



2020 Northwest Buffalo Tour of Gardens July 17-18, 2020

Dear Tour of Gardens Gardener;

I hope this finds you well given the challenges we are all facing right now. If you are like many of us, the sunny days and slightly warmer weather is teasing us to get out, start digging and planting, and tending to the gardens we love so much, while at the same time Covid-19 is preventing us from continuing with everything, including our gardening, in a business as usual way.

I wanted to reach out to you to let you in on what we are planning regarding the 16th Annual Northwest Buffalo Tour of Gardens. Over the past month, the BRRAlliance has been busy making plans, changing plans, and creating contingency plans for all our programs and projects. In this time where there is no start and stop date for the spread of the virus here in Western New York, everything we are doing has to be fluid and have multiple plan options so that as things change with the pandemic, we can shift gears as well.

First let me say, that we believe the tradition of the Tour of Gardens should continue, not only to give gardeners an opportunity to show off the beauty of their hard work, but because for those that garden, it can be a much needed therapy to help restore our sense of normalcy and bring the hope that comes with new life and new growth back to our lives and the community.

With that said, and keeping in mind that this may not be “over” by mid-July, here is our plan:

- ❖ The *NWBTOG will be July 17-18* (we changed the dates over the winter).
- ❖ We are planning to have the traditional tour opportunities (night tours and a day tour) *if the threat of Covid-19 has passed and social distancing is no longer necessary.*
- ❖ We will have a **“Virtual NWBTOG”** option for all gardeners, regardless of the pandemic status, so that you can sign up and send us photos of your garden prior to the Tour and we will create a presentation and put it online for others to see and visit the gardens from the safety of their homes while keeping you safe as well.
- ❖ You choose how you want to participate: 1) have people come to see your garden if the threat of the virus has passed, or 2) have people visit your garden virtually through your photos, or 3) both should the medical experts give social interaction the thumbs up by then.

Remember, that while we are currently planning to host the NWBTOG in the traditional way, should Covid-19 still pose a threat to our community we will not be allowing in person visits and we will just host the virtual tour. If hosting a traditional tour is safe, you make the choice of one, or the other or both based on what you are comfortable doing. We encourage you to use this time to certify your garden as a NWF Habitat, and to follow the community guidelines for social distancing to minimize your risk and stay safe.

And finally, if you have any questions about the NWBTOG or any of our projects don't hesitate to reach out to me at 716-202-9070 or via email at brraconnection@outlook.com or visit our website at www.brralliance.org for more details.

Warm regards,
Anne McCooey
Program Manager, BRRAlliance