



INSIDE

THE GARDENS

SUMMER 2021 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR
MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

This summer, perhaps and with fingers crossed, we can take a deep breath and just relax a bit. The past decade, by which I mean the last 12 months, has been grueling. At all four of our locations, the Gardens is primed to offer more than quiet healing experiences, which have been critical to countless, and let loose true joy.

Joy is back this summer as spring rain and snow have prepped a parched land for a verdant eruption of life. Joy is back in the form of children cavorting in Mordecai Children's Garden and rolling down the slopes of the UMB Bank Amphitheater.

The amount of birdsong is enthralling, as is the return of butterflies and bees.

It is going to take some time for many to feel fully comfortable, and we all get it. The cloud of menace has weighed heavily on us all. That's why we can all help everyone we encounter by demonstrating simple respect, giving people some space whenever they need it. It is something I see every day as groups wander, some with masks on, others without. We are living in a time of miracles, and few could have predicted during the dark days of shutdowns that we would be emerging into such better days now. Thank goodness for scientists and the medical community for shepherding our rebound.

Thanks too for the donors, volunteers and members who keep Denver Botanic Gardens vital and vibrant. You have seen us through a challenge, and we are all awash in gratitude.

Two words in our mission statement really stand out – delight and enlightenment. With four sites, deep levels of research and dynamic, inspiring programs, the enlightenment part is constant. And now, we aim to delight all people we attract with a reopened Mordecai Children's Garden, Science Pyramid and Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory. We are thrilled by the response to the new art galleries in the Freyer – Newman Center where visitors can also take in a documentary movie in the Sturm Family Auditorium. Classes are back. The new Helen Fowler Library is finally open. And events like Evenings al Fresco and Lavender Festival will provide plenty of fun times.

Deep breath. Big smiles. We are ready for a summer of joy.

Onward.

Brian Vogt
Denver Botanic Gardens CEO



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INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 3, 2021

Denver Botanic Gardens

1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206

Pre-purchased tickets and advance member passes only.

Through Sept. 6, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., last admission 8 p.m.

Sept. 7-26, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m., last admission 7 p.m.

Member Mornings, through September 5, Saturdays and Sundays, 8-9 a.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

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

[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.

DENVER BOTANIC
GARDENS

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.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

By Larry Vickerman, Director of Chatfield Farms

At Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms, we currently grow over 25 different crops and 80 different varieties of these crops for the **Community Supporting Agriculture Program**. For the past five years, we have been steadily working to make our vegetable and fruit growing more sustainable, applying regenerative agriculture practices. This term—regenerative agriculture—has become part of the agriculture vernacular—but what does it really mean? On one hand, regenerative practices in agriculture harken back to the days before fertilizers and pesticides were available to farmers. Soil fertility had to be maintained by cover crops and manure applied to fields.

Today at Chatfield Farms, we approach farming with a combination of old and new ways to overcome challenges of growing. Tried and true old methods include composting farm fields and using cover crops to enhance fertility and soil structure. During the growing season, we use fish emulsion or alfalfa-based fertilizers to keep plants healthy and growing. Planting in dense blocks allows more

production from smaller acreage, plus it helps crowd out weeds and shade the soil to preserve moisture.

Other traditional methods employed at the farm are the use of flower strips next to crops to attract pollinators and beneficial insects that help keep pest species in check. Planting windbreaks along field edges keeps plants protected from drying winds.

Thanks to new technology, we are utilizing extensive drip irrigation and low-water-use sprinkler heads that maximize water conservation. Floating row covers allow early planting and protection from frost, and they help prevent pests from getting to vegetables.

We also employ silage tarps and minimal tillage to enhance weed control and preserve

soil moisture and organic matter content. The process involves tilling very shallow (less than 2 inches) with a power harrow, then allowing the first flush of weeds to germinate. The plot is then covered with large silage tarps to let the weeds die underneath due to a lack of sunlight. At the same time, more weed seeds are germinating due to the warm, moist environment under the tarp and will die due to lack of light as well. When the tarps are removed after three weeks, the resulting seed bed is relatively weed free and ready for seeding or transplants.

By using both old and new methodology, we help forge a new path forward in agriculture that works more with the environment and minimizes the impact on it.



