

RM of Glenella-Lansdowne

Lansdowne Heritage Resources & Tourism Committee

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crocus photo contest marks 10th anniversary

It's about time to take fresh pictures of Manitoba's official wildflower, the wild prairie crocus.

Marking its tenth anniversary, the 2018 Wild Crocus Photo Contest is underway again at Arden MB. Digital entries will be accepted until midnight Saturday, April 28. Photos will be printed, judged and displayed a week later at Arden's annual Crocus Festival on Saturday, May 5, in the community hall. Approximately \$500 in prize money is available.

Lansdowne Heritage Resources & Tourism Committee (LHRTC) sponsors the annual photo contest in conjunction with a photography business. The commercial sponsor, Dons Photo, Winnipeg, prints the photo contest entries and donates them for LHRTC promotion.

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 still can be found in many unmarked locations around the province. The fragile, mauve-colored wildflower prefers sandy, sunny and undisturbed native grassland.

Arden has set aside a few acres at the north end of the village where thousands of wild Prairie crocus, and other native wildflowers, still bloom on native grassland. Crocus plants also bloom close to the CPR tracks in the village, and 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. Donors put up cash for 16 prizes in four categories, with separate competitions for youth and adults.

The photo contest is free to enter. The Crocus Festival program in Arden also is free to visitors.

Entry rules can be obtained online at www.ardenmb.ca or from the municipal website, www.glenella.ca. Previous winners are displayed on the two websites.

The LHRTC actually has two competitions for the avid crocus photographer.

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.

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.

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. The most popular receives the People's Choice Award.

"The first Crocus Photo Contest had 91 entries," Dietz says. "In 2016, we had a record 187 entries, with 149 in the adult section and 38 in the youth section. Conditions for the photography were excellent in 2016 and certainly played a role in setting the record. Last year, 2017, the contest was back to a 'normal' level with 90 photos from adults and 20 from youth."

He adds, "We would certainly like to see more youth participation, but the quality of the youth photos remains very high. They add a lot to the overall event."

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 28 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 150 residents. 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.

- 30 -

For more information

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