



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

KNOWLEDGE AND BEAUTY FOR THE AGES

On the covers: Visitors enjoy the new gardens south of the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center and one of the art installations from *Chihuly in the Garden 2023*.

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI

“Botanic Gardens have been working through the United Nations to help create a global strategy for plant conservation as a shared action agenda for all... The Missouri Botanical Garden is playing its part in understanding and protecting the world’s plants—[we are] a natural resource that sustains us all.”

Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson,
“Botanic Gardens from the Renaissance to the Present Day,”
April 2023 meeting of the American Philosophical Society

PHOTO BY JÜRGEN HOMEIER



Endangered Heisteria austroecuadorica from southern Ecuador

In yesterday’s shadow, tomorrow soars.

OF ABOUT 2,000 NEW PLANT SPECIES discovered annually around the world, the Missouri Botanical Garden’s Science and Conservation staff are credited with identifying roughly one in 10 of them! Discovery is the first crucial step in plant conservation, and many newly described plants are critically endangered. Pictured here is the newly described *Heisteria austroecuadorica*, a distant relative of the sandalwood, found in Ecuador by Garden Scientist Carmen Ulloa and colleagues Xavier Cornejo and Jürgen Homeier. Preliminarily described as endangered, this small tree endemic to the foothills of the Andes features fruits with a bright orange-red expanded calyx. These miniature “ballerina skirts” may attract Andean birds that eat its fruits and disperse its seeds. The comprehensive work needed to describe this plant as new has spanned nearly 25 years.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



IN MEASURE AFTER MEASURE, 2023 was an historic milestone year for the Missouri Botanical Garden, achieving many new and remarkable heights.

Following the completion of the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center, we welcomed over 1.2 million visitors in 2023, the highest annual total on record. The number of supporters, too, reached an all-time high, with more than 12,000 new member households joining the ranks of the Garden's growing family, reaching a record of 52,000. Our premier exhibits and events saw burgeoning attendance. Individuals and families from near and far experienced stunning botanical displays, world-class art, music, food, unique cultural celebrations, educational presentations, and much more.

The role you played in these achievements can hardly be overstated. We are honored to count you among those distinguished benefactors who understand that, beyond offering a haven for biodiversity, beauty, and community programs right here in St. Louis, *the Garden is serving the world.*

Your generosity is helping the Garden to preserve and enrich life as new knowledge is discovered and shared—and as plants and their habitats are safeguarded and cherished through the Garden's work.

Donor and member support is essential to help the Garden grow. Together, we fulfill our mission to apply new knowledge to address real-world problems. Our work builds on our ongoing efforts to discover and describe new plant species—and to apply a new model of conservation—to ensure these plants and their ecosystems survive to support and sustain the coming generations.

Facilities and programs across the Garden, Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House, and Shaw Nature Reserve highlight and contribute to our mission. From a butterfly longevity study to a major habitat restoration, from drop-in education programs to new endangered plant species on display, our venues have been carefully planned to seamlessly integrate our mission as part of the visitor experience for all.

For countless thousands of neighbors across the St. Louis region, the Missouri Botanical Garden remains deeply woven in the fabric of their lives. Its success is a direct outcome of that relationship and, with the support of our community, an asset that will never be lost.

With partners like you, the Garden continues to cultivate the same passion in the hearts and minds of visitors, members, partners, and scientists across the globe. We are, and continue to be, a Garden for the world.

DR. PETER WYSE JACKSON
President

FROM THE CHAIR



THE MISSION OF THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN echoes in the hearts of passionate philanthropists and friends like you. Thank you for your help in advancing the Garden's groundbreaking work throughout 2023.

This report showcases a year of achievement. As you'll see reflected in the charts on pages 30–31, the Garden is in a strong financial position that anchors our ability to continue to execute our global mission. Impressive though they are, these numbers alone cannot measure the value of your trust and confidence in the Garden's broader purpose to build a healthier, happier world for all through the discovery and sharing of knowledge about plants and their environment.

Your generosity has allowed the Garden to forge new frontiers of botanical discoveries across dozens of countries. Your investment is fueling the sharing of knowledge with researchers across the globe. Your support is inspiring thoughtful inquiry, educating tomorrow's scientists, and equipping communities worldwide with resources to restore and sustain the diversity of plant life needed to sustain our planet for generations yet born.

The Board of Trustees is committed to the prudent stewardship of your continuing investments, which remains our chief responsibility. This report offers you a glimpse into the breadth of the Garden's work over the past year. The fruits of your generosity and engagement are demonstrated in the highly transformed visitor experience here in St. Louis. It is also found in labs, green houses, fields, and forests around the world—all the places where the Garden's important work continues through your support.

Thank you once again for your continued generous commitment to the Missouri Botanical Garden.

MICHAEL K. STERN, PHD
Chair of the Board of Trustees

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The tiered entry gardens of the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center include extensive seating, encouraging visitors to sit and enjoy the growing landscape.

Enriching Tomorrow for All People

Exquisite beauty.
Invaluable learning.
Life-giving science.

IN 2023, MORE THAN ONE MILLION VISITORS streamed through the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center along their way to an unforgettable experience.

The five-year *Gateway to the Garden* campaign culminated in the planting of 3.5 acres of new garden landscapes and the June grand opening of the unique, state-of-the-art Bayer Event Center. Hosting private events and educational conventions, as well as supporting the Garden's year-round slate of public festivals, this extension of the Taylor Visitor Center "is assuring the continuation of the Garden's efforts in plant science, conservation, and education for decades to come," noted Dr. Michael Stern, chair of the Garden's Board of Trustees.

A showcase of sustainability and resourcefulness, the Taylor Visitor Center is serving St. Louis and the world as a *living, learning laboratory*, offering lessons in ecological awareness, water conservation, waste reduction, energy efficiency, Missouri's natural biodiversity, and more.

Its towering walls embrace an endless array of guests—students and scientists, dignitaries and dreamers, benefactors and beauty seekers. From around the corner and around the globe, they come to *immerse themselves in and be changed by* the fruits of the Garden's wide-ranging work.

