

INSIDE



E

THE GARDENS

WINTER 2022 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR
MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS



It never ceases to amaze me. For most of my career, I have served a board, people who volunteer their time and energy, their talent and treasure, to support an institution. It is both humbling and exciting to spend time with these leaders to craft a future that captures opportunities.

And the leader of the board? Wow. This is the person who is the pivot point for the whole organization, the person who can represent the institution to the community, ensure a great experience for the rest of the board and provide oversight and counsel to the staff.

For the past three years, we have been truly fortunate to have Kathy Hodgson at the helm. From the time she began board service, Kathy was a bright light, someone who leads with compassion and energy. Of course, the best laid plans of any organization are at the mercy of world affairs. When Kathy's term as chair began, it was all good news. The Freyer – Newman Center was under construction, marking the completion of an ambitious master development plan. Everything was firing on all cylinders and the reach of the Gardens extended regionally and globally.

Then 2020 happened. Confusion and anxiety were widespread. As we moved through the year, we were eventually shut down for nearly three months. Kathy is the city manager for Lakewood and carried her own heavy burden of responsibility. Still, she carved out time to compare notes with me, often several times a week. We were determined to keep staff healthy and employed, which was a very tall order. We shared public health information, developed protocols for reopening and eventually succeeded in receiving the first variance for a cultural institution in Colorado, ending the shutdown but with strict limitations.

To achieve our goal to move forward without layoffs or cuts to salaries and benefits, it took a special type of fearlessness. Kathy kept the faith while ensuring that we had both transparency and buy-in from the full board. In the end, we succeeded. I often contemplate how rare our board and its chair are and how their support impacted real lives during a frightful time.

Kathy's third year as chair has seen a powerful comeback for the Gardens and the incessant desire to keep progress rolling. A new master development plan for Chatfield Farms is under way, and funding is secured for important garden renovations at York Street. Outreach is at an all-time high. And a comprehensive plan has taken effect to address staff compensation to ensure livable wages and the capacity to grow careers.

It's been a rollicking ride, Kathy. You made a tremendous difference in momentous times. I will always be grateful for you.

Onward.

Brian Vogt
Denver Botanic Gardens CEO



Brian and Kathy

Contents

- Center for Global Initiatives
- Horticulture
- Plant Portrait
- Featured Garden
- Research
- Exhibitions, Art and Learning Engagement ...
- Helen Fowler Library ...
- Tours
- Education
- Family Corner
- Development
- Chatfield Farms
- Upcoming
- Tributes
- Donor List
- Trustees



INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 1, 2022

Denver Botanic Gardens

1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206

Pre-purchased tickets and advance member passes only.

Through April 1, 2022, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.,
last admission 4 p.m.

Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms

8500 West Deer Creek Canyon Rd., Littleton, CO 80128

Pre-purchased tickets and advance member passes only.

9 a.m. – 5 p.m., last admission 4 p.m.

Contact Us

General Information: 720-865-3500

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Membership Services: 720-865-3525

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[Gardening Help from Colorado Master Gardeners](#)

[Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium](#)

[Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi](#)

Editor: Tiffany Coleman

Graphic Designer: Nick Elias

Photographer: Scott Dressel-Martin

The mission of Denver Botanic Gardens is to connect people with plants, especially plants from the Rocky Mountain region and similar regions around the world, providing delight and enlightenment to everyone.

The Gardens is grateful for funds from the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), which enable us to expand services and enhance the quality of our programs and exhibits.

WHAT HAPPENS After the Exploration?

By Mike Bone, Associate Director & Curator of Steppe Collections

In 2019, staff from Denver Botanic Gardens, in collaboration with the Plant Collecting Collaborative (PCC), traveled to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to collect seeds from sister steppe climates for the Gardens' steppe collection. The collected taxa were shipped back to Denver through the USDA import inspection station, then some were sent on to PCC partners interested in the germplasm. Then, the work of sorting and growing the seeds began.

The seed from this trip arrived just before the pandemic took hold and changed the way we navigate everything. Fortunately, Gardens staff were still able to work and move forward with this project and others like it.

