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4th Annual Waterlily Weigh-Off Winner: Bok Tower Gardens Earns Heavyweight Title

This year's competition includes new featherweight and home grower/commercial nursery categories



Denver Botanic Gardens is pleased to announce that after two weeks of fierce competition, Bok Tower Gardens of Lake Wales, Florida wins the 2026 Waterlily Weigh-Off Heavyweight Champion title with a waterlily leaf holding an astonishing 285.7 pounds. Bok Tower also won the 2025 Heavyweight title. See all entries on the new Waterlily Weigh-Off Instagram channel! The fifth competition will take place in August 2027.

University of Bristol Botanical Garden in Bristol, England claims the first-ever Featherweight Champion title with a very creative entry and New York Botanical Garden is the Fan Favorite, as chosen by Instagram and TikTok audiences.

And Red Leaf Exotics is the inaugural Ultimate Grower category winner. The new categories are intended to ensure the competition remains inclusive for professional and home growers of all shapes and sizes.

"This year's competition was truly impressive," says Rachel Small-Brooks, assistant manager of social media and communications at Denver Botanic Gardens. "We received more than 60 entries from gardens and zoos representing 12 countries. Our home grower participation grew this year as well with 12 participants. It's by far our biggest year yet!"

The Waterlily Weigh-Off, led by Denver Botanic Gardens, challenges public gardens and zoos across the globe to a bit of friendly competition to see whose waterlilies can carry the most weight. The fourth annual competition took place August 17-26, 2026, on Instagram and TikTok. The light-hearted competition drives remarkable follower and engagement growth for participating organizations while

educating the public about the intriguing world of aquatic plants, specifically the waterlily species *V. amazonica*, *V. cruziana, V. boliviana* and Victoria 'Longwood hybrid'.

"The production level of this year's competition was also incredible. Every entry was incredibly well done and highlighted the unique personality of each garden," says Small-Brook. "We're already brainstorming what we're going to do next year to stand out."

2026 Full Rankings

1. **Bok Tower Gardens** (Florida, USA) | 285.7 lbs / 129.6 kg

2. **Royal Botanic Gardens Kew** (England) | 224.9 lbs / 102 kg

3. **Longwood Gardens** (Pennsylvania, USA) | 210 lbs / 95.25 kg

4. **Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens** (Pennsylvania, USA) | 163 lbs / 73.94 kg

5. **Missouri Botanical Garden** (Missouri, USA) | 149 lbs / 67.58 kg

6. **University of Oxford Botanical Garden and Arboretum** (England) | 127.9 lbs / 58 kg

7. **Naples Botanical Garden** (Florida, USA) | 109 lbs / 49.44 kg

8. **Sarah P. Duke Gardens** (North Carolina, USA) | 100 lbs / 45.36 kg

9. **New York Botanical Garden** (New York, USA) | 95 lbs / 43 kg

10. **Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam** (Netherlands) | 92.6 lbs / 42 kg

11. **Landcraft Garden Foundation** (New York, USA) | 86.25 lbs / 39 kg

12. **Miami Beach Botanical Garden** (Florida, USA) | 85.9 lbs / 38.96 kg

13. **Birmingham Botanical Gardens UK** (England) | 80.7 lbs / 36.6 kg

14. **Denver Botanic Gardens** (Colorado, USA) | 80 lbs / 36.28

15. **Como Zoo & Conservatory** (Minnesota, USA) | 79.5 lbs / 36.1 kg

16. **Huntsville Botanical Garden** (Alabama, USA) | 71 lbs / 32.2 kg

17. **Lauritzen Gardens** (Nebraska, USA) | 71 lbs / 32.2 kg

22. **Botanica, The Wichita Gardens** (Kansas, USA) | 58 lbs / 26.3 kg

23. **Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens** (Texas, USA) | 57.2 lbs / 25.94 kg

24. **New Orleans Botanical Garden and Pelican Greenhouse** (Louisiana, USA) | 57 lbs / 25.85 kg