Among dozens of examples of the integrative dynamic in action:

- August's XIV International Aroid Conference, where 100+ scientists, students, and enthusiasts from 16 countries of the world gathered at the Garden to improve and share knowledge about the unique Araceae plant family.
- In September, the International Advisory Council of Botanic Gardens Conservation International met at the Garden, convening botanical leaders from around the world. The two-day meeting aimed to define the role of botanical gardens in achieving the goals of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), to save the world's flora, their ecosystems, and the life they support. The GSPC was presented to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity in October by the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, co-chaired by Garden President Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson. This United Nations body will adopt the GSPC in 2024.
- Hundreds of Garden members attended six Speaker Series lectures, including one tracing the history of the science division's leading research, conservation, and restoration work in Madagascar.
- Diverse and often under-recognized groups united inside the Garden to celebrate community, immerse themselves in culture, experience beauty, mark life milestones, and learn about themselves and the world around them.

From the moment of its founding in 1859 to the present day, one of the nation's oldest botanical gardens has grown through the pioneering spirit of the very beneficiaries it exists to serve, year after year breaking new ground in a relentless pursuit to preserve and enrich all life. The *Gateway to the Garden's* extraordinary transformation heralds the dawn of an even brighter future for generations to come.

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI

(top) The Kemper Lobby of the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center serves as a hub and gathering place for visitors.

(bottom) The Bakewell Ottoman Garden seamlessly connects to the new terraces between Bayer Event Center and the Linnean House.



PHOTOS BY TOM INCROCCI, CASSIDY MOODY



Chihuly in the Garden 2023 featured 20 art installations across the Garden, integrating glass and natural elements to create truly unique displays.

Rising to the Top of the Glass

MONTH AFTER MONTH, 2023 ushered in record-breaking attendance at the Missouri Botanical Garden. More than 1.2 million total visitors experienced the Garden, Shaw Nature Reserve, and the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House. Attendance at nearly every special event and exhibit also shattered prior records.

With its extended run from early May through mid-October, *Chihuly in the Garden 2023* drew more than half a million of those visitors. The stunning exhibition showcased works from world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly on a grand scale. Thousands of pieces of blown glass forms in 20 dramatic installations graced the Garden's grounds. President Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson called *Chihuly* "our most ambitious exhibition to date" with "mesmerizing works, designed specifically for our botanical garden setting, that capture the imagination."

Nearly 12,000 of those visitors invested in the Garden's mission as first-time members, bringing the membership audience to an all-time high.

The annual Japanese Festival, Best of Missouri Market, and Garden Glow all broke attendance records as well, with Garden Glow welcoming nearly a quarter million people to the enchanting winter wonderland and dazzling light display.

The newly completed Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center welcomed guests through a customer-centered, highly accessible facility and engaged visitors from the moment they walked through the doors. The Taylor Visitor Center enabled guests to learn, dine, relax, and shop in a spaciouly intimate setting, bringing the outdoors in and sharing the Garden's mission in artful and interactive ways.



PHOTOS BY MARY LOU OLSON, SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

Japanese Festival features three days of cultural programs over Labor Day weekend, including the popular taiko drummers.



Other events enjoyed heightened attendance in 2023, including:

- The full revival of the perennially popular Orchid Show, which reopened inside Emerson Conservatory. The show featured more than 350 species and varieties of orchid from the Garden's vast collection of 5,000 individual plants. More than 45,000 visitors attended, a six-fold increase over the same period in 2022.
- On Wednesdays in the summer, the Whitaker Music Festival provided 10 free evening concerts at Cohen Amphitheater for more than 30,000 attendees. Funded by the Whitaker Foundation, the Festival aims to promote common heritage, celebrate diversity, and encourage vitality within the community since 1996.
- The Garden's expansive and growing field of educational classes and internships, member programs, and other events taking place continually across our sites helped engage visitors of all ages and interests with the Garden's mission.

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI



(top right) More than 45,000 visitors enjoyed the return of the Orchid Show in Emerson Conservatory.

(bottom) For more than 20 years, the Whitaker Music Festival has brought diverse crowds like this one to the Garden for free summertime concerts.

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



350,000
social media followers
(Facebook, Instagram, X)



466,000
monthly website
visitors



247,731
tickets sold for
Garden Glow



52,000
Garden member households,
an all-time high



PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

Growing the Garden for All

IN 2023, Missouri Botanical Garden’s growing emphasis on building an inclusive culture drew more diverse communities to our campuses than ever before.

In February, Black farmers from the region held tabling events at the Garden during Black History Month to make the community aware of their contributions to enhancing health and equitable food access for all. An in-depth panel discussion brought stakeholders together to discuss improving the economic plight of marginalized people.

Five additional celebrations offered special events, purposeful education, and community outreach to Garden members and visitors in 2023.

Juneteenth: More than 3,500 visitors enjoyed an enlightening day of special activities during this second annual celebration commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

Pride Month: The June celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community concluded with “Pride Night” on June 30. Friends, families, and allies enjoyed the colorful Chihuly Nights experience with a Pride-themed flare. Pride STL and the Human Rights Campaign hosted informational tables.

Hispanic Heritage Month: Celebrated annually from September 15–October 15, this celebration highlighted Latino contributions to prosperity, power, and progress in America. The Garden’s observance culminated in the October 14 unveiling of a flag created by local Hispanic artist José Garza. The flag recognizes the

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



20+

agencies/organizations collaborated in community outreach efforts



6

major diversity observances offered onsite events, education, activities and awareness building across the community

diverse cultures, achievements, and histories of our Hispanic community.

Indigenous People’s Day: On October 9, more than 1,900 visitors enjoyed activities for all ages, educational films, and inspiring speakers. The program explored the Indigenous peoples and plants of the St. Louis region.

Native American Heritage Month: Celebrated in November, the observance included special educational exhibits, award-winning storytellers, film screenings in the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center, and discussion of the relationships of indigenous people and plants.

The Garden also introduced new tours for individuals with disabilities in the spring. Trained docents began leading custom and complimentary Garden journeys for populations including people with memory loss and their caregivers, visitors with blindness or low vision, and those with hearing loss.

Garden staff continued participation in education workshops to foster a culture of greater understanding, open communication, and mutual respect among all employees. This is an essential foundation for a diverse and inclusive environment, where every person can succeed.

“As a world-renowned institution,” notes Michelle Martin Bonner, the Garden’s Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, “it is imperative to the Garden’s future to continue progressing toward becoming a more welcoming and inclusive place for everyone to enjoy our mission of beauty, science, and conservation.”



(left) A family enjoys a summertime visit to Seiwa-en, the Japanese Garden.

(above) Celebration of Black History Month included musical performances in February.

