

## SUSTAINABLE STORIES IN NIAGARA FALLS

*The following information has been prepared to inspire future visits to Niagara Falls and we look forward to welcoming visitors back safely in keeping with any health and safety restrictions. Due to fluctuating COVID-19 restrictions, we recommend visitors contact businesses directly to confirm availability.*

Visitors from Ontario, across North America and around the world who come to experience adventure, discover family fun, feel the romance and create unique and memorable experiences have made Niagara Falls Canada's #1 leisure destination.

Niagara Falls is a global iconic destination filled with awe-inspiring natural wonder, history and adventure. Inspired by Earth Day, we've brought together this collection of green spaces, environmental and sustainable stories in Niagara Falls.

### Niagara Falls Illumination for Earth Day

Each year on the evening of April 22, Earth Day, Niagara Falls is illuminated green from 10:00 – 10:15 pm in celebration of Earth Day around the world. Please see the [illumination calendar](#) for further details.

### Environmental Designations in Niagara Falls

#### WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Niagara Escarpment has been recognized as a **biosphere reserve** by U.N.E.S.C.O. There are 714 biospheres in the world, a designation that demonstrates excellence in sustainable development and allows for conservation, research and continued sustainable development. The geological nature of the Niagara Escarpment was a major factor in its being declared a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on April 4, 1990. The Escarpment corridor crosses two major biomes: boreal needle leaf forests in the north and temperate broadleaf forest in the south. The wildlife of the Niagara Escarpment with its wide diversity of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, including a number of rare or endangered species, was a contributing factor to the UNESCO decision. The biosphere concept includes humans as part of an ecosystem.

**What to explore on the Niagara Escarpment:** Head to the Niagara Parks [Botanical Gardens](#) with 40 hectares (99 acres) of beautifully maintained gardens to explore and world-famous rose gardens with over 2,400 roses. Home to the magical [Butterfly Conservatory](#), one of the largest in North America where you will see over 2,000 butterflies with over 45 species of tropical butterflies floating along lush paths. Bring Niagara history to life. A self-guided tour of the Battle of Queenston Heights starts at [Brock's Monument](#), a tribute to Sir General Isaac Brock, commander of the British forces in Upper Canada. Continue climbing to the top of the Niagara Escarpment for a magnificent view. Be sure to snap some photos at the Niagara Scenic lookout just North of Queenston Heights. Nestled high atop the Niagara Escarpment, [Queenston Heights Park](#) is the birthplace of Niagara Falls - garden and nature lovers, hikers and picnickers have used this park for generations. Queenston Heights Park is also a terminus point of the Bruce Trail. Visit the [Laura Secord Homestead](#) to learn how Laura Secord began the journey that has earned her a place in Canadian history.



## **CAROLINIAN LIFE ZONE**

The Niagara Peninsula is considered part of the Carolinian Life Zone. This Zone is actually the northernmost edge of the deciduous forest region in eastern North America and is named after the Carolina states. In Canada the Carolinian Life Zone is a narrow band across Southern Ontario, that supports the most productive and endangered assortment of plant and animal species in Canada.

Visit the [Niagara Glen](#) to hike through a Carolinian Forest.

## **PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT - AREA OF NATURAL AND SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (ANSI).**

This is a designation by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). There are two categories, Life Science and Earth Science. From the OMNR fact sheet:

- The Niagara Gorge is a Life Science ANSI because of its “large and excellent example of escarpment valley and slope. Rich, varied, highly significant vegetation patterns and flora. One of the most impressive of the Niagara Peninsula escarpment features.”
- The Niagara River Bedrock Gorge is an Earth Science ANSI because it is the “largest river gorge and most extensive Silurian exposure of its type in Southern Ontario.” Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). This is a regional designation reflected in municipal planning policies.

