

Big Springs Gardens open to public again

By Sacramento Bee

Don Phillips didn't want to leave his mountain paradise. Now he doesn't have to go – and we're welcome to visit.

Almost a year after Phillips announced the permanent closing of his Big Springs Gardens near Sierra City, the lush retreat is again open to the public.

"We're working to keep the place open forever," said Phillips, who turned 86 in October. "That was my dream."

Nicknamed "Monet in the Mountains," Big Springs has attracted more than 20,000 visitors up Highway 49 for brunch or barbecue and a stroll through 113 acres of amazing gardens and Sierra forest. Its beauty draws many painters who – like legendary French impressionist Claude Monet – find unmatched inspiration in the mix of flowers and water. With the 8,600-foot Sierra Buttes as a backdrop, its high country setting just makes it more precious.

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