The Butchart Gardens

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 Pirn 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 similar growing conditions to ours.

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The Butchart Gardens is "Smoke Free" except for parking lot areas marked.

Visitor Centre
Services include Information, First Aid, Lost and Found, Luggage Storage, Postal Box and Stamps, Pay Telephones and Attendant-Assist Washroom. We loan strollers, dog leashes, wheelchairs (requires a refundable deposit) and umbrellas. Please no throwing/catching games, disruptive behaviour, use of skateboards, scooters or roller blades, Segways or impromptu musical performances.

Plant Identification Counter
Our staff are happy to answer horticultural questions. To maintain the graciousness of a private garden, we leave most plants unlabelled.

Seed and Gift Store
Drawing from a wealth of local crafts people, we offer a treasure-trove of competitively priced souvenirs and gifts. Hand-packaging seed by Butchart Gardens staff has been maintained since the early 1920s.

Restaurants
**The Dining Room Restaurant**
Fine dining in the historic Butchart home. Enjoy Afternoon Tea all year long. Lunch and dinner served seasonally.

**The Blue Poppy Restaurant**
Cafeteria-style, offering moderately priced selections in a flower-filled conservatory setting. Hours vary seasonally.

**Coffee Shop**
Ideal for a quick stop - sandwiches, pastries, specialty coffees and ice cream treats.

Notice:
All visitors to The Butchart Gardens enjoy The Gardens and all its facilities and equipment at their own risk.

While enjoying The Gardens, for your safety please note:
- Exercise caution while walking in The Gardens in order to avoid possible accidents, particularly in areas where there are steps, flagstone walks and shaded areas.
- When night lighting is in operation, visitors are requested to stay in lighted areas.
- Youths and children must be supervised at all times.
- Pets must be kept on a short leash and under control at all times.
- In the event of a snowfall, during our winter months, stay in cleared areas only.

The Butchart Gardens Ltd.

Contact us:
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Average time in the gardens - 1 1/2 hours