**Explore the Niagara Gorge:** Soar above the Gorge on the [Whirlpool Aero car](#), a cable car with incredible views of the Niagara Whirlpool high above the racing Niagara River. Explore the [WildPlay Whirlpool Adventure Course](#), a unique Niagara experience of suspended obstacles and ziplines provides a new fun and thrilling way to see the world-famous whirlpool and Niagara Gorge from high above. Or get right down into the Gorge to marvel at the relentless power and beauty of the [White Water Walk](#). This experience offers a breathtaking boardwalk at the very edge of one of the world's wildest stretches of whitewater (class 6 rapids)! The [Niagara River Recreational Trail](#) meanders through some of the most beautiful countryside in the world.

## **DESIGNATED NATURE RESERVE**

The [Niagara Glen](#) was designated a **Nature Reserve** (a protected area of importance for flora, fauna and geographic features) in 1992 and features 4 km (2.5 miles) of paths that wind through a pristine pocket of Carolinian Forest (a life zone in North America characterized by trees with broad leaves).

**Explore the Niagara Glen:** explore 4 km (2.5 mi) of paths that wind through a pristine pocket of Carolinian Forest, past boulders left behind as the Falls eroded through the area thousands of years ago. Hikes through the Niagara Glen involve an elevation change of over 60 m (200 ft). The Glen has become Ontario’s hotspot for [Bouldering](#).

## **GLOBALY SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANT BIRD AREA (IBA)**

The Niagara River corridor offers a unique year round destination for bird lovers, adventure travelers and ecotourists alike. In 1996, the entire Niagara River corridor, stretching 56km (35 miles) from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, became the first site in North America to receive international recognition as a globally significant “**Important Bird Area**” by major conservation groups in Canada and the United States. More than 370 bird species can be found in the Niagara River Corridor, more than in any other river in Canada. Starting mid-November, the river comes alive with more than 100,000 gulls on migratory flights from as far north as Greenland and the Canadian Arctic to as far south as Florida. The introduction of eBird now makes it possible to keep a life list of bird sightings and explore sightings in any area - 170 species have been found at Dufferin

Islands in Niagara Falls. Numbers from eBird show that birdwatching, already considered the fastest growing recreational activity prior to the pandemic, *has increased 30% since March 2020*.

Every February, bird lovers and conservationists celebrate the vast diversity of northern birds that call the mighty river corridor their home each winter at **Birds on the Niagara**, the only international bird festival in North America.

**Where to bird watch in Niagara Falls all year round:** Table Rock Centre, Dufferin Islands, the upper Niagara River.

## Environmental Protection in Niagara Parks

Niagara Parks has established an enviable record of land stewardship. Their Environmental Mission Statement “improve environmental quality and sustainable development throughout the Parks system for the benefit of visitors, employees and associates” is reflected in many important preservation and environmental initiatives. Full details about the Niagara Parks environmental commitments and programs can be found [here](#).

### Project Green Initiatives

- Plant Health Care
- Golf Operations
- Recycling and Composting
- Botanical Gardens & School of Horticulture

### Environmental Partnerships:

- Air Emissions Reduction Program
- Moraine Management Plan
- Environmental Alliance
- Niagara River Restoration Partnership
- Water Quality Improvement Buffer Project
- Educational Programs
- Niagara Glen Vegetation Survey
- Niagara River Riparian Habitat Management Plan and Policy
- Niagara Glen Trail Management System
- Oak Savannah Projects
- Greenspace Enhancement & Reclamation
  - Dufferin Islands Reclamation
  - Fort Erie Riverwalk

## Top Sustainable Gardening Projects to See in Niagara Falls

### 1. Pollinator Gardens, Prairie Gardens Meadow Spaces and Tall Grass Areas

Fourteen pollinator gardens can be found along the Niagara Parkway from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake designed to sustain the ecosystems and provide support for a wide range of pollinating species, many considered at risk.



Fourteen interpretive signs include references to Indigenous myths, which offer wisdom about our connection to animals and our environment. The content of the signage was inspired by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Iroquois), the Wabanaki Confederacy (Algonquin) and Anishnaabe (Algonquin), all of whom inhabited this area throughout history, and their spiritual connection with the animal kingdom. To honour this legacy and to celebrate Ontario150, the province's sesquicentennial year, Niagara Parks has worked with local Indigenous artists and writers to develop a collection of animal legends and artwork that feature some of Ontario's native species.

