

Canada to participate in the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show in London

Canada will be represented this year at the Chelsea Flower Show, May 20 - 25, with representatives of the Canadian Orchid Congress, Ottawa Orchid Society and the Southern Ontario Orchid Society attending. The Canadian Delegation will be a part of:

Orchids in The Wild - The Beauty of Nature, Great Britain, India and North America.

Orchid Conservation Chelsea invited Canada to join in the International effort to carry the message of Orchid Conservation for native plants in Canada. Canada's diverse landscapes of mountains, prairie and boreal forests are home to an amazing variety of native orchids to Canada. Their habitat protection is vital to the protection of Canada's natural beauty and healthy environment.

Canada is home to many orchids, all of which are terrestrial. Some are showy and photogenic such as the well-known lady's slippers which are currently in flower or coming into their flowering season. Many others are inconspicuous and easily overlooked by the casual observer. Some are found only in the deep seclusion of almost impenetrable fens and quaking bogs with lots of mosquitoes for company, while others are waiting yet to be discovered. Our native orchids live in habitats that are very special to their needs. They do not survive moving to other locations, and many are endangered, at risk of extinction as native habitat is lost to industrial uses, agriculture and urban expansion and development.

Canada is represented at the Chelsea Show by several of the major orchid organizations in Canada. We carry the message of our precious resource and indicate some of the conservation activities being carried out in Canada to preserve this precious heritage.

The Canadian Orchid Congress - COC

Founded 35 years ago, the Canadian Orchid Congress (COC) is an association of Canadian orchid societies dedicated to serving the Canadian orchid-growing public. The COC represents affiliated orchid societies, currently 27, and their members. Through their website the COC helps to promote the cultivation of orchids through exhibitions, publications, lectures, and seminars. COC supports the conservation of orchids both nationally and worldwide. The COC makes awards in the form of medals or trophies for excellence in the development and culture of orchids.

<https://canadianorchidcongress.ca/conservation/cocconserv/>

Southern Ontario Orchid Society – SOOS

The Southern Ontario Orchid Society is based in Toronto, Ontario. For nearly 60 years SOOS has been supporting the orchid growing enthusiasts of southern Ontario with an annual Show and Sale and monthly educational meetings about orchid culture and collecting. Since 2010, SOOS has donated over \$100,000 toward conservation acquisition and stewardship projects. In 2021, SOOS co-sponsored an *orchid-gami* with the Orchid Species Preservation Foundation (OSPF) of Edmonton, Alberta. Through this project developed by the Smithsonian's North American Orchid Conservation Center (NAOCC), SOOS has been able to provide an educational tool to talk about conservation for schools and nature-based organizations. SOOS continues to look for new opportunities to promote orchid conservation in Ontario. <https://soos.ca/conservation/>
<https://northamericanorchidcenter.org/orchid-gami/>

Ottawa Orchid Society -OOS

The Ottawa Orchid Society operates in Ottawa, Canada's capital city. Founded in 1978, the Ottawa Orchid Society's aim is to promote and assist in every way the knowledge, appreciation, culture, study, development, improvement, and conservation of orchids. Conservation funds raised by OOS help to support the stewardship of the Purdon Conservation Area, the largest known colony of Showy Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*) in Canada with historically over 15,000 blooms. The OOS conservation committee is currently working with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA), the stewards of Purdon Conservation Area, to protect and preserve this colony and additionally focuses on conservation education in areas in and around Ottawa.

<https://ottawaorchidsociety.com/conservation/>

John Alexander is the conservation contact for the Canadian Orchid Congress and the Southern Ontario Orchid Society and a member of the Ottawa Orchid Society conservation committee. He is also a member of several field naturalist groups in Ontario. John lives in Toronto.

Dr. Jean Hollebhone is a Past President and active member of the conservation committee of the Ottawa Orchid Society and has held executive positions in the American Orchid Society. Jean lives in Ottawa.

Jean and John are looking forward to participating in the Orchid Conservation exhibit and sharing their knowledge of Canadian orchids and the importance of conservation of these amazing species.

Here is a sampling of conservation projects in Canada:

The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA), are the stewards of Purdon Fen. They work with the Ottawa Orchid Society to perform ongoing monitoring and plant conservation of the Showy Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium reginae*) orchids at the fen.

<https://mvc.on.ca/conservation-areas/purdon/>

The Native Orchid Conservation Inc (NOCI) based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has worked with The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Weston Foundation to preserve the native tall grass prairie habitat of the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*) in southern Manitoba.

<https://www.nativeorchid.org/>

The Orchid Species Preservation Foundation (OSPF) in Edmonton, Alberta is a repository of orchid species and promotes orchid conservation and education. <https://orchidspecies.ca/#>

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's unifying force for nature, working to deliver large-scale, permanent land conservation. Their largest project in Ontario to date was the Vidal Bay Forests and Shoreline on Manitoulin Island. They actively work to preserve land on the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, the largest diversity of native orchids north of Florida with approximately 44 species recorded. <https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/>

Many of the researchers and conservation entities active in Canada are part of the growing orchid conservation alliance established by the Smithsonian's North American Orchid Conservation Center (NAOCC), which is active in promoting and assisting conservation research and educational outreach in both Canada and the US. They have an active collaboration with the OSPF, have consulted on various orchid conservation efforts in Canada and supported NOCI in their efforts to

preserve the Small White Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium candidum*) in Manitoba, and have worked with the COC, and with Pinegrove Productions on a Landowner education film about orchid conservation in Ontario. <https://northamericanorchidcenter.org/>



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