

GARDENS OF VANCOUVER ISLAND

May 2024



Butchart Gardens

Explore 8 gardens with spring regalia

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 eight 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 eight exquisite gardens on Vancouver Island, from Victoria to Comox, and admire the splendid spring blossoms.



CANADIAN



ACTIVITY LEVEL

► Fares per person

from **\$2,185** double/twin, **\$2,635** single*

**pricing details for all departures provided on Page 2*

► Early Booking Bonus

\$120 discount on first 12 seats; **\$60** on next 8.

► Earn 53 Experience Points

► Departure from:

BC Interior, Vancouver Island, & Lower Mainland



Milner Gardens

DEPARTURE POINTS & DATES

- I BC Interior:** May 5, 2024 - 6 Days
- V Vancouver Island:** May 6, 2024 - 5 Days
- L Lower Mainland:** May 5, 2024 - 6 Days



Your specific departure point will be confirmed at time of booking. Passengers travelling from the BC Interior, Vancouver Island, & Lower Mainland regions will begin and end the tour as follows:

- I BC Interior:** We depart from communities in the BC Interior on Sunday, May 5 and take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. On Friday May 10, we return by ferry to Tsawwassen and then drive home.
- V Vancouver Island:** Passengers from the Greater Victoria area join this tour on Monday, May 6. We return to Victoria on Friday, May 10. Transportation is arranged from your pickup location on the day of departure, and back again when we return. **Note:** Depending on the number of people booked and coach size, home pickups may be offered. The decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.
- L Lower Mainland:** We depart on Sunday, May 5 and take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. On Friday, May 10, we return by ferry to Tsawwassen and then drive home. Home pick up and return may be arranged at time of booking for passengers in the Greater Vancouver area.

FARES PER PERSON

	Departure Point	Fares per Person	Notes
I	BC Interior	\$2,290 double/twin \$2,860 single \$2,140 triple	
V	Vancouver Island	\$2,185 double/twin \$2,635 single \$2,070 triple	• Please add 5% GST
L	Lower Mainland	\$2,315 double/twin \$2,885 single \$2,165 triple	

WHAT'S INCLUDED

► Meals

- ① **8 total:** 2 breakfasts, 5 lunches, & 1 dinner
- ✓ ① **7 total:** 2 breakfasts, 4 lunches, & 1 dinner

► Transportation

- Coach transportation
- ① ① 2 Strait of Georgia ferry crossings

► Accommodation

- ① ① 5 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- ✓ ① 4 nights of accommodation & hotel taxes
- Luggage handling at hotels

► Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director

► Key Highlights

- Hatley Castle Gardens with guide
- Horticulture Centre of the Pacific with guide
- Afternoon tea at Butchart Gardens
- Butchart Gardens
- Victoria Butterfly Gardens
- Finnerty Gardens
- Abkhazi Garden
- Filberg Heritage Lodge & Park with guide
- Milner House & Gardens with guide

► Gratuities

- Gratuities for guides at the gardens



Activity Level 2

Moderate Activity: As a traveller you like a variety of activities and walking up to 2 km with breaks such as a guided walking tour is very doable for you without assistance.

You can stand for prolonged periods, negotiate a variety of terrain from cobblestone streets to moderate hills comfortably and can climb two flights of stairs without assistance.

There can be lots of walking in the gardens if you want to see all the displays. You may bring a cane if needed. The coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. The tour director and driver 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 frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.



Tour Size 40

This tour is limited to 40 participants.



Abkhazi Garden

ITINERARY

Sunday, May 5

Passengers from the BC Interior and Lower Mainland take the 5 pm ferry from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay. We stay three nights at downtown Chateau Victoria which has a great location near the Inner Harbour.

Meals included: ① Lunch

Accommodation: ① ② Chateau Victoria

Monday, May 6

Passengers from Vancouver Island join the group this morning. Our first floral experience is at **Hatley Castle Gardens** and a guide shows us the highlights. 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. We may be able to add an interior tour of the Castle, but it depends on any events booked there. The **Horticulture Centre of the Pacific** in West Saanich maintains 15 acres of demonstration and teaching gardens with a central theme of habitat planting. With the benefit of a guide, we stroll through the Winter Garden, Rhododendron Garden, Japanese Garden, Heather Garden, Dahlia Trial Garden, and the largest outdoor Bonsai Garden in Canada.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Tuesday, May 7

The morning is free time. At noon, we go to **Butchart Gardens** for a sumptuous lunch with the afternoon tea menu, served in the mansion. 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. Nearby are the **Butterfly Gardens**, a tropical jungle with thousands of butterflies and other creatures.

