



The first greenhouses were built on the Rideau Hall estate in Thomas MacKay's time. As early as 1838, two greenhouses were used mainly to grow grapes, melons, fruit and vegetables for the kitchen and flowers for the gardens and residence. When the government purchased Rideau Hall as the vice-regal residence, MacKay's greenhouses were in poor condition. They were demolished and new ones were built. One of the new greenhouses abutted on the residence and was used as a "conservatory", a room for relaxation.

Plants Under Glass

As Bytown (Ottawa) grew and food became more readily available, it was no longer essential to grow plants for household use. As a result, Rideau Hall's greenhouses came to serve another purpose when, in the 1920s, they gradually made the transition from growing food to growing flowers and decorative plants as they do today.

1 Link numbers to letters to identify some of the most unusual plants in the Rideau Hall greenhouses.

- 1 = a 4 = e 7 = o 10 = v
- 2 = b 5 = l 8 = r
- 3 = c 6 = n 9 = t

View of the Rideau Hall greenhouses (1974)



a) The ancestor of this plant was given by the wife of the Ugandan Ambassador in the early 1980s. It takes 18 months to produce its fruit in the tropical greenhouse. It can grow to a height of 5 metres, reaching 3 metres in its first year.

$\frac{_}{2} \frac{_}{1} \overset{n}{_} \frac{_}{1} \frac{_}{6} \frac{_}{1} \frac{_}{9} \overset{r}{\frac{_}{4}} \frac{_}{4}$

b) This plant is more than 25 years old. It produces about 35 fruit each year, which are used by Rideau Hall chefs.

$\frac{_}{5} \frac{_}{4} \overset{m}{_} \frac{_}{7} \frac{_}{6} \frac{_}{9} \frac{_}{8} \overset{e}{\frac{_}{4}}$



Lord Lisgar (standing, right) and his guests in the conservatory (1869)