A Strategy to PROTECT ALPINE PLANTS

By Jennifer Neale, Ph.D., Director of Research & Conservation

Remote and inhospitable, the alpine ecosystem covers just 15 percent of the earth's land surface, and 9 percent of North American land surface. It contains life that has found a way to survive despite the harsh conditions of cold temperatures and high winds. As the climate warms, the effect of that warming is likely to be amplified at higher latitudes and elevations. In these new warmer and drier climates, alpine plants will be left vulnerable.

Botanic gardens are compelled—and uniquely qualified—to observe and monitor changes within these ecosystems. We can identify which areas are most likely to thrive with protection and pour our efforts into having the greatest impact possible.

One way to do this is through conservation strategies, which provide a roadmap to ensure the protection of specific taxa for posterity. All in situ and ex situ conservation work across the Gardens contributes to the targets outlined in the [Global Strategy for Plant Conservation](#). Additionally, in 2016 and 2017, we helped develop the [Global Conservation Strategy for Coffee Genetic Resources](#).

Born out of a continental desire to protect our rarest habitats, we have published the North American Botanic Garden Strategy for Alpine Plant Conservation in collaboration with the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens in Vail, Colorado. The strategy, modeled after the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the North American Botanic Garden Strategy for

Plant Conservation, lays out a comprehensive framework for documenting and conserving alpine plants and their habitats.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

- To understand and document alpine plant diversity
- To conserve alpine plants both in situ and ex situ
- To promote an understanding of the alpine and the protection efforts needed to conserve these fragile systems
- To expand our capacity to take action

The four objectives are further broken down into 12 targets with achievable deadlines and can be read in the [full strategy](#).

We are already taking action toward our targets, and our map of alpine habitats and plants known to grow in those areas is nearly complete. We are collecting plants for the herbarium in under-documented areas and collecting seed for ex situ conservation. While we feel we are making good progress, we need to expand our network and capacity to enact large-scale efforts that will protect the alpine and the plants that call our mountaintops home.

Top and bottom photos by Emily Griffoul, Conservation Scientist, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. Center photo by Mike Kintgen, Curator of Alpine Collections, Denver Botanic Gardens.

PUTTING OUR SCIENCE TO WORK

to Support Federal Protection of Endangered Species

By Rebecca Hufft, Ph.D., Associate Director of Applied Conservation and Michelle DePrenger-Levin, Research Associate, Population Biology

As scientists at a botanic garden, we are motivated to investigate and explain biodiversity patterns and processes. Two of our main objectives are to conduct scientific research and be a resource of scientific expertise related to biodiversity. One of the ways we can directly impact plant conservation is to communicate our research and share our expertise with federal agencies for use in management decisions about threatened and endangered species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is responsible for protecting and managing species that are considered threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA is America's strongest conservation law. The goal of listing these species under the ESA is to improve their conditions so that their population numbers can increase or stabilize and they can ultimately be delisted. To understand how to effectively manage listed species and when their numbers are large enough to delist, we must first have sufficient data on the species and their populations. The FWS conducts Species Status Assessments to use the best available data to make informed decisions about listed species.

These assessments bring together experts to review existing data to evaluate the current condition of a species and whether it is likely to be resilient and persist into the future. For plants, this means providing information on population size, genetic diversity and important species-specific life history traits, like survival and germination rates under different conditions. Gathering these types of data on multiple species is time- and resource-intensive. The FWS relies on partners to help them collect and review the large amount of data needed to manage all the 1,666 species currently listed under the ESA (including 943 plants).

Scientists at the Gardens support the FWS by collecting and providing data on listed plant species. We conduct genetic diversity assessments to understand connectivity among populations and standing genetic diversity that can indicate adaptive potential (especially important under changing climate and land use conditions). We conduct long-term monitoring studies to understand population trends and species responses to environmental variation. We conduct habitat assessments and floristic inventories to understand specific habitat associations for rare species. Most importantly, we share all this information with our federal partners and participate in Species Status Assessments to provide our expertise on the status, needs and threats of our most imperiled plant species. Collecting data on rare plants to support listing decisions under the ESA is one of the best ways the Gardens can impact rare plant conservation.