Meals included: Lunch

Accommodation: Chateau Victoria

Wednesday, May 8

We take a walk 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. A garden guide is arranged, then 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: Lunch

Accommodation: Beach Club Resort

Thursday, May 9

We drive 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. In Qualicum Beach, we visit Milner Gardens, 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 was visited by Queen Elizabeth. Mrs. Milner gifted the property to Vancouver Island University in 1996.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Beach Club Resort

Friday, May 10

We travel home. Passengers from the BC Interior and Lower Mainland ride the ferry to Tsawwassen and then continue to home cities. Transportation is also provided to passengers returning to the Greater Victoria area.

Meals included: Breakfast

TOUR NOTES & POLICIES

Garden Guides: Guides were arranged at 5 gardens when this tour was planned 7 months before departure. If staff shortages continue, guides may not be available upon arrival. A small refund may be provided if this happens.

Payments: A deposit of \$150 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due March 20, 2024. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard.

Early Booking Bonus: Receive a \$120 discount on the first 12 seats and \$60 on the next 8 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after March 20, 2024.

Cancellation Policy: Up to February 20, 2024, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From February 21 to March 20, the cancellation charge is \$150 per person (your deposit). From March 21 to April 4, the cancellation charge is 60% of the tour fare. After April 4, there is no refund.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a tour component due to an issue beyond our control,

the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Please do not tell us about your food preferences, as restaurants ignore these requests. An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not.

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. Medical questionnaire is not needed. Please contact us for details.

Photo credits: Adobe Stock (Butchart Gardens, page 1), Milner Gardens (page 1) , Roland Neave (Butchart Gardens, page 2), and Abkhazi Garden (page 3).

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 53 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until March 20, 2024.

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

WE PLAN.
YOU PACK.
NO WORRIES!

www.wellsgraytours.com
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Our offices are open for walk-in traffic or by appointment

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Vernon, BC
V1T 6B7
250-545-9197

PENTICTON
100 -159 Wade Ave East
Penticton, BC
V2A 8B6
250-493-1255

VICTORIA
102-736 Broughton St.
Victoria, BC
V8W 1E1
250-590-7889

Your Tour Experience

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

ACCOMMODATIONS: The hotels named in the tour descriptions are confirmed at the time the brochure is printed. It is very unusual for changes to occur, but clients will be notified whenever possible.

- **Hotel Lists:** Your ticket package contains a hotel list, which gives the hotel name, address, and phone number. You can leave this list with family/friends so you can be contacted while on your tour.

- **Special rooming requests:** If you wish to have a ground floor room where there is no elevator, a lower floor room in a high-rise hotel, or a room adjacent to another traveller, please make this request at the time you book your tour. Although we make every effort to confirm your request by passing the information onto the hotels, it cannot be guaranteed.

- **Class of Room:** Our choice of accommodation is in the deluxe to first class range. We try to strike a happy medium by maintaining a high standard of hotels while keeping a close eye on costs. Most hotels we use are members of the National Tour Association or approved by the Canadian or American Automobile Association. AAA rating is usually ♦♦♦ or better.

ROOM PARTNERS: Our reservation system tracks partner requests, and you can add your name to our partner request list, or we can provide you with the name and phone number of a possible partner. Together you can decide if you are compatible and would like to travel together.

SINGLES: Some hotels limit the number of single rooms assigned to each group, so people travelling alone should make reservations early. On a full tour, singles are requested to sit with other singles on the coach, so that travelling companions can sit together.

SEAT ROTATION: This is mandatory on all tours, and your tour director will describe the pattern and the frequency of the moves. For fairness to other clients, exceptions will not be made.

BOARDING PASS: Your ticket package contains a boarding pass which we request you fill out and give to the tour director upon departure. This contains essential information that the tour director would require in case of an emergency. Note that these are shredded after the tour returns to protect your privacy.

SMOKING POLICY: All motorcoaches are non-smoking, but rest stops are frequent. If smoking outdoors, please be considerate of those clients who may have allergies to smoke. Also note that many hotels are entirely non-smoking.

FOOD ALLERGIES: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. Some tours go to remote places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. Please do not tell us about your food preferences, as restaurants ignore these requests. An allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

ITINERARY NOTES: Some tours have choices for attractions or accommodation, and sometimes there are attractions that are at an additional cost and listed as optional. Please choose these options when you book your tour as some are limited in space. If you wish to leave the tour at any time to visit friends and family, you are certainly welcome to do so. Please ensure that the tour director is informed and note that Wells Gray Tours Ltd. will not make a refund for any missed or unused portions of the tour package.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you require ongoing assistance in any way, you must be accompanied by a travelling companion who will be fully responsible for your needs while on tour. Your tour director cannot provide ongoing assistance. Some tours may not be suitable due to the level of activity, so please discuss your needs with us when you book your tour. Please note that coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair.

