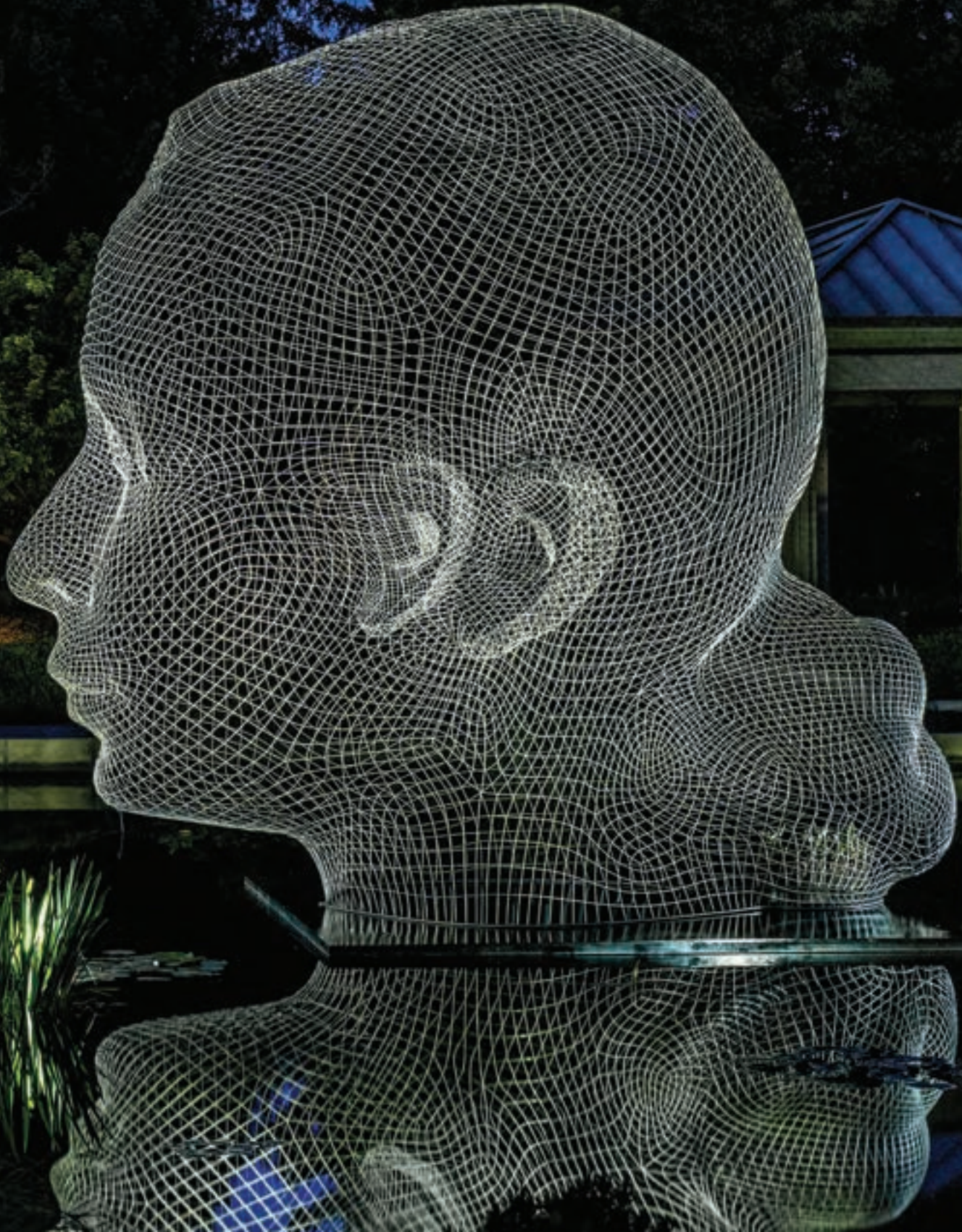


INSIDE



THE GARDENS

SUMMER 2026 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR
MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS





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There are certain places that do more than reflect their environment—they help define it. As Denver Botanic Gardens marks its 75th anniversary alongside Colorado’s 150th year, I find myself considering what it means to belong to a place as distinctive as this one.

Colorado is not an easy landscape. The environment is a semi-arid, high plains steppe shaped by extremes: intense sun, limited water, dramatic temperature swings. And yet, life here is not just resilient, it is remarkably inventive. The plants that call this region home remind us that thriving involves adaptation, stewardship and innovation. What we learn here in Colorado increasingly informs how others garden, conserve and design for resilience in similar environments around the world.

From the beginning, the Gardens has worked to amplify those lessons. We have sought not only to cultivate beauty, but to lead, asking what a public garden can and should be in a changing world.

The answers are found at Chatfield Farms, where the elegant combination of agrivoltaics in the [Solar Garden](#) offers a model for sustainable gardening while offsetting power consumption. In seed-collecting expeditions to climatically similar regions, which foster [international partnerships](#) while identifying resilient plant species suited to Denver’s evolving climate. And in projects like the [Center for Plant Conservation](#), which safeguards plants on public lands at risk of wildfire.

