

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



## **Gardens receives prestigious award**

*American Public Gardens Association  
honors Betty Ford Alpine Gardens  
with Award for Garden Excellence*

VAIL, Colo. (July 22, 2008) — America's highest botanical garden has entered into the ranks of North America's elite.

The American Public Gardens Association has awarded Vail's Betty Ford Alpine Gardens with the prestigious 2009 Award for Garden Excellence, sponsored by *Horticulture* magazine. The honor came at the association's meeting last month in St. Louis.

"It is a tribute to our volunteers and staff that Betty Ford Alpine Gardens has been honored with this national award. We want to use this opportunity to encourage our visitors, as well as those in our community from Gypsum to Vail, to become members of the Gardens," says Deane Hall, president the Gardens' Board of Trustees. "With greater community support, we will be able to expand our environmental stewardship and education programs, as well as keep up our much-heralded garden in Ford Park."

Created by the American Public Gardens Association in 2003, the Horticulture Magazine Award for Garden Excellence is given annually to a public garden that exemplifies the highest standards of horticultural practices and shows a commitment to supporting and demonstrating best gardening practices. Criteria include:

- Gardening practices that are appropriate to a local or regional environment and reflect environmentally informed horticulture.
- Maintenance of commitment to plant collections.
- Demonstrated commitment to the national or a regional horticultural community.
- Encouraging students of gardening at all levels through innovative horticultural practices.
- The best designed and most horticulturally outstanding display.

Winners of the award since its inception include some of North America's greatest, and largest, public gardens, including: Ganna Walska Lotusland; Missouri Botanical Garden; Olbrich Botanical Gardens; Chicago Botanic Garden; GaChanticleer Foundation; and Bloedel Reserve.

"This award was created to recognize some of the most wonderful gardens in North America," says Dan Stark, executive director of the American Public Gardens Association, based in Kennett

Square, Penn. “Betty Ford Alpine Gardens’ joining such an elite group of public gardens says a lot about their hard work creating, maintaining and growing a truly wonderful botanic garden in such a trying environment.”

Inspired by an extraordinary passion for high-altitude flowers and plants, 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. The Gardens, recognized as the foremost authority on high-altitude plants in natural and cultivated landscapes in the Rocky Mountains, contributes staff and expertise essential to conservation efforts throughout the region and provides an environment for rare, exotic and imperiled alpine wildflowers and plants.

Cincinnati-based *Horticulture* magazine, with a paid circulation of more than 200,000, dedicates four pages of an upcoming issue to a feature story about the winner as part of the annual Award for Gardening Excellence.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is an 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization for which operations and programs are funded entirely through the generosity of donors. For more information, call 970-476-0103, ext. 3, or visit [www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org](http://www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org).

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Media contact:  
Stephen Lloyd Wood, media liaison  
(970) 949-9774  
[press@bettyfordalpinegardens.org](mailto:press@bettyfordalpinegardens.org)