

Explore Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden

BY ALAN HODGE Staff Writer
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Though it has only been open for just a little over 10 years, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is rapidly assuming a reputation as a world-class example of the gardener's art. Offering everything from meticulously groomed formal gardens to lush, natural meadowlands, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is a place of striking beauty.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden got its start back in 1989 when retired Belmont textile executive Daniel J. Stowe donated 450 acres of farmland and forest along with \$14 million to establish a botanical garden equal to any on the planet. The facility is located at 6500 S. New Hope Road near Belmont.

The first offering that DSBG gave visitors was 10 acres containing Butterfly and Children's Gardens. Visitation to that original 10 acre site was estimated at 35,000-40,000 annually and came from all 50 states and 14 foreign nations.

In October, 1999, DSBG opened an additional 100 acres of garden to the public. That event was attended by over 4,000 people and did much to pave the way for the Garden's eventual goal of a full 450 acres of botanical bounty. Special guest was Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent. Since the new acreage has been open, over 100,000 folks are expected to come calling this year. When the entire 450 acres is finished according to landscape architect Geoffrey Rausch's Master Plan, as many as 1 million people annually are expected.

Just as important as its environmental and aesthetic contributions, DSBG is also a main player in the area economy. When fully developed the Garden is expected to pump \$31.5 million into the region. DSBG also employs 50 full-time and part-time workers. Cost to complete the entire project, which will take several decades, is estimated at \$150-200 million.

One of the most striking current attractions at DSBG is a 13,500 square foot Visitor Pavilion. Erected at a cost of \$5 million, the Pavilion is fronted by 20 Tuscan columns and features a 22 foot, early 20th century stained glass dome over the foyer. Fronting the Visitor Pavilion are fountains, sculptures, and a reflecting pool. The Pavilion also houses a Garden and Gift Shop as well as reception and meeting facilities.

Though the Pavilion is a masterpiece, it's the astonishing variety of plants and flowers that bring folks to DSBG. Designated a Heritage Garden of North Carolina by the N.C. Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and Sports

Development, DSBG offers seven separate gardens areas of beautiful plants for visitors to enjoy.

Located near the Visitor Pavilion, the Four Seasons Garden is arranged around a large village green area and brick walkways. Plants in this area are selected for their ability to offer some degree of color and texture year round, especially in the cooler months when flowering plants begin to fade.

The Cottage Garden offers a glimpse into what a pre-1920s southern garden might have contained. Planted here are a variety of heirloom bulbs, annuals, shrubs and roses. Currently, many of the plants in bloom are purple and blue, giving this garden a cool, relaxing feel.

The Canal Garden is next on a tour of DSBG. Framed at either end by large fountains and separated down the middle by a 255-foot long reflecting pool, the Canal Garden has many tropical plants including banana, elephant's ear, hibiscus and canna. Placed in the canal last month, a series of large, terra cotta fish seem to be leaping out of the water.

As large as the other gardens combined, the Perennial Garden is made up of four separate sections divided like rooms by hedges. The Allee Garden features a water tunnel fountain and brightly colored flowers. The Scroll Garden has its plantings arranged in a spiral shape that gains in both width and height along its length.

The Ribbon Garden features plantings in vibrant, warm colors such as yellow and red, and is followed by the Serpentine Garden with another large fountain and color groupings of pink, burgundy, and blue. Like all 12 of the fountains at DSBG, the Serpentine Garden feature adds a dimension of sight and sound to the overall effect.

Looking past the Serpentine Garden, visitors can see the surrounding forest and fields where one day a large glass conservatory and other structures will be erected in the next phase of development at DSBG. Also on the Master Plan will be a Heritage Farmstead with log barn, clapboard house and appropriate gardens.

The next month or so has many special events planned at DSBG. August 5 will see the sixth annual Balloon Glow Festival occur from 4 p.m. until 9 p.m. In addition to the tethered hot air balloons, food vendors, antique sports cars, music and a variety of other attractions will be featured.

August 12 and 13, fans of hummingbirds can get a close look at those amazing creatures when special banding and lecture by The Hummer/Bird Study Group will take place each day at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Cost for Hummingbird Happenings is



Photos by Alan Hodge /THE HERALD

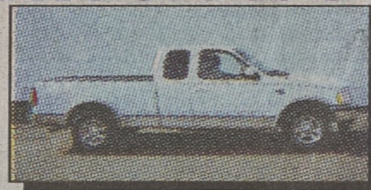
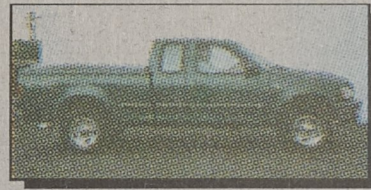




free with admission. September 16 will feature a class entitled "Harvesting Herbs, Flowers, and Seeds" from 1-2 p.m. Call 829-1271 for more information on these and other events and classes at DSBG.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is as vibrant, beautiful and growing as any plant on its premises. A vital link in the cultural present and future of

the entire Piedmont region, this showcase of the gardener's art is swiftly taking its rightful place among the treasures of North Carolina.

Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden is open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon until 5 p.m. Call 825-4490 for admission prices and other information.

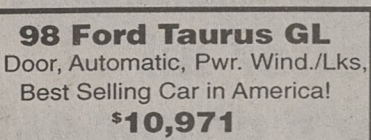
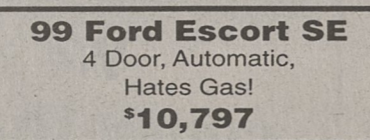
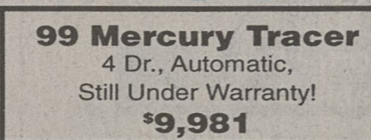



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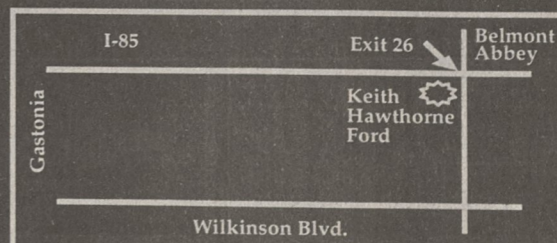
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