BEYOND THE GARDEN WALLS

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

In a 2016 paper I co-authored with my colleague Dr. Ari Novy titled “The Role of Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century” (Krishnan and Novy, 2016), we emphasize the role played by botanic gardens in addressing global issues such as climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation, environmental education, sustainability and human well-being. To advance these goals, gardens need to extend their programming beyond their walls by addressing societal issues that can lead to positive impacts within communities.

At Denver Botanic Gardens, we have a huge presence beyond our garden sites:

- Our Horticulture Outreach program is helping municipalities create low-water-use gardens. We are also providing design assistance for several commercial, public and community projects. In 2020, we worked with 12 Colorado municipalities, 16 for- and nonprofit organizations and three cultural organizations.
- To address food insecurity issues in Denver, we have a partnership with Denver Housing Authority in the Mariposa and Sun Valley neighborhoods. We have created urban food gardens, engaging these communities to produce food locally that is then offered through farm stands. In 2020, between the two locations, we harvested approximately 7,500 lbs. of produce, of which 5,800 lbs. were distributed through farm stands, and 1,700 lbs. were donated to community organizations.
- Our Therapeutic Horticulture program reaches underserved audiences. In addition to programs offered onsite, we have several programs we take out to the community. The Winter Green program connects participants in residential care with plants to engage the senses and provide social enrichment during the winter months. Organizations that we work with include Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers, Mental Health Center of Denver, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Craig Hospital, Rocky Mountain Easterseals Camp, Denver Children’s Advocacy Center, Autism Society, Alzheimer’s Association SPARK! programming and others.

In addition to being important aesthetic, cultural and scientific establishments, botanic gardens also contribute to the well-being of our society by offering diverse programs.





Dining on the Farm at Chatfield Farms

various dates, see [website](#)
\$150 per person

What better way to enjoy the warm weather than with hand-crafted cocktails, extraordinary food and the company of friends? Join us for a special dinner al fresco on a historical homestead and working farm tucked against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Start with cocktail hour (specialty cocktail and mocktail available) with delightful amuse-bouche and live music. Then enjoy a seated dinner at a table just for your party. Finish with dessert and coffee.

[GET TICKETS](#)



Fall Plant & Bulb Sale at York Street

Preview Party, Thursday, Sept. 23, 4:30-7 p.m., see website for tickets

Friday and Saturday, Sept. 24 & 25, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., free admission
Member-Only Hour: 8-9 a.m., Friday

The best spring gardens start during the fall! Shop in person from a large selection of fall bulbs and Grown at the Gardens perennials. Take home beautiful horticulture-curated bulb bag designs, large custom seed mixes and a wide variety of standard and specialty bulbs. Engage with our horticulturists onsite to ask all your questions and create a spectacular planting plan for fall. See [website](#) for more details.

Lavender Festival at Chatfield Farms

Saturday, July 17, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
\$7-\$13

More than 2,000 lavender plants set the scene for this family-friendly celebration. Shop lavender products made by local growers and artisans; enjoy free tours, demonstrations and live music; free barrel train rides for kids; food, dessert and drink vendors; educational programs on lavender and related topics are available for an additional charge and include admission to Lavender Festival. Tickets must be purchased in advance. [GET TICKETS](#)



Corn Maze at Chatfield Farms

Fridays – Sundays, Sept. 17 – Oct. 31
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
\$10-\$15

Get lost in the 7-acre Corn Maze! This year features a new design, plus the mini maze and barrel train rides for kids. Enjoy funnel cakes, corndogs, kettle corn and freshly squeezed lemonade. **NEW!** You've navigated the maze, now see if you can make it out of the Escape Room! The clock is ticking down—can you solve the puzzle and get out? Tickets must be purchased in advance.

[GET TICKETS](#)

Fête des Fleurs

Friday, August 27
5:30-9:30 p.m.

Denver Botanic Gardens invites you to join us for the reimagined *Fête des Fleurs*, the Gardens' 37th annual fundraising gala, taking place throughout the 24-acre oasis of the York Street location. More than 500 guests are anticipated, including distinguished business and community leaders.

Begin your evening with a traveling cocktail hour through various internationally themed gardens, including the Japanese Bill Hosokawa Bonsai Pavilion, French Le Potager and South African Plaza.