Many species of plants require different types of pretreatment to germinate. It's part experiment and part implementation of germination science combined with best practices. Through 2020, plants were germinated, transplanted and grown for planting in 2021.

In the spring and early summer of 2021 many of the taxa that germinated and grew large enough to be planted were added to the Steppe Garden. More than 50 new species will be evaluated for hardiness and aesthetic appeal. Many of the species are herbaceous perennials, some are small shrubs, and others still in production areas are trees that may take several years to get large enough to plant.

The culture and ecology of steppe is a part of who we are and where we live. Collections like this help the Gardens tell the story of Colorado's climate and tie together the understanding of steppe ecology on a global scale.



**COLLECTIONS LIKE THIS
HELP THE GARDENS TELL
THE STORY OF COLORADO'S
CLIMATE AND TIE TOGETHER
THE UNDERSTANDING
OF STEPPE ECOLOGY ON
A GLOBAL SCALE.**

Photo by Mike Bone.

NEW HABITAT GARDENS Transform the South Side of the Gardens



Schematic site plan by Didier Design Studio

By Sarada Krishnan, Ph.D., Director of Horticulture and Center for Global Initiatives

As years pass, gardens evolve and change. Newly established gardens develop character and come into their own whereas some of the older gardens start looking tired and in need of rejuvenation. In addition to the renovation of the O'Fallon Perennial Walk, which we wrote about in the [spring 2021 issue](#), there are three tired gardens that have been on our horticulturists' radar for several years now: the Birds & Bees Walk, South African Plaza and the steppe area of PlantAsia. Thanks to the citizens of Denver and the recently passed bond referendum, we can embark on the renovation and reinterpretation of these three garden spaces.

The Birds & Bees Walk is situated on a steep slope and consists of a narrow path that makes navigation challenging. The west end of the garden terminates next to a pond and the pathway exits via a short set of steps. This is problematic for people in wheelchairs or with strollers since, to exit, they must retrace their

path. The updated garden will continue the pollinator/wildlife habitat theme while making the garden more accessible. Some of the old and mature trees and shrubs will stay in place.

With the creation of the Steppe Garden in 2016 and its South Africa collection beds, the collection in South African Plaza is now redundant and can be transitioned into a new space. This renovated area will showcase native willows and willow habitats.

Finally, the southern end of PlantAsia, which features the Asian steppe, is also now redundant due to the Steppe Garden. Keeping with the theme of the Asian garden, this bed will be transformed into a Himalayan garden.

Be on the lookout; construction should start in the second or third quarter of 2022. These three new and transformed habitats will expand our programming as well as our plant collections.

ALL THE WILLOWS

PLANT PORTRAIT

By Kevin Philip Williams, Assistant Curator

Most of my work is governed by punk. Curating gardens is no exception. I often justify my completist tendencies by invoking the philosophy created by legendary punk drummer and Coloradoan Bill Stevenson (Descendents, Black Flag), called All. The foundation of All pushes one to explore the furthest positive limits of any goal, making the most of any effort.

In preparation for the development of the Habitat Garden and the unifying of the Dwarf Conifer Collection, Conservation Garden, Birds & Bees Walk and the Rock Alpine Garden with a riparian swale, Mike Bone, associate director and curator of Steppe Collections, and I have been searching every corner of Colorado for all the wild willows. Our goal is to collect every species of North American willow that occurs within Colorado's borders.

Salix (willow) shrublands are one of the most pervasive and important habitats for wildlife, including pollinators, in Colorado and the greater American West. There are approximately 70 species of *Salix* that exist in western North America, and just over 30 that occur in Colorado.

Photos by Kevin Williams.

Using herbarium records and plant distribution maps we've plotted a collecting plan that we'll execute over the next couple of years. Since willows grow in rivers, creeks and wet seeps in every life zone of Colorado, we have to stagger our collecting trips throughout the growing season, sticking to lower elevations in the spring and collecting in alpine areas all the way through autumn.

