

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**PBS to showcase Betty Ford Alpine Gardens**

*'GardenSMART' comes to Vail to tape three shows this week*

VAIL, Colo. (July 15, 2008) — America's highest botanical garden is heading for national television.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, welcomes Joe Lamp'1 of "GardenSMART" — a unique gardening program broadcast nationally by the Public Broadcast System — to Vail this week while he and his crew tape three half-hour shows.

"We hardly ever get up to the elevation of Vail, so most people in our national audience haven't had the opportunity to see a true alpine garden," says Lamp'1. "Everyone knows what Vail looks like in the winter. But it's beautiful in the summer, too, and our crew will showcase it from a gardening standpoint."

In its 10th season, "GardenSMART" travels the country visiting astounding public, private and resort gardens through the eyes of expert local guest gardeners, who share their knowledge and gardening experiences with a wide range of practical, helpful advice.

For one of the shows from Vail, Lamp'1 and his crew will showcase Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. A second show will feature Pearl Taylor, a volunteer for the Gardens for 20 years, and Mary Pownall, a former volunteer at the Gardens, at their private gardens in Wildridge and Vail Village, respectively.

"We are honored and excited to have "GardenSMART" visit our spectacular gardens," says Ann Kurronen, executive director of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. "We think we have quite a unique botanic garden here in the Vail Valley and are pleased to share it with PBS garden show viewers across the country."

A third show will explore public gardens throughout the town of Vail, led by Todd Oppenheimer, the town's landscape architect, and Vail's mayor, Dick Cleveland.

The three Vail "GardenSMART" shows are scheduled to air on Denver's PBS television station KRMA TV 6 in September.

In addition to his hosting duties with “GardenSMART,” Lamp’l is a Master Gardener and a Certified Landscape Professional, a nationally syndicated columnist, a sought-after speaker and author of two books: “Over the Fence with Joe Gardener” and “The Green Gardeners Guide: Simple Actions to Protect & Preserve the Planet.” Passionate about gardening since he was a child, Lamp’l has emerged as one of the nation’s leading gardening communicators, inspiring and sharing his knowledge in an easily understood and unassuming manner.

On Thursday at noon at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, Lamp’l will present the “Best of the Must-Have Garden Tools.” The presentation is free and open to the public.

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 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 more information about Lamp’l’s presentation Thursday or about the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, call 970-476-0103 or visit [www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org](http://www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org).

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*Credit: Joe Lamp’l, host of the weekly ‘GardenSMART’ gardening show on PBS, is at Betty Ford Alpine Gardens this week taping three shows to air in September. On Thursday at noon he presents “Best of the Must-Have Garden Tools.”*

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