25. **Cambridge University Botanic Garden** (England) | 55 lbs / 24.975 kg

26. **Ganna Walska Lotusland** (California, USA) | 54.5 lbs / 24.72 kg

27. **The Eden Project** (England) | 48.7 lbs / 21.96 kg

28. **The Hudson Gardens & Events Center** (Colorado, USA) | 33 lbs / 14.9 kg

29. **Brookgreen Gardens** (South Carolina, USA | 32 lbs / 14.5 kg

30. **Botanischer Garten Augsburg** (Germany) | 29.6 lbs / 42 kg

31. **Naturhistorisk Museum** (Norway) | 22.4 lbs / 10.154 kg

32. **Fairchild Garden** (Florida, USA) | 22 lbs / 9.98 kg

33. **Franklin Park Conservatory** (Ohio, USA) | 19 lbs / 8.62 kg

34. **The Arboretum at Penn State** (Pennsylvania, USA) | 18.4 lbs / 8.4 kg

35. **Powell Gardens** (Missouri, USA) | 18.12 lbs / 8.3 kg

36. **The Toledo Zoo** (Ohio, USA) | 12.5 lbs / 5.67 kg

37. **New England Botanical Garden at Tower Hill** (Massachusetts, USA) | 12 lbs / 5.4 kg

38. **Atlanta Botanical Garden** (Georgia, USA) | 11 lbs / 5 kg

18. **Jardin Botanique de Lyon** (France) | 70.55 lbs / 32.5 kg

19. **McKee Botanical Garden** (Florida, USA) | 70 lbs / 31.75 kg

20. **Orto e Museo Botanico di Pisa** (Italy) | 69 lbs / 31.3 kg

21. **Ghent University Museum & Botanical Garden** (Belgium) | 62.83 lbs / 28.5 kg

39. **Brooklyn Botanic** (New York, USA) | 8.5 lbs / 3.55 kg

40. **Hershey Gardens** (Pennsylvania, USA) | 8.15 lbs / 3.69 kg

41. **Chicago Botanic Gardens** (Illinois, USA) | 6 lbs / 2.7 kg

Featherweight Entries (in alphabetical order)

Auckland Botanic Gardens (New Zealand)

The Morton Arboretum (Illinois, USA)

Bristol Botanic Garden (England)

Olbrich Gardens (Wisconsin, USA)

City of Lincoln (the garden guys) (Nebraska, USA)

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Scotland)

Conservatory of Flowers (California, USA)

Royal Botanic Garden Sydney (Australia)

Douglas Hart Foundation (Illinois, USA)

Royal Botanical Gardens Canada (Canada)

Filoli Estate (California, USA)

San Diego Botanic Garden (California, USA)

Fruit and Spice Park (Florida, USA)

United States Botanic Garden (Washington, DC, USA)

Green Bay Botanical Garden (Wisconsin, USA)

UCLA Mathias Botanical Garden (California, USA)

Lincoln Park Conservancy (Illinois, USA)

University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Minnesota, USA)

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Minnesota, USA)

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (United Kingdom)

Ultimate Grower Entries

1. **Redleaf Exotics** | 195lbs
2. **Iis Garden** | 194.01lbs
3. **Kwekerij Bandus** | 176.37lbs
4. **Ed the Pond Professor, Aquascape** | 55lbs
5. **St. Louis Water Garden Society** | 49lbs
6. **Riley Wilde** | 47.3lbs
7. **Chalily Pond and Gardens** | 42.7lbs
8. **Bergen Water Gardens** | 41.75lbs
9. **Nelson Water Gardens** | 21.8lbs
10. **Agua.be** | 16.37lb
11. **Two Little Fruits** | One Toy Horse
12. **Two Feral Gardeners** | 0.2 oz

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About Denver Botanic Gardens: Green inside and out, Denver Botanic Gardens celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2026 and is considered one of the top botanical gardens in the United States and a pioneer in water conservation. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and the American Public Gardens Association, the Gardens has a robust living plant collection, natural history collection and art collection along with temporary art exhibitions. The Gardens' Denver location features a 24-acre urban oasis in the heart of the city, offering unforgettable opportunities to flourish with unique garden experiences, as well as world-class exhibitions, special events, education and plant conservation research programs. Additional sites extend this experience throughout the Front Range: Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms is a 700-acre native plant refuge with an active farm in Jefferson County; Mount Goliath is a high-altitude trail and interpretive site on the Mount Blue Sky Scenic Byway. The Gardens also manages programming at Plains Conservation Center in Aurora. For more information, visit us online at www.botanicgardens.org.