

INSIDE



THE GARDENS

WINTER 2026 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR
MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS



Last year proved the point that the only constant in life is change. Having lost our longtime CEO Brian Vogt in March, we entered a transition phase that lasted the rest of the year. I’m proud to have served as the Interim CEO during this time and am so pleased that, in navigating uncertain times, our institution continued to tackle complex environmental and social challenges.

We engaged with people near and far to address and co-develop solutions to the problems of our time. More than 1,000 industry professionals from across the country attended the American Public Gardens Association conference at Denver Botanic Gardens. We welcomed the World Food Prize laureate (the first time one has visited Colorado) to address global food supply threats. Our scientists joined forces with peers at other U.S. botanic gardens to safeguard funding for scientific research. And we brought together representatives of more than 150 SCFD-funded organizations to identify and share best practices in arts and culture nonprofit management.

We did not spend 2025 standing still. We concluded Phase 1 of the Chatfield Farms Master Development Plan with the opening of the Robert & Judi Newman Welcome Center. We participated in the voter-approved Vibrant Denver Bond initiative, proceeds from which will improve the visitor experience at our York Street location.

This year marks several milestones: 2026 is the Gardens’ 75th anniversary, the state of Colorado’s 150th and the nation’s 250th. Denver Botanic Gardens has spent three-quarters of a century connecting people with plants, “providing delight and enlightenment to everyone” in fulfillment of our mission. We will soon be joined in this pursuit by our new CEO, Donna McGinnis, who comes to us from Naples Botanical Garden where she has served as their CEO since 2017. We look forward to welcoming her in February, but in advance of her arrival, she wanted to share the following:

I am honored to be joining you as Denver Botanic Gardens’ new CEO. I have long shared your admiration of this very special place. Its beauty is exceptional, its heart is generous, and its dedication to nature is profound.

During my career I had many opportunities to visit and learn as the Gardens hosted the most important conferences and symposia in our field. Its leaders have shared their knowledge and expertise in countless ways across the globe, and its touring exhibits have touched the audiences of gardens everywhere. I am excited to join this outstanding team.

Colorado is a very special place for my family, having spent many happy vacations in Denver and the Rocky Mountains. As a child of the West raised at the foot of the Cascade Mountains, but who has been away for too long, I look forward to returning to my roots and meeting you soon.

Jennifer Riley-Chetwynd
Denver Botanic Gardens Interim CEO



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INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 1, 2026

Denver Botanic Gardens
1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206
Holiday Hours through January 11: 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.,
last admission 2:30 p.m.
Winter Hours, January 12 through March 31: 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
Holiday Hours through January 11: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., last admission 3 p.m.
Hours starting January 12: 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.

DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

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.





Primula pauciflora. Photo by Jen Toews

WHY, OH WHY, Do Plant Names Change?

*Cindy Newlander, Associate Director of Horticulture, Plant Records,
and Jen Toews, Assistant Manager, Plant Records*

It’s aggravating! Confusing! Confounding! Your favorite plant’s scientific name has changed, but why? In some cases, a plant’s identity changes because it was not the first validly published name for that species. Older names are discovered as botanists review texts and herbarium specimens, especially as collections are digitized, allowing greater access. This priority of publication rule dictates that the oldest name wins, apart from when a name is conserved by the [International Botanical Congress](#) to promote stability. The 2024 Madrid Congress also voted to disallow new names that are derogatory to groups of people.

Today, the most common reason for name changes is due to advancements in botanical knowledge, often informed by DNA sequencing. As botanists clarify evolutionary relationships, long-held assumptions

based only on visible traits—flowers, fruits and other structures we can see with the naked eye or a hand lens—are being rewritten.

This has led to the shift in families, genera and species names, many impacting the plant collections at the Gardens. These changes in nomenclature or family placement are frequently detected through online databases (e.g. [World Flora Online](#) or [Plants of the World Online](#)) or through journals such as Taxon. When new names are accepted, the plant records database and plant labels are updated while still tracking the now synonymous names plants arrived with. Some recent changes that may surprise visitors: All *Gaura* are now placed in *Oenothera*, while the beloved shooting star, *Dodecatheon*, is now *Primula*.

