

RAP GARDENS IN FOCUS

Explore Sites That Participate in the AHS Reciprocal Admissions Program

Idaho Botanical Garden

by Alejandra Vansant

SOUTHERN IDAHO seems like a challenging place to garden, given the region's dry, almost desertlike climate, with hot summers and frigid winters. Yet Idaho Botanical Garden (IBG) in Boise offers vivid testimony that regionally adapted and native plants are key to horticultural success.

Founded in 1984 in the heart of Boise's Old Penitentiary Historic District, IBG "showcases landscaping that is possible in people's own gardens," says Executive Director Erin Anderson. Along with helping Idaho residents become more successful gardeners, Anderson hopes that out-of-state visitors leave with at least a few "gardening ideas from Idaho." To that end, IBG comprises vi-



brant gardens and plant collections sure to inspire those living in the Intermountain West and beyond.

SHOWCASING BOTANICAL DIVERSITY

Among IBG's carefully curated collections of plants, the Gem State's own diverse flora takes center stage in the **Idaho Native Plant Garden**. The **Lewis and Clark Native Plant Garden** gives a broader picture of the region's botanical heritage, featuring 145 species native to the northwestern region between Montana and Oregon that were collected during the famed Corps of Discovery expedition in the early 19th century. The plants are organized by ecological



Idaho Botanical Garden features diverse landscapes. Left: Wisteria in the English Garden. Top: The Rose Garden. Above: The Gathering Place at the Lewis and Clark Native Plant Garden.

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE COURTESY OF IDAHO BOTANICAL GARDEN

Additional Information

Idaho Botanical Garden

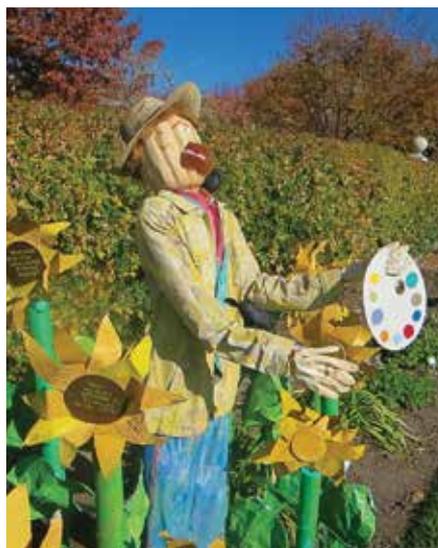
2355 Old Penitentiary Road, Boise, ID 83712. (208) 343-8649
www.idahobotanicalgarden.org

- Hours: Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m.–7 p.m.
- Fees: Adults: \$7; Seniors (65+): \$5; Youth (5–12): \$5; IBG members and children 4 and under: free.
- RAP benefits: AHS members showing a current membership card receive free admission and free parking.

zones such as canyon, mountain, prairie, and wetland.

Other garden areas focus on design techniques and plant palettes for dealing with the region's most challenging environmental conditions, such as extended drought and wildfires. But IBG also includes "traditional" garden areas one might find in more mild climates such as an **English Garden**, **Herb Garden**, and **Rose Garden**. Each of these incorporates stone, plant choices, or other elements that give them a distinctively Idahoan flair.

One of the most popular areas is the **Children's Adventure Garden**, where families can explore imaginative and interactive features such as a treehouse, **Music Trail**, and a whimsical fountain. Beds filled with plants that kids can touch and smell and a kitchen play area complete with edible plants encourage youngsters of all ages to actively explore the natural world around them.



Seasonal events at IBG include the Scarecrow Stroll in October, above, and Winter Garden aGlow, top, beginning in November.

CELEBRATING THE SEASONS

When the gardens start winding down in the fall, IBG continues to entice visitors with its month-long **Scarecrow Stroll** each October. Community members create the colorful scarecrows placed all around the gardens, hoping to garner votes from visitors for the title of Scarecrow Stroll Champion.

IBG really goes all out with its annual **Winter Garden aGlow**, when thousands of lights transform the garden into a wintry wonderland. It runs this year from November 19 through January 5.

Regardless of the season, IBG's evocative plant displays and exciting events contribute to an inspiring experience for all visitors. 🌿

Alejandra Vasant is an editorial intern with The American Gardener.

HOW THE RECIPROCAL ADMISSIONS PROGRAM (RAP) WORKS

This American Horticultural Society program is designed to encourage people to visit gardens, arboreta, and conservatories while traveling. As a current member, you receive free admission and/or other special discounts at more than 320 sites throughout North America! (Check "Regional Happenings," starting on page 52, to see upcoming events at some of these participating gardens.) Here's how to make the most of this member benefit:

- View the current list of participating locations and the RAP benefits they offer at www.ahsgardening.org/rapgardens. At the beginning of each year, this list is also published in a full-color booklet. To order, visit www.ahsgardening.org/RAPGuideHelp.
- Be sure to contact the garden before your visit to confirm the RAP benefits you can expect to receive. (Some sites may choose to enforce a 90-mile exclusion policy; if your zip code falls within that distance from the location, you would not receive the offered RAP benefits

there.) Admission to special events or exhibits may also be excluded.

- Present your current membership card at the admissions counter or gift shop to receive the RAP benefit(s) offered by that garden. Each card will only admit the individual(s) listed on the card. In the case of a family, couple, or household membership card that does not list individual names, the garden must extend the benefit(s) to at least two members; it is at the garden's discretion to extend benefits to more than two individuals. Some gardens may require a photo ID.