This summer, whether you find your connection to plants through the sun-warmed blooms at Lavender Festival or as the setting for Jaime Plensa’s monumental sculptures, I hope you also experience the simple, profound truth that plants are not just resources; they are companions in our human story.

Anniversaries offer a chance to reflect as well as look forward. The challenges facing our environment are real and urgent, particularly in regions like ours where water and climate shape every decision. Yet I am inspired by what is possible when creativity, science and community come together.

As we celebrate 75 years of Denver Botanic Gardens, we do so with gratitude—for the visionaries who came before us, for the community that sustains us and for the landscapes that continue to shape us. And we look ahead with purpose, committed to cultivating a future where both people and plants can thrive.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Donna McGinnis
Denver Botanic Gardens CEO

INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 3, 2026

Denver Botanic Gardens
1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206
Hours through Sept. 7, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., last admission 8 p.m.
Sept. 8-30, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., last admission 8 p.m.

Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms
8500 West Deer Creek Canyon Rd., Littleton, CO 80128
9 a.m. – 5 p.m., last admission 4 p.m.

[Check the website for early closures](#)

General Information: 720-865-3500
Class Registration: 720-865-3580
Donations: 720-865-3528
Gift Shop: 720-865-3595
Membership Services: 720-865-3525
Private Events: 720-865-3551
Volunteering: 720-865-3609
Helen Fowler Library: 720-865-3570

Visit Our Website for More Information:
[Gardening Help from Colorado Master Gardeners](#)
[Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium](#)
[Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi](#)

Editor: Tiffany Coleman
Graphic Designer: Jessica Lammert
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.



botanicgardens.org



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.





Mount Goliath



Aerial view of Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory, 1960s



Fledgling gardens in front of Waring House, early 1960s

AT THE BEGINNING: Denver Botanic Gardens, 75 Years Ago

By Tiffany Coleman, Marketing Manager



Rosa canina (dog rose)
Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium

Photos courtesy Denver Botanic Gardens'
Helen Fowler Library Archive

In 1951, volunteers transformed a “rubbish-strewn bank” in City Park into a rock garden using stones hauled from the mountains and plants donated from home gardens. This was the humble beginning of Denver Botanic Gardens.

Even then, the vision stretched beyond ornamental beauty. Early plans described a botanic garden built specifically for the Rocky Mountain region—a place to test plants, share knowledge and help people connect more deeply with Colorado’s landscapes.

Because the original City Park location wasn’t secure, the Gardens was moved to a new location at 1007 York Street in 1958. In an old issue of *The Green Thumb*—predecessor to *Inside the Gardens*—the site was described as “centrally located in the city” and notes “There are no existing plants on it now; it was formerly a cemetery.”

Visitors could wander Lilac Lane, collections of flowering crabapples and roses, and hundreds

of evergreens adapted to Colorado’s climate. Plans also called for greenhouses, classrooms and an alpinum so visitors who could not travel to the high country could still experience alpine plants in Denver. In addition, the Gardens was already expanding beyond the city through its stewardship of the alpine garden atop Mount Goliath.

“Botanic Gardens House”—known today as Waring House, located on the south end of the Ellipse garden—was intended to be horticultural headquarters for the entire region, housing offices for the Gardens, Colorado Forestry and Horticulture Association and the Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs.

What started as a community project has evolved into one of the region’s defining cultural and horticultural institutions. Seventy-five years later, guided by the core values of sustainability, transformation, diversity and relevance, the Gardens remains a way people can connect with plants—from the plains to the alpine.

150 YEARS OF BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH IN COLORADO

By Molly Nepokroeff, Head Curator of Natural History Collections;
Andrew Wilson, Associate Curator of Mycology; Matthew Sheik, Collection's Assistant



Colorado ecosystems have undergone major changes in the past 150 years since we gained statehood. While this history of biodiversity research in Colorado is largely told through a western science perspective, Indigenous people spent thousands of years before that passing down knowledge of native plants and managing Colorado's ecosystems, from the grasslands of the Front Range to the peaks of the Rockies.

The first botanical expeditions by western scientists date back to the 1820s when members of the Stephen H. Long expedition documented many common Front Range native plants. In 1877, Asa Gray, Harvard University Professor and the namesake of Grays Peak, together with Joseph Hooker, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London, explored the alpine plants of Colorado to understand connections to other alpine regions in Europe and Asia. A decade later in 1887, Alfred Russel Wallace was guided by local East High School teacher and amateur botanist Alice Eastwood up Gray's Peak to address similar questions. Eastwood created one of the first collections of plant specimens in Colorado and described 395 plant species throughout her career, many from Colorado. Considerable work by many later botanists has documented 3,644 species of vascular plants in our current flora.

