



History

The Butchart Gardens covers more than 22 ha (55 acres) of a 53 ha (130 acre) estate. It began from an idea Jennie Butchart had to beautify the worked-out limestone quarry which had supplied her husband Robert Pim Butchart's nearby Portland cement plant.

The Gardens, through the skillful mixture of rare and exotic shrubs, trees and flowers, often collected by the Butcharts during their extensive world travels, continually expanded over the years to become the world famous Sunken, Japanese, Rose, Italian and Mediterranean gardens you see today.

The hospitable Butcharts christened their estate "Benvenuto"—Italian for "Welcome." By the 1920s more than fifty thousand people visited each year. Today The Gardens, still owned and operated by the family, and together with a talented and dedicated staff, continues the horticultural excellence and welcoming traditions of Jennie Butchart. It is visited by close to a million visitors annually. In 2004, The Butchart Gardens, in bloom for 100 years, was designated a National Historic Site of Canada.

If you are interested in a more complete history, please visit our Seed & Gift Store.

This guide follows the **pink arrows** on the map. For wheelchair access please follow the additional **blue dots**.

Start Here

Your walk begins in Waterwheel Square bordered by the Coffee Shop, Seed & Gift Store, Visitor Centre, and washrooms. During the "Magic of Christmas" season, an outdoor ice skating rink offers a unique experience. Exiting the square past the Visitor Centre take the **left** hand path by the Snail Pond. Opposite, rambling roses (summer) festoon the pillars marking the sloping border of the Piazza in front of the Butchart's former home. Further on the left baskets hang where Mr. Butchart kept ornate houses for his collection of exotic birds. Continuing on, take the first path on the **left** which leads to the Sunken Garden. Notice the hand rails of concrete fabricated to look like Garry Oak.



Sunken Garden

Rounding the curve, the lookout reveals a stunning view. Arbor Vitae stand on each side of the main path. In the distance the tall kiln stack is all that remains of the cement plant.

At the bottom of the switchback staircase take either path winding through beds of annuals, flowering trees and shrubs growing to the base of the towering walls.

A rock mound overlooks the still waters of Quarry Lake lying in a deep pocket of limestone.

At the far end of the Sunken Garden is the Ross Fountain, created and installed in 1964 for the Gardens 60th anniversary by Ian Ross, grandson of the Butcharts. The water rises 21 m (70 ft) providing a magnificent display by day and night.

From here, the concrete path slopes upward.

At the top take the **left** fork past washrooms and the bronze horse "Annabelle" to the **Children's Pavilion and Rose Carousel**, a menagerie carousel with 30 hand-carved wooden animals and two chariots. Beyond, two totem poles overlook the Fireworks' fields. On Saturday evenings in July and August thousands of visitors enjoy the spectacular fireworks, designed by Christopher Ross, great-grandson of the Butcharts. Continue past the Organ Pavilion (the original dairy barn) to the **left** of the Concert Lawn between a magnificent show of Dahlias (autumn) and three ancient "specimen" trees, to the Rose Garden.

Rose Garden

Perennial borders with rose laden arches (summer) lead to the frog fountain and, to the right, a "wishing well" of Italian wrought-iron. Many varieties of Hybrid Tea Roses are marked with the name, country of origin and year registered with the American Rose Society. The Rose Garden is at its most beautiful in July and August. Walk through an open pergola covered with climbing and rambling roses to the bronze Sturgeon Fountain cast in Florence, Italy.

Japanese Garden

Passing the fountain, walk **left** through the Torii gate and down the steps into the garden. Himalayan Blue Poppies (late spring) will be found throughout. Jennie Butchart was one of the first in North America to grow them as the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens had shared their first seeds with her. This non-traditional garden began in 1906 with the expert assistance of Japanese landscaper, Isaburo Kishida. The **left** hand path through the bamboo arch, leads to our dock where electrically operated boats take passengers (summer) on a ride past the remains of the cement factory in Tod Inlet.

Star Pond

A flight of stairs leads from the Japanese Garden to the Star Pond—originally designed for Mr. Butchart's collection of ornamental ducks. Between the points of the "star" beds of colorful annuals surround the frog fountain rising from the center.

Italian Garden

Between the two arched entrances inside the garden stands a bronze statue of Mercury. The cross-shaped pond is fed by a fountain depicting a child holding a fish. Before 1926 this area was the Butchart's concrete-surfaced tennis court. The long narrow building to the left once housed a bowling alley.

Piazza

Passing under the bowling alley the tunnel opens onto the Piazza featuring the Florentine bronze statue of Tacca the Boar. To the **right** is the Dining Room Restaurant. The path to the **left**, past washrooms, the Blue Poppy Restaurant and Show Greenhouse with its convenient photo window, leads **back to your starting point** - Waterwheel Square, Coffee Shop, Seed & Gift Store, and Visitor Centre.

From Waterwheel Square walk under the beautiful laburnum arches bearing a spectacular display of pendulous yellow blooms (late spring), to the last garden before the car park.

Mediterranean Garden

A celebration of our mild climate, this unusual garden features many drought resistant plants from various areas of the world that share similar growing conditions to ours.

