

## GENERAL CONTACTS

Parker Education Center	(608) 752-3885
Gift Shop	x0
Education	x17
Volunteer	x20
Horticulture Center	(608) 754-1779

Website: <http://www.rotarygardens.org>

Visit our website to subscribe to e-updates on volunteer opportunities, education programs, special events, and more.



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## PARKER EDUCATION CENTER (PRIMARY MAILING ADDRESS)

1455 Palmer Drive, Janesville, WI 53545

Phone: (608) 752-3885

Fax: (608) 752-3853

## HORTICULTURE CENTER

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[www.rotarygardens.org](http://www.rotarygardens.org)

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*Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm holding up until your back gets used to it.*  
~Author Unknown

*There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone at their work, you would find them smiling. ~Mirabel Osler*

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This handbook and the policies in it do not constitute a contractual obligation. Rotary Botanical Gardens has made every effort to make the information and policies in this handbook accurate and current, and reserves the right to change or amend them at any time.

*The breeze, the trees, the honey bees -*

*All volunteers!*

~Juliet Carinreap

## SAFETY:

The safety of our volunteers, visitors and staff is of utmost importance. Please follow all safety procedures and execute common sense. If you see another person acting in an unsafe way, or if you experience an accident, please inform a staff member. Report any potentially unsafe conditions or equipment.

In case of severe weather emergencies, staff members will alert volunteers to move indoors. When bad weather is looming, volunteers should also use their own judgment as to when to leave the garden and seek shelter.

## COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

We appreciate all comments and suggestions from our volunteers. Please discuss them with the Volunteer Coordinator or the staff member in charge of your volunteer area. Feel free to ask questions and make suggestions about your volunteer assignment.

*The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.*

~Nelson Henderson

## WELCOME TO ROTARY BOTANICAL GARDENS!

*Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something.*

– Anon.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

Rotary Botanical Gardens is an internationally themed botanical garden which provides education and appreciation of horticulture for all people.

1. The goal is to support the Rotary International objective of promoting world peace through multicultural understanding (note: Rotary Botanical Gardens is not affiliated with Rotary International).
2. The gardens shall celebrate the universal interest in horticulture and ecology.
3. The gardens shall serve as an educational resource for the community of Janesville and the region.
4. The gardens shall display plant material as well as promote educational programs and interpretive literature about the many facets of ornamental horticulture, using both native and exotic species.
5. The gardens shall reflect the cultural uniqueness of each country or region represented.
6. The gardens shall display the unique plants indigenous to the various geographic areas represented, thus emphasizing the concept of foreign exotic versus plants native to Wisconsin.
7. The gardens shall be a place of serenity and contemplation.
8. The gardens will be as accessible as possible to the disabled by at least one route.

## ROTARY BOTANICAL GARDENS HISTORY:

Rotary Botanical Gardens is a 20 acre internationally-themed botanical garden. It was founded in 1989 by a group of Janesville Rotarians led by Dr. Robert Yahr. Previously, the site had been home to a sand and gravel company, a cattle auction business, a BMX bike track, and a storage area for the City of Janesville Parks Department. Dr. Yahr noted the site lay between two areas already developed by local community groups: Lions Beach and Kiwanis Pond. He envisioned a botanical garden divided into “rooms” that would highlight the gardens of different countries. Today some of these gardens include the Japanese garden, the French rose garden, the English cottage garden, the Italian formal perennial garden, the alpine garden and the Scottish garden. In addition, there are other developed areas, including the fern and moss garden, herb gardens, sunken garden, reception garden, demonstration berms, seasonal display berms, shade garden, color rooms, prairie, woodland walk, gazebo garden, arboretum, entrance garden and children’s garden.

The grounds collection includes over 2,500 varieties of perennials, 400,000 spring-blooming bulbs representing over 1,000 varieties, and over 1,000 varieties of trees and shrubs. In addition, 100,000 annuals representing over 800 varieties are planted each year. Over 400 volunteers log in more than 15,000 hours each year.

The entrance to Rotary Botanical Gardens flies three flags: the American flag, the Wisconsin flag, and the flag of Rotary International, a symbol of peace and understanding. The sculpture near the Parker Education Center is entitled “Dialogue: World Peace Through Friendship”. Rotary Botanical Gardens is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

## RECORDING VOLUNTEER HOURS:

It is very important to record your volunteer hours, as this information is used for calculating our total volunteer base, obtaining grants, issuing complimentary garden memberships, and recognizing outstanding service by individual volunteers. Volunteer Record books are located at the information desk in the Parker Center and the break room of the Horticultural Building. The first time you volunteer start a new sheet with your name and personal information at the top and file alphabetically. It’s best to keep your sheet updated each time you volunteer, however if you prefer to keep track of your hours at home we recommend you record your hours into our log sheets monthly. Remember, work you do for the Gardens at home still counts and should be recorded! See staff with any questions regarding logging your hours.

## HOURS OF OPERATION:

The Gardens are open from dawn to dusk year round. Admission is charged from April 15 through October 31. The first Wednesday of every month is a free admission day, as well as one week in the Spring and one week in the Fall. Participants in the Friends program have access at no charge. Rotary Botanical Garden also participates in AHS reciprocity with other gardens (see [www.ahs.org](http://www.ahs.org)). To view detailed admissions hours, check the website at [www.rotarygardens.org](http://www.rotarygardens.org).

## PARKING:

Parking is available in the main parking lot in front of the Parker Center. If the lot is full, parking is also allowed on Palmer Drive. Enter the Parker Center to check in and access the Gardens. For those volunteering to work on the grounds or at plant sales, parking is available at the Horticulture Building. Access to the Gardens is through the east entrance motorized gate. Please see staff to determine how to access this gate. During special events, additional parking will be created on the golf course driving range.