Best viewing sites:

- The Niagara Parkway
  - Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens
2. **Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex** Five pollinator gardens can be found at Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex as well as a 100-acre habitat restoration pollinator meadow.
  3. **Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens** A Legacy Prairie Garden with over 15,000 locally sourced, native wildflowers and shrubs, from manicured gardens to natural habitats.
  4. **Chippewa Grasslands Bird Habitat Management Project** will restore approximately 50 hectares (120 acres) of fallow former agricultural fields into native grassland habitat to protect and enhance bird habitats. Using a diverse mix of native grasses and wildflowers it will also support pollinators.
  5. **Niagara River Coastal Wetland Restoration Project** will provide essential habitat to increase fish and other wildlife populations in the Niagara River.

## Celebrating Green Spaces in Niagara Falls

- **Niagara Glen and Nature Centre** - Overlooking the Niagara River, deep in the Great Gorge, the Niagara Glen is a designated Nature Reserve with 4 km (2.5 mi) of paths that wind through a pristine pocket of Carolinian Forest, past boulders left behind as the Falls eroded through the area thousands of years ago.
- **Gardens** - Niagara Falls is surrounded by some of the most spectacular gardens that are ranked among the most beautiful public gardens in Canada and the world. The gardens are open year around and the flowers vary each season offering a landscape of changing blooms. **Queen Victoria Park**, the heart of Niagara Parks, celebrates every season in style with a visual spectacle, from 500,000+ daffodils and tulips in spring. Niagara Falls is the Daffodil Capital of North America owing to the growing number of daffodils that number well over 1 million. The spectacular **Oakes Garden Theatre** is the entranceway to Queen Victoria Park, the key central area of Niagara Parks that showcases the perfect panoramic view of the Falls. Concerts and special events are held here throughout the summer. The **Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens** is among Canada's largest with 40 hectares (99 acres) of beautifully maintained gardens to explore including the largest rose garden in Canada and is home to the **Butterfly Conservatory**, one of the largest in North America. Walk the green spaces and smell the flowers at the **Floral Showhouse**. With seven shows a year something new is always in bloom. Visit Niagara Parks in May or early June to experience the fragrant **Centennial Lilac Garden** with over 1,200 plants and over 200 different varieties.
- **Parklands - Dufferin Islands**, popular with locals and tourists alike, offers ten acres of quiet secluded parkland including several small islands secluded parkland including several small islands connected by



bridges and footpaths. Admission free. Picnicking available. Nestled high atop the Niagara Escarpment, **Queenston Heights Park** is the birthplace of Niagara Falls - garden and nature lovers, hikers and picnickers have used this park for generations. Queenston Heights Park is also a terminus point of the Bruce Trail.

- **Scenic Trails** Whether by foot or bike, discover 56 kilometers (35 miles) of historical and horticultural sights along the **Niagara River Recreational Trail**. Bordering the winding Niagara River, travel past the Horseshoe Falls, historical sites, attractions, restaurants and parkland as this trail connects Fort Erie to **Niagara-on-the-Lake**.
- **Cycling** Niagara is one of Ontario's premier cycling destinations with exceptional cycling routes and trails for beginners and pros alike. Cycle, walk, run or rollerblade through the **Greater Niagara Circle Route**, a 140 km picturesque route along the Niagara Parkway beside Niagara Falls leading you through the lush greenery of the Niagara Escarpment. **Niagara River Bike Tours** offer two- and half-hour cycling tours showcase the hidden gems along the Niagara River.
- **Birding** The Niagara River corridor offers a unique year round destination for bird lovers, adventure travelers and ecotourists alike.
- **Bouldering in Niagara Glen** The Niagara Glen has become a popular bouldering hotspot. Bouldering permits can be purchased at the Niagara Glen Nature Centre and the Butterfly Conservatory.
- **World-Class Golf** Niagara Falls is a world-class **golf destination** with 8 top golf courses (35 in the Niagara Region) designed by famed architects including **Legends on the Niagara**, Canada's premier public golf course, and the **Whirlpool Golf Course**, one of Canada's most highly rated and renowned public golf courses located in a spectacular setting against the backdrop of the Niagara River Whirlpool and Gorge.
- **Geocaching in Niagara Parks** is an outdoor treasure hunt where the goal is to find hidden containers, known as caches or geocaches, using a portable satellite navigation device called a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver. Niagara Parks has a number of geocaches to find. More information regarding different types of caches and geocaching in general can be found at [Geocaching.com](http://Geocaching.com), and [Earthcache.org](http://Earthcache.org).

