

Our Love Affair with the Denver Botanic Gardens

by Kenita Gibbins

The ideas for the Denver Botanic Gardens started in 1951. George and I became curious one summer night in 1963. We lived near the construction site. We spotted a place in the fencing we could actually climb! We spotted no one guarding the grounds. With youth, adventuresome tendencies, we looked at each other, giggled, and made love.

Today we don't have to climb a fence to enjoy the gardens. Our favorite time is to arrive at 5:30 p.m. with our picnic and bottle of wine. There are picnic tables left outside the door of the ticket place. We eat by ourselves or with friends and then take the picnic paraphernalia back to the car. We also have a picnic backpack that George can carry into Gardens.

The Gardens stay open until 8:00 p.m. in the summer. I do advise you get advance tickets and make sure you haven't selected an event evening. Whenever we go I think about where the sun will be. The eating place near what I call the Monet pond has very good selections of food. My last lunch costs \$15, but I like ahi tuna.

The main reason I don't want you to miss going to the DBG this summer: Craig Ponzio of Evergreen has loaned 17 of his sculptures to the Gardens. The collection represents contemporary art. You will recognize some of the artists like Beverly Pepper (she has a sculpture outside the Denver Art Museum), and Auguste Rodin. My favorite sculpture is on the path to the right of the Odyssey statue when you first arrive. It is sculpted in shining black and the man is holding the woman out from himself. The placement shows perfectly in a lovely forest setting.

Yes, the flowers never fail to be diverse, beautiful and alluring. I particularly like the water lilies when a mallard swims near. I must tell you that the water lilies fold up in the evenings. The Gardens have something to offer no matter what time of the day. The admission price is \$9.50 for seniors. We think a membership pays off for us. That means on Saturday or Sunday we can get in at 8:00 a.m. and I can get the best daylight time for photographing. The Denver Botanic Gardens also owns DBG at Chatfield and Mount Goliath on the route to Mount Evans. A friend and we plan to go see the lavender farm at Chatfield July 20. Online you can order tickets in advance for tours. I will always recommend tours, but strolling in beauty satisfies also.

I counted 37 places to play tourist in Denver including athletic events. Happy Summer.