## CLOSINGS:

In the event the Gardens are closed due to weather or other emergency conditions we will contact WCLO (AM 1230) and the Janesville Gazette ([www.gazetteextra.com](http://www.gazetteextra.com)) to make this information available to the public.

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## GIFT SHOP

Assist sales of a wide variety of beautiful and unique garden related items in the gift shop. You will be trained to use a cash register. The gift shop is open every day, with morning, afternoon and early evening shifts available. In addition to gift shop duties these volunteers support the staff by directing phone calls and answering visitor questions. If you are interesting in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Coordinator.

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## OFFICE SUPPORT

Put your office experience to good use by volunteering to help the office staff in a variety of duties, including preparing mailings, data entry and making phone calls. Call the Volunteer Coordinator to volunteer.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

Perfect for those who can't offer help on a regular basis, but would like to volunteer at specific times of the year. There are a multitude of annual events requiring volunteer assistance, such as the Spring and Fall plant sales, dinner dance, home garden tour, Halloween walk, Taste of Chocolate dinner and the Holiday Light Show. These events are held either at the Horticulture Center or the Parker Education Center. Check the calendar to see what might interest you. The Rotary Botanical Garden's website, [www.rotarygardens.org](http://www.rotarygardens.org), and the Horticulture Director's blog, [www.rotarygardens.blogspot.com](http://www.rotarygardens.blogspot.com) are both excellent sources of information about upcoming events, or contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION/BACKGROUND CHECKS:

As a new volunteer, you will receive a packet which includes a personal information form and a background check consent form. These should be filled out and returned to the Volunteer Coordinator. All information will remain confidential and not be shared with any other groups. Please report any changes in your address, telephone number or email address to the Volunteer Coordinator.

## WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Volunteers are the Garden's greatest resource. Special talent such as gardening experience is always a bonus, but definitely not a requirement. A willingness to learn, to do your best and to take pride in your work goes a long way when volunteering at Rotary Botanical Gardens! Whether it's weeding in the garden, cashiering in the gift shop, taking tickets at a special event or guiding school children on a tour of the gardens, there is a volunteer job (or jobs!) that is right for you. Our volunteer coordinator can discuss volunteer options with you and guide you to the area that fits you best.

## VOLUNTEER BENEFITS:

Some of the benefits of volunteering:

- Utilize the skills and talents you already have.
- Receive practical hands-on experience.
- Meet other people with similar interests.
- Enhance and improve the community in which you live.
- Enjoy healthful exercise in a beautiful outdoor environment.
- Add dimension and continuity to your work resume.
- Be an integral part of a friendly gardening community.

In addition, regular volunteers are invited to the Spring and Fall Volunteer Recognition Potlucks, and also receive a subscription to The Grapevine, our quarterly newsletter. Volunteers who work 36 hours or more in a given year receive a complimentary single membership for the following year, which includes a 10% discount in the Cottage Garden Gift Shop, RBG plant sales and selected educational programs.

## VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS:

Volunteers are goodwill ambassadors for the Gardens. Most volunteer jobs are very visible to the public. Please display good judgment and dress appropriately for your volunteer job.

Volunteers are encouraged to purchase a volunteer t-shirt, or they can wear a Rotary Botanical Gardens visor provided to them at no cost by the Gardens. Courtesy and good conduct are expected of all staff and volunteers. Arrive on time for your volunteer assignment. If you're unable to fulfill a shift obligation, please call the contact person as soon as possible. Please take good care of all equipment and tools. Admission to the garden is allowed only during your volunteer time. If you'd like to visit the garden at any other time, please purchase an admission ticket, or better yet, become a member of the Garden (and remember, you will receive a complimentary single membership for the following year after volunteering 36 hours in a given year). Above all, enjoy your time volunteering and have some fun!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

### ASSIGNED GARDENERS

Take care of your own specific area on your own schedule. We ask a minimum of two hours per week during the growing season. If you are interested, call the Horticulture Director at (608) 754-1779 and set up a time to view available garden areas.

### GENERAL GARDENING

If you have some free time, call our Horticulture Director to arrange volunteer time. While we prefer some notice, we can frequently find a project for those who give short notice or just drop by. The grounds staff is at the Gardens from 7 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, but volunteers are not limited to those times; we can accommodate all schedules.

### GRUMPIES

Short for "Grumpy Old Men," this historic group of volunteers (men and women) has existed since the inception of the gardens. Grumpies are involved with many gardening activities in addition to special event preparation, painting, carpentry, equipment repair, etc. We're always in need of more volunteers to join this informal and fun group. This group meets at the Horticulture Center on Monday and Thursday mornings from 8 a.m. to noon, with a 10 a.m. coffee break.

### SATURDAY WORKDAYS

These group workdays on select Saturdays (see calendar for dates) run from 8 a.m. to noon (with a donut break at 10 a.m.!). Meet at the Parker Education Center and come prepared to work outdoors. Bring gardening gloves and we'll supply the tools.

### SUNDAY WATERING CREW

Small crews are needed to water containers in the Gardens on Sundays. Participants can sign up for any number of Sunday slots. A training session is provided in Spring. Contact our Horticulture Director to sign up.

### TOUR GUIDES

Lead interpretive walks through the garden for visiting groups. Learn and teach about the history and design of the Gardens. Knowledge of the individual plants is not necessary, although you will learn some along the way! Training and support is provided. Contact our Director of Education at (608) 752-3885 ext. 17.