Good afternoon and thanks for joining us; I am Judy Simpson. One of the world's best and biggest botanical gardens this just a short drive north of Vermont in Montreal. The many gardens there serve as an inspiration, pleasant day outside, and a place to learn many new plants and plant design. Back with us today to give us a photo tour of the various parts of Montreal botanical gardens is our frequent guest from the University of Vermont, Extension Horticulturalist Leonard Perry. Welcome; this is always one of my favorite shows.

Leonard.: It's fun to be here, there's a lot of pretty pictures.

Judy.: Tell us how someone who hasn't been to the gardens what can they expect to see?

Leonard.: Montreal Botanical Gardens is right in downtown Montreal. It's amazing it's about 100 acres of gardens sitting on a big long rectangle. All kinds of gardens there 11 displays greenhouse plants from all over the world. It's actually we mentioned one of the best botanic gardens in the world. Most extensive as far as number of plants and even if people have been or haven't been in a few years it is always changing. I've been going for about 30 years and see a lot of changes and it always amazes me that designers and the combinations they put together there it's pretty phenomenal.

Judy.: So what did visitors see first.

Leonard.: Okay let's start our tour at the beginning. And when you go in at any of these you see a map on the side that's well marked and you can get a map in English or French. As you can see it's a big long up and down rectangle it's almost a mile. It takes me about 20 minutes to walk to the back. We will kind of do a clockwise tour starting in the lower left. If we just are at the beginning as you come off the subway in the springtime end of April, first of May. You can see the mass and there's not too many places in North America that you can see a mass of tulips in this case. There's the main building that dates back to the 1930s and here's the same area in the summertime if you go in the main entrance with all kinds of plantings. Again just to show some of the differences of different years here's the planting with many types of annuals. Again this changes very much yearly. Here is sweet potato vine on the right the golden sweet potato and then salvia the up right type of blue salvia fence and varied foliage textual plants like elephant...
ears in the back. A lot of great design. Closer to the building there's a fountain here it is in the springtime with tulips. You can see masses and everything's well labeled in the garden. Here's the same bed in the summertime in this case with New Guinea impatiens and one of the newer types of fountain grass an asedum purple leaf. Just a great entrance. If you come in off the parking lot here's the entrance you'll see going to the greenhouses. Here in 2011 they had some sculptures by famous international sculptors around the gardens here. Here's one in the summertime and then if you come back in the fall you see kale and mums. So again some of the main displays of annuals change and of course fountain grass. One of the things about the garden that we noticed the last one was a raised bed very good and accessible for wheelchairs. You have these green dots around and those are paths and parts of the garden that are accessible for people that are physically challenged. Right in the courtyard of the main building you'll find this garden. This is a sensory garden again setup for wheelchairs but also people that are sight impaired. Signs with Braille and all kinds of nice herbs that you can feel and touch. Even some of the ones with different textures like thorns and soft fuzzy leaves. It's a fun area.

Judy.: You mentioned greenhouses, do they have a new greenhouse?

Leonard.: The greenhouse is right behind the main building and there are 11 of these display greenhouses. They have many in the back that they produce plants and bring them in as they are in full bloom. Let's take a look at some of those. These are in a long pattern as you see here you come in the center. To the right is the main display you'll see at the end. I will start off in the center and go to the left. What they've done in recent years they've been renovating one. This one used to be pretty much bromeliads. Now it's a tropical rainforest. And you see Spanish moss as well as a lot of bromeliad but things that like the very humid climate. So they're changing some of the greenhouses to be more habitat-specific. This one was changed in recent years it's the economic house. They updated it in you can now walk up top like this and look down. It has cinnamon and coffee and some of the different plants of economic importance like bananas. This is one of my favorites, the orchids. You walk in and the orchids are always changing there's always ones in bloom they're very well labeled. Very unusual orchids here that are very easy to see right up near the path. At the end of that there's the fern house with all kinds of different ferns. Stack horn ferns and tree ferns. One of the newest renovated opened in 2012 brand new is gesneriads and begonias two of their major collections in the gardens, again just hundreds of different ones on display there. Of course this tells us what it is it's cacti and succulents but a whole host of cacti just quite a collection in the stall house. Inside there are some bonsai and this greenhouse as your head into the main display. Again this one changes yearly. In the fall they have a pumpkin display with painted pumpkins by kids and they have a contest. That is worth seeing too. That's just a quick overview of the greenhouses.