Fungi are presently having a moment in Colorado with *Agaricus julius* designated as the state mushroom in 2025. The study of mushroom biodiversity in Colorado started in the 1960s with amateur mushroom enthusiasts like Dr. D.H. "Sam" Mitchel (namesake of the Gardens' Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi) documenting the mushrooms of Colorado. Fungi have important symbiotic relationships with plants, making the study of fungi important for plant conservation concerns. However, unlike plants, a majority of mushroom biomass exists underground as mycelium, making them a challenge to document and study.

There are still regions of the state that are under-explored—and biodiversity is dynamic as plants and fungi come and go with environmental changes. Modern day "explorers," such as Colorado's scientists and their students—including those at the Gardens—continue to work to document Colorado's plant and fungal diversity. They collect specimens, use advanced genetic analysis techniques, and study the more than 1 million specimens of plants and fungi that have been collected in Colorado over the last 150 years. These efforts describe new plant and fungal species and lay the foundation for ecological conservation. The continued documentation of Colorado's biodiversity will give us clues into the health and future of its biodiversity, and our ongoing work will inform Coloradans in another 150 years.

OAK GROVE ENHANCEMENT

By Mike Holloway, Horticulture Coordinator

In June, Oak Grove welcomed new permanent residents: about 267 plants representing 48 new species and cultivars. Established in 1982, the beloved woodland garden continues to evolve more than four decades later. New trees, flowering shrubs, perennials and groundcovers diversify the collection, bringing fresh texture, color and seasonal interest to this space.

There are dramatic bloomers such as the giant Himalayan lily (*Cardiocrinum giganteum*), native to Himalayan woodlands and capable of reaching 7 to 9 feet in height, and the vampire lily (*Dracunculus vulgaris*), which sends up a three-foot stalk topped by an 18-inch, deep red flower. Its distinctive odor attracts flies, its primary pollinators.

Look for standout hostas, including 'Empress Wu', the world's largest cultivar, growing to a height of 4 feet with a 6-foot spread, and the highly sought-after Japanese selection 'Mito-no-hana', which has green leaves with bold yellow stripes.

Another treasure: four hardy lady slipper orchids, which prefer dappled light and rich, moist woodland soil—conditions Oak Grove provides.

New trees include the white fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus* 'Spring Fleecing'), draped in fringe-like white flowers in late spring; the Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*), bearing white, bell-shaped flowers in late April; and sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), long valued for its aromatic roots. Sassafras also benefits wildlife with bird-friendly fruit and supports native pollinators as a host plant.

We hope you enjoy watching these new residents take root and transform Oak Grove in the years ahead.



A BRISTLECONE ON MOUNT BLUE SKY

By Amy Schneider, Assistant Curator

In the year 403, a small seed from a bristlecone pine tree (*Pinus aristata*) got its start on the northeastern slope of what is now called [Mount Goliath](#)—12,000 feet above sea level, on a shoulder peak of the Mount Blue Sky massif. Perhaps left behind by a bird or squirrel stashing food, the seed sent roots into the soil and slowly began to grow.

Other bristlecones eventually established nearby. Some of those earliest trees still stand today, more than 1,600 years later. The most ancient began growing around the time the Roman Empire was collapsing and Roman rule in Britain was ending after nearly 500 years.

By the time these trees had reached roughly 600 years of growth—around the era when the Pueblo cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde were being built—most would have had exposed wood on their trunks where bark had been scoured away by powerful winds blasting gravel and ice. Branches, sculpted by wind

into twisted, curling forms, typically numbered 70 to 100 per tree. Some crown dieback and dead branches on the lowermost part of the trunk would have been present. The crown would gradually bend sideways, developing the classic top-heavy bristlecone form over the next 1,000 years to present day.

These grizzled, gnarled giants retain needles for 20 to 40 years, an energy-saving measure. Their high abundance of resin results in the sticky white resin dots on their needles. Resin protects and preserves the tree during and after its life, as fallen logs, or snags, take hundreds of years to decay.

The gates to the Mount Blue Sky Scenic Byway opened once again in May after being closed since 2024 for road repairs. Come hike the trails among the bristlecone pines, there to admire and contemplate.

Reservations are required; make yours at [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

SPECIAL EVENTS



LAVENDER FESTIVAL AT CHATFIELD FARMS

Saturday & Sunday, July 18 & 19, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
\$7-\$17, tickets must be purchased in advance.

Celebrate the beauty and aroma of summer at Chatfield Farms, where peak lavender season fills the landscape with purple blooms and fragrance. Stroll through lavender fields, enjoy live music and shop an artisan marketplace featuring lavender inspired and handcrafted goods.

Experience the farm in full bloom with local food trucks, interactive art that includes a collaborative mural and a relaxed festival atmosphere. Step back in time at Hildebrand Ranch, where history comes to life alongside demonstrations of lavender cultivation and harvesting by Chatfield Farms' horticultural team.

NEW FOR 2026! Guided garden tours, a Lavender Festival scavenger hunt and expanded shaded seating where you can linger and unwind. Get your tickets now.

