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*A beautiful account of the Peony Garden,
the University of Michigan's "living museum,"
that is sure to delight any reader*

Passion for PEONIES

**Celebrating the Culture and Conservation
of Nichols Arboretum's Beloved Flower**

**EDITED BY
David Michener and Robert Grese**

There's no more breathtaking signal of summer's onset than the blooming of peonies. Stunningly beautiful and relatively easy to grow, peonies are a favorite flower everywhere they can be cultivated and for good reason: the heady fragrances and enchanting colors of a peony-rich display create an immersive experience that has enamored generations of garden lovers across the world. This passion is on full display each June at the historic Peony Garden of the University of Michigan's Nichols Arboretum.

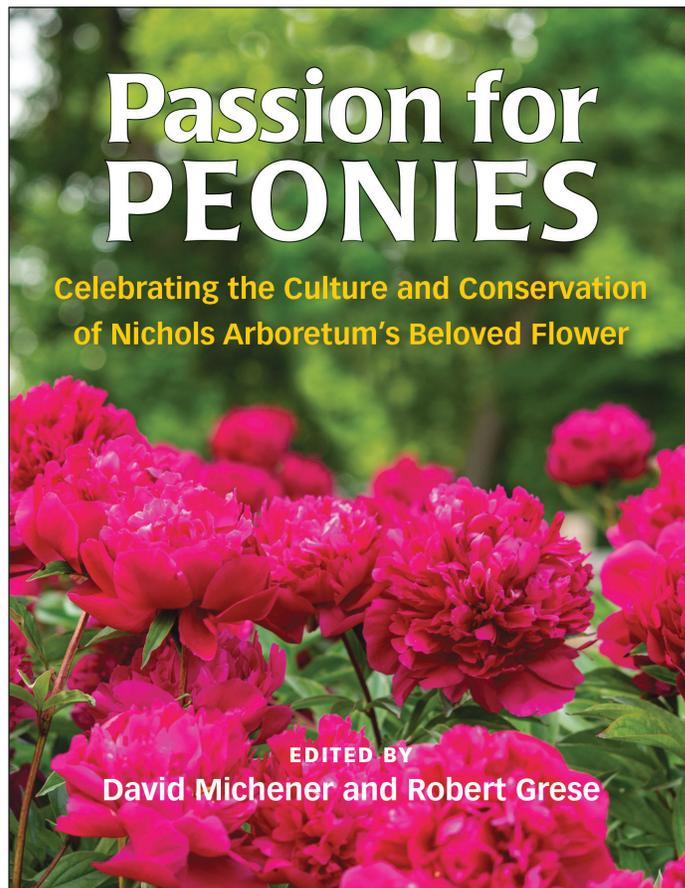
Originally planted in 1922, the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden now boasts North America's largest public collection of heirloom herbaceous peonies. The Peony Garden has become a sacred space for the Ann Arbor community, a not-to-be-missed sensation when it erupts each season, as the *Ann Arbor Observer* once wrote, in "a riot of color, of crimson, rose and shell pink intermingled with fluffy pompoms of creamy white." The rather short period of peak bloom—about two fleeting weeks each year—only seems to intensify the garden's appeal, drawing thousands of visitors annually to this spectacular "living museum" on campus that showcases upwards of 10,000 blossoms.

Richly illustrated with hundreds of striking color photos, *Passion for Peonies* collects short essays that celebrate the story of the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden as well as the rich social history of peony gardening that it is an integral part of. Together these pieces comprise a love letter both to a magical public space at the University of Michigan and to the broader history and culture of peony gardening. The book will appeal to readers interested in the University of Michigan, the history of public gardens, and of course peonies!

Praise for the Nichols Arboretum Peony Garden

"In late May and early June, Nichols Arboretum bursts into a swoon-worthy display of 130 peony plants. The annual pastel pageant—first opened to the public in 1927—is North America's largest public display of heirloom peonies. Visitors circulate among the ruffled blooms with a sort of reverence, appearing to bow as they bend to breathe in the sweet scent. Although the sprawling University of Michigan medical complex is close by, a visit to this 100-plus-acre tract of meadow, prairie, woods and gardens seems a natural prescription for good health."

—*The Washington Post*



David Michener has curated the peony garden at the University of Michigan's Nichols Arboretum since 1990. He is co-author (with Carol A. Adelman) of *Peony: The Best Varieties for Your Garden*.

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