(below) The Garden’s observance of Hispanic Heritage Month included the unveiling of a flag recognizing our Hispanic community.

(bottom) Indigenous People’s Day include demonstrations of traditional crafting.



PHOTOS BY MARYLOULSON, COURTESY OF GARDEN STAFF



PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI

One of the Chihuly in the Garden 2023 installations floats peacefully among the historic Victoria water lilies (*Victoria amazonica*).

EXEMPLARY SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING GARDEN STAFF RETIRED IN 2023 following decades of exemplary service. The Garden is grateful for their years of vision, commitment, and passion.

Bruce Allen
39 years with Science and Conservation



Lawrence Enkoji
32 years with Horticulture



William Behrns
22 years with Information Technology



Douglas Deem
22 years with Facilities

IN 2023, THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS celebrated significant service milestones.

40 YEARS
Jean Leonhardt

35 YEARS
Linda Whitten

25 YEARS
Suzanne Blanke
Claire Meyners
Linda Munsell
Robert Siemer
Gwynn Turner

20 YEARS
Barbara Altenbernd
Tammy Behm
Carolyn Burke
Paul Feldker
Judith Goedeker
Jan Gowen
Judith Harmon
Ruth Hartsell
Barbara Hilton
Madelynn Kester
Pat Kohler
Maya Lerch
Mike Lerch
Ginny McCook
David Riley

Volunteers of all ages are essential to major festivals like Best of Missouri Market.



PHOTO BY LIPING WANG

GARDEN NUMBERS

VISITORS

Attendance at all locations	1,206,916
Highest daily attendance in 2023	19,250 (September 2)
Highest nonevent attendance	8,710 (July 22)
Lowest nonevent attendance	5 (January 23)

MEMBERS

Total member households	52,634
Total member visits	352,280

PERSONNEL

Number of staff	454
Volunteers	1,594
Volunteer supervisors	215
Total volunteer hours	67,018

COMMUNICATIONS

Total online visits	8.5 million
Unique online visitors	5.6 million
Total visits via mobile device	4.8 million
Total email subscriber base	260,000
Social network followers	Facebook: 198,000 Instagram: 109,000 X (formerly Twitter): 54,100 YouTube: 6,720 TikTok: 2,100

HOME GARDENING

Horticulture Answer Service	calls: 2,888 questions: 4,309 emails: 2,010
Plant Doctor walk-in questions	3,802
Hours volunteered by Master Gardeners	15,169
New certified Master Gardeners	63

HORTICULTURE

Total accessions	32,514
Wild source accessions	8,486
Total taxa/unique types of plants	17,509
Total rare or threatened (endangered) species	1,443
Total accessions in the Seed Bank	2,835
Total genera	2,300
Total species	8,889
Total plantings	54,778

EDUCATION

Education Program Participation	322,643
Students participating in education programs	42,345
Teachers using workshops and instructional materials	602
Scouts and leaders in education programs	1,306
Adults in adult education programs	6,010
Youth and families in education programs	3,543
Seniors, special needs, and others in therapeutic horticulture education programs	9,722
People engaged via community-based programming	32,850
Visitors experiencing drop-in education opportunities	225,230

EDUCATION VENUE ATTENDANCE

Visitors to the Children's Garden	107,392
Visitors to Brookings Exploration Center	202,071
Visitors to Tower Grove House	93,620
Visitors to the Dana Brown Overnight Center	3,474

SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

Staff publications	184
New species described	120
Countries where fieldwork is done	presence in 54 countries
Graduate students	28, from 9 countries
Herbarium total specimens	7,808,327
Mounted specimens added to Herbarium	46,627
TROPICOS®	specimens: 6,933,051 plant names: 1,385,535 hits/year: 60,869,752
Articles published in MBG Press's two journals, <i>Novon</i> and <i>Annals</i>	29 <i>Novon</i> articles (268 pages) 8 <i>Annals</i> articles (491 pages)
New books and journals added to the Peter H. Raven Library	784 books 1,225 print issues of journals 350+ online journal titles
Interlibrary loans provided	469
Interlibrary loans received	199
Reference questions	1,306
Visitors to the Sachs Museum	47,853

Leading Global Efforts to Save Fragile Flora

IN 2023, THE SIZE AND INFLUENCE of the Missouri Botanical Garden's science division continued to grow, advancing the Garden's global mission to restore Earth's ecological balance through plant discovery, knowledge, and conservation.

A diverse team of research staff, interns, fellows, and students collaborated on projects across every Garden site in Missouri and in 53 other countries around the world.

The team includes the Center for Conservation and Sustainable Development (CCSD), which focuses on science-based approaches to conservation and use of biodiversity. The CCSD received a grant to advance its work propagating six threatened plant species in *ex-situ* collections outside of their natural habitats. CCSD research with 115 plant species listed on the United States Endangered Species Act was highlighted by St. Louis Public Radio in December, including propagating species from the seed bank for reintroduction into the wild.

CCSD researchers employed a variety of methods to conserve imperiled plant species, including genetic assessments of 27 threatened plant species. In Colombia, a collaborative team established a garden experiment with more than 2,000 endangered plants in the genus *Espeletia*, working with local partners to understand and care for critical species.

The Garden is a global leader in plant species discovery, identification, and classification, as well as the collection and sharing of plant data. The Garden's Herbarium is one of the largest and most active collections of preserved plant specimens in the world. In 2023, the Herbarium reached a milestone seven millionth specimen — and continued to grow. More than 700,000 additional specimens acquired from other organizations are being accessioned into the collection.

The Herbarium also ramped up digitization efforts, adding 30,000 digital specimen records per month.

With these impressive efforts, the Tropicos database grew to more than one million high-resolution images of botanical specimens. The global database is one of the largest, most comprehensive collections of digital plant data in the world. All the records are freely available to students and scientists across the globe.

Students also come to work at the Garden itself through internships and fellowship programs. The Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program hosted a dozen students for independent research at the Garden in its tenth anniversary year. More than 100 students have benefitted from REU, which seeks to broaden participation in science by students from underrepresented groups and under-resourced schools. Many past participants have gone on to graduate school; several have won prestigious fellowships.

(continued)

A water lily (Nymphaea 'Hermione') specimen from the Garden's Herbarium is prepared for digitization.



PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA



Seedlings growing in the nursery for forest restoration in Amabalabe, Madagascar

Conservation in Madagascar

MADAGASCAR IS HOME to the Missouri Botanical Garden's largest international research program with more than 200 local staff members, all of whom but one are Malagasy. Their work includes describing new plant species, studying biodiversity, and conserving threatened plants to protect the life dependent on them. The team is also actively engaging local communities in their work to document and support climate change resilience of human communities; connect wild food diversity to nutritional health; link restoration of biodiverse forests to support for education; complete agroforestry projects to provide stable income while supporting the conservation of nearby protected areas; and link exploration of tree diversity to the behavior of the lemur populations that make their home in Garden-managed conservation areas.



(left) Barbados cherry (*Malpighia inclinata*), a new species from Nicaragua identified by Garden scientists in 2023.
 (right) The Garden's team in Bolivia is key to long-term experiments and conservation efforts.



PHOTOS BY OLGA MARTHA MONTIEL, SEBASTIAN TELLO

Around the world, the Garden's programs in Africa and Madagascar reached milestones, as did programs in Latin America.

Ecosystem conservation continued to be the top priority in Madagascar, the Garden's largest international science and conservation program. More than 232,000 seedlings were planted as part of restoration efforts on more than 250 acres in managed conservation sites on the island.

In Gabon, Garden teams collected more than 5,200 specimens focused on forest inventories to assess the diversity and health of these important ecosystems. The Garden organized workshops and led teams of local and international experts in evaluating 38 sites for biodiversity following global criteria and standards. These Key Biodiversity Areas cover a total of 43,245 square miles.

Field teams working in Latin America added 4,140 specimens to Garden collections and planted nearly 2,500 seedlings in restoration research experiments involving 16 tree species.

In Bolivia, Garden scientists helped establish the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Bolivian Plant Species Specialist Group. The team was instrumental in the botanical assessment needed to identify Key Biodiversity Areas in Bolivia.

Capacity-building also continued to grow in Latin America, including establishment of a wide-ranging course on botanical field methods in Bolivia, as well as long-term in-country collaborations in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia. Capacity-building programs include mentorship, research funding, and access to the Garden's databases and other resources.

The field support and critical training provided to young plant scientists are fostering tomorrow's biologists and conservationists, reflecting the Garden's sweeping commitment to nurture talent and advance plant science and conservation globally.

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



nearly 61 million
 uses of Tropicos, the world's largest
 botanical database



200,000+
 specimens and plant names added
 to the database



120
 new plant species identified



WHY IT MATTERS

The world is experiencing a dangerous decline in nature, with one in eight species of plants and animals now threatened with extinction. Damaged ecosystems exacerbate climate change, undermine food security, and put people and communities at risk. Discovery and classification are crucial first steps to species conservation and ensuring survival.

Nisa Karimi in a forest in Andrafiamadinka, Madagascar

PHOTO BY ALEX LINAN



PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA

More than 32,000 plants were propagated in the Oertli Family Hardy Plant Nursery for display in the gardens surrounding the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center. The Oertli Nursery is continuing to grow thousands of additional plants for perennial display.

Science Beyond Beauty

THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN'S horticultural staff worked tirelessly throughout 2023 to connect the Garden's mission of plant conservation throughout the visitor experience.

The division's most visible achievement came with the completion of planting, labeling, and mapping 32,000 plants in the 3.5 acres of beds surrounding the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center. Many years of work on design, selection, propagation, and procurement of plant materials led to these new displays. The majority of the plants in the landscape represent species that are rare or threatened with extinction.

The Garden's nearby Oertli Family Hardy Plant Nursery facilitated the early growth of these endangered specimens. The Oertli Nursery continues to extend the Garden's capacity for propagation, conservation, and education, playing a vital role in the master plan to increase visitor engagement and expand global impact in the years to come.

The new landscapes also brought some visitor favorites back to the Garden, including the vibrant and historic rhododendron collection. Combined with seasonal plants and special displays to complement the *Chihuly in the Garden 2023* exhibition, the Horticulture team added a quarter of a million plants to the Garden grounds.

WHY IT MATTERS

Malus sieversii fruit from Kyrgyzstan, a hotspot of biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth. Climate change is playing an increasingly important role in the decline of biodiversity and climate-driven extinctions of plants and animals. Globally, 1.2 million plant and animal species are estimated to be under threat of extinction. When a species is lost, its vital role within the habitat community is also lost—along with any foods, medicines, or other uses it may have for humans.



PHOTO BY DAVID GUINN



250,000

estimated total number of new plantings



338

species of conservation concern added to the living collections



17

field collecting expeditions on 2 continents

Staff devoted significant time to the renovation of Shoenberg Arid House, scheduled to reopen in mid-2024. As part of the conservatory renovations, the Horticulture team worked on environment modifications including enhancing soil and irrigation, designing the displays, and identifying plants from the Garden's historic arid collections for inclusion. More than 1,000 species of arid plants were considered for the initial plantings.

Water quality is crucial to the survival of the Garden's living collections, including rare species. In 2023, the Garden's new rainwater collection and runoff water systems provided more than 90% of the water needed for the species housed in the Tropical Nursery greenhouse and Emerson Conservatory. This natural source of irrigation also supports the Garden's largest greenhouse collections, including orchids and aroids.

The William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening reopened to visitors following closure due to the pandemic and renovation. It continues to offer an array of services to visitors and members. The 23 demonstration gardens offered countless ideas to interested home gardeners, including the redesigned Lopata Prairie Garden. Local "plant doctors" (expert Garden staff and Master Gardener volunteers) fielded more than 13,000 inquiries from calls, email, and onsite visitors. People of all ages took part in guided nature walks as well as classes on gardening practices, photography, and green living with these experts.

Horticulture staff also began collaborating with the Garden's Center for Conservation and Sustainable Development to advance the study of six threatened plant species in the Garden's collection. The collaboration is one of many ways the Horticulture team is working to advance conservation horticulture. This study will provide data to better equip plant scientists to solve problems including species extinction and habitat loss.



PHOTOS BY NATHAN KWARTA, TOM INCROCCI

(top) A great golden digger wasp (*Sphex ichneumoneus*) pollinates rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) in the Lopata Prairie Garden.

(bottom) The Garden's iconic rhododendron collection was replanted in the gardens south of the Taylor Visitor Center in 2023.



Urban Garden Dreams, the 2023 exhibition in the Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum, included a gallery of student artworks from students at more than a dozen local schools.