This year we worked with the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to obtain permits to take cuttings of willows in public lands as diverse and far flung as the cool, moist montane and subalpine of Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests in the north to the arid canyons of Comanche National Grasslands right at our southern border. In only a few short trips we collected five species of willows and over 30 associated species, plants that grow near and with the willows, which we collect to help us more accurately create and represent ex-situ plant communities at the Gardens.

Next year we'll plan more frequent and longer trips, hoping to find most of our target species and continuing our quest for



FEATURED GARDEN

Improvements at the MARIPOSA URBAN FARM

By Jason De Pecol, Manager of Urban Food Programs

2021 marked the eighth season at the Mariposa Urban Farm, located in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. The farm serves two central purposes: improve access to fresh, healthy produce; and serve as a living classroom for diverse audiences to learn how to grow, harvest and prepare their own food.

While the farm has successfully grown and distributed thousands of pounds of food and engaged many local community members, Mother Nature has taken her toll on the growing beds. Wind, rain, hail and the intense summer sun have caused the wood frames to collapse, making it difficult to continue our work at this site. The farm was in dire need of an infrastructure upgrade.

At just the right time, an exciting partnership with DTJ Design – an architecture, design and



landscape architecture firm located in Boulder – provided us with an opportunity to improve the farm. In March of 2021, Eric Anderson, senior architect and member of the Mariposa Community, secured the DTJ Design Experience Compassion Grant to fund the project. On a warm Friday in October a team of designers and architects from the company volunteered to demolish the old growing beds and start building the new ones. The newly designed beds are infinitely more robust and will withstand the elements with style and strength.

Work on this project will continue into the winter and will be followed by a buildout of a walk-in cold storage room – funded by the same grant. Both projects will be completed by spring 2022 and will enable the Mariposa Urban Farm to thrive for many years to come.

Photos by Jason De Pecol.



Land Management Shapes a POST-FIRE LANDSCAPE

By Christina Alba, Ph.D., Assistant Research Scientist

Many factors influence plant community composition, or the specific mix and relative abundance of plant species that grow together in nature. Some influences are “quiet,” like whether the soil is more or less sticky with water-grabbing clay, and some influences are “loud,” more profoundly transformative, like wildfire. These loud transformations are considered disturbances in ecological parlance – representing a pulsed change to the physical environment and resources. For example, fire opens competition-free space by clearing vegetation and plant litter and can prime the soil bed with nutrients.

With such pronounced change, the ecological stage is reset, potentially promoting turnover in the plant community as it reassembles.

Understanding this reassembly matters because plant species identity is linked to plant functional traits, and by extension to ecosystem function. Consider big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) a long-lived prairie grass with a robust root system. We can expect big bluestem to better reduce post-fire soil erosion than an annual grass with weak and shallow roots – such as introduced cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), which can cause extreme degradation in wildlands. Consider how insects might respond to a post-fire flush of native forbs (showy flowering plant) versus a flush of introduced plants they may not recognize as a suitable host.

