
2027 CALL FOR PROJECTS

Grand-Métis, Québec, Canada, September 2, 2026 – Every summer since 2000, the **International Garden Festival** has transformed the Reford Gardens into a laboratory for creative landscape design. For its 28th edition, the Festival invites landscape architects, architects, artists, and multidisciplinary teams from all over the world to propose concepts for five new gardens. The Festival's next edition will open on Saturday, June 19, 2027, at Les Jardins de Métis / Reford Gardens, in Québec's Gaspésie tourist region.

2027 Theme – *Making Visible: Alternative Geographies*

The triennial thematic cycle centred around human beings' relationship with space and territory, conceived by the Festival's artistic director, Ève De Garie-Lamanque, concludes in 2027.

In 2025, *Borders* focused on issues arising from the representation, organization, and management of geographic space, drawing on concerns involved with geopolitics and private property. In 2026, *Mapping Sensitivity* addressed the immaterial and affective aspects of territory by encouraging a relational dynamic and returning users to the foreground.

This new call for projects, with the theme *Making Visible: Alternative Geographies*, will ultimately lead to the selection of five contemporary garden projects that will extend – and reveal the shortfalls of – the reflections undertaken during the preceding editions.

Emerging at the confluence of *Borders* and *Mapping Sensitivity*, this new theme probes mechanisms, approaches, and systems that have become the norm. Approaches will draw on the concepts of intersectionality (a theoretical framework introduced in 1989 by the American jurist Kimberlé W. Crenshaw) and counter-mapping (a term coined in 1995 by the American sociologist Nancy Lee Peluso). Both of these concepts have contributed, among other things, to providing marginalized or traditionally underrepresented individuals and communities with voice and visibility.

To ensure complementarity – in both substance and form – with the projects chosen for the first two years of the thematic cycle, the designers are encouraged to consult the web pages and press releases for the Festival's [26th](#) and [27th](#) editions.

Eligibility of Candidates

This call for projects is open to landscape architects, architects, visual artists, and multidisciplinary teams from Canada and abroad. The Festival encourages the formation of teams bringing together several disciplines. Individuals and teams may submit only one proposal, and the participants may come from the same city or country or from different world regions.

Applicants are asked to design a garden that falls within one or another of the Festival's subject areas. Once the winning projects are selected, the Festival's artistic and technical committees will determine, in collaboration with the designers, which site will best highlight each project. Applicants are asked to design a garden that will be presented for at least two summers and to propose strategies for repurposing, reusing, or recycling its materials once its presentation ends.



Deadline to Submit Proposals

The deadline for submitting a project online is **Tuesday, October 27, 2026, AT 5:00 PM EDT (UTC – 4)**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

All the details can be found at projects.internationalgardenfestival.ca.

GUIDELINES

Selection Process

The gardens will be selected by a jury on the basis of:

- The creative response to this year's theme: ***Making Visible: Alternative Geographies***;
- The originality of the concept and the innovative nature of the garden;
- The sensory and intellectual scope of the garden (user experience);
- The contribution to the field of garden art and to the diversification of landscape architecture practices;
- Rigorous research and critical approach;
- The constructability of the garden / feasibility of the project;
- The integration of sustainable design strategies.

During its deliberations, the jury will also consider, where applicable, the composition of the team involved and any safety issues raised by the project.

All participants will receive the results of the competition by email. In addition to designers selected by this international call for proposals, the Festival may also select designers by invitation.

International Garden Festival: Forum for Innovation and Laboratory for Experimentation