Nurturing by Nature



Education team member Kelly Wehrheim leads a summer Budding Scientists class in the Garden.

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI

WITH A FOCUS ON INSPIRING AND EDUCATING the community, the Garden's educational initiatives achieved remarkable growth in 2023.

Instilling knowledge is a critical step to igniting passion for positive change among the young people destined to inherit global environmental challenges. The Garden has continued to increase the number of school-age learners engaged in education programs across all sites, reaching more than 42,000 students. This substantial growth followed an intentional commitment to create a community with a deeper understanding of botanical sciences, ecological awareness, and sustainable practices.

With a grant from the Bayer Fund, the Education Division expanded its use of therapeutic horticulture to improve the well-being of children with cancer and their families. Therapeutic horticulture engages participants in nature-based activities to improve overall physical and emotional well-being. The programming provides relief and diversion from the stress of dealing with a challenging situation while enjoying the wonders and nuances of nature.

In 2023, the Education Division developed comprehensive, age-appropriate learner guides to enhance the impact of Garden events, including the botanical side of *Chihuly in the Garden 2023*. The guides helped connect art with science, highlighting how beauty and knowledge can reinforce one another to

preserve and enrich all life. Learning experiences were also integrated into the other exhibits and cultural celebrations such as the Orchid Show, Juneteenth, and Kwanzaa.

Students also engaged with plants through a juried art exhibition displayed in the Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum. *Urban Garden Dreams: Student Community Art* debuted in May 2023 and highlighted the impact of the Garden's leadership as an urban garden. The exhibition showcased 160 creative works in varied media. Art teachers from 15 participating schools and regional art programs guided K-12 students in visually expressing representations of their dream gardens.

Urban Garden Dreams helped cultivate educational partnerships that weave the fabric of the Garden and its mission into the lives of St. Louisans and visitors from around the world. In an article published by the *Botanical Society of America* (Fall 2023), Museum Curator Nezka Pfeifer articulated how these collaborations can remove barriers to information and build connections that lead to a deeper understanding of plants, as well as the larger world around us.

The Sachs Museum concluded 2023 with the work of a poet often met through high school curricula, Emily Dickinson. The winter opening of *This Earthen Door*, an exhibition of artworks inspired by Emily Dickinson and her plant herbarium book, introduced visitors of all ages to a forgotten treasure of science, botany, art, and poetry.

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



42,345

learners in Garden-sponsored school programs

9,722

participants in therapeutic horticulture programs

602

area educators participating in Garden-led professional development

10,859

public program participants

322,643

visitor engagement interactions through education

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI



A visitor learns about composting with one of the education partners at the Green Living Festival.

Growing Greener, Cleaner

SUSTAINABLE-LIVING INITIATIVES reached new heights in 2023. The Sustainability Division added staff and expanded programs to support its driving commitment to being a model environmental steward.

In February, the Garden's Deer Creek Watershed Alliance management plan was accepted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), making it one of only 12 EPA-accepted projects in Missouri. The Alliance has helped create nearly 500 rainscaping projects in the watershed, with an annual impact of removing an estimated 188 tons of sediment, 119 pounds of nitrogen, and 23.5 pounds of phosphorus from the creek and reducing impact from damaging floods. The Shaw Series for Stormwater and Landscape Professionals also relaunched in 2023, in partnership with the Alliance and the City of Webster Groves.

The Outdoor Leadership Corps piloted in 2022 welcomed nine new restoration assistants in 2023. These youth worked more than 2,000 hours along public lands and waterways to collect trash, remove invasive species, and plant some 2,200 native plants and trees. The program includes mentorship from restoration experts at Shaw Nature Reserve.

The iconic Green Living Festival was held as an expanded five-day series of events across all five organizations in the Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District (ZMD). A record 27,229 visitors engaged with outdoor exhibitions, tours, and family-friendly activities focused on sustainable living. Key topics included making one's home more energy efficient; using native plants and rain gardens to create a more sustainable landscape; exploring renewables, conservation, and green building; and using recycling and composting to reduce waste.

PHOTO BY MARY LOU OLSON



PHOTOS BY CASSIDY MOODY, SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

(top) The Garden's first Greenhouse Gas Inventory will include operations of historic buildings, including the Lichtenstein Victorian District.

(bottom) Event partners feature sustainable transportation—biking—at the Green Living Festival.

Also serving the community, The Sunflower+ Project celebrated its tenth year of sowing sunflowers in a vacant urban site. The site has become a meeting space for people and pollinators alike, featuring artwork displays from area elementary schools and a scarecrow created by a neighborhood artist.

Continuing our own education, the Garden completed our first comprehensive Greenhouse Gas Inventory of our historic campus and buildings. This massive data project is a critical tool in a multi-year plan to understand the sources of emissions and the pathways to reducing them.

As one of the founding members of the Midwest Climate Collaborative, the Garden was pleased to serve as a field site for the first annual Midwest Climate Summit. More than 50 educators attended a daylong workshop to explore how the Garden's work connects to climate solutions.



PHOTO BY TJ INGRASSIA

A young visitor recycles a plastic bottle.

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



20 tons

of Garden electronics, paper, office supplies, food waste, and recyclable materials were diverted from landfills through the Zero-Waste Ambassador program



3,275

unique drivers used the Garden's electric vehicle charging stations, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 84 tons



34.5 megawatts

of renewable energy were produced through the Garden's solar arrays



27,229

attendees welcomed across five Green Living Festival events

Pretty and Purposeful: An Expanding Role in Conservation

IN 2023, the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House celebrated its 25th anniversary of entertaining St. Louisans and visitors from around the globe. More than 129,000 visitors were welcomed into the warm, wondrous habitat of some of the planet's smallest pollinators and ecosystem managers.

As one visitor posted in an online review, *"I had a 'spiritual experience' there ... with a feeling of oneness I had with them and the environment. Joyful tears welled in my eyes at the beauty of the moment...."*

The Tropical Conservatory remained a vital habitat for more than 60 tropical butterfly species and more than 150 species of tropical plants. In addition to providing beautiful connections with nature, the Butterfly House escalated its commitment to conservation.

Expansion of the onsite Entomology Lab enabled staff to serve the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) in an enhanced capacity during 2023. In February, USFW agents tapped the Butterfly house to facilitate the protection of a seized shipment of Antilles pinktoe tarantulas (*Caribena versicolor*) likely on its way to the pet trade from the island of Martinique.

