



Burlington's Royal Botanical Gardens

by **Claire BonEnfant**

Summer is a great time to see nature in its glory, and there's no better place for you to see it than Burlington's Royal Botanical Gardens. This is no ordinary garden — there are 2700 acres of gardens and woodlands to explore.

The Gardens are one of the area's biggest attractions, with close to a million visitors each year. It's not just the beauty that attracts them — it's the peace and tranquility, too.

"This is such a relaxing atmosphere," says Helen Yantsis, Development Assistant, Communications. "After a hectic work schedule, it's a great escape for people."

A collection of nature's finest makes this a beautiful retreat. Throughout the summer, shows will highlight different varieties.

The Iris Festival in early June features nearly a quarter of a million blooms — their beauty is a sight to behold.

"It's hard to describe how spectacular they look," says Yantsis. "There's such a fantastic variety of colors."

The Iris Show is Sunday, June 11 from 1 to 5. Flowers will be on display and judging will take place.

The Hamilton and Burlington Rose Society is having its annual show Saturday, June 24 from 1 to 5 and Sunday, June 25 from 10 to 4.

From June to October, the Rose Festival is in bloom in Hendrie Park, with over two acres of roses.

Other highlights of Hendrie Park include the scented gardens, trial gardens for annuals and medicinal gardens, which feature healing plants from ancient times. The Harvey clematis collection is also featured.

The Lily Society Show takes place on Saturday, July 8 from 10 to 5 and Sunday, July 9 from 10 to 4. There will be a competition, flower arranging demonstrations and slide shows. Lily stems will be on sale Sunday.

At the Gardens you can buy a ticket for the annual Hamilton and area Garden Tour. This grants you admission to a selection of private gardens June 9, 10 and 11 from 10 to 4.

The Royal Botanical Gardens appeals to all ages, from children to seniors. You can stroll through the gardens at a leisurely pace, visit the Mediterranean greenhouse, or hike along the nature trails which extend for 50 kilometres or 30 miles.

"There's a lot to see — but you don't have to see it all to enjoy yourself," says Yantsis. "You can do it at your own pace."

Visit the gift shop or stop for refreshments in the Turner Pavilion in Hendrie Park, or at the Teahouse in the Rock Garden on York Boulevard.

The Royal Botanical Gardens are located at 680 Plains Road West. Call 527-1158 for more information.