

Canada Blooms

THE FLOWER AND GARDEN FESTIVAL

Escape to spring at Canada Blooms this March Break

Toronto, Ont. – After a long winter, escape to a spring paradise with your family this March Break by visiting Canada Blooms. With free admission for children – 12 and under - and plenty of activities for both parents and kids, Canada Blooms will provide families with lasting memories from March 16th – 20th at the Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place in Toronto.

Surrounded by Canada Blooms lush feature gardens, children will have the opportunity to explore nature and learn important eco-friendly tips in the Bienenstock Natural Playground.

Bienenstock Natural Playground:

Children and adults are invited to explore the 3500 square foot natural playground. Enter through the towering, ancient willow stumps and woodland carvings by Craig Thompson and inside, you will discover the best of Canada's natural beauty. Bienenstock has partnered with Parks Canada to create a space in celebration of their Centennial Anniversary. Debbe Shannon is back, creating a 100-foot mural, celebrating our National Parks 100th birthday and Karen Fralich will re-create the animals of the forest from 40 tons of sand!

On Wednesday, March 16th at 2:30PM JUNO award winner Carolyn Dawn Johnson will be performing for children in the Bienenstock Natural Playground Amphitheatre. Check the schedule as you enter the Natural Playground for guest artists, entertainers and activities at the amphitheatre throughout the week.

Also, on Saturday, March 19th from 6-8PM, Adam Bienenstock will be on the Green for Life Celebrity Stage hosting an evening on Children's Play and why natural playgrounds are so popular. He will offer tips on simple things you can do in your own schoolyard or backyard to connect your children to nature.

Explore the JUNO's

As the JUNO Awards celebrate their 40th Anniversary this is a great opportunity to teach your children about Canadian music and musicians. Be sure to visit the "JUNO Rocks" Gardens, created for JUNO Award-winning artists Jilly Black, Sarah Harmer, Ben Heppner, Carolyn Dawn Johnson and a tribute Garden to Oscar Peterson created in partnership with Ontario's award-winning landscapers. In addition, the "JUNO Glam" Feature will present a series of eight presentation booths depicting the eras from 1970 when the first JUNO Awards were held, to 2011. Canada Blooms, in partnership with the Canadian Academy of Floral Art (CAFA), will pay homage to the JUNO Gala Dinner & Awards of past, present and future.

Festival visitors who vote for their favourite "JUNO Rocks" Garden at Canada Blooms will be entered for a chance to win a VIP pass for two to the events of the 40th Anniversary JUNO Awards.

Skills Canada - Ontario Landscape Gardening Contest

Are your children considering a career in gardening? From Thursday, March 17th until Saturday March 19th, post-secondary teams from Colleges across the province will showcase their skills at Skills Canada -

Ontario's 2011 Landscape Gardening Contest. Six college teams of two will compete to build the best small garden based on a common set of criteria, drawings and material, such as landscape rocks, precast wall and paving units, landscape lighting, wood, sand, composted mulch and plants.

This Landscape Gardening Contest provides an opportunity for students studying this registered-apprenticed skilled trade to be tested against exacting standards, judged on their ability to complete the elements of the project, while following the guidelines within the time allotted. Students compete to win the honour of receiving a gold medal and moving forward to represent Team Ontario at the Canadian Skills Competition held in June. Awards will be given out on the Green for Life Celebrity Stage at Canada Blooms on Sunday March 20th at 10:30 am.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

It's time to 'Get Ready for St. Patrick's Day' with Tourism Ireland. On the opening day of Canada Blooms (March 16th), all guests who bring a Shamrock (FREE download at www.discoverireland.com) to the Canada Blooms Box Office will receive \$2 off their admission and the first 100 attendees to visit Tourism Ireland's booth (#406) will receive a FREE Frommer's 2011 Ireland Guide! Traditional Irish Dancers will be tapping their toes on the Tourism Ireland stand at 12:00, 2:00 and 4:00pm, while live entertainment by musicians Dan McDonald and Dan Restivo will be featured on the Green for Life Celebrity Stage from 6:00-8:00pm. Canada Blooms visitors can celebrate Ireland's Patron Saint on March 17th at Tourism Ireland's booth by donning themselves in all things green– from hats to shamrock glasses' – and take a souvenir photo in the themed photo booth. Musicians Dan McDonald and Dan Restivo will be playing live throughout the afternoon as well (11:30-12; 12:30-13:00; 14:30-15:00; 16:30-17:00; 17:30-18:00). In addition, Tourism Ireland will be giving away FREE items throughout the day from green candies to goodies.

Travelling into the city?

Experience Hyatt Regency Toronto's location in the center of the city's vibrant downtown, which is the host hotel for the festival. Fresh from a multi-million dollar renovation, their sparkling Toronto downtown hotel showcases 394 guestrooms, including 32 suites. They will be offering a Special Package Rate for Canada Blooms visitors: \$149.00 Single/Double Occupancy including one (1) admission ticket to Canada Blooms and FREE admission for children– 12 and under. Taxes as applicable.

Canada Blooms 2011 Festival information

Dates: Wednesday, March 16 to Sunday, March 20, 2011
Hours: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Wednesday to Saturday); 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Sunday)
Venue: Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto Ont.
Tickets: Available online at www.canadablooms.com and at participating garden centres for a special advanced discount price of \$16
At the door \$18; Seniors \$16; Students \$16; Children 12 and under are free

About Canada Blooms

Canada Blooms is a not-for-profit organization that gives back to the community throughout the year by funding community garden projects around Ontario. Canada Blooms is also dedicated to providing the community with horticulture expertise, education and resources on an ongoing basis.

Now in its fifteenth year, Canada Blooms was founded by Landscape Ontario and The Garden Club of Toronto. Each year it is supported by a committed group of partners, sponsors and volunteers.

Canada Blooms has been named One of Ontario's Top 100 Events by Festivals and Events Ontario and One of North America's Top 100 Events by the American Bus Association.

For more information and to purchase festival tickets please visit: www.canadablooms.com.

Canada Blooms Sponsors

Canada Blooms Founding Partners are Landscape Ontario and the Garden Club of Toronto.

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