"We accepted 98 young tarantulas and cared for them until they were old enough to share with partner institutions," senior entomologist Tad Yankoski explained. "The Butterfly House is one of the few U.S. insect facilities able to care for confiscated species being smuggled in illegal trade."

A record of successfully caring for numerous shipments of spiders and mantids, ants, and other insects has made the Butterfly House a trusted and increasingly visible resource for public partners and government entities. "USFW agents know they can call or text us

any time, day or night," Yankoski says. "They often work overnight, so I get messages at all hours."

As part of the Garden's mission to preserve and enrich all life, the Butterfly House continued to source most of the tropical butterflies in the collection from a sustainable butterfly farm in Costa Rica. El Bosque Nuevo (The New Forest) provides farmers in Costa Rica a business model that preserves the forest through sustainable economic activity. The organization directs all profits to acquire rainforest areas for conservation, reforestation, research, and preservation.

(continued)

(left) An atlas moth (Attacus atlas) displays a wingspan of almost 10 inches in the Tropical Conservatory of Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House.

(below) A young visitor follows a butterfly in the Tropical Conservatory during a Little Bugs education program.



PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER



PHOTO BY NING HE



Visitors are encouraged to sit among the butterflies in the Tropical Conservatory.



PHOTOS BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER, CASSIDY MOODY

The Butterfly House also began a unique study in 2023 in the Tropical Conservatory. Entomologists solicited visitors' help in the research phase of a longevity investigation. Individuals from each of the species living in the Tropical Conservatory were tagged with a unique identifier. Visitors are invited to find and photograph tagged butterflies, then upload their time-stamped image to a data collection portal. Over the next two years, entomologists will use the collected data from both staff and citizen-scientist visitors to study the lifespans of the captive species. The data will be compared to populations in the wild to ensure the best possible conditions for our butterflies. The data may also help inform global conservation measures. In the U.S. alone, nearly one in five butterfly species is at risk of extinction.



(top) Visitors use education guides to identify dozens of species in the Tropical Conservatory.

(bottom) The Butterfly House receives thousands of chrysalides each year, including these for the common blue morpho (*Morpho peleides*).

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



31,000

chrysalides received; 1 in 8 were the Menelaus blue morpho (*Morpho menelaus*), a highly-prized species distinctive for its large wingspan and iridescent blue color



200

animals rehomed following confiscation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including **10** new or rare (to the Butterfly House) animal species



40%

of the tropical butterflies displayed at the Butterfly House each year come from sustainable farm El Bosque Nuevo in Costa Rica



WHY IT MATTERS

Preventing the collection of wild insects and arthropods for commerce

Many species desired for the pet trade and other commercial purposes are threatened or endangered in the wild. Many collection methods are unsustainable; some are illegal. If a suitable home cannot be found for a seized shipment, the animals may be euthanized, further threatening the population. Captive and sustainable breeding programs provide opportunities for broader audiences to learn about these fascinating creatures while protecting fragile populations. They also provide a way to reintroduce animals to wild populations and support the species' survival.

A mature blue morpho (*Morpho peleides*) rests on a leaf in the Tropical Conservatory.

PHOTO BY ASUELENI DELONEY



An American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) perches on a stalk of rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) in the prairie at Shaw Nature Reserve.

SHAW NATURE RESERVE

Seeds of Splendor

PASSIONATE STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS work together at Shaw Nature Reserve to restore natural biodiversity. The rolling 2,440 acres of the Nature Reserve were once a diverse landscape of native grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands.

As part of this work, the bold, 120-acre Wolf Run Grassland Restoration project reached a major milestone in 2023.

Over the decades, the Wolf Run area had devolved into dense thickets of invasive species and weedy trees, making the landscape unsuitable for diverse plants and other wildlife. In 2021, intensive work began to remove detrimental species and mediate erosion damage. Thousands of invasive plants were removed to initiate transformation of the site into a highly diverse mosaic of prairie, savanna, and woodland. In the fall planting season of 2023, the seeds of 210 native plant species were sown over the first 40 acres targeted for full ecological restoration.

The project's ultimate goal is to create a complex and diverse prairie-like ecosystem to promote a far richer wildlife habitat, cleaner water, and healthier soil. With less than 1/10 of 1 percent of prairie land remaining in Missouri, the Wolf Run project is vitally important. The resulting transformation will introduce an abundance of native flora, attracting more native wildlife to be enjoyed by visitors and neighbors for years to come.



PHOTO BY MIKE SAXTON

A sunrise at Shaw Nature Reserve shows progress in a recently seeded section of the Wolf Run Restoration project.

“People want connection to the natural world,” said Mike Saxton, Manager of Restoration and Land Stewardship at the Nature Reserve. He noted volunteers are essential to the success of these massive projects. “Volunteers derive a lot of meaning from our programs and understand their efforts are really important. We try to connect people with the work, the outdoors, and with one another.”

Volunteer Tom Bowen agrees. “Wonderful, like-minded folks are coming out to the Nature Reserve to recreate what used to be here,” he said, “so our kids and others can enjoy it as it should be.”

(continued)

2023: BY THE NUMBERS



ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

1,100

pounds of native seed collected and sown over 40 acres of the Wolf Run Grassland



EDUCATION

1,234

hours of nature-focused programming for area schoolchildren



EVENTS

1,125

attendees at Whitmire Wonderlights, nearly tripling 2022's attendance



HORTICULTURE

75

native species propagated for the Ozark Ethnobotany Garden

PHOTO BY MATILDA ADAMS



Luminaries lead to the historic Bascom House during Whitmire Wonderlights.

PHOTO BY MATILDA ADAMS

In 2023, the Education and Visitor Experience team connected increasingly diverse audiences with nature. Staff welcomed participants from the St. Louis refugee community, hosted hikes for urban community members, developed partnerships to welcome new visitors, and took part in the Racial Equity Summit in St. Louis in November.

The completion of the Kling Family Bridge and improvements to the surrounding trail system also enhanced the visitor experience at the Nature Reserve. Hikers now have greater access through acres of Meramec River bottomland forest habitat.

A premiere destination within the Nature Reserve, the Whitmire Wildflower Garden, celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023. As one of the largest and oldest native plant gardens in the region, it presents more than 500 native Missouri species in garden landscape design. In December, more than 1,000 visitors enjoyed Whitmire Wonderlights, an evening stroll through the luminary-lit garden.