## Where to Find the Best Blooms in Niagara Falls

Niagara Falls is surrounded by spectacular gardens considered among the most beautiful public gardens in Canada and the world. The gardens are open year around and the flowers vary each season offering a landscape of changing colours. There's always something in bloom!

As provinces lift stay-at-home restrictions and many of us look for getaways, a visit to see the blooms and gardens in Niagara Falls is the perfect outdoor activity. With acres of beautifully landscaped spaces, take your time exploring and soaking up the healing and rejuvenating power of green spaces, vibrant colours and luscious scents and even gain some inspiration for your own home garden.

We've put together the perfect list of upcoming annual blooms and major horticultural collections in Niagara Falls:



## MARCH

### **Snow Drops and Crocus**

These early spring blooms are the first signs that warmer weather is coming and appear while there is still snow on the ground. **Snow Drops** sprout out of the ground in early March and blanket the grounds with their small white bell-shaped flowers. Soon after, in late March, the colourful **crocus** with their vibrant yellow, mauve and purple flowers make a cheerful appearance.

#### Best viewing sites:

- *Queen Victoria Park* - on the west side of the walking path that runs from Clifton Hill to Murray Hill
- *Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens* - in the Woodland Gardens

## APRIL

### **“Daffodil Capital of North America” (Queen Victoria Park)**

In early April, a spectacular sea of well over one million blooming daffodils is the reason why Niagara Falls has become known as the Daffodil Capital of North America. Every daffodil is represented in colour from white, yellow, white and yellow and white with orange. 30,000 daffodils are added each year.

#### Best viewing sites:

- Queen Victoria Park - on the west side of the walking path that runs from Clifton Hill to Murray Hill
- Table Rock Centre – Along the stone railing that overlooks the Falls

## Tulips

Around mid-April thousands of colourful red Species Tulips with their narrow, pointed flowers begin blooming followed by Hybrid Tulips starting around the third week of April. 40,000 new bulbs are added to the collection each year and the bulbs are rotated each fall to provide a colourful new display of blooms each spring.

#### Best viewing sites:

- Queen Victoria Park
- Oakes Garden Theatre
- Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens
- the Niagara Parkway

## Forsythia

You will find these bright yellow shrubs in plant beds and hedgeways and at the Botanical Gardens where you can see different varieties and different tones of yellow.

#### Best viewing sites:

- Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens
- The Niagara Parkway

## Cherry Blossoms and Crabapple Vista

The indigenous species of white cherry blossoms are followed by pink cherry blossoms and deeper pink Crabapples along the Niagara Parkway. Don't miss Crabapple Vista at the Botanical Gardens.

#### Best viewing sites:

- Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens
- The Niagara Parkway

### **Magnolia Allée**

Around mid to late-April hundreds of magnificent magnolia trees and shrubs bloom in Niagara Falls. Dubbed Magnolia Allée, enjoy a walk through this stunning pathway of approximately 50 trees lined with magnificent bright pink, white and yellow Magnolia trees at their peak of bloom.

Best viewing sites:

- Floral Showhouse

### **MAY**

#### **Hydrangea Show**

The Annual Hydrangea Show just in time for Mothers Day Weekend features gigantic spheres of colourful blue, pink and white Hydrangeas are featured. As many as 20,000 plants are grown annually complementing the stunning array of tropical plants plus incredible orchids with blooms in a range of colours and sizes.