SHADY LANE REBOOT

By Jennifer Miller, Horticulture Coordinator



When I first looked at Shady Lane with a critical eye, I knew it would take more than a refresh to restore it. The garden, which runs between the Steppe Garden and Orangery toward Monet Pool, had become so overgrown, it had lost direction.

Before I could flesh out a strategy, a robust tangle of weeds and groundcover had to be removed. At first, my volunteers and I moved timidly across beds, following creeping plants to their roots, but soon we were rolling up groundcover like carpet. The garden opened up. Structural shrubs stood out, and the upper limbs of trees seemed to become more vaulted.

We stumbled upon lost plants: a shredded umbrella plant behind a curtain of bugloss or an oakleaf hydrangea stalled out under the overhang of Japanese anemone. At times, we were as enamored with light in the garden as with plants. Ribbons of sunlight streamed down from the Austrian pines and shifted across beds.

We weren't just cleaning the garden, we were getting to know it: the plants, light, soil and even the temperature drop that occurred walking into the garden.

And like that, a strategy for the garden coalesced around two key ideas:

1. Honor the garden's history. Many plants were worth saving, and the more I could weave into the design, the better.
2. Celebrate Shady Lane's character.
 - It's an expansive shade garden with nuances of light and shelter. Let's make it as diverse and lush as possible, while staying intentional.
 - It lies along the main corridor of the Gardens, so it should beckon visitors. The sunny side will be lush and relaxed; the shady side, a play of textures and shapes.
 - It's both grand and intimate — the pines tower above while the crabapples form a tunnel. Shrubs will draw the eye up; perennials will fill in around paths and nod over benches.

This year we reorganized the garden, filled in and cleaned deeper. With each year that follows, we'll add and refine. We hope you'll join us on our journey.

CYMBIDIUM ORCHIDS: Boatloads of Beauty

By Nick Snakenberg, Associate Director & Curator of Tropical Collection

Sometimes referred to as “boat orchids”, *Cymbidium* orchids (from Latin *cymba* – boat shape) are a showy genus of epiphytic or semi-terrestrial orchids found throughout southeast Asia and Australia. They were first scientifically described in the late 1700s but have been referenced in historical writings for more than 2,000 years.

About 90 species can be found in nature but you are likely more familiar with the thousands of engineered hybrids available. These beautiful flowers are widely used in floral arrangements – especially in corsages. Production of cymbidium flowers is centered in Asia but is also prominent in the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand. Most species naturally bloom

in winter so cut flowers are not always available. However, producers carefully control cultural conditions to ensure a constant supply of cut flowers for many months of the year.

Cymbidium plants can grow quite large so if you choose to add a plant or two to your collection, be sure to set aside plenty of room. Miniature hybrids are available, but flowers are smaller, and the plants will still need a good amount of space. The parent species of most modern hybrids are found growing at higher altitudes, which suggests they prefer bright light and cooler temperatures. Cool temperatures are especially important for the formation of flowers so moving plants outdoors for the summer can be helpful – just remember to bring them inside before it gets too cold (plants will tolerate a light frost, but this is not recommended). Keep the potting mix moist but never soggy and provide as much humidity as you can.

Whether you grow your own or purchase cut flowers from a florist, cymbidium flowers provide boatloads of beauty.