Select from one of seven dining locations, each with its own unique atmosphere, special music and plated or picnic dining experience.

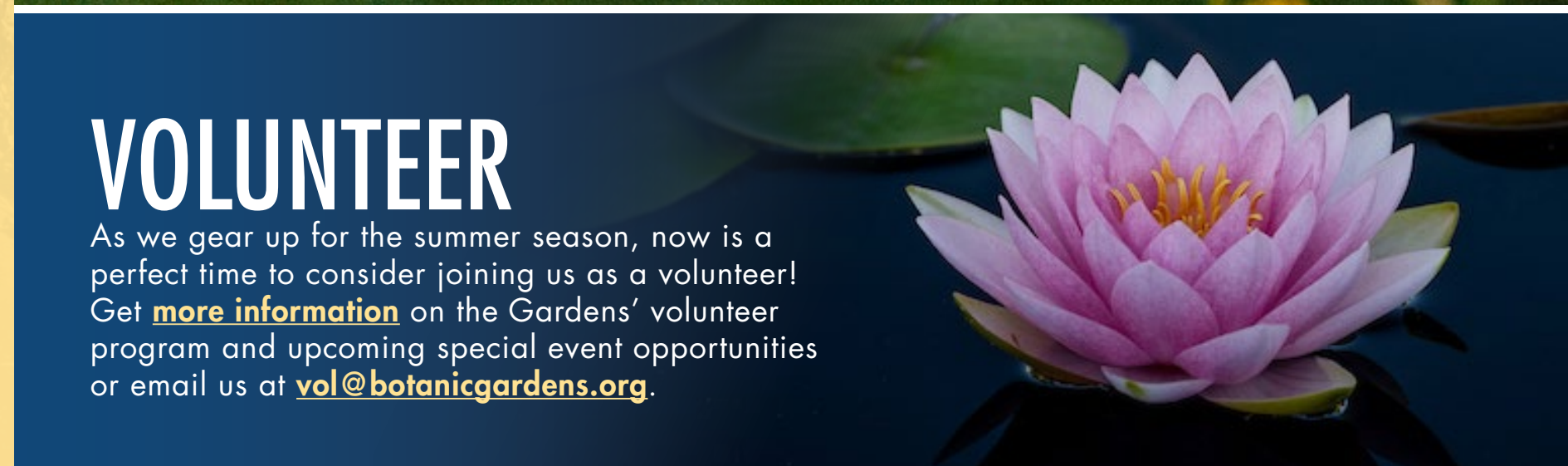
The funds raised at the *Fête* contribute to Denver Botanic Gardens' core programs, such as children's education, public outreach, horticulture, research and conservation.

[Reserve your table or picnic today!](#)



VOLUNTEER

As we gear up for the summer season, now is a perfect time to consider joining us as a volunteer! Get [more information](#) on the Gardens' volunteer program and upcoming special event opportunities or email us at vol@botanicgardens.org.