CORN MAZE AT CHATFIELD FARMS

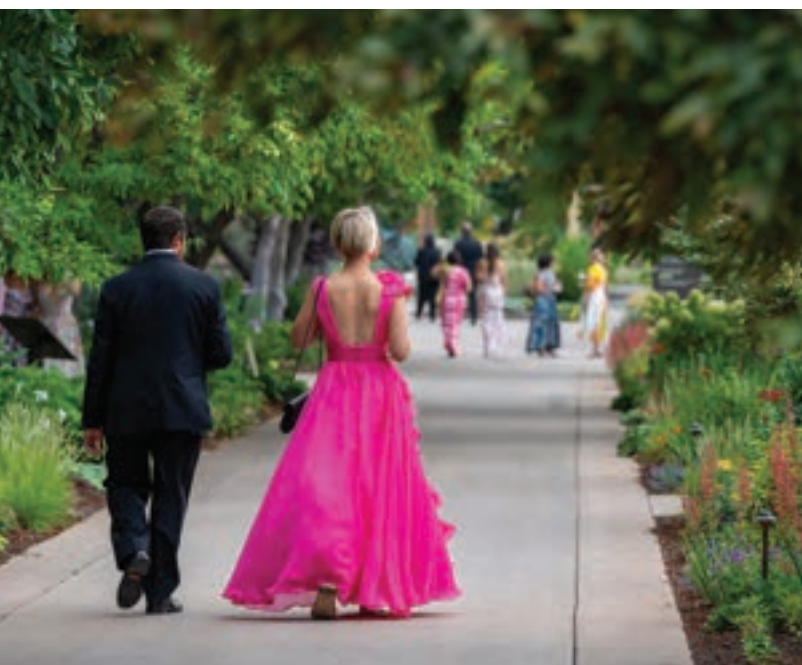
Fridays – Sundays, September 18 – November 1, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
\$10-\$22, tickets must be purchased in advance.

Wander through eight acres of twists and turns as Corn Maze celebrates 150 years of Colorado statehood. This year's design brings Colorado's natural heritage to life, featuring the foothills, bighorn sheep, columbine, greenback cutthroat trout and the delicate hairstreak butterfly woven throughout the maze. As you explore, keep an eye out for icons of the Centennial State hidden among the corn.

Younger guests can enjoy the mini maze and barrel train rides, while everyone can pause for classic festival treats like funnel cakes and kettle corn from our food vendors.

Take part in a farm-wide scavenger hunt.

Corn Maze is a unique Colorado adventure for all ages. Get tickets today.