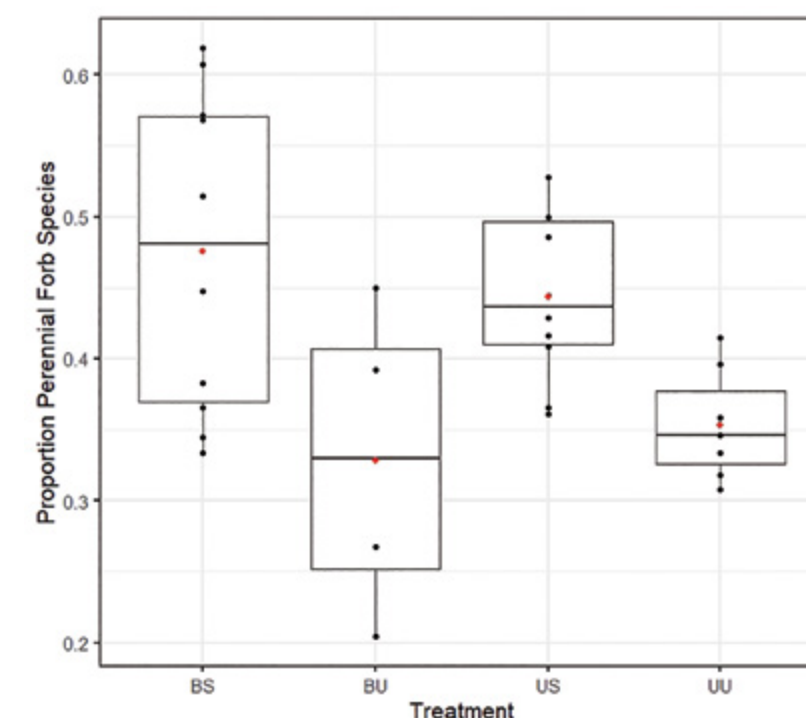
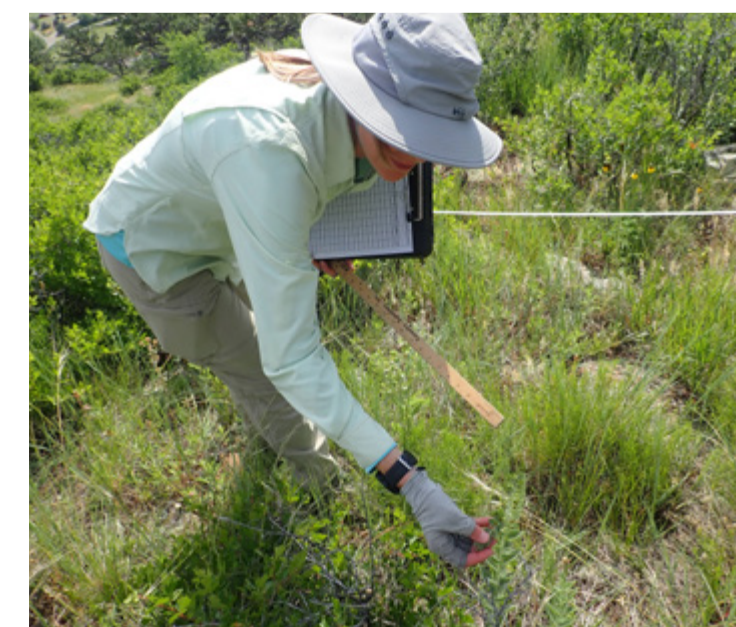


Andropogon gerardii

Light-colored stand of cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*)

Now take these ingredients – the foundational template of soils, climate and topography; the transformative action of fire; the palette of species available – and add the existing fingerprint of land management to the mix. Across our modern landscapes, management represents another influence on wildland plant communities. Last summer, scientists at Denver Botanic Gardens were awarded a grant from Boulder County Parks & Open Space to answer a critical management question: Did cheatgrass removal with herbicide support the recruitment of desirable native species after the 2020 Calwood Fire? The featured graph tells part of the story: perennial forbs (most of which are native and important resources for insects) are more abundant in sprayed than unsprayed areas, and they are most abundant in sprayed areas that have been burned.

While only one piece of the puzzle, the robust post-fire recovery of this important functional group, especially in areas with less cheatgrass, suggests a successful management outcome. Such findings can help guide future decisions about how to steward our wildlands in the face of global climate change.



(BS = Burned, Sprayed; BU = Burned, Unsprayed; US = Unburned, Sprayed; UU = Unburned, Unsprayed)



Scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*) and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*)

Photos by Alissa Iverson.

Artist Talks with Land Line Artists in Residence

Denver Botanic Gardens' Land Line artist residency program seeks to inspire and bring awareness to nature through individual perspectives. Through this series of artist talks, discover the research and inspirations behind the work of the 2021 Land Line cohort.