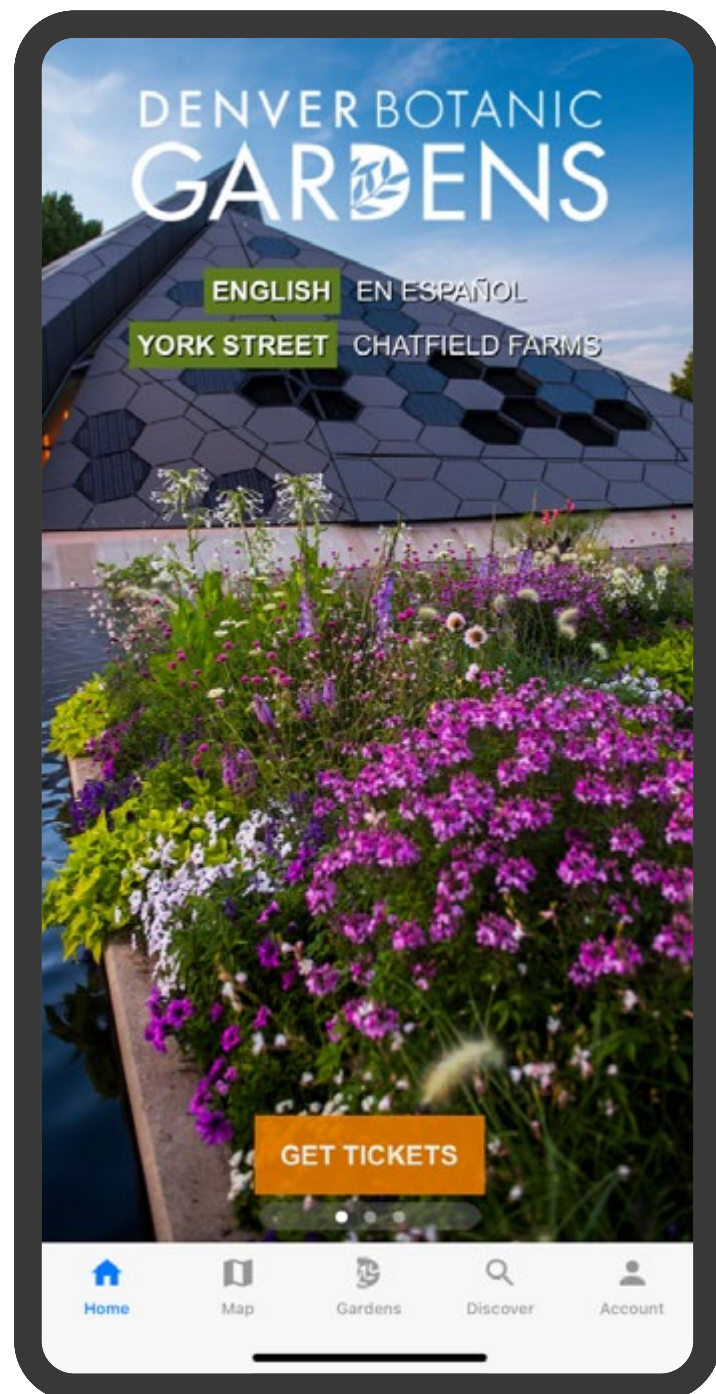


Get to Know

THE GARDENS APP

By Casey Hill, Associate Director of Membership, Visitor and Volunteer Services

Take a deep dive into all the Gardens has to offer through the new Denver Botanic Gardens mobile app. Our free app is designed to enhance your experience while at the Gardens. You'll find detailed information on our garden and plant collections along with access to interesting insights into the art, science and educational programming we offer. Use the app for easy access to tickets and membership cards. Utilize the GPS-enabled map to find your favorite gardens at York Street and Chatfield Farms. **The mobile app features five separate sections:**



HOME – Set your preferred language in English or Spanish, select York Street or Chatfield Farms and purchase tickets.



MAP – View a map of York Street or Chatfield Farms. Easily find your favorite gardens through GPS-enabled tracking. Icons on the map are interactive and bring up a short description of each location.



GARDENS – Explore the beautiful and ever-widening diversity of plants from all corners of the world. View a description of each garden and use the “Take me there” function to find a specific garden on the map.



DISCOVER – Get information about new art exhibitions, science research and educational programs. Learn more about current artists on display in the Freyer – Newman Center, including special artist talk videos from the artists themselves.



ACCOUNT – Want to eliminate paper and plastic waste? Access your digital membership cards and tickets for easy and expedited entry to the Gardens.

Download the app today and find out all the Gardens has to offer!

FEATURED GARDEN

A GARDEN FOR THE SENSES

By Angie Andrade, Manager of Therapeutic Horticulture Programs

Our senses allow us to understand the world around us. By sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing we can intimately experience our surroundings every day. When we enter a garden, our senses come alive with the scent of fresh blooms, the sound of the birds cheerfully singing and the sight of soothing plant textures and color combinations.

In the Sensory Garden you are invited and encouraged to explore your senses by interacting directly with the plants and the garden around you. The plants of this garden are intentionally chosen for their ability to evoke the senses. For example, *Mimosa pudica*, or sensitive plant, folds its leaves right before your eyes when touched. *Pelargonium tomentosum*, or peppermint geranium, has the softest leaves and when rubbed releases the distinct smell of fresh peppermint. *Carex caryophylla* ‘Beatlemania’ not only has a great cultivar name but its common name, mop head sedge, perfectly describes its hair-like appearance. *Melissa officinalis*, lemon balm, is an old-fashioned herb that has the smell of citrus blooms and can be used to brew a refreshing summer tea. The annual, *Impatiens balsamina*, or touch-me-not, has seed heads that explode between your fingers when touched at the perfect moment.

