



VANCOUVER ISLAND GARDENS

May 15, 2021 – 5 Days

Explore 6 exquisite gardens

Vancouver Island has always been known for its exceptional gardens and enthusiastic gardeners, and Wells Gray Tours has offered many tours that focus on this theme. The immense variety of plants, shrubs, and trees that flourish in the rich soil and moderate climate make the area a horticultural paradise. This tour takes you up close in six colourful gardens to admire the spring blooms. The gardens range from small gems like Abkhazi to world famous such as Butchart, and from the floral displays dominated by Hatley Castle to woodland glades lined with rhododendrons at Milner Gardens in Qualicum Beach. Several of our garden visits are accompanied by an expert gardener. Here is your opportunity to explore six exquisite gardens on Vancouver Island, from Victoria to Comox, and admire the splendid spring blossoms.

Activity Level: 1



10 Meals Included:

4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

\$1,750 double/twin; \$2,110 single; \$1,665 triple
Please add 5% GST.

BC Seniors (65 & over): \$15 discount with BC Services Card

Early Bookers:

\$100 discount on first 10 seats; \$50 on next 6

Experience Points:

Earn 41 points on this tour

Redeem 41 points if you book by March 30, 2021.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Saturday, May 15

After driving the Coquihalla, we take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. Enjoy the extensive Pacific Dinner Buffet during the crossing. (Note: Most ferries on this route offer the buffet, but an alternative will be arranged if there is a ship change.) We stay two nights at downtown Chateau Victoria which has a great location near the Inner Harbour.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Day 2: Sunday, May 16

Our first floral experience is at **Hatley Castle Gardens**. The Japanese, Italian, and Rose Gardens were created in 1912 by former Lieutenant-Governor James Dunsmuir and wife Laura. Their landscape architects designed 20 acres of gardens around the mansion and 100 gardeners were employed to maintain the grounds. Next is renowned **Butchart Gardens**. In 1909, Jennie Butchart set about converting her husband's limestone quarry into the Sunken Garden. In 1939, the Butcharts gave the gardens to their grandson, Ian Ross, who spent the rest of his life creating and promoting this renowned attraction. A gardener guide leads a walk through Butchart to explain some of the highlights. Nearby are the **Butterfly Gardens**, a tropical jungle with thousands of butterflies and other creatures. Dinner is at Vista 18 atop the hotel with a terrific view of Victoria.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Day 3: Monday, May 17

First, we stroll through **Finnerty Gardens** at the University of Victoria. Next is **Abkhazi Garden**, a heritage garden created by Prince Nicholas Abkhazi and his wife Peggy who came to Canada from Georgia (Russia) in 1946 and created these gardens with majestic trees and a dramatic location. Lunch is served in their heritage home. This afternoon, we drive up-Island to **Parksville** and

stay two nights at the Beach Club Resort. Enjoy the ocean view rooms, seaside pool, hot tub, and Stonewater Spa. You may want to take a stroll on Parksville's long boardwalk or the sandy beach.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Beach Club Resort



Day 4: Tuesday, May 18

We visit **Milner Gardens** in Qualicum Beach, a heritage home surrounded by 70 acres of woodland gardens, the dream of Veronica Milner. She gathered plants from the temperate zones of the world, including a significant collection of rhododendrons. It was her vision that created this



incredible combination of garden and old growth forest which has been visited by Queen Elizabeth. Mrs. Milner gifted the property to Vancouver Island University in 1996. We continue to Comox and tour **Filberg Heritage Lodge and Park**, built in 1929 by Bob Filberg, president of Comox Logging & Railway Company. Bob died in 1977 and donated the property and \$11 million to maintain it as a park. The gardens consist of nine landscaped acres with plantings such as maples and

magnolias, plus rare and exotic trees such as London Planes, and Atlas and Deodora cedars.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Beach Club Resort

Day 5: Wednesday, May 19

We ride the ferry to the mainland and travel home via the Coquihalla.

Meals included: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for 5 days
- 4 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- 2 Strait of Georgia ferry crossings
- Hatley Castle Gardens
- Butchart Gardens with guide
- Victoria Butterfly Gardens
- Finnerty Gardens
- Abkhazi Garden
- Milner House & Gardens
- Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park
- Gratuities for guides at the gardens
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **10 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 2 dinners

TOUR NOTES



Activity Level: Light activity including short distances to walk and some stairs. Note that there can be considerable walking in the gardens if you want to see all the displays. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coach cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 1, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, driver and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require ongoing assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour.



Abkhazi Garden

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$150 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due March 30, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$100 discount on first 10 seats and \$50 on next 6 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after March 30, 2021. BC seniors (65 & over) receive \$15 discount extended by BC Ferries, so you must bring your BC Services Card.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 2, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$50 per person. From March 3 to March 30, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From March 31 to April 14, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After April 14, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore, Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes until departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credits: Roland Neave (Butchart Gardens, top right page 1), City of Colwood (Hatley Castle), Beach Club Resort, Milner Gardens, Abkhazi Garden

Experience Points: This tour earns 41 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until March 30, 2021.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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