

# TAIL ETIQUETTE AND SAFETY GUIDELINES



**ROYAL  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS**  
[www.rbg.ca](http://www.rbg.ca)



Royal Botanical Gardens protects 10-square kilometres of nature sanctuary in the Hamilton/Burlington area. Home to thousands of plant species, a provincially significant Class 1 Wetland, and over 40 rare and endangered plants and wildlife — it is listed as an environmentally sensitive area. Royal Botanical Gardens trails entice visitors into nature so that they may enjoy what it has to offer. However, these nature sanctuaries are in serious danger of being loved to death by people who use them.

**Trail use guidelines** have been developed for the safety and enjoyment of our visitors as well as for the protection of our natural environment. Our actions have a definite, quantifiable impact on the environment around us. By maintaining a minimal impact approach with respect to trail usage, we can avoid implications such as soil compaction and erosion, spreading invasive species and wildlife habitat alteration.

Rules and guidelines are posted at official trailheads on all Royal Botanical Gardens properties and are designed to preserve and protect the trail system and promote enjoyable use of the natural areas.

- Making new trails or using closed or unmarked trails damages vegetation, causes erosion and disturbs animal habitat.
- Invasive species, like garlic mustard, are spread further into undisturbed areas, putting more stress on the ecosystem.
- Royal Botanical Gardens occasionally closes trails that are dangerous or causing damage to sensitive habitats. When this happens, signs are posted.

## **Please keep dogs leashed at all times and pick up after your dog**

Keeping dogs on leash is the law. Our bylaws require that pets must be leashed at all times. Those breaking this law may be fined.

- Free running dogs can cause a great deal of damage by disturbing vegetation, nesting birds and other small animals.
- They can foster the spread of invasive species by dispersing their seed.
- We want everyone hiking our trails to have an enjoyable experience, some people are afraid of dogs.

*Your impact is multiplied one to two hundred times every day of the year!*

*Please respect our efforts to protect sensitive environments! Obey all posted signs and stay on marked trails.*

## **Respect the natural environment**

Please do not take plants or animals from the sanctuaries.

- Many wildflowers take years to produce a single flower, and may not recover after being damaged.
- Royal Botanical Gardens is home to many rare and endangered plants. By staying on marked trails and not removing any vegetation you can help minimize impact.
- Plants are an important food source and shelter for wildlife, removing any natural feature could disrupt plant and animal survival.

Please do not alter the natural environment.

- Fires or the making of any kind of structure from materials found or brought into the nature sanctuary are strictly prohibited as it will disturb and damage the natural ecosystem.
- Please utilize the garbage bins provided at the trailheads, bringing everything back that you brought in.
- It is important to take only pictures and fond memories away from the trails with you.
- Please do not feed the animals along the trails. These animals can become dependent upon humans as a food source.

## Safety along the trails

### Be aware of your surroundings

The natural lands of RBG can be breathtaking, but there are considerable risks when enjoying these areas.

- Be aware of what is above and below you at all times, as our lands can range from wetlands to cliff faces and dense forests. As a result caution must be exercised when walking around water, cliff edges and densely vegetated areas.
- Be aware of weather conditions. High winds can cause tree limbs to fall. Royal Botanical Gardens staff maintains the trails of all hazards but intense weather can cause anything to happen. When winds are above 35 kilometres per hour it is recommended that you stay out of the forest.
- Be aware that Royal Botanical Gardens contains several poisonous plant species — therefore, obeying signs and staying on designated trails is imperative.

### If you become lost or injured

The likelihood of getting lost within our trail system is minimal. However, if you become lost:

- Do not panic.
- Remain on the designated trails.
- Try to retrace steps to your last trail course.
- Trail signs are no more than 200 metres apart from one another and have been inscribed with GPS coordinates of their location. Emergency services are aware of these coordinates and can send help quickly when needed.

### Safety in prescribed burn areas

Our prescribed burn program involves several locations on our property. These burns are implemented in order to regenerate native plant species and minimize the spread of unwanted invasive species.

- Areas are sensitive to disturbances following burns.
- Obeying signs and avoiding affected areas is imperative.
- Burned areas present potential hazards to individuals as dead trees continue to fall and ground surfaces still smoulder and shift, creating unstable ground.

If you have anything to report — hazard trees, broken signs, damage to the trails, excessive erosion or a species at risk — please contact Royal Botanical Gardens' conservation department at 905-527-1158.

### Motorized vehicles and bicycles are not permitted on Royal Botanical Gardens trails

Our trails are not designed to safely accommodate or withstand the impact of these activities.



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**CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NUMBER:**  
13350 0850 RR0001



We all wish to enjoy the natural world for years to come. To achieve that we must also work together in a responsible manner ... naturally. **See you at the trails!**