Judy.: Oh my goodness. What are some of the events at the gardens?

Leonard.: Of course the gardens have a great gift shop. They have a library a lot of people don't know about its great if you really want to look up some things and take a break from the heat outside or whatever. Of course they have that's really nice. Take a look outside it's great to go outside of the cafe area and sit out amongst the flowers. I brought a picture of that with the springtime Magnolia in bloom as you see here with tulips underneath. It's a wonderful place to sit in the springtime and enjoy this area. On the other side is a Turkish peace garden. Those are
special iznick tiles from Turkey. This was designed in conjunction with the Turkish community as a lot of the gardens are ethnic gardens they are working with the local ethnic groups. It's interesting it's tulips. Tulips originate in Turkey so very appropriate to see a springtime and then the same bed in the summer with all the blues matching the tiles with ageratum and salvias hanging baskets and then whites. This year with white impatiens and those are papyrus that all plants in there. Changes in different years. Again coming from the other side of the cafe at the end down in a very long walk you see in this case it looks like marigolds and salvias and some cardoons down there. Another year some begonias and ornamental grasses as well as some foliage. Then turning around and going the other way new ideas new plants on display can see a host here such as these huge baskets of white and foliage of the coleus. There's just a lot of plants and ideas you can get. Here's a path of white baby's breath and again foliage. Foliage is very big in recent years so. And then of course, when flowers are very big may have a nice collection of different ones of the echinacea or cone flowers. Of course quite a few different vegetables grouped by type of whether the beets are carrots are cabbage is you see beans tomato. You can really see all the types. Across the road is another garden which has edible plants. It has herbs. There also from plants in there. And then at the end of this long walk there's a few of the specialty gardens. There's a monastery garden and this happens to be a poisonous plants garden. When you go in you can see the sign don't touch. This things like poison ivy so you can really learn what it looks like.

Judy.: They grow poison ivy?
Leonard.: They grow poison ivy behind a cage so you can see what looks like.

Judy.: The gardens then are all concentrated near the greenhouses and restaurant?