ORCHID SHOWCASE

January 10 – February 16
Included with admission

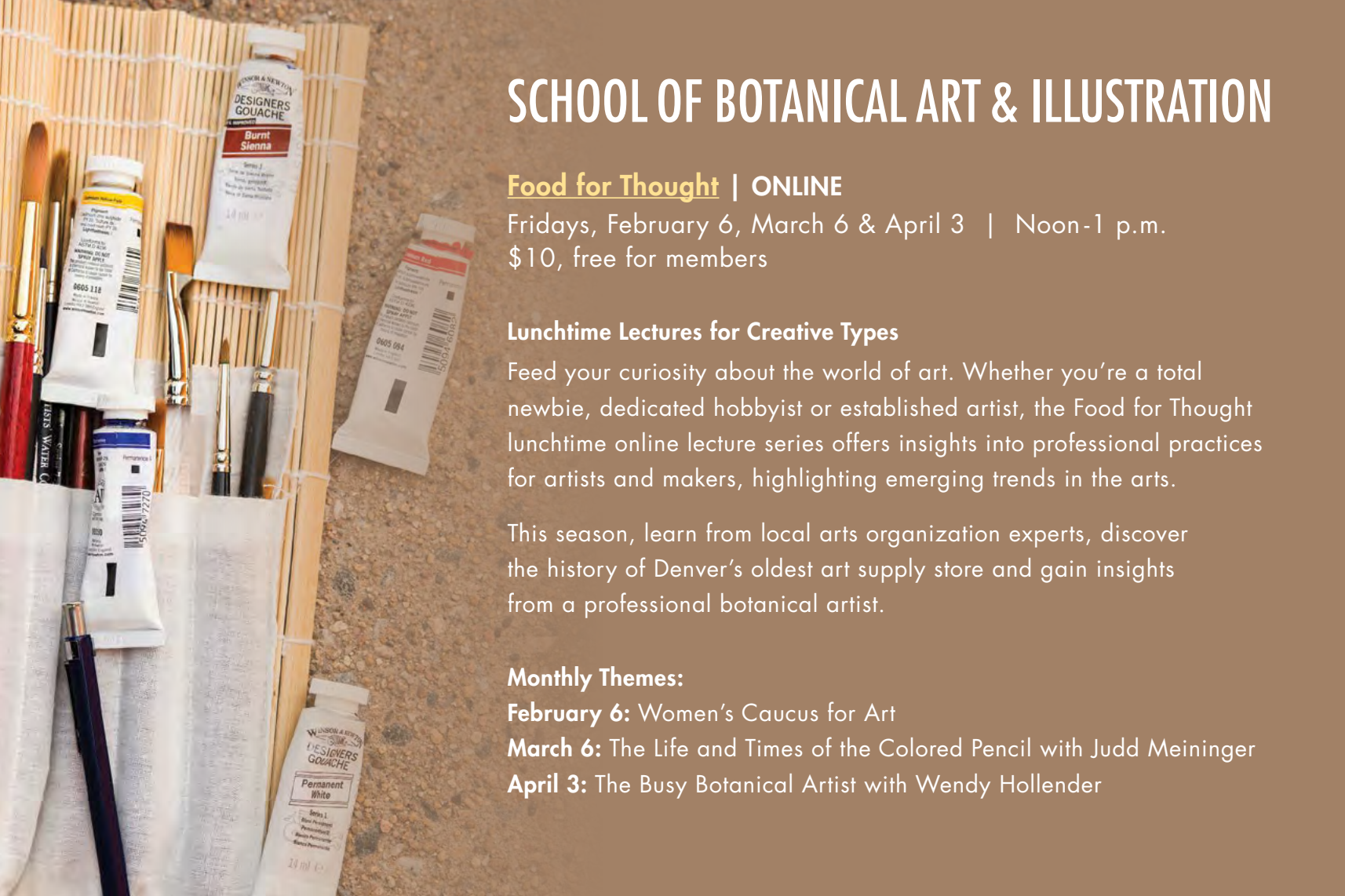
Step into a tropical dream at the Orchid Showcase, where hundreds of orchids are on display. This lush, indoor celebration transforms the Orangery into a vibrant tapestry of color and texture – a perfect winter escape or Valentine’s week treat. Wander through clusters of exotic orchids and purchase orchids from local grower Fantasy Orchids, onsite Saturdays 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. during the showcase. Pause, marvel and bring home a bit of beauty.

LUNAR NEW YEAR MARKET

February 1, 7, 8, 14, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Included with admission

Celebrate the Lunar New Year with this vibrant indoor market. Local artisans sell crafts and fine art in Mitchell Hall in the Boettcher Memorial Center. Families can enjoy free drop-in activities and crafts during the market. The market is provided with support from the Far East Center.





SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL ART & ILLUSTRATION

Food for Thought | ONLINE

Fridays, February 6, March 6 & April 3 | Noon-1 p.m.
\$10, free for members

Lunchtime Lectures for Creative Types

Feed your curiosity about the world of art. Whether you're a total newbie, dedicated hobbyist or established artist, the Food for Thought lunchtime online lecture series offers insights into professional practices for artists and makers, highlighting emerging trends in the arts.

