Smart” shares his views on the latest garden tools.

Special events at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens this season include:

- The 20th Anniversary Kick-Off Event Celebration, 2-5 p.m. June 30 — Events include “Bells and Butterflies,” celebrating the anniversary with the unveiling of Vail's newest street, Betty Ford Way.
- The annual Spirit of Betty Ford Award Gala, Wednesday, Aug. 13. — The Gardens' annual fundraising event honoring a community member who exemplifies many of Mrs. Ford's fine community-oriented strengths. This year's award recipient is Martha Head.

“Our summer of 20th anniversary events has something to offer for everyone, and we invite locals and visitors to join us in celebrating the Vail Valley's cherished botanic gardens” says Kurronen.

The historic Schoolhouse Gift Shop & Museum, meanwhile, is open every day in Ford Park through Labor Day, as well, and as meeting place for regular weekly programs at 10:30 a.m. throughout the summer, including:

- Guided tours of the Gardens on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- The Learn N' Grow children's' program on Wednesdays.
- Horticulture Therapy on Tuesdays.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, at 8,250 feet above sea level in Vail's Ford Park, is the highest botanical garden in the United States, and perhaps the world, providing free access to an estimated 100,000 visitors annually. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization for which operations and programs are funded entirely through the generosity of donors, its mission is to inspire passion for plants in high-altitude communities through beautification, conservation, education and research programs.

Recognized as the foremost authority on high-altitude plants in natural and cultivated landscapes in the Rocky Mountains, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens not only contributes staff and expertise essential to conservation efforts throughout the region, it also provides an environment for rare, exotic and imperiled alpine wildflowers and plants. It also plays an important role in encouraging summertime flower displays throughout the Vail Valley at both private homes and businesses.

For the complete events schedule or more information about the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, call 970-476-0103 or visit www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org.

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Cutline info for Kevin Miles at BFAG.jpg:

Kevin D. Miles, part of a husband-wife artistic duo with his wife, Wendy Schaefer-Miles, adds finishing touches to a painting at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens as part of the nonprofit's Art in the Gardens series. The Gardens offers a variety of cultural and educational programs throughout the summer.

Credit: Photos courtesy Betty Ford Alpine Gardens.

(Note: Additional photos of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens are available for download at www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org, or upon request — SLW.)