

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Discover the Secret Gardens of Rockford, Illinois USA

ROCKFORD, IL – Stroll an exquisite Japanese Garden...purchase exotic hybrids from a daylily grower...explore 150 acres of unusual trees, shrubs and perennials.

If you think this sounds like British Columbia or North Carolina, think again! It's Illinois' Rockford Region...one of Illinois' three largest cities, just 60 minutes west of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. Incongruous? Well, take another look at the "City of Gardens" and its 10,000 acres of parks and public gardens. Here's a tiny sample of what you can experience:

- **Anderson Japanese Gardens** was voted the best Japanese garden in North America in 2004, by the readers of the *Roth Journal of Japanese Gardening*. The 12-acre treasure is open for self-guided tours daily May through October and features waterfalls, ponds, paths, quiet corners and 16th Century Sukiya-style structures, including a guesthouse, teahouse and gazebo. New visitor center with restaurant, gift shop and art gallery to open in Summer 2007. Hours are 10 am to 5 pm Monday-Friday, 10 am to 4 pm Saturday and 12 noon to 4 pm Sunday, with special early-morning hours for those seeking a quiet place to meditate or pray. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$3 for students. Guided tours for groups are available by appointment. Logon to www.andersongardens.org.
- **Ellison Perennials** is world-famous for creating more than 50 daylily hybrids. Ellison also specializes in hosta cultivars, shade plants and sun-loving perennials. People travel to Rockford from all over the world to buy Ellison's plants. The retail gardens are open April through October. Hours are 8 am to 5 pm Monday-Saturday April-July, and 8 am to 5 pm Thursday-Saturday August-October. Admission is free, including several annual events. (Ellison's private residential garden is open for group tours by appointment, for a nominal fee.) Logon to www.gardensights.com/ellison.

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- **Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden** began in 1910 as a 150-acre nursery, planted with unusual trees, shrubs and woody plants from the owner's world-wide trips. Today, the Northern Illinois Botanical Society (NIBS) operates the site, which showcases spring blossoms, summer flowers, fall foliage and winter evergreens, plus themed gardens, sculptures, mazes and fountains. When an international team of botanists inventoried the site, they said there was only one other place in the entire world with such diverse and mature plant specimens...in France! Echoing the botanical theme are an art gallery, gift shop, library and spacious education center. Hours are 9 am to 4 pm daily year-round. Admission is \$2 for people age 16 and up; admission to special events is additional. For more info, logon to www.klehm.org.
- **Sinnissippi Gardens**, Rockford's river-side garden spot includes an annual garden meticulously planted with colorful bedding plants, a floral clock planted each year with thousands of annuals, an accredited rose garden plus a lagoon and fishpond graced by Mute Swans. The gardens are a favorite spot for outdoor weddings and the nature path along the river is a popular jogging and walking site. Admission is free.

Rockford is located in north-central Illinois at the juncture of I-90 and I-39, an easy 60-minute drive west of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

For more information about the Rockford Region's garden spots, logon on to www.gorockford.com, phone 815.963.8111 or fax 815.963.4298.

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