This season, learn from local arts organization experts, discover the history of Denver's oldest art supply store and gain insights from a professional botanical artist.

Monthly Themes:

February 6: Women's Caucus for Art

March 6: The Life and Times of the Colored Pencil with Judd Meininger

April 3: The Busy Botanical Artist with Wendy Hollender

TOURS

Dig deeper during tours with friendly, knowledgeable guides.

Love in Bloom Tour

Various days, dates and times | \$22, \$14 member, \$10 student

Discover the Botany of Romance

From that first coffee date to gifts of flowers, plants play an important role in our love lives. Explore how nature entwines with the most fundamental human emotion during a Love in Bloom Tour, offered throughout the month of February.

Encounter *Theobroma cacao*. This unassuming tree plant is the source of chocolate, a beloved treat across the globe. The *Theobroma cacao* in the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory is nearly 30 years old and fruits regularly, producing pods that are left on the tree for guests to ponder and enjoy. Learn about this fascinating plant and many more we use to woo, seduce and entice. End your tour on a sweet note with a complimentary chocolate bar—or better yet, share it with someone you love.



Photo by Narong, Adobe Stock

FEATURED PROGRAMS

ADULT PROGRAMS

How to Host Your Own Tea Party

February 17, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$47, \$42 member

Join tea entrepreneur Margo Seymour Sparto, founder of Denver Tea Room, for a hands-on workshop designed to inspire joyful hosting. Participants receive her guide, "Host Your Own Classic Tea Party: A Simple Guide for Beginners."

A New Gardener Boot Camp

March 14, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
\$100, \$85 member

New to gardening and not sure where to begin? This beginner-friendly, hands-on event is your perfect starting point! Designed specifically for the Front Range's unique climate, gain the confidence, skills and inspiration to create a thriving garden—whether you're working with a backyard, balcony or community plot.

The Art of Perennial Gardening | ONLINE

April 7, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
\$60, \$51 member

Bring your garden to life—year after year! Step into the colorful world of perennial gardening, where beauty meets sustainability. Whether you're a seasoned green thumb or just starting out, this hands-on course will inspire you to create a garden that bursts with color, texture and life—season after season.

Yoga Alignments: Explore and Refine

January 29, February 12 & March 26, 5:30-7 p.m.
\$18, \$15 member

In this workshop style class, we break down key yoga poses and movement mechanics to support alignment, stability and joy in your practice. Each session focuses on a specific posture or aspect of movement, offering clear guidance and mindful inspiration.

Curb Appeal – Beds that Pop

April 9, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
\$45, \$40 member

You don't have to be a plant mixologist to dress up beds in front of your home. Jenny explores the concept of curb appeal and share planting strategies and plant combinations for different styles and colors of homes and conditions.





Gather and GROW

Programs that feed the senses, spark creativity and invite calm in nature.

The Gardens focuses on plants of course, but it also focuses on people. The natural world and creative expression have direct, positive effects on our health and wellbeing. Through the restorative power of nature, creative expression and social connection, we offer experiences designed to help you pause, recharge and flourish.

In this section, we highlight select opportunities to bring you closer to your own wellbeing—through cooking, art, mindfulness and guided exploration.

Look for new opportunities to explore and connect this year.

Cooking | [Let's Halva Good Time](#)

Tuesday, January 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$44, \$39 member

Delight your senses and connect with the joy of making halva, a fudge-like treat, from scratch.

Art | [Lunchtime Zentangle](#) | ONLINE

Fridays, February 20, March 27 & April 24,
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
\$40, \$35 member

Take a mindful pause in your day with meditative doodling inspired by nature.

Art | [Recipes and Memories](#)

Wednesday, March 4, 5-8 p.m.
\$85, \$65 member

Visit the exhibition *Nourished: Works by Jazz Holmes* then sample recipes and explore how our senses are informed by memory.

Nature | [Seasonal Discoveries Tour](#)

Various dates and times
\$20, \$12 member, \$10 student

Explore the Gardens' seasonal treasures and refresh your mind with a mindful stroll.

Wellness | [Singing Bowl Workshop](#)

Various dates, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$50, \$45 member

Experience the calming vibrations of sound and reconnect with your inner rhythm.