Garden of Sound:

An Evening with

Nathan Hall

Thursday, February 3,
6 p.m.
Sturm Family Auditorium

Artist Talk with

Chris Coleman and Laleh Mehran

Wednesday, February 9,
6 p.m.
Sturm Family Auditorium

Artist Talk with

Sarojini Jha Johnson

Wednesday, March 9,
6 p.m.
Sturm Family Auditorium

An Evening with

Paula Castillo

Thursday, March 24,
6 p.m.
Sturm Family Auditorium

Month of Printmaking (Mo'Print)

Open Portfolio Sale

Saturday, March 12, 1-4 p.m.
Mitchell Hall

Learn about printmaking, meet artists and purchase original prints from more than 50 local artists ranging from students to established professionals. Mo'Print celebrates the making of original prints to inspire, educate and promote awareness in the Denver metropolitan area, the Front Range and throughout Colorado.



Opening Reception: Winter Art Exhibitions

Saturday, January 15, 5 p.m.

Celebrate the exhibitions *Organic Tarot*, *Cross-Pollination* and *The Indelible Garden*. Galleries will be open and artists will be present. Masks required.

Free admission – get [full details](#) and join us!



The Indelible Garden: Prints by Taiko Chandler

Through April 3

Memories of nature suffuse Taiko Chandler's artwork, finding form in the organic, layered shapes of her prints and installations. Chandler's undulating plant-like forms are not intended as literal representations of nature, but instead interpret its foundational influence on family and memory.

REGISTER NOW

Tours: Exploring Exhibitions and Curator Conversations

See info under Tours, page 13

Taiko Chandler, *On and On T12020*, oil monoprint with stencils, 2020. © Taiko Chandler.

Organic Tarot: Works by Tya Alisa Anthony

January 15 – April 3

Tya Alisa Anthony illuminates and reframes the personal stories of Depression-era Black sharecroppers to reimagine them as icons of divine and mystical power. Combining archival photos with botanical imagery, *Organic Tarot* explores often hidden stories of people of color depicted in historical photographs. Juxtaposed with Anthony's works are botanical prints from Robert John Thornton's "Temple of Flora" (1799-1807), fostering reflection on the history of botanical illustration and the representation of plants, people and places.



Tya Alisa Anthony, *Seven of Pentacles*, digital collage, 2020.
© Tya Alisa Anthony.

REGISTER NOW

Artist Talk: Tya Alisa Anthony

January 20, 6 p.m.
Join artist Tya Alisa Anthony for a discussion of her artwork featured in *Organic Tarot*.

Tours: Exploring Exhibitions and Curator Conversations

See info under Tours, page 13

Cross-Pollination: The Moth Migration Project

January 15 – April 3

Hilary Lorenz's immersive installation highlights the capacity of artmaking to forge powerful and unexpected connections between people. *Cross-Pollination: The Moth Migration Project* features more than 16,000 printed paper moths alighted on surfaces throughout the gallery. Each moth is a unique artwork created by the artist or crowd-sourced from individuals across 27 countries. Discover this collaborative project celebrating moths as pollinators and metaphors for the exchange of art and ideas.



Hilary Lorenz, *Moth Migration Project* (installation detail), prints on cut paper, 2017, 516Arts, Albuquerque, USA. © Moth Migration Project.

REGISTER NOW

Artist Talk: Hilary Lorenz

January 13, 6 p.m.
Join artist Hilary Lorenz for a discussion of her artwork featured in *Cross-Pollination: The Moth Migration Project*.

Tours: Exploring Exhibitions and Curator Conversations

See info under Tours, page 13

Seeing the Invisible

Through August

Experience an innovative exhibition of contemporary artworks existing only in augmented reality (AR). Co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring, *Seeing the Invisible* presents virtual works that engage with existing features of the natural landscape. Beyond the boundaries of what is possible with physical artworks, many of the works created for the exhibition address themes of nature, environment, sustainability and the intersection of the physical world with the digital one.

Seeing the Invisible is organized by the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund.



GREATER ACCESS

to Art and Archives Collections

By Nicole Famiglietti, Manager of Exhibitions, and Allaina Wallace, Associate Director of Education and Library; Head Librarian

Denver Botanic Gardens' art collections have a new digital home. In 2019, the Gardens was awarded a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support the transition of non-living collections into the new Freyer – Newman Center. One goal was to make art and archives collections more discoverable to the public and enable greater access.