DEPARTURE TIMES: We suggest that you arrive at your departure point no later than 15 minutes prior to the time shown on your ticket. The first day of a tour usually has many stops for client pick up. Please turn on your cell phone so the tour director can notify you if the coach is late.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Insurance is **not included** in tour fares, but it is available for purchase. We strongly recommend purchasing insurance to protect the non-refundable portion of your fare and to provide coverage for unexpected events. Our policies are underwritten by AIG Insurance Company of Canada. Policy must be purchased no later than the time of final payment. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause as relates to cancellation, upgrade, or trip interruption. A detailed brochure is available. Premiums are always subject to change until paid as insurance companies can change premiums without notice.

GRATUITIES: Gratuities are at your discretion; however, they are a significant portion of income for these professionals. Please use local currency. The following are guidelines:

- **Tour director and coach driver:** \$7 CAD per person per day to the tour director and \$5 per person per day to the driver. Please do not start a group collection. The most discreet method is to place the tip in an envelope and on the final day either hand it to the tour director or driver or leave it on her/his seat.

- **Meals:** In Canada and the USA, 15-20% of the pre-tax bill; note: For included meals, gratuities have been included.

- **Housekeeping staff:** \$2 per person per night local currency.

- **Luggage handling:** \$2 per bag. Note: Tip for one piece of luggage at hotel is usually included.

- **Transfer driver with luggage handling:** \$2 per person.

LOST ITEMS: Clients disembarking at the end of a tour are urged to check that they have all their personal belongings with them. Lost items are usually held in Kamloops or Victoria Wells Gray offices.

CURRENCY: Your credit card is a convenient way to pay for many meals and purchases. ATMs are easily accessible in Canada and the USA but may be difficult to find in other countries. You should also carry some cash with you in the currency of that country for gratuities and in case credit cards cannot be used.

LUGGAGE: The limit per person is one large suitcase, weighing no more than 50 lbs., and a small carry-on bag. A luggage tag is included in your ticket package. The Wells Gray tag is essential for the efficient handling of bags at hotels. Please attach the completed tag to your suitcase before arriving at your departure point. If you are on a cruise, please do not attach your cruise luggage tag until the morning of embarkation. Airlines charge a fee for checked luggage on Canada and USA flights. This is included in your tour fare if the airline allows Wells Gray to prepay this fee, but if payment is required at the airport, you must pay this directly to the airline at check-in.

COMMENT SHEETS: We always strive to improve, and comments from our customers are very important. Your tour director will hand out a comment sheet during the tour (with a confidential envelope if desired), so you can tell us what you think. To maintain a high standard of service, Wells Gray management reads every client's comments and discusses any problems and praises with the hotels, motorcoach company, other suppliers, and our staff.

TOUR PACKAGE: Your tour price includes all items listed in the "What's Included" section in the tour brochure. GST on applicable tours is extra.

Terms & Conditions

PAYMENTS: A deposit is required within three days of booking and is outlined in each tour brochure. If a deposit or balance becomes overdue and we cannot contact you, your reservation will be cancelled. By placing a deposit, you agree to the Terms and Conditions. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person on credit cards). If your cheque payment returns as 'non-sufficient funds', Wells Gray Tours Ltd. must charge you a \$25 NSF fee.

CANCELLATIONS: The cancellation policy for each tour is described in detail in the tour brochure. If you cancel after the final payment date, without paying in full, you forfeit the full deposit paid.

CONSUMER PROTECTION: In British Columbia, Consumer Protection BC requires that any business or organization that collects advance deposits from people for future travel must be registered with the government and must hold those deposits in trust. This protects consumer deposits in the unlikely event of bankruptcy. Wells Gray Tours Ltd. is also a member in good standing of the National Tour Association, which requires its members to carry at least \$1 million in professional liability, errors, and omission insurance.

BORDER CROSSING: For any travel outside of Canada, a valid passport is required. Passport numbers and expiry dates are required in advance for many tours, and this information will be collected before final payment. Clients are responsible for ensuring that they have valid documentation for all border crossings. Clients without valid documents may be detained by Customs Officers and therefore miss their tour. Wells Gray Tours Ltd. cannot assume responsibility for portions of a tour missed due to improper documentation.