Wellness | [Sweater Weather Yoga and Winter Tunes](#)

January 20, February 18 & March 24, 6-7 p.m.
\$27, \$24 member

Warm up with this cozy, candlelight vinyasa flow with live music and leave feeling blissful and balanced.

EXHIBITIONS, ART AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Current Exhibitions Through March 22

[Agave: Symbol and Spirit](#)

Uncover the story of agave, a hardy plant at the heart of Mexican culture, through works on loan from Museo de Las Americas.

[Nourished: Works by Jazz Holmes](#)

Experience Jazz Holmes' vibrant paintings inspired by her Creole roots, honoring the plants and recipes that nourish body and soul.

[Xochimilco: Works by Eduardo Robledo Romero](#)

Experience the world of Eduardo Robledo's dreamlike prints, where the landscape and heritage of Xochimilco, Mexico, intertwine with the spiritual power of nature.



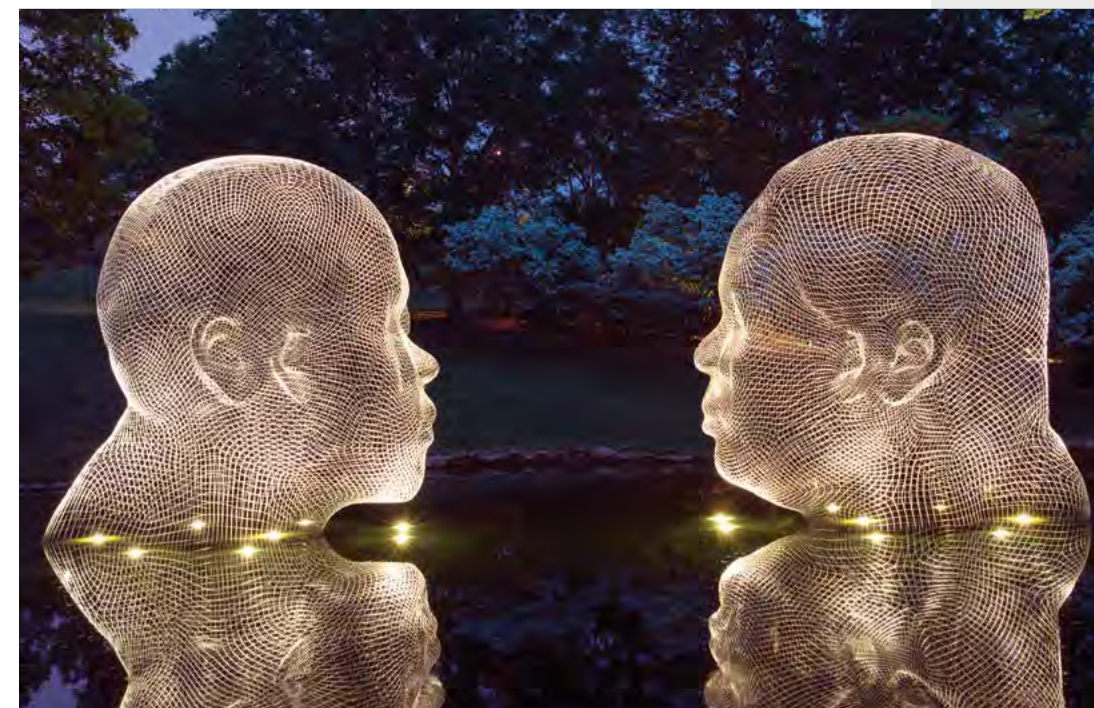
Agave | Unknown artist, Untitled, paint on amate paper, mid-20th century.



Nourished | Jazz Holmes, *Étouffée*, oil paint and rhinestones, 2025.



Xochimilco | Eduardo Robledo Romero, *Carnaval*, linocut print, 2023.



Opening April 18

Jaume Plensa: A New Humanism

Discover works by internationally celebrated sculptor Jaume Plensa in his first retrospective exhibition in the United States. Monumental outdoor sculptures and artworks inside the galleries celebrate unity, shared experiences and the human spirit.

Jaume Plensa, *Awilda & Irma*, steel, 2014. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid. Photo courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens.