Hundreds of artworks including paintings, prints, drawings and sculpture have been carefully photographed and cataloged as part of their move to new storage spaces in the Center. As a result of these efforts, these works can be seen online through a publicly accessible catalog. Discover artworks within the Gardens' collection by searching by artist, date, subject, medium or keyword, or browse

using the "Random Image" feature. [Explore the art collections catalog.](#)

Archival collections have been made discoverable thanks to Helen Fowler Library's archivist and library interns supported through the IMLS grant. These collections tell the history of Denver Botanic Gardens and include materials such as photographs, blueprints and architectural drawings, event brochures and departmental records. Collections are keyword searchable and viewable by appointment. Search the [ArchivesSpace database](#) on the Library Collections web page.

We hope you'll explore the Gardens' collections and be inspired by artworks and archival materials that help make this such a special place.

IMLS Award number: MA-30-18-0410-18

GUIDED STAFF-LED TOURS AT YORK STREET

\$19, \$15 member (includes admission)

Garden Guru

ORCHIDS – January 27, 10 a.m.

The orchids you see at the grocery store are just a small sample of the thousands of orchid species that come in all different shapes and colors. Denver Botanic Gardens grows more than 1,000 different orchids from dozens of countries. Join us for the January Garden Guru tour led by Nick Snakenberg, curator of tropical collections and associate director of horticulture, to learn about these colorful, peculiar plants from habitats around the globe.

SPRING GARDEN PREPARATION – March 11, 2 p.m.

Is your garden ready for spring? Join the March Garden Guru tour led by Dan Johnson, associate director of horticulture and curator of native plants, to get some gardening tips and ideas for the new growing season.

Curator Conversations

Select Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Interested in some behind-the-scenes insight about the art exhibitions? Stroll the galleries with one of our curatorial staff members and get the scoop on the artworks and the fascinating details of how the exhibition came to life.

GUIDED DOCENT-LED TOURS AT YORK STREET

\$16, \$12 member (includes admission)

Exploring Exhibitions

Select Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.

Enjoy the current gallery exhibitions with a docent as your guide. Exhibitions change regularly. [Learn about current and upcoming art exhibitions.](#)

Love Potions from the Vine

February 13, 14 & 15, 3 p.m.

Celebrate the month of love with a captivating indoor tour of exotic tropical plants that have inspired myths and teased the senses.

Tropical Trails

January – March, Select Saturdays, 2 p.m.

Denver may be blanketed by snow but the plants in the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory enjoy a warm climate year-round. Join them for a tropical retreat during a docent-led tour that highlights the Gardens' tropical plants.

PRIVATE TOURS AT YORK STREET OR CHATFIELD FARMS

(Online options available too!)

Looking for a special experience for your group of eight or more? Schedule a private guided tour at York Street or at Chatfield Farms or an online tour of the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory at least three weeks in advance. For more information, contact tours@botanicgardens.org.

Docent-led: \$15, \$6 student (includes admission)

Staff-led: \$17, \$6 student (includes admission)

Online tours: Prices vary.

TOURS AT PLAINS CONSERVATION CENTER

\$10 public





GET GROWING Even if It's Snowing!

By Sarah Olson, Associate Director of Education

The holidays are over, and now a somber realization sets in: Gardening season is five cold months away. Roads are icy, your work schedule is packed and you're dreaming of spring. Don't fret! The Gardens offers online and hybrid programs to get you through the winter season.

Regardless of location, transportation or time constraints, you can get prepared for the best summer yet. Join us to discuss horticulture in the high country, growing your own food or starting your very own urban farm. Whether you are marching your house plants to their death or are pondering how to start a garden from seed, we have something for you. Courses are available from the comfort of your home with options to visit us in the Freyer – Newman Center's state-of-the-art classrooms and Sturm Family Auditorium.

HERE ARE A FEW SELECT OFFERINGS

A New Gardener Boot Camp

ONLINE OR ONSITE

Are you a blank slate when it comes to starting your very own garden? Worried about ending the growing season with a pile of dead plants and sad vegetables? Join us [online](#) or [onsite](#) for sessions packed with answers to all those looming and mysterious gardening questions. Beginners are especially welcome!



