

Alpine Gardens celebrates the summer solstice on Saturday

Daily staff report

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VAIL — America's highest botanical garden is gearing up for the summer season with an afternoon filled with flowers, art and fun.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens — in conjunction with Vail's Art in Public Places program, the Vail Nature Center and the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival — will observe the longest day of the year during its annual Summer Solstice Celebration from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Artists participating in the 10th annual Summer of Sculpture will display their work near the gardens' Schoolhouse gift shop and museum. This year's featured work, on loan from the Denver Art Museum, is by Bernar Venet. The sculpture, titled "228.5 degrees Arc x 5," is a 7-foot-tall, rolled-steel, curved shape.

For a second time, the gardens and Vail's Art in Public Places Program also are hosting an outdoor painting competition, during which judges will select

three paintings of Venet's sculpture to be sold at Vail International Gallery.

"The artists all choose different viewpoints," said Art in Public Places coordinator Leslie Fordham. "Come look over their shoulders; see their points of view; watch paintings being created from beginning to end. It's a great way to see the whole artistic process."

For the kids, activities include a painted lady butterfly launch, dancing around a maypole, Bravo!'s Instrument Petting Zoo, croquet games and guided tours of the gardens. The Vail Nature Center, meanwhile, is hosting "The Wild Side of Ford Park," including more kids activities, as well as educational nature-trail walks along the banks of Gore Creek.

For more information about the painting competition during this year's Summer Solstice Celebration, visit www.ArtInVail.com. For a 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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