RECOMMENDED READS TO Root, Grow and Bloom

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



The Helen Fowler Library maintains a collection of unique materials about plants and the many ways we connect with nature. Do you connect with plants and nature through art? Through writing? Through stories? Or do you connect more directly through the soil, garden or landscape? Perhaps the Gardens is your main point of connection. This connection with nature is how many of us find solace, joy or comfort when life brings change.

Here are a few titles to explore that include topics such as the changes women go through, how art changes your brain, trans short stories, soil restoration and the history of the Gardens. We also have books for children about the resistance to change, recovery after change, rediscovery when life changes and a classic children's tale of transformation and rebirth.

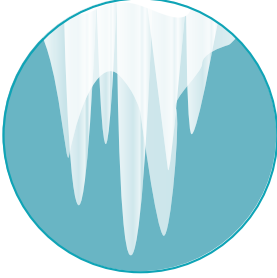

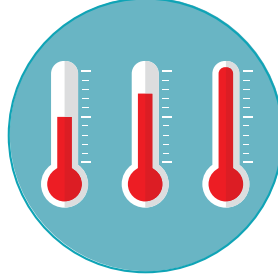





- "Why Women Grow: Stories of soil, sisterhood and survival" by Alice Vincent
- "Your Brain on Art: How the arts transform us" by Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross
- "A Natural History of Transition: Stories" by Callum Angus
- "Dirt to Soil: One family's journey into regenerative agriculture" by Gabe Brown
- "Firsthand: Creating gardens for all people" by Denver Botanic Gardens
- "Little Tree" by Loren Long
- "Hello, Tree" by Ana Crespo; illustrated by Dow Phumiruk
- "Wildful" story and pictures by Kengo Kurimoto
- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle

Find these titles and more in our [catalog](#).

SEASON OF CHANGE

By Helena Nitz, Family and Children's Program Coordinator

Although winter might make our natural world appear frozen in place, Colorado is full of surprises from January to March. In one day, snow might melt or fall, changing the scene outside your window and over time the days grow longer and brighter. How many changes can you notice in just one day or over a longer period?

 <p>Icicles forming or dripping</p>	 <p>The first signs of plant regrowth of spring</p>	 <p>Changes in temperature</p>	 <p>Animal footprints in the mud or snow</p>
 <p>The shifting of shadows during the day</p>	 <p>Snow turning crunchy or slushy</p>	 <p>Birds returning or singing more often</p>	 <p>Color changes in the sky as the sun rises and sets</p>

EXPLORE THE WORLD

with Denver Botanic Gardens

The Gardens' Center for Global Initiatives offers [trips that traverse many continents](#).

Croatia: Flowers of the Dalmatian Coast

April 21-30

The dramatic twists and turns of the Dalmatian coast and its myriad islands present a beguiling landscape, ripe for exploration. Spring sees the waysides colored with wild irises, bold spurge and bright macchie shrubs. Hidden among these are a plethora of delicate orchids, fritillaries, anemones and cyclamen. The rugged limestone mountains hug the coast and rise steeply into different worlds where late snow is fringed by crocuses and pretty dog's-tooth violets. The cooler, more humid hinterland offers a great contrast to the Mediterranean coast and nestled among their emerald beech woods is the waterfall wonderland of Plitvice. Denver Botanic Gardens' Mike Bone, associate director and curator of steppe collection, hosts this trip.

Japan Garden Tour

November 1-10

This thoughtfully designed tour takes travelers through Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka—three of Japan's most iconic and culturally rich cities. Explore celebrated sites such as the Meiji Shrine, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Nijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple and Osaka Castle, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The itinerary features immersive experiences including a traditional rickshaw ride through a bamboo forest, a hands-on sushi-making class and a visit to the amazing digital art museum. Free time is woven throughout the journey for relaxation, shopping or personal exploration. Denver Botanic Gardens' Panayoti Kelaidis, senior curator and director of outreach, hosts this trip.