Garden Camp and Farm Camp for Kids

ONSITE

Help your child reap the positive mental and emotional effects of immersion in nature with a week of Garden Camp or Farm Camp! Spring and summer camp registration for members begins on January 13 and remaining spots open to the public on January 17. Weekly themes include Art, Potions and Plants and a week of Gardening 101 at York Street, as well as Life on the Farm and a Pollinator Week at Chatfield Farms. We also offer spring break camp at York Street. [Learn more and register](#) or email gardencamp@botanicgardens.org for information.



NEW

High Country Horticulture Program

ONLINE OR HYBRID WITH ONSITE OPTIONS

Are you new to Colorado? Has our growing season sent you into a tailspin? [Join us](#) for a better understanding of Colorado ecology and how to have a successful garden with Colorado's short season, dry conditions and stunning native plants. Led by Denver Botanic Gardens horticulture staff and longtime instructors.

ICY OUTDOOR ORNAMENTS

By Melissa Gula, Manager of Family and Children's Programs

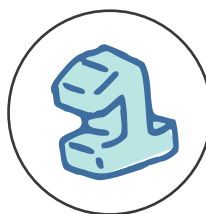
There are beautiful treasures to be found in the winter garden.

Bundle up and take a walk through your neighborhood or local park and discover the beauty of nature in winter. Bring along a container to collect some unique, natural treasures to create an icy masterpiece. As you are exploring, keep an eye out for winter wonders such as:

- Animal tracks (look closely in the snow and mud!)
- Plants that still have green leaves
- A nest left behind in the branches of a tree
- A dried seedpod
- Bright berries
- A bird staying behind for the winter

After your winter nature walk, look at the items you collected. Did you collect any leaves, berries or stems? Choose some of your favorite treasures to use in your ornament. (Remember, some plants can make you sick. Don't eat berries or any plant parts you find.)

To Create an Icy Outdoor Ornament



Fill a plastic container (plastic storage containers or leftover yogurt cups work great) with a little bit of water. Place some of your collected treasures in the water. Depending on the item it may sink to the bottom or float on top. Place the end of a piece of yarn in the water and put the container in the freezer. (If it is cold enough, you can even place your container outside to freeze!)



Check on your creation every hour or so. As the ice begins to freeze you should be able to adjust the items or add more water to the container to evenly disperse the materials throughout the ornament.



Once the ice ornament has frozen through, gently turn the container over and tap the bottom until the ice ornament comes loose from the container.



Find the perfect place to hang your ornament outside and admire the wonderful winter treasures you found on your winter nature walk!

The Fête des Fleurs REIMAGINED

By Johanna Kelly, Director of Development

Last year, when things were still turned upside-down, the 37th annual *Fête des Fleurs* retained its incredible allure fundraising power through imaginative changes.

Instead of a single dining location, guests chose from seven socially distanced options. To accommodate various comfort levels, table sponsorships of eight, six and four guests were available. The locations included the Romantic Gardens, Monet Pool gazebo and the UMB Bank Amphitheater Tent. A novel option was to pick your spot on the grass or a bench and enjoy a picnic basket filled with a delicious dinner. The attire? Garden party chic!

Five hundred fifty-two guests gamely enjoyed a traveling cocktail reception following a route led by the *Pantala flavescens*, or globe skimmer dragonfly, depicted on signage through the Gardens. Did you know this dragonfly is the longest distance traveler in the insect world? This unique cocktail hour led guests to internationally themed gardens, including the Japanese Bill Hosokawa Pavilion, French Le Potager and American Oak Grove.

The event was a tremendous success thanks to co-chairs Lizzy Morton and Becky Schaub and an amazing committee. In support of the Gardens' core programs—including children's education, public outreach, horticulture, research and conservation—the event raised \$341,000. The evening generated many ideas that may enhance the *Fête* in the future. Mark your calendar for August 26 to be part of the experience this summer!





