

THIS WEEK'S BUSINESS FOCUS

SAWTOOTH BOTANICAL GARDEN

11 GIMLET ROAD, OFF U.S. HIGHWAY 75
BETWEEN KETCHUM AND HAILEY

If you haven't turned off the highway into the Sawtooth Botanical Garden lately, you are missing something new. Every season brings a fresh cloak of color and flourish, nary a one worth missing.

Once you have parked within the oasis grounds, the experience you are seeking is determined by the path you choose.

If you are looking for a place to escape the day's busy hum, follow the stepping stones into the Garden of Infinite Compassion. Run your hands along the prayer wheel. Touch the scripted scroll and stay quiet allowing the bell's chime to resonate. Feel the peace that the Dalai Lama wished on the valley during his visit to Idaho in 2005.

Many lovely places to picnic are found among the flora and fauna. Grab a seat on one of the artfully sculpted benches and relax. Just don't be surprised if a butterfly or praying mantis makes a visit.

Kids love to meander along the stream and catch the water skippers. After that, they can go inside to explore the greenhouse, or visit the Discovery Corner to find age-appropriate activities and information about anything else they've happened across on their nature walk.

This is a place of perpetual rebirth and renewal, sanctity and preservation, as well as a copious source of information for everyone be it weekend gardener, hobby farmer or teacher trying to give dimension to a lesson plan. The Garden is here as a visual and educational guide to the possibilities.

Every year for the last nine, for example, hundreds of school children, their teachers and parents have flocked to the Bug Zoo to hold and shriek at the creepy crawlies and

engage in crafts that entertain and entice.

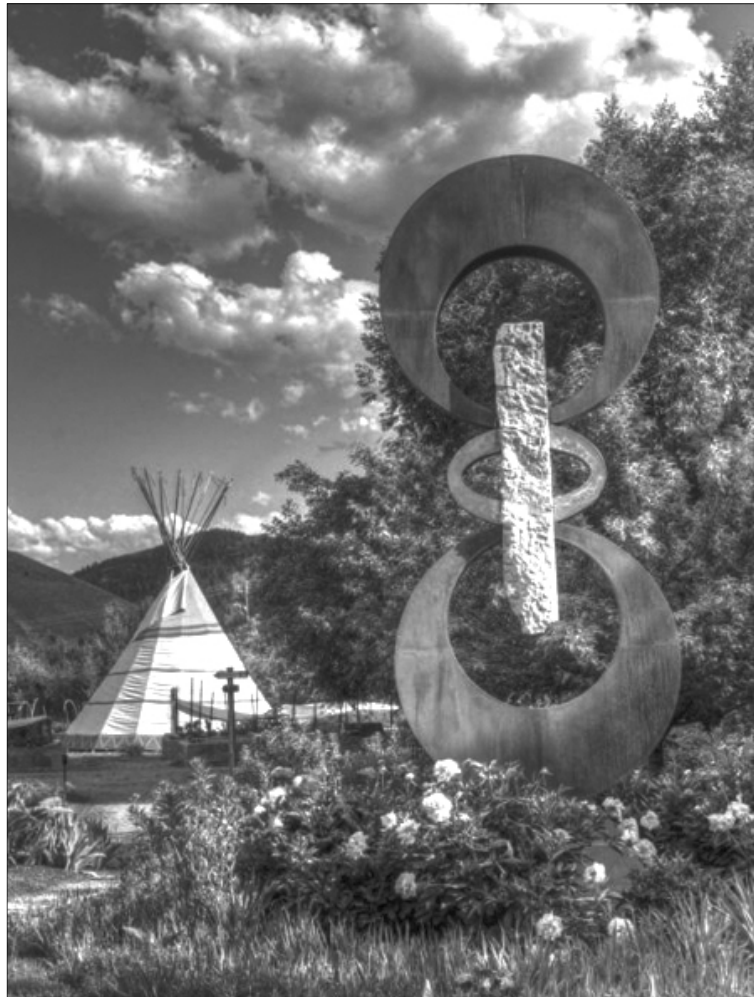
In the last year, this community resource of native and cultivated high altitude plants has added numerous elements to enhance the experience with the goal of representing five biomes, (plant communities) that adorn south central Idaho.

Visitors can enjoy walking through the displays of four of these communities of the High Altitude Steppe with riparian, sagebrush steppe, montane and alpine gardens. The montane garden, for example, showcases a variety of vegetation that thrives in this varied biome including aspen, lodge pole pine and tasty wild strawberries.

Lush perennial beds, lovingly tended by horticulturist Carol Blackburn, who's name is now on the extraordinary patch, gives one the feel of a lowland wildflower hike.

Thanks to Doreen Dorward Sadler and Sally Swanson, who gifted the Garden their book "Along Mountain Trails," there is a comprehensive, localized, wildflower guide available for purchase at the Garden and area bookstores for around \$15. The proceeds benefit the Garden and hikers have a beautiful and informative companion guide for years to come.

Go ahead, take that turn off the highway, you will always be surprised at what's happening at the Sawtooth Botanical Garden.



VITALS

YEARS OF SERVICE: **17**
EXEC DIR: **Carter Hedberg**
P: **208.726.9358**
W: **www.sbgarden.org**