The plant world is amazing, and the Sensory Garden highlights some of the softest, strangest and most fragrant plants in the Gardens. Make sure to visit the Sensory Garden this summer and get lost in the sights, sounds, textures and scents.

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Click the links
to learn more. 

The Gardens offers a range of programming for all ages, as well as certificate programs and online learning.

Children and Family Programs

Family programs engage children and their grownups to learn about the natural world, discover the importance of plants and spark creativity.



Classes & Workshops

Choose from workshops, lectures, fitness and wellness, photography, gardening and more. Scroll or search by category or date.

Trips & Travel

Botanical Wonders of Brazil's Estrada Royal October 3-11

This trip to Brazil offers a rich cultural and botanical experience, exploring 17th-19th century architecture, local cuisine, natural history, art, culture and landscapes.

Día de los Muertos in Oaxaca

October 28 – November 3

This eight-day journey takes you to Mexico City, Puebla and Oaxaca, a unique opportunity to explore the rich history and long-standing traditions of this beautiful celebration.



Helen Fowler Library

The library is now open on select days. Stop in to see our beautiful new space, get research assistance, check out items (if you're a Gardens member) or just say hello.



Michael Campbell, *Helianthus annuus*, 2010, colored pencil.



Marguerite (*Chrysanthemum frutescens*) from FlorDalí, 1968, photolithograph with original engraved remarque and color. Collection of The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, FL (USA) 2021, © Salvador Dalí Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí (ARS), 2021.

Golden Opportunity: Botanical Illustration

Through August 15

From daffodils to daisies, discover a world of yellow growing all around you through illustrations created by students and faculty of Denver Botanic Gardens' School of Botanical Art & Illustration (SBAI).

Salvador Dalí: Gardens of the Mind

Through August 22

Experience rarely seen fanciful color lithographs mixing flora with the artist's signature motifs, underscoring Dalí's infatuation with his native Catalan landscape and the intriguing images of surrealism.

This exhibition is organized in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Sarasota, FL) and The Dalí Museum (St. Petersburg, FL).

Freyer – Newman Center exhibitions are presented by



**Wealth
Management**

ONLINE & IN-PERSON

Artist Talk: Yoshitomo Saito

August 5, 6 p.m.

Join artist Yoshitomo Saito, [online](#) or [in-person](#) to learn more about the artist and his methods as he discusses the inspirations behind his bronze forms.

See related tours on page 19.

Yoshitomo Saito, *Cheikh Lo*, 2020, Bronze.

Of Sky and Ground: Yoshitomo Saito

July 24 – November 28

Yoshitomo Saito's cast bronze works capture and celebrate the elegant lines and subtle details of nature, reinterpreting organic forms and encouraging contemplation.

This exhibition is organized in collaboration with William Havu Gallery, Denver.

ONLINE & IN-PERSON

Artist Talk:

Ana María Hernando

Sept. 18, 1 p.m.

Join artist Ana María Hernando, either [online](#) or [in-person](#), as she discusses the creation of artworks featured in *Fervor*.

Yoshitomo Saito, *Cheikh Lo*, 2020, Bronze.

Fervor: Ana María Hernando

September 11, 2021 – January 2, 2022

Permeated by the artist's love of plants, flowers and the spirit of nature, *Fervor* features works including the installation *Écoutons | Eschuchemos | Let's Listen*, created in response to bird sounds submitted by more than 200 people across the globe.

Seeing the Invisible

September 2021

Experience an exhibition of contemporary artworks existing only in augmented reality (AR). Co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring, *Seeing the Invisible* features virtual works by more than a dozen international artists.

The exhibition is organized by the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund and opens simultaneously at 11 gardens across six countries. The project has been made possible in partnership with The Jerusalem Foundation.