The International Garden Festival is the largest contemporary garden festival in North America and one of the foremost international platforms for creation and dissemination of architectural research. Since its creation in 2000, almost 200 gardens have been presented at Grand-Métis and in other locations in Canada and abroad. The Festival takes place on a site adjacent to the historical gardens, establishing a dialogue between history and modernity and among conservation, tradition, and innovation. Each year, the event offers close to 30 creations produced by some 70 architects, landscape architects, artists, and designers from various disciplines. Over the years, the International Garden Festival has presented works by some of the most influential designers of their respective generations, including Agence Spatiale, Appareil Architecture, BGL, Pierre Bélanger, Claude Cormier, Pierre Thibault, Adrian Blackwell and Jane Hutton, CCxA, Mason White and Lola Sheppard, Diana Balmori, Michael Van Valkenburgh, Snøhetta, Charles Waldheim, Ken Smith, Bernard Lassus, Christopher Bradley-Hole, Topotek 1, Aranda\Lasch, Stoss Landscape Urbanism, Taylor Cullity Lethlean, and Atelier Le Balto. Since 2019, the Festival has also operated La Maison d'Ariane, in Métis-sur-Mer, and its residency program. The Festival receives financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and a community of donors to and friends of the Festival.

The Festival encourages participating designers to explore all facets of the garden, from the physical setting (site and context) to creating a range of sensory, emotional and intellectual experiences for the visitor. The Festival sees the garden as a space for creative interaction, while not negating its botanical and horticultural dimensions. The Festival imagines the garden as a multisensorial space and encourages designers to consider the visitor's experience in the design of the garden, provoking interaction, participation, exchange and reflection.

The Festival Site

Located in Grand-Métis, in the Gaspésie region of Québec, Canada, the International Garden Festival is held on a site adjacent to the Jardins de Métis | Reford Gardens, the historic gardens created by Elsie Reford from 1926 to 1958, a National Historic Site and Québec heritage site.

The Festival site is delimited on the north by the St. Lawrence River, on the west by a mature forest of deciduous trees (trembling aspen) and on the east by a field that opens onto a forest of conifers. The site is articulated around two perpendicular axes.

The north-south axis is defined by a geometric grid of identical rectangular spaces that are 10 x 20 meters. These sunny and open spaces possess one entry/exit from the West and/or the East. They are separated from each other by a filter of trees (birch, maple and linden) underplanted with ground covers or inert materials.

The west-east axis consists of a series of garden rooms that are variable in size and of irregular configurations (from 150 m² to 250 m²). Surrounded by mature conifers (mostly white spruce) and poplars, these garden rooms are shadier than those on the grid. They mostly have a single entrance/exit from the access road. Some offer filtered views to the St. Lawrence.

The natural soil is clay and the water table is about 1.5 meters below the surface. Excavation is possible, but extensive excavation should be avoided. All the sites have adequate soil and subsurface drains. All sites have access to water and electricity.

The summer climate in Grand-Métis is temperate, with temperatures varying from 15°C to 30°C from June to September. Most plants flourish in this climate (hardiness zone of 4b). The hardiness zone map (www.planthardiness.gc.ca) outlines the different zones in Canada where various types of trees, shrubs and flowers will most likely survive based on the average climatic conditions of each area. Most annual plants and several varieties of exotics can be used for the summer months.

We produce most of the plants in our greenhouses beginning in March. Planting is done in June. Designers should thus expect to use mature plants or plants with a rapid growth rate if they wish to assure bloom during the time the temporary garden is exhibited.

Project Oversight and Construction

The construction of each garden is the result of close cooperation between the Festival and the designers' teams. The technical coordinator and horticultural foreman oversee the construction and planting of each garden by a team of staff, interns and volunteers. The construction of the gardens will begin in May and must be completed by Friday June 18, barring *force majeure* (such as adverse weather conditions). The Festival and its crew assure the maintenance of the garden after the opening and for the duration of the event.

Designers will be required to travel to Grand-Métis to participate actively in the construction, to the best of their abilities, during the week leading up to the opening of the Festival (Sunday, June 13 to Saturday, 19 June, 2027). During this period, they will be housed in summer cottages in nearby Métis-sur-Mer at the Festival's expense.

Honoraria and Budget

The budget for the creation and construction of each garden is **\$27,000 CAD**. This budget is divided in the following fashion:

- **\$7,000 CAD** for the team's honorarium, which is paid to the designers in two instalments;
- Up to **\$15,000 CAD** for the purchase of materials necessary for the realization of the project (including engineering or other fees if required). This budget is managed jointly by the Festival and the designer(s);
- A team of Festival staff build each garden. The budget for labour is **\$5,000 CAD**. This sum is managed by the Festival.