Best viewing sites:

- Floral Showhouse

#### **Centennial Lilac Garden**

With 1,200 lilac bushes with over 200 varieties on 10 acres, the Lilac Garden is in spectacular fragrant bloom with purple, white, pink, blue, pink and white, fuchsia, double and single blooms for only a few weeks each spring. New plantings are introduced each year to ensure a growing field. Created in 1967 to commemorate Canada's Centennial Year, the American Rotary Clubs of District 709 contributed funds towards the development of this unique garden.

Best viewing sites:

- North of Niagara Parks Floral Clock

#### **The Iconic Floral Clock**

Each year, the intricate design on the face of the iconic Floral Clock is planted with approximately 20,000 plants. The clock design is changed twice each year seasonally and features a different theme each year. Spring planting begins the third week of May and takes up to two weeks to complete.

Best viewing sites:

- North of the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens

### **JUNE - JULY**

#### **Canada's Largest Rose Garden**

In addition to perennials, rhododendrons, azaleas, a formal parterre garden, herb and vegetable plantings, the world-famous rose garden features more than 2,500 roses bushes and 120 different species.

Best viewing sites:

- Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens

### **JULY - AUGUST**

New - Visit the gardens at the new Niagara Parks Power Station scheduled to open July 1, 2021. Featuring indigenous plants that can be found in Canadian forests, meadows, wetlands and prairies and include pollinator plants.

Best viewing sites:

- Niagara Parks Power Station



## **Pollinator Gardens, Prairie Gardens and Sustainable Projects**

Fourteen pollinator gardens can be found along the Niagara Parkway from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake designed to sustain the ecosystems and provide support for a wide range of pollinating species, many considered at risk. Five pollinator gardens can be found at Legends on the Niagara Golf Complex as well as a 100-acre habitat restoration pollinator meadow. A Legacy Prairie Garden with over 15,000 locally sourced, native wildflowers and shrubs, from manicured gardens to natural habitats is located at the Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens. The Chippawa Grasslands Bird Habitat Management project will restore approximately 50 hectares (120 acres) of fallow former agricultural fields into native grassland habitat to protect and enhance bird habitats.

### Best viewing sites:

- The Niagara Parkway
- Niagara Parks Botanical Gardens

## **FeastON Restaurants in Niagara Falls**

Committed to sourcing Ontario grown and made food and drinks, a restaurant with the FeastON designation ensures you will enjoy the Niagara terroir of a locally sourced and inspired meal.

All five of the Niagara Parks' restaurants focus on locally sourced ingredients: **Table Rock House Restaurant**, **Queen Victoria Place Restaurant**, **Queenston Heights Restaurant**, **Legends on the Niagara Restaurant** and **Whirlpool Restaurant**.

**Flour Mill Scratch Kitchen Restaurant** offers dining in the only historic restaurant in Niagara Falls dating back to 1904. Famous patrons include Princess Diana and Prime Minister Trudeau among others.

**AG Inspired Cuisine** is a recipient of CAA/AAA 4 Diamonds Award, OpenTable top 100 restaurants in Canada and TripAdvisor's 10 Best Niagara Falls Restaurants. This acclaimed dining experience showcases ingredients grown and harvested daily including honey from the new AG Busy Bee Honey Factory.

**Ravine Vineyard** (Niagara-on-the-Lake) is considered one of the top 20 winery restaurants in the world. Located on a 100+ year-old farm, Ravine has been owned and operated for five generations by the Lowrey family who craft small-batch organic VQA wines, bake their own bread, raise their own pigs, and grow their own certified organic vegetables.

**Vineland Estates** (Vineland) dates back to the 1800s and rests on the fertile Niagara Escarpment, located on a former Mennonite Homestead painstakingly restored. With sweeping views of lush vineyards, the farmhouse is the perfect place for an enjoyable and customizable dining sensation.

**Peller Estates** (Niagara-on-the-Lake) is the ultimate wine and food lover's playground. Partake in a barrel cellar dinner, fine dining in the Winery Restaurant with Executive Chef Jason Parsons, or casual dining on the patio's Barrel House Grill. Party in the Vineyard at the annual food truck event in spring and country music festival in summer.