[Check website for updates.](#)

Alebrije: Xólotl: Dios perro

October 2 – November 7, 2021

In partnership with the Mexican Cultural Center, Denver Botanic Gardens hosts the monumental sculpture *Xólotl: Dios perro* (*Xólotl: dog deity*) by contemporary Mexican artist Oscar Becerra-Mora. Standing nearly 15 feet tall, the sculpture depicts an alebrije—a fantastical hybrid creature from Mexican folklore, featuring the tail, wings, horns and claws from a variety of animals. *Xólotl: Dios Perro* depicts the Aztec deity Xólotl, the brother of Quetzalcóatl, charged with guarding the sun as it passed through the underworld.



Detail, Sigalit Landau, *Salt Stalagmite #1 (Three Bridges)*, 2021.

Oscar Becerra Mora, *Xólotl: Dios perro (dog deity)*, 2013, papier-mâché and cardboard. © Oscar Becerra Mora.



TOURS

GUIDED TOURS AT YORK STREET

松風園 Shofu-en Japanese Garden

September 8 and October 6, 10 a.m.

Meander through the Japanese Garden with Curator Ebi Akiyoshi Kondo as your guide.

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

Of Sky and Ground Exhibition

July 30 & September 3, 5:30 p.m.

August 5, September 23 and October 14, 9:15 a.m.

October 1 & November 12, 3 p.m.

Join a docent on an indoor-outdoor exploration of Yoshitomo Saito's exhibition *Of Sky and Ground* and the Japanese Garden.

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

Midsummer Nights

July 5 and 6, 6 p.m.

Enjoy a Shakespeare-inspired summer stroll in the Gardens infused with poetry and plants.

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

Seasonal Discoveries

September 4, 12 and 18, 2 p.m.

Embrace the exuberance of summer's end. Enjoy a docent-led tour of gardens filled with late summer blooms such as blanket flowers and sages.

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

PRIVATE TOURS AT YORK STREET OR CHATFIELD FARMS

(Virtual Options Available Too!)

Looking for a special experience for your group of 5 or more? Schedule a private guided in-person 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: \$14, \$6 student (includes admission)

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

Online tours: Prices vary

GUIDED TOURS AT PLAINS CONSERVATION CENTER

Wagon Tour

Select Saturdays

Get to know the prairie in a whole new way. On our ride across the plains, participants watch for wildlife beneath the great stretching sky while learning about the short grass prairie ecosystem.

\$10 per participant

Sunset Wagon Tour

Select Friday evenings

Get to know the prairie in a whole new way. Wagon rides are scheduled to coincide with the spectacular sunsets at the Plains Conservation Center.

\$10 per participant

For more information or to register, visit the [tours web page](#) or call 720-865-3500.

LANGUAGE DIVERSITY & COLLABORATION

a Dynamic Duo



By Esperanza Rodriguez, Bilingual Program Instructor in Education

¡Hola!
Mi nombre es Esperanza Rodríguez y soy la Instructora Bilingüe en los Jardines Botánicos de Denver.

Hello!
My name is Esperanza Rodriguez, and I am the bilingual program instructor at the Gardens.

Denver Botanic Gardens has long cherished a goal to uplift and provide access to its programs for a diverse language community. As the bilingual program instructor (Spanish-English) at the Gardens, I help carry the torch of this mission. This work would be obsolete without the important collaboration of fellow departments and professionals. Our teamwork and collaboration expand our impact to bilingual learners, a community that is excited for all things related to the Gardens. I see that excitement and connection with young students during onsite programs when they talk about their grandparents' gardens in Mexico, or when they recognize the same fruit trees and other plants in the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory that they are used to seeing or grew up with in their native land.

It is a privilege to reach such a large spectrum of school groups. Our groups range from preK-12th grade, with participants from all over the Denver metro area, plus occasional out-of-state and international virtual learners. Since April 2020, the school programs team has developed nine new virtual programs and revised eight onsite tour programs at three of

our locations, all of which are now offered with Spanish instruction. It is so rewarding to see the smile on a child's face or watch their eyes light up when I pronounce their name correctly in Spanish. It is an adventure in itself to deliver bilingual curriculum that ranges from a micro lens, for instance the magic of each plant part function, and in a subsequent lesson expand the lens to a macro system like the analysis of a prairie or rainforest ecosystem.