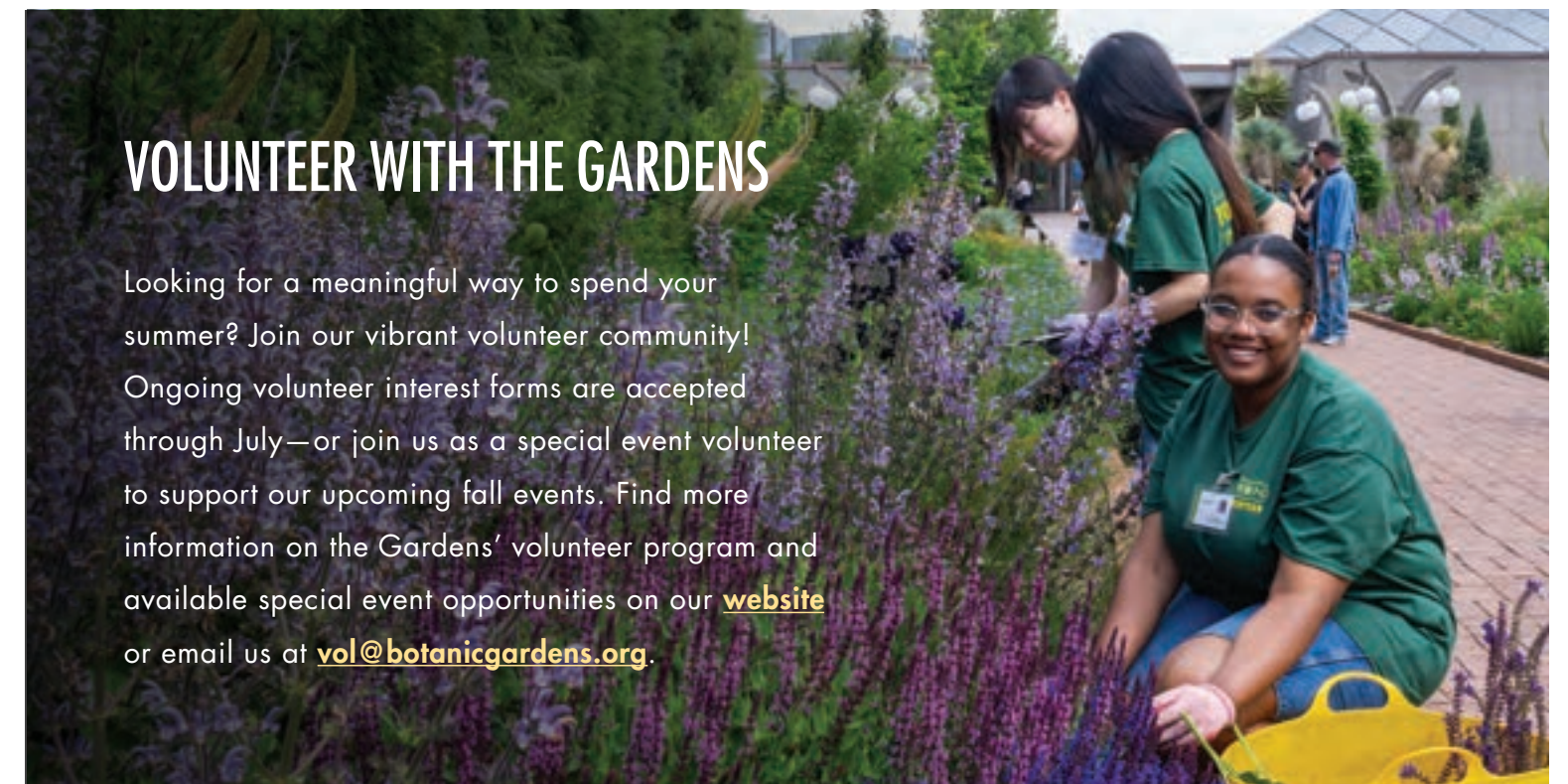
FÊTE DES FLEURS

Friday, August 28, 6-11:30 p.m.

This unforgettable evening closes out summer while supporting core programs at the Gardens. The annual fundraising gala honors the Gardens 75th anniversary and Colorado's 150th anniversary of statehood this year with Colorado-inspired décor and long connected tables that celebrate community. Guests enjoy cocktails and a curated dinner experience. The evening continues with dancing to live music, creating a vibrant close to a night of elegance and celebration.

VOLUNTEER WITH THE GARDENS

Looking for a meaningful way to spend your summer? Join our vibrant volunteer community! Ongoing volunteer interest forms are accepted through July—or join us as a special event volunteer to support our upcoming fall events. Find more information on the Gardens' volunteer program and available special event opportunities on our [website](#) or email us at vol@botanicgardens.org.





Jaume Plensa, *Talking Continents*, steel, 2013. Photo by Scott Dressel-Martin. Artwork © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid.

Current Exhibition

Jaume PLENSA

A New Humanism

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7

Monumental outdoor sculptures and a variety of indoor gallery artworks explore unity, shared experiences and the human spirit.

[Learn more about the exhibition](#)

Related Programs

[Garden to Gallery Tour](#)

Various dates and times

Experience a selection of Jaume Plensa's iconic sculptures on this 90-minute stroll through the gardens and into the galleries.

[Film Screening: Can You Hear Me?](#)

Thursday, August 20, 5:30-8 p.m.

This film takes audiences on a journey around the globe with celebrated sculptor Jaume Plensa, exploring his iconic installations in public spaces and into the studio where it all begins.

[Drop-in: Make & Take Nature Journaling](#)

Select Thursdays and Sundays,
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. through September 7
\$15, no registration required

Hone your visual thinking skills in gardens and galleries with a Plensa-inspired nature journal activity.

Fall Exhibitions Preview

[The Place of Flowers: Works by Daisy Patton](#)

September 19, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Discover transformed found photographs, where vibrant floral patterns revive forgotten faces and invite fresh encounters with the past.

[Curious Companions: Fungi, Parasites and Carnivores](#)

September 26, 2026 – January 31, 2027

Explore surprising and unusual interspecies interactions through detailed botanical illustrations.

[Realm of Wonder: Izumi Yokoyama](#)

