

RM of Glenella-Lansdowne

Lansdowne Heritage Resources & Tourism Committee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fresh crocus photos to get prizes at Arden

It's time to take fresh pictures of the Manitoba prairie crocus.

More than \$500 in prize money is available for winners in the 2016 Crocus Photo Contest at Arden MB. Entries close at midnight Saturday, April 29. Photos will be printed, judged and displayed a week later at Arden's Crocus Festival on Saturday, May 6.

Lansdowne Heritage Resources & Tourism Committee (LHRTC) sponsors the annual contest in conjunction with a photography store. This year's commercial sponsor, Dons Photo, will print the entries for the LHRTC.

Contest photos must be as fresh as the season - taken in April, anywhere in Manitoba. Normal full-bloom stage is about a week on either side of April 15.

Photographers usually focus on open, full blooms. Crocus buds also can make a captivating photo, says John Dietz, event organizer.

Prairie crocus can be found at many scattered, unmarked patches in Manitoba. The fragile, mauve-colored wildflower prefers sandy, sunny and undisturbed native grassland.

Arden still has a few acres at the north end of the village where thousands of crocus blooms can be found normally for a few days. They also bloom close to the CPR tracks. Visiting photographers are welcome.

Arden is located 6 km north of the Yellowhead Highway, about 160 km northwest of Winnipeg.

Two events for prizes

The photo contest is open for all residents of Manitoba, except professional photographers. Sponsors put up cash for 16 prizes in four categories, with separate competitions for youth and adults.

It is free to enter the photo contest, and free to attend the Crocus Festival in Arden's Community Hall on Saturday, May 6.

Entry rules can be obtained from the municipal website www.ardenmb.ca. Previous winners are displayed on the site.

The LHRTC actually has two fee-free competitions for the crocus photographers.

For the first event, a University of Manitoba honors degree graduate in photography will judge the entries on artistic merit.

The popular second event is a People's Choice competition.

All of the printed photo entries are displayed in the Arden hall. Crocus Festival visitors participate by selecting a single favorite youth, and adult, photo. In 2016, the gallery displayed approximately 180 entries.

Supporting this second event is the People's Choice Award, sponsored by the Manitoba Cooperator newspaper. People's Choice winners are published by the farm newspaper and awarded \$50 each.

The Background Information

Entries are made in four classes: portraits of a single crocus flower, portraits of crocus clusters (3 or more flowers), portraits of crocus in its natural prairie habitat, and creative crocus portraits that don't fit the other classes.

Entries are only being accepted in digital format. They must be submitted by email before midnight, April 29 to: crocusphotocontest@gmail.com .

The crocus photo contest is a 'natural' for Arden, says Dietz. "People love to photograph the Prairie Crocus. This contest gives them a chance to display and share their photos. We expect to see some stunning photography, and a lot of good-natured discussion in the new crocus photo gallery."

The Arden Crocus Festival began in 2001. It is held on the first Saturday in May. The Crocus Photo Contest began in 2009.

Crocus festival visitors can take in a pancake breakfast and other family-oriented activities. It ends with a self-serve supper and local entertainment. Photo contest winners are announced after supper.

Arden, known as the Crocus Capital of Manitoba, has about 75 households. It is 16 km east of Neepawa and is centered in the farming region between Saskatchewan, North Dakota and the Red River. Arden is home to the World's Largest Crocus monument.

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For more information

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