ROOM PARTNERS: Wells Gray Tours Ltd. cannot assume responsibility for added costs due to disagreements encountered while travelling or for cancellations by one party of a double or twin accommodation room prior to departure.

LUGGAGE & LOST ITEMS: Luggage insurance is not included in your fare. Please note that neither Wells Gray Tours Ltd. nor the motorcoach company can assume responsibility for lost or damaged luggage or its contents.

ITINERARY: Expect the unexpected. If you are unable to participate in all aspects of the itinerary, Wells Gray Tours Ltd. will not issue a refund or provide a fare reduction for any missed or unused portions of the tour package. If any unforeseen delays, cancellations, changes, or add-ons happen that are beyond Wells Gray Tours control, (or by customer choice) there may be extra costs involved that may be passed onto you, the client, after the trip returns. There is no guarantee of refunds or reimbursements.

EXPERIENCE POINTS: Each time you travel with Wells Gray Tours, you earn Experience Points (e-points). The number of e-points you earn is written on the front page of each tour brochure. Your e-points will be awarded to you after your tour returns and can then be redeemed on future tours. E-Points must be earned before they can be redeemed. 1 e-point is equivalent to \$1.00.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Wells Gray Tours Ltd. and its designated tour director reserve the right to take photographs or videos during the operation of any tour or part thereof and to use the resulting photography or videos for promotion on Facebook, the Wells Gray Tours Ltd. website or for other commercial uses. By making a reservation with Wells Gray Tours Ltd., you agree to allow your likeness to be used by Wells Gray Tours Ltd. without compensation to you. If you prefer that your likeness not be used, please notify us in writing at final payment, or give a note to the tour director on the first day.

CHANGES TO FARES: Due to the uncertainties of inflation, fuel surcharges, taxes and foreign exchange, Wells Gray Tours Ltd. reserves the right to modify tour fares in the event of cost changes.

COVID-19: Some countries we are visiting may require all tour participants to be tested for Covid-19 prior to departure and/or be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at least 14 days prior to departure. You are responsible for ensuring you meet the requirements for the countries they you are visiting. **Expect changes to the itinerary.** It may not be possible to communicate changes ahead of departure.

FACE MASK REQUIREMENTS: Although it is not mandatory, Wells Gray Tours strongly encourages everyone to wear a face mask at airports, in public places, and onboard motor coaches, ships and airplanes. If you unfortunately become ill with Covid-19, you can still ride on the coaches in the rear seat, but you must wear a KN-95 or N-95 mask.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS: Wells Gray Tours Ltd. has no special knowledge regarding the financial condition of any supplier or the existence of unsafe conditions, health hazards, weather hazards, political conditions, or climate extremes at locations to which you may travel. For information about these concerns, we recommend contacting the Travel Advice Section of the Government of Canada website at travel.gc.ca. For public-health information, we recommend contacting the BC Centers for Disease Control at 604-707-2400 or bccdc.ca. The responsibility for checking and verifying all passport, visa, vaccination, or other entry requirements of your destination(s) and all conditions regarding health, safety, security, political stability, and labour or civil unrest at such destination(s) solely belongs to the traveller. Each tour has many suppliers, each with their own policies or rules which you are expected to abide by while on their premises. It is extremely rare, but suppliers can close unexpectedly overnight or declare bankruptcy. Funds that we have deposited with them on your behalf may not be recoverable and therefore not refundable to you.

PRIVACY: Information collected by Wells Gray Tours Ltd. for purposes of the tour or marketing or to assist attending personnel in the event of an emergency is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties.

FORCE MAJEURE: In the circumstances amounting to force majeure, Wells Gray Tours will not be required to refund any money to you, although if Wells Gray Tours can recover any monies from our suppliers, we will refund these to you. Suppliers may choose to provide travel vouchers or credits in lieu of refund. Wells Gray Tours is not responsible for a supplier's failure to pay a refund.

RESPONSIBILITY

Neither Wells Gray Tours Ltd., nor any of its agents or representatives shall be held liable or responsible directly or indirectly for any delay, injury, loss or damage to any person or property, occasioned by the neglect or default of any person or company providing transportation, accommodation or any other services in connection with these tours, or damages resulting directly or indirectly from act of God, sickness, strike, quarantine, weather, government restraints, machinery breakdown, or any other cause beyond our control. Wells Gray Tours Ltd. acts as an agent for its suppliers, including but not limited to companies providing transportation, accommodation, and other services rendered. The right is reserved to withdraw all, or part of any tour should conditions warrant and make such alterations in the itinerary as may be found necessary for the convenience and proper operation of any tour, without penalty.