

SEPTEMBER 2025

CENTRAL
GARDENS
of NORTH IOWA

What's Growing On!

at Central Gardens of North Iowa

*There is a language, little known,
Lovers call it as their own.
Its symbols smile upon the land,
Wrought by nature's wondrous hand;
And in their silent beauty speak,
Of life and joy to those who seek
For Love Divine and sunny hours
In the language of the flowers.*

The Language of Flowers, London, 1875

FLOWER TALK

Across civilizations and throughout time, flowers express and awaken feelings, evoke emotions, and convey meanings that transcend words. Among the 22,000 blooms that adorn Central Gardens, three grow rich and are often featured in bouquets for Fresh on Friday and special events: the lily, the iris, and the rose. Together, these blooms form a kind of floral chorus, each with its own story yet united in their ability to express what is most deeply human.

The lily, with its luminous petals, has carried meanings of purity and renewal for millennia. In Christian tradition, it became a symbol of the Virgin Mary's grace, while in Greek mythology, it was born of Hera's milk—a flower both divine and human in origin. The lily whispers of life's cycles, mourning and rebirth, fragility and resilience. Their bulbs, which lie dormant underground during the winter before sending up brilliant stalks and flowers in spring or summer, are natural emblems of renewal. This symbolism found its way into Easter and funeral traditions, where lilies are commonly used to signify the restoration of the soul after death.

With its wide spectrum of colors, the iris derives its name from the Greek goddess who was believed to be the messenger between gods and humans, and the embodiment of the



rainbow. In ancient times, its three petals were thought to represent faith, wisdom, and valor. Today, the regal form of the iris still evokes a sense of dignity and clarity, a reminder of the courage found in honest expression. Their enduring symbolism connects them to messages of good news, hope, divine guidance, and remembrance.

Perhaps no flower is more storied—or more cultivated—than the rose. With fossil evidence suggesting roses are over 35 million years old and written records of their cultivation dating back at least 5,000 years, the rose is truly enduring. Throughout history, roses have carried connotations of love, beauty, passion, and secrecy. Its thorns remind us that love is rarely without challenge, yet its fragrance and form endure as the universal emblem of the heart, expressing what words often cannot.

The lily, the iris, and the rose. Our own histories echo in their blooms, telling tales of hope and courage, purity and renewal, passion and love, gratitude and abundance, resilience and strength, reminding us that nature always finds a way to speak to the heart.

Little things seem nothing, but they give peace, like those meadow flowers which individually seem odorless but all together perfume the air. - Georges Bernanos

TOUR OF THE UPPER MIDWEST: A GARDENERS ROAD TRIP

Members of Central Gardens of North Iowa can enjoy free admission to over 380 gardens and arboretums across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, 11 in Iowa, making a road trip to Iowa gardens a great option this fall. Enjoy the tour!

REIMAN GARDENS in Ames, IA. This year-round attraction features distinct indoor and outdoor gardens on a 17-acre campus.

Go to www.reimangardens.com to plan your visit.

GREATER DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN in Des Moines, IA.

A dynamic, innovative institution that pushes horticultural boundaries and activates its work through high quality guest experiences.

Visit www.dmbotanicalgarden.com for more information



THE BRENTON ARBORETUM in Dallas Center, IA. Inspiring joy through the beauty and knowledge of the natural world of trees.

You'll find more information at www.thebrentonarbooretum.org

IOWA ARBORETUM & GARDENS in Madrid, IA. Immerse yourself in a world of tranquility and botanical excellence. For more information, visit www.iowaarboretum.org

CEDAR VALLEY ARBORETUM & BOTANIC GARDENS in Waterloo, IA.

Features stunning displays of flowers and plants. Visit www.cedarvalleyarboretum.org for more information

VANDER VEER BOTANICAL PARK in Davenport, IA. Established in 1885, this 33-acre park features beautiful floral displays and much more. Visit www.davenportiowa.com for more information.

DUBUQUE ARBORETUM & BOTANICAL GARDENS in Dubuque, IA. Featuring a wide variety of gardens across 56 acres. Learn more about DABG at www.dubuquearboretum.net

SEED SAVERS EXCHANGE'S HERITAGE FARM in Decorah, IA. This 890-acre Heritage Farm offers gardens, orchards, trails, and more. Visit www.seedsavers.org for more information.

CENTRAL GARDENS OF NORTH IOWA in Clear Lake, IA. Round out your tour of Iowa gardens right here at Central Gardens! For more information, visit our website at www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com

Not a Member?

Join Central Gardens of North Iowa and enjoy

FREE OR DISCOUNTED ADMISSION

to over **360** gardens and arboretums across

North America and the Caribbean. Simply scan the

QR code to sign up and start planning your road trip today.





A Final Note:

For over 8 years, it has been my great pleasure to serve Central Gardens both as a volunteer and its development coordinator. As I conclude my 50th newsletter, and look forward to new adventures in retirement, I'm filled with the deepest thanks for the Gardens, for its people, its beauty, and for having been part of something of such importance in north Iowa.

Gratefully, Joni

*Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.
-F. Scott Fitzgerald*



2025 Corporate Members

DESIGNER (\$2,500 AND UP)



GARDENER (\$1,000 - \$2,499)



CARETAKER (\$500 - \$999)

- Bombie, Inc. (Bonnie Hall)
- Sail Inn
- Steve Wright Outdoor Lighting

PLANTER (\$250 - \$499)

- Bank Iowa
- Bergland + Cram Architects
- Brother's Ace Hardware
- Clear Lake Arts Center
- ControlPrint Creative
- Farmers State Bank
- Glen's Tire Service
- Holdredge Construction
- Jane Fischer & Associates
- Kevin Burtness Plumbing
- Lake Liquors
- Laurie Cook Photography
- Metalcraft, Inc.
- Pla-Ground Family Farms





Central Gardens of North Iowa
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Clear Lake, IA 50428

Address Service Requested

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES AT CENTRAL GARDENS

Central Gardens gates are open dawn to dusk each day through October 31. Come and enjoy free Bocce Ball and corn hole on the Activity Lawn. Follow us on Facebook or visit our website for information on upcoming activities, events, and programs coming up in the Gardens.

FRIDAYS, SEPTEMBER 5 AND 12, 9 AM – 11 AM

Fresh on Friday Bouquet Sales

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 4 PM – 6 PM

25th Anniversary Celebration. Free.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 5 PM – 6 PM

Picnics & Performances – The Nonsemble. Free.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 4 PM – 7 PM

Pumpkin Palooza. Free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31

Gates close for the season