The Festival assumes for each garden, upon presentation of supporting invoices, the travel expenses up to:

- **\$1,000 CAD** for Quebec-based designers;
- **\$2,000 CAD** for designers from other Canadian provinces and territories;
- **\$3,000 CAD** for designers coming from abroad.

Designers are encouraged to solicit donations or grants for materials or other expenses (travel, printed material, etc.) for the realization of their garden from arts councils, sponsors or private partners. The Festival offers a range of visibility for donors and sponsors depending on the magnitude of the contribution in cash or product.

Presentation of Entries

You must create an account on our portal before you can submit an application. You can register at any time. To complete your registration, go to: projects.internationalgardenfestival.ca.

The deadline for submitting a project is **Tuesday, October 27, 2026, AT 5:00 PM EDT (UTC – 4)**.

The proposal (in French or English) must be uploaded as 3 separate files:

A 1 PDF (maximum 10 MB, 300 DPI and RGB mode), presenting the PROJECT with the following documents, in this order (making sure to present the information without the name of the designers):

- A schema 11" x 17" or A3 with:
 - A 180-word text describing the concept and presenting the experience offered to visitors in the proposed garden;
 - A layout plan of the garden (at minimum scale of 1/100);
 - A list of suggested plants.
- A schema 11" x 17" or A3 with:
 - 2 main views or elevations of the garden (candidate is free to choose the scale);
 - A perspective, sketch or rendering, showing the garden in its entirety.

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- B** **1 JPG IMAGE presenting the PROJECT:**
- An overall view of the project in JPG. Maximum size: 13 MB or 3000 x 4500 pixels.
- C** **1 PDF file (maximum 5 MB) identifying the DESIGNER or the members of the TEAM and presenting the following documents, in this order:**
- Presentation page 11" x 17" or A3 with:
 - Title of the project;
 - Name of the designer or the members of the team with their profession (architect, landscape architect, visual artist, etc.);
 - City and country of residence;
 - An 80-word presentation of the designer or the team;
 - Your answer to the following question (70 words): How does your project resonate with this year's theme, ***Making Visible: Alternative Geographies?***
 - A schema 11" x 17" or A3 presenting up to three recent projects by the team and/or its designers;
 - *Curriculum vitae* of the designers (2 pages maximum per person);
 - Complete information (address, telephone, email, website) of the primary contact for the team.

Please avoid compressing your texts or images to Bitmaps (BMP) in the PDF files.

By taking part in this call for proposals, candidates authorize the International Garden Festival to make public, exhibit and disseminate their proposals.

The Festival website will present all projects submitted during this competition.

Summary Schedule 2026-2027

- September 2, 2026** - Launch of the call for proposals
- October 27** - Deadline to submit proposals
- November** - Selection process and jury deliberations
- December 18** - Contact made with all candidates
- January 2027** - Transmission of text and image files required for the preparation of contracts and content intended for media/promotional purposes
- First virtual meeting with the artistic and technical committees
- Contract signings
- February** - Distribution of the press release presenting the selected projects
- Online publication of the proposals submitted to the call for proposals
- Submission of preliminary sketches
- Issuing of comments and recommendations by the Festival's technical committee
- Revision of plans and estimates
- March – April** - Final approval of plans, estimates and budgets by the Festival's artistic and technical committees
- Period for requesting quotations, purchasing materials and ordering shrubs and trees
- Start of the preparation of plants in the greenhouses
- Early May** - Dismantling of gardens not returning for another year of exhibition
- Start of construction and landscaping work by the Festival team
- June 13 to 19** - Designers are on site to supervise the completion of their garden, actively participate in its construction, attend the opening and meet with the media
- June 18** - Inauguration of the 28th edition of the International Garden Festival
- June 19** - The Festival opens to the public
- October 3** - Last day to visit the installations of the 28th edition of the Festival

This schedule may be modified without notice. The International Garden Festival reserves the right to not respond to this call for proposals.