My language proficiency and fluency in both English and Spanish grants flexibility to my role and the mission of the Gardens. In addition to offering school programs in Spanish, our bilingual language services have developed and evolved to include professional recordings, YouTube videos for multiple departments and Gardens events, and on-the-spot translation for partners such as the Colorado Ballet. These collaborations are essential; my individual efforts would reach a standstill without the teamwork and interest of other departments and co-workers.

My ambition is that my role and services expand exponentially and fortify the Gardens' core value of diversity by prioritizing Spanish language services. This mission that nurtures connection and belonging is evident in every student who feels seen when we communicate in their first language. It is a joy and privilege to be a facilitator of this language-diversity mission.

ANNUAL ECHO SUMMIT

Fosters Connection with Nature

By Chelsey Bardgett, Family & Children's Program Instructor

In the world of young learners, there is so much to discover! Here at the Gardens, explorations in nature through play provide our brains with sensory input and lead to learning, providing opportunities for children of all ages and families, while guiding our educators from the classroom. Denver Botanic Gardens has partnered with the National Wildlife Federation's Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) program to host an annual Summit that provides a living backdrop for an informational and interactive exchange of tools, resources and hands-on learning. We've had the pleasure of engaging with over 340 participants during this time and look forward to continue growing this event.

The ECHO Summit invites educators those working for and with children to explore how to grow a connection with nature

through outdoor play. Research shows us when children spend time outdoors, healthier lifestyles are established. By providing educators hands-on practice with the Gardens, the educators can return to their classrooms

with knowledge to share with our youngest learners. It is an opportunity for us, the Gardens' instructors, to share what works in our Seedlings classes and other family programs.

Long term, the gain of early childhood educators growing their confidence in interacting with nature is substantial. The results increase understanding of scientific concepts and observational awareness. It also creates more comfort when guiding children in their own classrooms. Sharing the outdoors with our youngest learners supports a lifetime love of nature.

Through partnerships of all kinds, the staff at Denver Botanic Gardens keeps the love of learning growing with all ages!

"It left me feeling positive and with great ideas to enhance a young person's mind and psyche. What an inspiration considering the current climate we live in. This gives me glimmers of hope. I left smiling, thinking about how much we will change so many young people's lives."

Summit Participant

"We are thrilled to partner with Denver Botanic Gardens to host the annual ECHO Summit. It's inspiring to observe educators coming together to learn, collaborate, and use the beauty of the gardens as a foundation for reaffirming the importance of connecting young children to nature."

ECHO Education and Outreach Manager Adrienne Sedlak

The Next Generation Embraces the Gardens: **THE SCHLESSMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION**

By Claire Lanier, Ph.D., Associate Director of Development

The Schlessman Family Foundation began impacting Denver Botanic Gardens in the 1980s. Their first gift was Schlessman Plaza in the Romantic Gardens, a popular site for weddings and events. Recently, the foundation awarded a \$1 million capital grant to the Gardens for the Freyer – Newman Center for Science, Art and Education. The timing of this gift made a significant difference in

the progress of the Center and helped the organization complete a challenge grant presented by the Sturm Family Foundation.

To honor the family, the Center's spectacular atrium has been named the Schlessman Family Atrium. This space is the focal point of the entire building. It welcomes visitors as the crossroads for the experiences the new facility has to offer.

Gerald Schlessman, then owner and CEO of the Greeley Gas Company, and his wife, Florence, created the foundation in 1956 to support nonprofits and institutions that provide programs and assistance to Denver's most vulnerable residents. Since its inception, the Schlessman Family Foundation has gifted approximately \$100 million to more than 1,000 charities. Lee Schlessman, the son of Gerald and Florence Schlessman, was the foundation's president and chairman of the board for many years. He and his wife, Dolores, have been frequent visitors to the Gardens, attending concerts, bringing picnic dinners and witnessing the magic of the Gardens through the eyes of their grandchildren.

"One of our little great-grandsons is always eager to get [to the Gardens] time and time again. One thing he has discovered is a small bridge that seems to wiggle when he crosses it ... I know that people will be coming to see the beautiful gardens and special events for generations, and we are so thankful to all of the folks who tend them."

Dolores Schlessman, 2019

Today the children and grandchildren of Lee and Dolores bring new energy and community engagement to the foundation's board of directors.

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