A significant gift from Nature Reserve volunteer Susie Russell paved the way for groundbreaking in 2023 on the Linnemeyer-Russell Restoration Center. The center will help advance the Nature Reserve's leadership in the field of ecological restoration by providing dedicated space for the specialized tools and equipment needed to conduct large-scale ecological restoration.

Throughout 2023, Shaw Nature Reserve advanced Missouri's robust native biodiversity while enriching visitor experiences through enhanced access, education, and special events.

PHOTO BY MATILDA ADAMS



A trail leads through the lush diversity of the prairie at Shaw Nature Reserve.

WHY IT MATTERS

Bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*)

The trouble with invasive plants

An invasive plant species is one that is alien to the original ecosystem and likely to cause harm to the natural environment. Invasive plants often choke out the native species that insects need to survive. When the insects suffer, the birds and small mammals will follow. A functioning ecosystem can be destroyed by invasive species, negatively affecting the lives of all who depend on the land—including people.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN STAFF

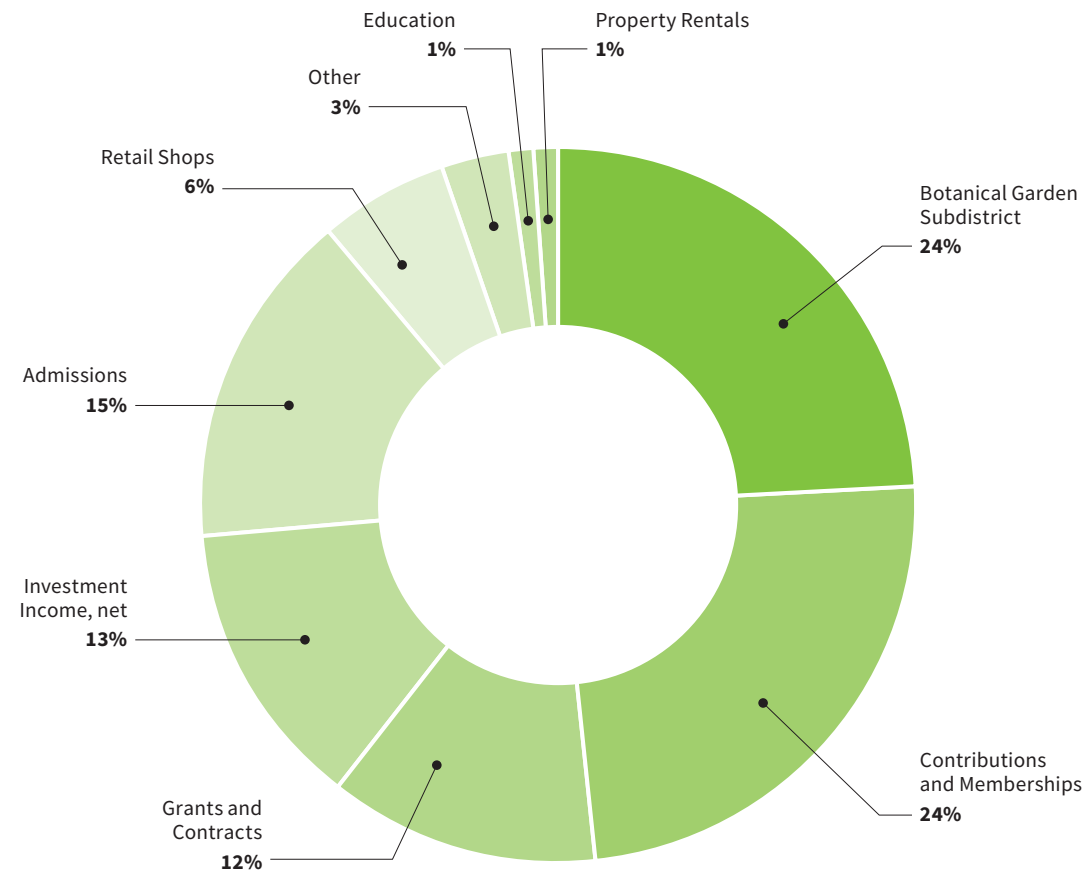
A Legacy of Land Stewardship

SHAW NATURE RESERVE EMERGED as a regional leader in ecological restoration as the first acres of prairie were planted in 1980 and woodlands were managed with prescribed fire in the 1990s. In the years since, hundreds of acres of prairie have been planted, dozens of acres of glades restored, and numerous wetlands created. After initial intensive phases of ambitious ecological restoration projects are complete, the process of land stewardship continues in perpetuity. Frequent low-intensity prescribed fire and targeted control of invasive species are essential to sustain high quality natural communities. In 2025, the Nature Reserve will celebrate its centennial. Growth of the Nature Reserve's ecological restoration endowment will provide capacity for stewardship of this remarkable landscape for the century to come.

FINANCIALS

(fiscal year ended September 30, 2023)