THE COMPOST WHISPERER

Update on Regenerative Agriculture

By Josie Hart, Manager of Farm Programs

Over a year ago, the **Community Supporting Agriculture** (CSA) team at Chatfield Farms made a commitment to become a living example of regenerative agriculture.

The end goal is to be an “internationally recognized, locally utilized” model for how farm practices can improve the quality of soil, water and biodiversity rather than negatively impacting those systems through food production. While not exactly a new commitment as the CSA team has been growing food sustainably at Chatfield Farms for more than 10 years, there is a sharpening of focus. We seek to build our soil health as the first and foremost activity that enables a larger system to bring new and sustain current life and nutrients in our food and our ecosystem.

The soil truly is the key to regenerating life. To create a program for soil health and management, we started with on-farm composting, helmed by Rutger Myers. A seasonal farmer with the CSA crew for the last three years, one thing became clear while working with Rutger – he is truly dedicated to soil health, compost production and waste reduction on the farm and off.

Rutger became our first ever soil health technician, with the initial focus on creating amazing in-house compost. A master composter, he works closely with Denver Urban Gardens’ community compost program. Rutger is inspired by “local compost,” an idea that if all the elements in your compost come from your own growing space, the mycological and bacterial connections will flourish at a much quicker rate (versus bringing in foreign elements to enhance the soil and initiate decomposition through these friendly “micro-helpers”).

We hope to build the fungal content of our soil. Fungus forms a bond with plant roots, and with the help of bacteria, nutrient exchanges occur to facilitate plant growth. Making healthier soil will in turn make healthier plants and ultimately healthier food for all of us.

I call Rutger the Compost Whisperer – but I think he is really whispering to the worms, the microbiology, the animal friends and the soil layers that all work together to build back the land in a healthier way. The hidden elements in the soil infrastructure are what sustain life, hold more water and capture carbon. Not only do we need a soil health technician, but we all need a little gratitude for the world under our feet.

UPCOMING

CONCERTS ARE BACK!

The Summer Concert Series returns to York Street this year! Traditional concerts will return to the UMB Bank Amphitheater as well as more intimate weeknight performances throughout the Gardens during Evenings al Fresco. Artists and dates to be announced. Keep an eye on our website and your inbox!



TRIPS & TRAVEL

Space is limited for all trips. COVID-19 vaccinations required for all participants.

Garden of the Gods: A Springtime Journey to the Greek Islands

April 26 – May 7, 2022

Greece in spring is a magical experience. It’s the time of the year when the entire country becomes a vast natural garden. Greece is home to a stunning number of plant species, comprising the richest flora in Europe. More than 6,000 species thrive in the country, of which about 10 percent are endemic and can be found nowhere else in the world. On this springtime journey we will witness the beautiful display of wildflowers that cover the land among ancient sites, old villages and notable islands. Host is Dr. Sarada Krishnan, director of horticulture and the Center for Global Initiatives at the Gardens.

Get [details and more information](#) about trips and travel with the Gardens.

Superb Gardens of the Côte d’Azur and Provence, France

June 22 – July 1, 2022

Our tour starts in Nice on the Côte d’Azur visiting beautiful gardens along the coast. Then on to Provence, where a selection of private gardens has been chosen by leading local landscape designers. Cypress trees, country roads lined with majestic plane trees, olive trees and vines, massive lavender fields in bloom near Sault and Valensole – all seen against a backdrop of craggy limestone hills or forested mountains – are just part of the superb Provençal landscape. The climate is challenging: Hot summers with the fierce Mistral blowing down the Rhône valley, a lack of water, and even cold winters. Yet the gardens are stunning. Host is Larry Vickerman, director of Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms. Tour includes a local French guide.

Photo courtesy Thalassa Journeys.

Honor/Memorial Contributors

Gifts Received August 1, 2021 – October 31, 2021

IN MEMORY

In Memory of Baby Amos
Lauren and Bryan Amos

In Memory of Peggy Atkinson
Rainguet Family

In Memory of Nick
Elizabeth and Yasu Kizaki

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