

Now, that's some tulip, Mr. Ambassador

'It's not what I expected, but it's much grander than what I expected'

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Artist Jill Alexander, left, and U.S. Ambassador David Jacobson pose with the 'Obama Tulip' on Thursday.

Photograph by: Christopher Pike, The Ottawa Citizen

U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Jacobson said he was misinformed about what kind of gift he was to receive from Canadian Tulip Festival officials.

The ambassador came to a tulip festival reception Friday at Major's Hill Park expecting to get a real tulip named after U.S. President Barack Obama, who is a close friend. At least that is what his staff led him to believe.

Instead, the ambassador was presented with a tulip of the fibreglass kind, not the floral variety.

"My staff told me I was coming to pick up a tulip present. What would you think if someone told you that?" said Jacobson moments after receiving a five-foot fibreglass tulip from Canadian Tulip Festival chairman David Luxton at a presentation inside the Mirror Tent.

"It's not what I expected, but it's much grander than what I expected," said a delighted Jacobson.

The Red, White & Blue tulip, created by Ottawa visual artist Jill Alexander, is adorned with a drawing of President Barack Obama, including his famous phrase, "Yes We Can."

It also has other well-known quotes from Martin Luther King and U.S. president Abraham Lincoln.