Leonard.: Those are the specialty gardens that we just saw. There's a lot more and we can take a look at those. Again we're still in the lower left and we're going clockwise up and around the big long rectangle of the garden. Let's take a look there starting with the alpine garden if you venture a little further past the ones we just saw. This has plants grouped by alpine regions of the world. You'll have Europe and North America. They have water features. This is a new one with this up right slabs crevice gardening. And plants in these little bitty microclimates in between the crevices when you enter this alpine garden. Of course lilacs in the springtime they have a lilac garden next to the alpines and then across the way is a shrub garden and this happens to be in September so there's still a lot to see in the fall in the shrub collection. It is a very nice collection there. Then moving back across in the center part of the gardens this is one of the newer ones. It's been there for a few years now but it's in a wooded area. The first nations garden. A tribute to the original peoples of Canada which are depicted there. Of course they lived off the woods and wild plants and like a lot of gardens and buildings there have exhibits and a lot of information of course a lot of plant science and that's a wonderful very different type of garden. Just right next to it is this more traditional but informal garden called a flowery brook. It's maybe an acre or more. In midsummer or July all daffodils and daylilies as you see here and to some other plants for color lilies and iris early on. This leads this flowery brook into the pond which is just a lovely place to see some people sitting relaxing. Looking across the pond two arboretum from the other side. In the springtime this is a lovely walk it reminds me of what you might see in Europe and France for instance going around the pond two the arboretum on the other side. In the back of the arboretum the arboretum is Arbor trees and their collection by genus so you have oaks and pines and ashes and this type of collection. Here's another one of those sculptures and some evergreens junipers and so forth. And in the very back corner
appropriate for an arboretum is what they called a tree house. It's not in a tree but it is kind of like a tree museum if you will. You can go inside and see native trees of North America depicted on these boards. You can see their bark leaves and learn these plants and in their courtyard you see banzai done with native American trees. That's unique feature well worth a walk way to the back of the gardens. Then walking back specially in the springtime you see crab apples and other plants in bloom such as Emmalake. Don't miss on the side of the garden. This is in the summer and late fall the shade garden which is a wonderful place to walk through to get ideas of how to use color in the shade to brighten it up. Then one that's been there for many years I've always enjoyed is the water garden aquatic a garden. All kinds of water plants and you can actually walk down among the beds down lower so there at chest high and you can see these plants close up. That's a great idea for water plants. Then almost back to the beginning going clockwise there's a rose garden. In the spring you can see the layout of the beds where they have over 8000 or 10,000 roses. Very immaculate these are more modern ones but they also have an area with shrub roses and old fashion roses. And finely back that the entrance or if you go right the other way they have a new building dedicated to research and in front they have a gallery and when it opened in 2011 this is exhibit by a botanist in Quebec who actually by supported the province painted wallflowers. That's what these are paintings of. 2012 exhibit is one of the founders Victoria of the gardens who would back in the middle of the last century did plant explorations to Cuba and brought plants back so it's a tribute to him.

Judy.: My gosh you could spend days and not see everything.

Leonard.: You really can even a day I get overwhelmed and that's about all I can take but you don't see it all.

Judy.: They haven't shown us photos that you usually show in the fall of the Chinese Garden.

Leonard.: That's correct there's three gardens that I saved for last and they're probably some of the most famous gardens there. Will take a look at those gardens and exhibit if you will. Not necessarily a garden. But of course the Japanese Garden has been there awhile now. It's done more to contemporary style you see here a lot of traditional elements in the building like a lot of these main gardens have buildings. There's a library and a stone and say and meditation garden. There's actually a T house where you can go in the summer for tea ceremonies as a library and an exhibit there. In the back is I find one of the more peaceful gardens. Very horizontal in scope and you see a lot of traditional elements. They have koi in the pond. Next to it as a Chinese Garden which is done in the Ming Dynasty period from much earlier. A lot of traditional elements that you'd see in that type of garden with peaked roofs. They have lovely pangenics in their courtyard which is the predecessor to the bonsai the Chinese version if you will of the banzai and here's the main building where they have exhibits on rice and bamboo. Each year changes some important crop or feature of their culture and agriculture there. And of course you mentioned in the fall we always show the lantern exhibit. That changes each year. These are made out of silk in China. Designed in Montreal made in China and shipped over and assembled. It opens in the fall. By day that's the exhibit and by night you can see the same exhibit what it looks like glowing. It's worth seeing both by day and by night. Finally across the way from the Chinese Garden is the insectarium. The museum for insects the design actually looks like insects. On the inside looks like the inside of a plant you see a spider web. This is a montage of all types of different insects mounted there and they have insects to both alive behind cages of course as well as mounted like that then outside even in the fall Chinese lanterns insects pollinating flowers.
Judy.: That's amazing. That's a great tour. How does someone find out more information about the gardens?

Leonard.: On my web site perrysperrnials.info I've done pictures for many years on the gardens under the garden section. And in the Montreal Garden section I have a link to their web site so that's an easy way to find it. My website of course is in English and French. It gives hours and directions and all you need to know.

Judy.: I can only imagine how many people must work there to keep these gardens up.

Leonard.: It is truly amazing.

Judy.: Specially the fact that it changes every year that fascinates me.

Leonard.: It is it's well worth seeing even if you've seen it before because it's so much different each year as far as new plants and flower combinations as well as these exhibits.

Judy.: Thanks for the tour always fun. That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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