October 3, 2026 – February 7, 2027

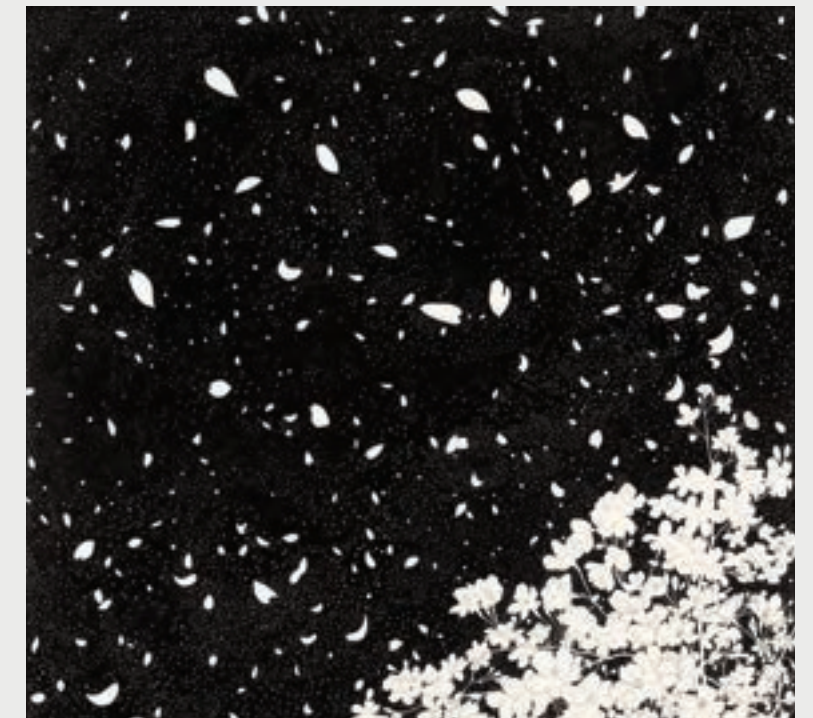
Reflect on the fleeting beauty of nature in *Realm of Wonder*, Izumi Yokoyama's site-specific installation of drawings and sculpture.



The Place of Flowers | Daisy Patton, *Untitled (Family in the Garden)*, oil paint on archival pigment print, 2023.



Curious Companions | Karen Kluglein, *Magic*, watercolor on illustration board, 2023.



Realm of Wonder | Izumi Yokoyama, *Whirl*, ink, 2024.

ADULT PROGRAMS

[Food with a Story: A Timeline of Food in Colorado](#)

Thursday, August 13, 20, & 27, 6-7:30 p.m.
\$25 per session, \$60 for full series

In celebration of Colorado's 150th anniversary, join Bill St. John and Marczyk Fine Foods for a three-part series taking a closer look at the role and significance of food throughout our state's history.

[Cheese 101](#)

Wednesday, August 19, 5-6 p.m.
\$38, \$32 member

Discover how cheese is made, explore the different categories and types of cheeses throughout the world and learn how cheese has evolved throughout time.

[A Singing Bowl Workshop for Self-Care and Wellness](#)

Wednesday, August 26 or Wednesday,
September 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$50, \$45 member

In these hands-on classes, experiment with different types of bowls and experience ways to use them—both for self-care and to help others.

[Handmade Paper from Foraged Mushrooms](#)

Thursday, September 24, 5:30-7 p.m.
\$43, \$38 member

Learn the basic tools and techniques of Western-style papermaking as well as an introduction to identifying which mushrooms can be used for paper.

[Growing Great Garlic](#)

Wednesday, September 16, 5-6:30 p.m. or
Saturday, September 26, 10-11:30 a.m.
\$44, \$36 member

Growing great garlic in Colorado can be easy and fun. Learn how to select varieties, prepare soil, plant, maintain and harvest garlic effectively.

[Root & Reset: A Day in Nature](#)

Saturday, July 25 or Sunday, July 26,
9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
\$195, \$165 member

We know what happens when people step outside and slow down. It's transformative, and that's the idea behind a new program called Root & Reset: A Day in Nature.

Join us this July at the Genesee Outdoor Experiential Learning Center, nestled in the foothills west of Denver. Trails weave through the forest and across streams, wildflowers catch the light and the air feels different.

The day includes a guided hike with Vanessa "The Nerdy Naturalist" Callahan, which, true to form, means plenty of stopping to look closely. The afternoon opens into facilitated artmaking using natural materials. We wind down with a gentle yoga session.

No prior experience with hiking, art or yoga is needed. Come solo or bring a friend.

SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL ART & ILLUSTRATION

Explore the Summer/Fall Catalog from School of Botanical Art & Illustration

The 2026 Summer/Fall course catalog features more than 110 programs, both onsite and online. Offerings include options for all skill levels. Explore some highlights:

- Join us in Crested Butte for [Crested Butte Wildflower Festival](#), July 10-19. Instructors from the School of Botanical Art & Illustration teach single day classes such as nature journaling, paper flowers, book making, collage and more.
- The [Art at the Gardens Immersive Retreat](#) returns August 1 and 2. Twenty short classes focus on various art topics taught by a variety of talented instructors. Design your creative weekend with a la carte registration; most materials are supplied.
- Visiting artists from around the world teach in this session, including Julie Beeler (OR), Işık Güner (Türkiye), Xitlalic López (Mexico) and Daleen Roodt (South Africa).
- The Food for Thought lunchtime online speaker series features interesting topics to help expand your creative practice.

All this and much more. Preview the [course catalog](#).

PLAINS CONSERVATION CENTER

[Guided Wagon Tours](#)

Celebrate the history, culture and ecology of Colorado on a guided wagon tour at the Plains Conservation Center. Daytime and sunset tours take guests across 1,100 acres of shortgrass prairie, where you'll learn about the native plants and animals that make this ecosystem so diverse and unique.

