



The ARNOLD
ARBORETUM
of HARVARD UNIVERSITY

125 Arborway
Boston, MA 02130-3500
tel: 617.384.5209
www.arboretum.harvard.edu

For Immediate Release

Lilac Sunday Canceled for 2020

Popular spring event will not be held to promote safe social distancing on Mother's Day

BOSTON, MA—In keeping with CDC and Harvard COVID-19 guidelines for large gatherings, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is canceling [Lilac Sunday 2020](#). All formal activities such as tours, family crafts and science, and performances scheduled for Sunday, May 10 are suspended, and picnics will not be allowed on this or any day. While the Arboretum landscape remains open, staff are encouraging the public to pick another day to visit the Arboretum and see the lilacs in bloom—a season which is only beginning and spreads over the next four weeks.

Mother's Day traditionally coincides with the Arboretum's annual celebration of the beginning of spring and the blooming of our renowned lilac collection, but in the interest of public safety and to avoid crowding staff are encouraging the public to visit on any other day. "Think of your Mother on Mother's Day—stay healthy and stay home" is the message staff are sharing to prevent crowding on a day that in the past has attracted up to 50,000 visitors. Street parking has been eliminated around the Arboretum perimeter by state and City of Boston mandate since April 10, another reason to plan any visit with care.

The lilacs will bloom as usual over the course of several weeks (typically late April through late May) and are blooming late this spring due to weather conditions. We predict peak of bloom will arrive later than Mother's Day, so visitors should ideally select a time to see the collection in the days and weeks following May 10. When you visit, please observe safe social distancing guidelines, and if the landscape appears to be too crowded, please return another time. See levels of visitation monitored in real time through a [Google tracker](#), and note [peak visiting times to avoid](#).

The Arboretum urges public cooperation with the following guidelines to help us maintain a safe outdoor environment in our landscape for everyone this spring:

- PLEASE DO NOT COME ON MOTHER'S DAY. Help us make this day in particular safe.
- All streets around the perimeter of the Arboretum are closed to parking, including the Arborway and Bussey Street. Visitors parking in surrounding neighborhoods should respect parking regulations and signage. Do not block crosswalks.
- Wear a facial covering. Maintain a distance of at least 6-10 feet from other visitors. Assess the safety of visiting the lilac collection. If crowds at the lilacs do not allow for safe social distancing, visit a different area of the landscape or return at a different time.
- All buildings and restrooms, including portable toilets, are closed through May.
- Do not touch anything. We cannot guarantee the sanitation of any surfaces, for example, benches, railings, plant identification tags, or signage.
- Picnics are not allowed.
- Carry in and carry out all of your belongings, including trash and dog waste.
- As ever, be kind to our plants. Do not pick or prune plants, do not climb trees, and do not step in planting beds.

Guidelines for visiting are subject to change per COVID-19 best practices. Please check the [Arboretum website](#) before visiting. Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and restorative environment for the community.

Founded in 1872 as the first public arboretum in North America, the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University is a leading center for the study of biodiversity and a treasured Boston landscape open free to the public daily. One of the most comprehensive and best-documented collections of temperate woody plants in the world, the Arboretum promotes the understanding and appreciation of plants through world-class research, horticulture, and educational programs for all ages.

###

Press Contact: Jon Hetman
jon_hetman@harvard.edu
