

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**Help celebrate National Public Gardens Day**

*Betty Ford Alpine Gardens recognizes  
Friday as unofficial start of spring*

VAIL, Colo. (April 28, 2009) — America's highest botanical garden invites you to help celebrate all public gardens on Friday.

Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, in Vail's Ford Park, recognizes Friday, May 8, as National Public Gardens Day, a way to raise awareness of America's public gardens and their important role in promoting environmental stewardship and awareness, plant and water conservation and education in communities nationwide.

National Public Gardens Day, a promotion of the nonprofit American Public Gardens Association, takes place annually on Mother's Day weekend, an unofficial start of spring. It celebrates all public gardens, botanical gardens, educational gardens, specialty gardens, entertainment gardens, arboreta, farm gardens, historical landscapes and zoos.

"In light of National Public Gardens Day, I think I can speak for most people who live in Eagle County by saying that we feel a sense of civic pride in having a nationally renowned botanic garden right here in our own neighborhood," says Ann Kurronen, executive director of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. "And I encourage everyone to consider becoming a member of the Gardens so that we can continue to showcase the unique landscape of our mountain community and support the many conservation efforts in which we participate and lead."

At 8,250 feet above sea level, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is the highest botanical garden in the United States, and perhaps the world, providing free access to an estimated 100,000 visitors annually. Its mission is to inspire passion for plants in high-altitude communities through beautification, conservation, education and research programs.

While Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is just awakening from its winter slumber due to climatic conditions in the Colorado High Country, many of the nation's public gardens will mark National Public Gardens Day with special events and activities for schools, families and thousands of visitors to explore and discover their local public garden while learning about each garden's commitment to education, research and environmental stewardship.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization for which operations and programs are funded entirely through the generosity of donors, the Gardens depends on its active membership, through which gifts at any level can extend the love of gardens, native plants and concern for the environment to others.

“It’s our members who have sustained us through our 20-year history, and during these challenging economic times we rely on our membership base to continue to help us champion the cause of environmental stewardship, which is more relevant than ever before,” says Kurronen. “For that reason we ask our local community to show their support by becoming members of our environmental organization. Of course, we are a fun bunch to spend time with, as well.”

All memberships, ranging from \$50 to \$10,000 or more, are tax deductible. New for 2009 are expanded membership benefits that include an onsite consultation of your home garden and use of the Gardens for private events.

For more information about becoming a member of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, call 970-476-0103 or visit [www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org](http://www.bettyfordalpinegardens.org). For more information about National Public Gardens Day, visit [www.publicgardens.org](http://www.publicgardens.org).

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*Note: Photos of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens are available upon request — SLW.*