

For Immediate Release

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**COME SEE OUR BLOOMS AT
THE ESSEX COUNTY PRESBY MEMORIAL IRIS GARDENS**
Events begin Friday, May 6

Upper Montclair, NJ (2016) – Come see our blooms at the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens. It is our 89th year of presenting the public with an unforgettable display of bearded iris, known as the ‘Rainbow on the Hill.’ Families, couples, artists, photographers, and iris lovers marvel at the sight of thousands of iris in bloom each May.

The Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens is internationally renowned as the largest public iris garden in the United States, with display beds containing nearly 1,500 iris varieties (around 14,000 plants) that produce over 100,000 blooms. It is a living museum of botanical preservation with some varieties dating back to the 1500s and is listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Sites.

“The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens welcomes spring with its landmark display of blooms,” said Nancy Skjei-Lawes, Board President of the Citizens Committee of the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens. “And this year, we are especially looking forward to the arrival of the American Iris Society. We can’t wait for the American Iris Society to see the history of bearded iris unfold in our rainbow display as well as the 887 guest convention iris. We hope visitors and convention goers will enjoy the blooms and delight in our honey bee yard.”

“The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens is recognized internationally for their horticultural and historical significance. Our unique public-private partnership preserves and protects this New Jersey treasure. We look forward to sharing this wonder with iris enthusiasts from across the country and around the world. We invite the public to come out and enjoy the dazzling display of colors on the ‘Rainbow on the Hill,’ and support the Citizens Committee’s work to maintain this valuable resource,” Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. said.

In addition to the spectacular iris display, visitors will be invited to peruse the Bloom Room gift shop which will be open with an exciting mix of affordable house, garden and iris-related items. Presby’s Iris Plant Sale will offer iris dug from our own gardens. Our popular Mother’s Day luncheon will be offered. A complete schedule of events is listed below.

Events are free and open to the public. For more information about the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens and 2016 activities, visit www.presbyirisgardens.org. Also, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Flickr.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Bloom Room Gift Shop Opens & Iris Plant Sale

Friday, May 6 through Sunday, May 8 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Bloom Room Gift Shop features an exciting mix of affordable home and garden accents. Potted and bare root irises from our collection are available for purchase.

Visitors may also reserve summer grab bags.

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 8 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Enjoy the day with Mom at Presby. Treat her to a special iris or item from our Bloom Room Gift Shop. Enjoy a free music program. A special luncheon is planned; check our website for ticket information.

Anticipated Bloom Season

Thursday, May 12 through Friday, June 3 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Bloom season begins its annual display starting with our "minis" bearded collection, then to our famed tall bearded irises and ends with our non-bearded irises. The Bloom Room Gift Shop is open. Visitors may purchase potted and bare-root irises from our collection. Check our website for peak bloom status.

Family Garden Party

Saturday, May 21 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Essex County Family Garden Party is a free community event sponsored by Essex County Parks with entertainment, crafts, face painting, booths from local organizations such as the Essex County Environmental Center and Master Gardeners, and various food trucks. A student art exhibit will also be featured. Rain date: Sunday, May 22.

Live Jazz Music

Weekends during Bloom Season from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

TaikoZoku Japanese Drumming Show

Sunday, May 15 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens is located at 474 Upper Mountain Avenue in Upper Montclair, New Jersey. **During bloom season**, admission is a suggested \$8 donation to help fund garden costs. The Gardens are open daily from dawn until dusk.

For more information about the 2016 bloom season:

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About the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens: *The Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens is the largest public iris garden in the United States. Located at the base of Mountainside Park in Upper Montclair, the Gardens contain nearly 14,000 irises of around 1,500 varieties and produce over 100,000 blooms each May. It is a LIVING MUSEUM of botanical preservation with some varieties dating back to the 1500s and is lovingly referred to by locals as the Rainbow on the Hill. Adjacent to the Gardens is the historic Walther House, a circa 1865 building which acts as headquarters for Citizens Committee offices and houses the Bloom Room gift shop. The overall site is listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Sites and is also a facility of the historic Essex County Parks System. The Citizens Committee maintains the everyday operations of the gardens.*