Photo by John Shors Travel

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GROWING OUR IMPACT: 30 Years of Biodiversity Conservation

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



As we enter 2026, I reflect upon the 30 years of cohesive work the Gardens has led since the inception of the Research & Conservation Department. Our herbarium collections and seed collection program already existed, but formally designating a research department brought our biodiversity conservation efforts under a single umbrella, growing our impact. Over the years, we have worked tirelessly to document and safeguard rare plants and habitats across Colorado. Rare plant conservation and floristic and mycological surveys have been our bedrock, while the expansion of our studies into the urban landscape has changed the way we connect people with plants and contribute to global biodiversity conservation.

Nature-based solutions coupled with actions taken to protect, sustainably manage or restore ecosystems to benefit biodiversity and human well-being are essential for responding to our changing climate. Our partnership with the High Line Canal Conservancy has helped both organizations understand and improve the health, biodiversity and function of the urban greenway. Assessments of green stormwater infrastructure are providing data on how these systems keep plants, soil and water connected. Our partnership with the Colorado Golf Association has led to enhanced native plant diversity and pollinator presence within the rough areas

of the CommonGround Golf Course. Additional efforts have been focused on seed mixes and planting methods that result in the greatest restoration success.

These studies and programs strengthen our contribution to global efforts to document, understand and conserve biodiversity. With the adoption of the [Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF) at COP15, the UN Biodiversity Conference held in Montreal in 2022, the stage is set for bold, collaborative action to halt biodiversity loss worldwide. Botanic gardens are positioned to lead these efforts and Denver Botanic Gardens is helping to shape the conversation. The Gardens is a partner in the [Global Partnership for Plant Conservation](#) and provided strategic input into Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2030. All our work helps advance the targets of the GBF. While as a nation the way we do conservation work is changing with shifts in federal policy and funding, we are working collaboratively with public gardens across the country to adapt. We co-organized and participated in the Conservation Leadership Summit held at Atlanta Botanical Garden in August. We left the summit with a new mindset and a collaborative vision for a strategic, nationwide plan to drive conservation efforts forward and continue documenting and protecting biodiversity.

WHY IS CHATFIELD FARMS' GREEN FARM BARN RED?

By Larry Vickerman, Director, Chatfield Farms



Why is the Green Farm Barn red? Visitors are often curious about this seeming incongruity between name and color. The answer is both historical and practical—but first, a bit of background.

The barn appeared on Jefferson County tax rolls in 1918. It was built by a company from Texas that had purchased the farm just before the end of World War I.

During the war, which began in 1914, American agriculture experienced a boom. With European countries unable to produce crops, demand for U.S. agricultural products surged. This led to skyrocketing prices for both crops and farmland. Speculators bought land, made minor improvements, and sold it

at a profit to farmers hoping the boom would continue. However, after the war ended and Europe began to recover, crop prices fell sharply, leading to a farm depression in the 1920s.

The original owner of the farm who purchased it from the speculators eventually went bankrupt during this downturn. The Green family then purchased the property and successfully operated a dairy and duck farm. At one time, the hillside on the south side of Chatfield Farms was covered in duck pens and coops.

The barn is named after the Green family. But why is it red?

Historically, farmers used a mixture of linseed oil and rust (ferrous oxide) to seal and protect wood. This created a reddish color and was an affordable, effective method to prevent decay. When commercial paints became available, red remained a popular and economical choice. Over time, red became a traditional color for barns—one that continues today for both practical and aesthetic reasons.

So there you have it! That's why the Green Farm Barn is red. It used to serve as the maintenance shop for Chatfield Farms, but since 2006, it has been a charming rental facility for meetings, weddings and other events.

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

As the seasons change, now is a perfect time to consider joining us as an ongoing volunteer! Volunteers support horticulture, educational programming, the visitor experience and so much more. Learn more about the Gardens' volunteer program and get specific details on both ongoing and special event volunteer opportunities at York Street, Chatfield Farms and Plains Conservation Center on our website or email us at vol@botanicgardens.org. New volunteer onboarding begins in March.



Donors of Distinction

Gifts received August 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025

Citizens of the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District	Katherine Dines and David Miller
Anonymous	Joy and Chris Dinsdale
Kristen Abell	Mr. Grady Durham and Lori Payne Durham
Kara Alexandrovic	Jane and Reed Eberly
Dr. Jandel Allen-Davis and Mr. Anthony Davis	Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ebrahimi
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