

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
NEWS RELEASE
CHICAGO OFFICE OF TOURISM

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CHICAGO.... NATURALLY!

For more than 160 years, "Urbs in Horto," which is Latin for "city in a garden," has been Chicago's official motto. With more than 7,500 acres of parkland, two world-class conservatories, 26 miles of lakefront and 600 acres of nature areas, the city truly lives up to this motto.

Chicago is home to two beautiful conservatories, both located in the city's public parks. Garfield Park Conservatory, celebrating its centennial in 2008, at 300 N. Central Park Avenue, is the largest public horticultural collection under glass in the world. Garfield Park Conservatory features a new permanent exhibit called *Sugar From the Sun* that teaches the principle fundamentals of photosynthesis. Lincoln Park Conservatory, at 2391 N. Stockton Drive in Lincoln Park, has a collection that fills four greenhouses and includes a Scheellea Palm grown from seeds collected by the Field Museum in Brazil in 1926. Both conservatories host seasonal flower and garden shows and special events as well as offer excellent free information for visitors to experience self-guided tours.

Just north of the Lincoln Park Conservatory is the Notebaert Nature Museum (2430 N. Cannon Drive). Visitors can connect with the natural world through environmental programs and scientific learning, such as the Judy Istock Butterfly Haven, a 28-foot greenhouse filled, year-round, with butterflies from around the world. Also located nearby, at 2400 N. Cannon Drive, is the Lincoln Park Zoo, one of the nation's only remaining free zoos.

Since its debut in 2004, Millennium Park has hosted millions of people, making it one of the most popular destinations in Chicago. Among the public art and spectacular Jay Pritzker Pavilion sits the Lurie Garden. Designed by Gustafson Guthrie Nichols Ltd., Piet Oudolf and Robert Israel, this 2.5-acre garden was inspired by Chicago's transformation from flat and marshy origins to a bold and powerful city. Highlights of the garden include the dramatically lit, 15-foot-high "shoulder hedge." This physical representation of Sandburg's famous description of the "City of Big Shoulders" encloses the garden on two sides and protects the delicate perennial garden. A graceful hardwood footbridge over shallow water divides the garden diagonally between "light" and "dark" plates of perennial plants.

From nature hikes to fishing to bird watching, Chicago's parks provide visitors the opportunity to catch glimpses of wildlife in the big city. This year, the National Audubon Society designated the Lakefront from Montrose south to the city limits as "An Important Birding Area," which sanctions the area as a key habitat critical to bird conservation. Chicago parks are also home to four bird sanctuaries that focus on providing bird habitats, located in Jackson Park, Burnham Park, and two in Lincoln Park. In addition to bird sanctuaries, a wide variety of wildlife habitats exist in the city--from lagoons located at Gompers Park, to river-edge parks located at Ronan Park, to savannahs at West Pullman, to a wetland at South Shore Nature Sanctuary. For more information on these and other events in city parks, please visit the Chicago Park District's website, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com.

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Add One/Chicago... Naturally!

To see a more pastoral side of the city, head over to the North Park Village Nature Center located at 5801 N. Pulaski Road. This 46-acre nature preserve includes an educational facility and provides visitors with an opportunity to interact with wildlife, plants and other natural resources through environmental education and access to improved natural landscapes. The Nature Center also has several festivals throughout the year. The Maple Syrup Festival in March is one such festival, where festival goers can watch maple syrup being made the old fashioned way, enjoy the tasty syrup on top of homemade pancakes and participate in other activities.

Chicago also offers a number of opportunities to tour city gardens. Visit Millennium Park's Lurie Garden for a docent-lead tour on Sunday mornings from May-October. From June-September, the Greater North Michigan Avenue Association sponsors the annual *Gardens of the Magnificent Mile*, a self-guided tour of the gardens along this historic mile filled with shopping, museums and restaurants. Another yearly event is the *Sheffield Garden Walk* each July on Chicago's north side. It features self-guided tours of more than 100 gardens, a Garden Center, guided Architectural Tours, live entertainment by some of Chicago's finest bands, as well as food, drinks, and activities for children. The Chicago Office of Tourism's free *Chicago Greeter* visitor service also has several themed visits relating to nature in Chicago.

Visitors and Chicagoans planning to entertain out-of-town guests can receive Chicago brochures, reserve hotel accommodations and receive trip-planning assistance by calling toll-free 1.877.CHICAGO (1.877.244.2246), or visiting www.explorechicago.org. Brochures and information on Chicago's exciting events and activities are also available at the Visitor Information Centers. The centers are located at Chicago Water Works, 163 East Pearson Street at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 East Randolph Street. The TTY toll-free number for the hearing impaired is 1.866.710.0294.

The Chicago Office of Tourism, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the official City agency dedicated to promoting Chicago to domestic and international visitors and to providing innovative visitor programs and services.

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