From the wagon, watch for pronghorn herds, soaring bald eagles and hawks, prairie dog towns and seasonal wildflowers. Sunset tours are timed for golden hour views of the Front Range.

The tour also includes stops at our replica Sod Homestead Village and Tipi Camp, where we explore the history and culture of life on the plains.

The Sod Homestead Village features two late-1800s "soddies" (sod homes) a one-room schoolhouse, an heirloom vegetable garden, a blacksmith shop and farm animals.

At the Tipi Camp, guests can explore tipis representing the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Lakota and Kiowa peoples while learning about the ways their traditions were shaped throughout centuries of thriving in and stewarding the prairie landscape.

In conjunction with Indigenous partners and community members, the City of Aurora also hosts events in the Tipi Camp throughout the year, offering deeper insight into the enduring cultural connections to the plains.

"HISTORY" BOOKS

By Allaina Wallace, Associate Director of Education and Library, Head Librarian

Most of the books in the Helen Fowler Library are about plants, but we also hold a few that reflect the history of the Gardens, Denver and Colorado. Stop by the library and take a look at these titles:

"Cemetery to Conservatory: A history of the land around Denver Botanic Gardens, 1859 – 1978"
by Louisa Ward Arps

It is well known that the Gardens sits on land that was Denver's first cemetery. This work covers the transition from the cemetery to its current use in detail, spanning the period from 1859 to 1980.

"The Colorado Book"
edited by Sandra Dallas, Thomas J. Noel and Pam Sandlian Smith
These essays were written and compiled to celebrate Colorado's 150th anniversary of statehood.

"Exploring Colorado with Kids: 71 field trips and 142 nature-inspired activities"
by Jamie Siebrase and Debbie Mock
Explore Colorado with the kids. This guide includes a variety of places to go, from trails and parks to art and history.

"Finding Solace in the Soil: An archaeology of gardens and gardeners at Amache"
by Bonnie J. Clark
Through the oral histories and personal photographs of those formerly held at the War Relocation Authority Incarceration camp in Colorado, combined with archival data, this book describes how community was cultivated in confinement through the act of gardening.

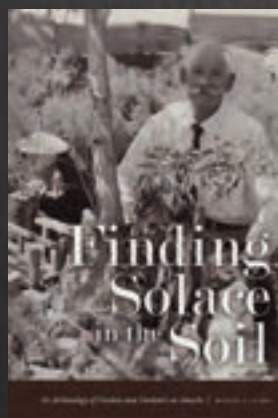
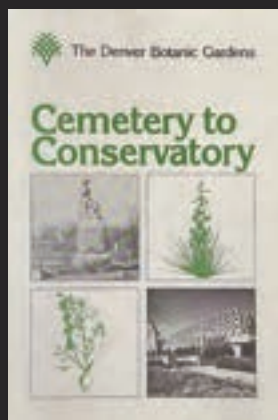


Photo by Evgeny Karandaev, Adobe Stock.

COLORADO 150TH ANNIVERSARY WORD SEARCH

To celebrate Colorado's 150th anniversary, let's explore some fun facts about our favorite state! As you read, keep an eye out for the bolded words. Can you spot them all in the word search below?

Colorado is full of exciting contrasts. To the west, the **Rocky Mountains** tower; to the east, the **Great Plains** roll on and on. This special mix of landscapes creates a one-of-a-kind home to many amazing plants and animals. Here are a few that we are proud to call our own:

State Animal: **Bighorn** Sheep
State Flower: **Columbine**
State Bird: **Lark Bunting**

State Dinosaur: **Stegosaurus**
State Tree: **Blue Spruce**
State Insect: Colorado **Hairstreak Butterfly**

Happy 150th anniversary, Colorado. Here's to many more wonderful years of adventures!

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POWERING FRESH FOOD FORWARD AT SUN VALLEY

By Julia Zoltowsky, Manager of Urban Food Programs

Sun Valley Grow Garden—a partnership between Denver Botanic Gardens and Denver Housing Authority—reached an exciting milestone this year with the installation of a 20-foot, solar-powered cold storage unit, developed by Radiant Innovation, LLC. Made possible through a grant from Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids Initiative funded by the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment, the unit will provide the storage capacity needed for the 9,000+ pounds of produce we anticipate growing this season.

For many Sun Valley residents, access to fresh, healthy food is limited. This investment helps address that gap by making it easier to grow and share fresh produce directly within the community. Just as importantly, the

crops being grown reflect community input—providing produce that residents want, use and help shape.

The addition of on-site cold storage is an important step toward building a more sustainable, closed-loop food system. Instead of harvesting produce and transporting it off-site for storage before it reaches residents, food can now be cooled, stored and distributed directly from the farm. This reduces transportation, lowers handling costs, cuts food waste and helps ensure produce reaches families fresher and faster.

More than infrastructure, this cold storage unit strengthens Sun Valley’s local food system by improving food access, supporting community choice and creating a more efficient way to connect residents with fresh, locally grown food.