2023 OPERATING REVENUE



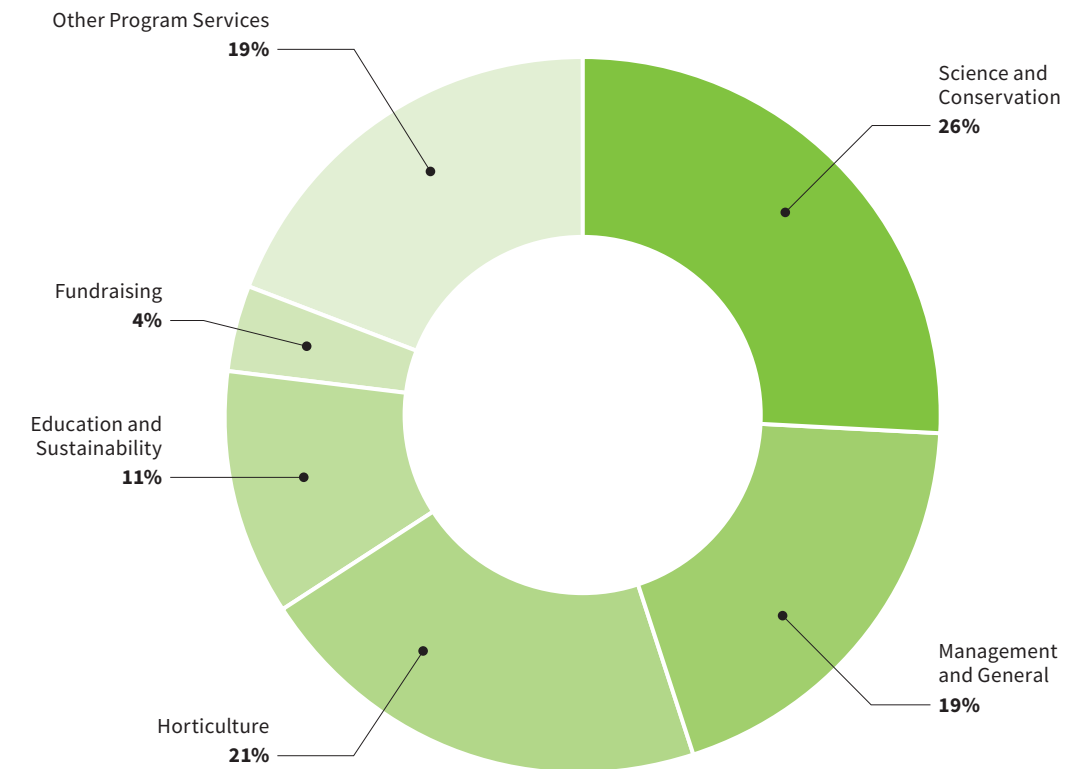
2023 Operating Revenue

Revenue	
Botanical Garden Subdistrict	\$ 13,262,987
Contributions and memberships	13,539,366
Grants and contracts	6,812,998
Investment income, net	7,675,284
Admissions	8,683,641
Retail shops	3,184,111
Other	1,990,777
Education	335,776
Property rentals	352,450
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 55,837,390

2023 Operating Expenses

Program Services	
Science and Conservation	\$ 13,324,494
Horticulture	11,046,305
Education and Sustainability	5,468,272
Other	9,922,914
Total program services	39,761,985
Supporting Services	
Management and General	9,560,129
Fundraising	2,200,585
Total supporting services	11,760,714
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 51,522,699

2023 OPERATING EXPENSES



2023 Fund Balances

Operating Fund	
Total operating support and revenue	\$ 55,837,390
Total operating expenses	(51,522,699)
Total operating transfers	(1,032,671)
2023 Operating fund excess/(deficit)	3,282,020
10/1/22 Operating fund balance	11,814,954
9/30/23 Operating Fund	15,096,974
Endowment Funds	176,899,327
Land, Building, and Equipment Fund	161,146,780
Gift Annuity Fund	12,465
Total All Funds	\$ 353,155,546

*Botanical Garden Subdistrict

Since 1972, residents of St. Louis City and County have generously supported the Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District (ZMD). The ZMD is a property tax-supported district that distributes funds through five cultural subdistricts, which include the Botanical Garden Subdistrict. The Botanical Garden Subdistrict has provided support for the Missouri Botanical Garden since 1983. The Garden is grateful for the continued support of the Botanical Garden Subdistrict and the residents of St. Louis City and County.

Financial information used in this report was obtained from the 2023 Missouri Botanical Garden audited consolidated financial statements. These financial statements can be obtained by visiting mobot.org/reports.

Zoological Park and Museum District

The Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District (ZMD) is a tax-supported cultural district governed by an eight-member board of directors, each appointed for a four-year term by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis County Executive.

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The ZMD levies an annual tax on property on behalf of five subdistricts, including the Botanical Garden Subdistrict. The subdistrict contracts with the Garden to provide botanical services.

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PHOTO BY MATILDA ADAMS



Big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii) blooms at Shaw Nature Reserve.

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The Members' Board leadership group organizes the activities and events that enhance and encourage membership, expand awareness in the community, and increase financial support for the Garden's mission.

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The Young Friends Council leadership board engages young professionals of the St. Louis community with the global network of the Garden, developing events and initiatives to grow a younger Garden audience.

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The dedicated representatives of the Corporate Council collaborate with the Garden to further relationships with the business community through education, sustainable business programs, volunteer opportunities, and special events.

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PHOTO BY YOUSUF ALABASSI

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Businesses participating in the Corporate Partners Program make an annual membership gift. In return, they receive recognition and benefits throughout the year for their employees.



PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

The historic Linnean House has returned to its original use as an orangery, displaying citrus, ferns, and other potted specimens from the living collections.

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“Villa Lighting Supply is happy to partner with the Missouri Botanical Garden to support the mission of the organization and offer our employees access to the beauty of nature on the Garden grounds throughout the year.”

Matt Villa, Chief Operating Officer, Villa Lighting Supply, Inc.

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We are grateful to the following event sponsors for making gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2023.

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Rabobank
Renewal by Andersen

Quiris V. and Michael W. Riney
Don and Nancy Ross
Nancy and John Ross
Safety National Casualty Corporation
Schnuck Markets, Inc.
Mr. Scott C. Schnuck
Nick Schoenfeldt
Mr. James Shekelton
Siteman Cancer Center
Spire
St. Louis Composting
Star Lane Vineyards
Mike and Karen Stern
Nora R. Stern
Steward Family Foundation
Sugar Creek Gardens
Thompson Coburn LLP
Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Missouri
Steve and Lisa Trulaske
Waterway Gas & Wash Company
Wells Fargo Advisors
Whitaker Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Williams, Jr.

“Schnuck Markets, Inc. was proud to sponsor Chihuly in the Garden 2023, which brought iconic works of art to the Garden and shared the beauty of art and nature with our region.”

Todd Schnuck, President, Schnuck Markets, Inc.

Visitors enjoy the Holiday Flower and Train Show display in Emerson Conservatory.



PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER



Omta Ter Tsho is a sacred lake in Bhutan and one of the locations Garden scientists visit when working in the Himalayas.

The Impact of Climate Change in the Himalayas

THE HIMALAYAS are seeing some of the most measurable impacts of climate change, and Garden scientists have been studying the impacts on mountain plants and people since 2005. In conjunction with international and local collaborators, the Garden's Himalayan research focuses on 33 mountain summits in China, Bhutan, and Nepal. Teams return to the sites every 5 to 10 years to survey plants and monitor temperatures, recording how the alpine flora is responding to temperature changes. Plants needed for food and medicine are becoming scarcer. Changing rain patterns are observed. Landslides wash roads and trails. Melting glaciers form lakes that can appear, drain, or overflow unpredictably. Observations Garden scientists make about how plants respond to climate change lay the foundations for conservation and restoration actions that can help people adapt to these climate impacts.

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