

# Victoria

## Canada's Garden City



Angel Trumpet Vines,  
Victoria Butterfly Gardens

BY MARGARET CADWALADR

Victoria is special in many ways but especially for those who love to walk and who enjoy gardens. The best know of all its gardens is Butchart Gardens which is open every day of the year. Jennie Butchart began to develop the garden in a limestone quarry in 1904 and this year it is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The five-acre garden has several sections and features various garden design styles and seasonal blooms. There are rhododendrons in spring, roses in summer, fireworks in July and August, colorful autumn maples and a spectacular annual Christmas light display.


Like Butchart Gardens, Victoria Butterfly Gardens and the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific are located on the Saanich Peninsula. A stroll through the Butterfly Gardens is to be transported to a tropical fantasy. Members of the 35 imported species of butterflies gracefully fly among tropical plants and orchids in the covered garden.

The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific is an educational and demonstration centre featuring a collection of the plants, shrubs and trees that grow on Vancouver Island. It is open daily for tours. Special events and lectures are regularly scheduled and the wetlands are ideal for bird watching.

Victoria also features a number of public gardens and parks, many of which are located in the heart of town. Beacon Hill Park is a short distance from the

Provincial Legislature Buildings and a walk here will lead to both formal gardens and wildflower meadows. Also here is the Gary Oak meadow park which links to the gardens at St. Ann's Academy, a former girls' school which is surrounded by a mature garden with a historic orchard, herb and perennial beds.

A few kilometers away is the lovely one-acre Abkhazi Gardens, a small heritage garden which features native Garry Oaks, Japanese Maples and splendid rhododendrons set in a rocky outcrop. A gift shop and tearoom help support the garden. From here it is a short walk to Government House, an estate which is home to the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, the Queen's representative in the province. The grounds are easily accessible and feature a rose garden, perennial and herb gardens.

Also worthy of a visit is Hatley Park Castle, a National Historic Site located on the campus of Royal Roads University. This oceanfront estate was built in the early 1900s as the home of James Dunsmuir, son of coal baron Robert Dunsmuir. The gardens are open year-round and include rose and Italian gardens. Contact: 800-663-3883, [www.tourismvictoria.com](http://www.tourismvictoria.com). 

*About the author: Margaret Cadwaladr is a writer and public speaker who lives on Vancouver Island. She's the author of "In Veronica's Garden - The Social History of the Milner Gardens and Woodland."*



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