Photos by Julia Zoltowsky



CHATFIELD FARMS

A Landscape of Change and Continuity

By Larry Vickerman, Director of Chatfield Farms

Change has always been a part of Colorado. The sheltered Deer Creek Valley emerging from the Front Range just south of metro Denver has a long history of human habitation. Indigenous peoples were attracted to the area by abundant game and water. Lush grasses grew in the rich soils that were washed down from the mountains over millennia.

These abundant resources later attracted European settlers eager to start farms and ranches to feed the rapidly growing towns that sprang up during the Colorado Gold Rush. In 1866, German immigrant Frank Hildebrand purchased a small cabin along with 160 acres, establishing what would become one of the foundational properties that make up Chatfield Farms.

In the 1970s, more changes came about. The construction of Chatfield Reservoir in the late 1960s created the need for the United States Army Corps of Engineers to condemn the property for floodwater storage.

Denver Botanic Gardens acquired the lease to develop a public facility in 1975. Over the past five decades, Chatfield Farms has restored native habitats and historical buildings—including Frank Hildebrand’s original cabin, which survives as part of the Hildebrand Ranch House interior—built pathways, planted gardens and trees, resumed farming and created programs to educate people about the many changes that have taken place here. Change will continue to shape this landscape over the next 150 years as we advance our mission through stewardship, research, conservation and meaningful engagement with the communities we serve.

Denver Botanic Gardens acknowledges that the land known today as Colorado, including Chatfield Farms, is the traditional homeland of Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. We honor their enduring relationships with and knowledge of this land and continue to seek reciprocal collaboration and learning with Native communities.

TRAVEL THE WORLD

The Gardens' Center for Global Initiatives offers trips that traverse many continents. [Learn more](#) and travel with us.

Japan Garden Tour

November 1-10

Experience the essence of Japan. This thoughtfully designed tour will take travelers through Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka—three of Japan's most iconic and culturally rich cities. Explore historical sites such as the Meiji Shrine, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Niijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple and Osaka Castle, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Immersive experiences include a traditional rickshaw ride through a bamboo forest, a hands-on sushi-making class and a visit to the amazing digital art museum. Savor local cuisine and enjoy time set aside for personal exploration and shopping. With expert guidance and immersive cultural experiences woven throughout, this tour offers a perfect balance of discovery and inspiration. Your host is Denver Botanic Gardens' Panayoti Kelaidis, senior curator and director of outreach.

Magical Mexico: Puebla

Nov. 29 – Dec. 6, 2026

From the bustling streets and grand plazas of Mexico City to the charming towns and artisan villages of Puebla, experience culture, art and culinary delights. Wander through UNESCO-listed historic centers, marvel at intricately tiled churches, visit lively markets and taste the flavors that define this region. Explore the serene beauty of the Sierra Norte, stroll through colorful gardens and plazas and witness artisan traditions that have been passed down through centuries. Each day blends guided experiences with moments of leisure, offering space to reflect, connect and soak in the energy of Mexico's rich cultural tapestry. Hosted by Yvonne Garcia Bardwell, the Gardens' associate director of community relations.

Photo courtesy John Shors Travel



BRANCHING TOGETHER TOWARD GREATER IMPACT

By Johanna Kelly, Director of Development

Like Denver Botanic Gardens, GH Phipps has a long history in our community and along the Front Range of Colorado. The two organizations have partnered on several iconic projects. At York Street, they have been the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory (completed in 1966), the greenhouse complex and the Freyer—Newman Center. The most recent project has been at Chatfield Farms, with the Robert & Judi Newman Welcome Center.

Since 2018 GH Phipps has been the presenting sponsor of the *Fête des Fleurs*, the signature fundraising gala of the Gardens, giving \$285,000 over nine years toward the event, which raises funds to support general operations and key programs.

A philanthropist and civic leader in the Denver area, Gerald H. Phipps founded GH Phipps in 1952. One hallmark of his leadership was his interest in his employees' success. In 1967, he established a profit-sharing plan allowing employees to share in the company's success. After Gerald's passing, his legacy was created with the transfer of the company's assets to a profit-sharing trust. This trust is now held

as an ESOP and shared by more than 200 of the company's employees.

"We have been honored to partner with Denver Botanic Gardens over the last six decades in helping shape projects that leave a lasting impact on our communities. Serving as the Presenting Sponsor for the *Fête des Fleurs* reflects both our deep respect for Denver Botanic Gardens' mission and our continued commitment to celebrating this proud tradition."

— Todd Ruff, President,
GH Phipps Construction Companies

The *Fête des Fleurs* is the culmination of hard work and creativity by a committee of members and friends of the Gardens. On August 28 over 700 guests will gather in the Gardens at York Street for cocktails, dinner and dancing. The event enjoys the elegant and colorful backdrop of gardens in full bloom to celebrate the anniversaries of Denver Botanic Gardens' 75th year and the Colorado's 150th year of statehood.

Reservations for the *Fête* can be made on the [website](#).

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