



Naples Botanical
GARDEN
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
2019



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Naples Botanical Garden, I am honored to present this review of the Garden's recent activities. This young institution is still growing both in its physical landscape, its commitment to the region and to the global botanical community.

The Garden welcomed almost 230,000 visitors and over 4,600 school children. For many of these guests, this was their first experience visiting the Garden. Thanks to the work of the staff and volunteers, it won't be their last. We provide meaningful experiences to all guests, whether they are seeking a place of beauty and respite or they are here to enjoy one of our evening events.

None of this would be possible without the commitment of our supporters. The Garden now has over 12,000 member households. The contributions of our members and donors truly make our mission possible.

As the Garden grows, so does the need for infrastructure. Our new Horticulture Campus is underway and will allow the Garden to enter the next phase of growth. We not only will be able to cultivate our own plant material to add to our living collections, we also will be able to influence the local horticulture trade so more sustainable options are available to everyone.

We thank the many people and organizations who make this work possible. The Board looks forward to the continued growth of this amazing organization.

Carl Crosetto
Chairman
Board of Directors



Two years ago at this time, I was waist-deep in debris and writing to you about hurricane recovery efforts. Thank goodness we've moved on—in a very big way.

After Irma, we pledged not to simply rebuild but to advance our Garden and reimagine our future. In the past year, I'm proud to say we did just that.

We've embarked on an ambitious, \$13 million Horticulture Campus, which will give our gardeners the space, equipment and technology to take Naples Botanical Garden into the future as an international leader in subtropical plant knowledge, growing standards, conservation, and landscape design.

We've gone full throttle on conservation efforts, signing a formal memorandum of understanding with Cuba's Jardín Botánico Nacional, strengthening ties with another important regional player, the Bahamas National Trust, and working with local organizations on efforts such as protecting the endangered native thatch palm.

We've been invited to help create a demonstration landscape at the new Collier County Sports and Special Events Complex. We'll share our research on growing standards and plant selection so that we can create a public landscape that minimizes water and fertilizer use, protects us against storms, reduces the risk of loss from invasive pests—and introduces beautiful, new subtropical species to the region.

Our Education and Visitor Experience Department, meanwhile, has created and expanded programming that reaches everyone from children to adults with dementia. We launched a new Garden for All membership plan, targeted to hard-working Collier County families whose incomes don't allow for recreational and cultural activities, in order to better serve our community.

At the heart of our operations, our Horticulture Department has been hard at work maintaining the display gardens and growing our collections. Over the past year or so, we've added 160 new palm species and expanded our collection of tropical fruit. The team also took on a landscape demonstration project at Big Cypress National Preserve, creating replicas of native habitats at the preserve's visitor center, another way of educating the public about Florida's unique environment.

I report all this—and more—with gratitude to our donors, whose generosity helps us grow a little more spectacular with every passing year.

Donna McGinnis
President & CEO

The Garden is for Everyone

Being inclusive and accessible is important to the Garden, and in 2019, programs for individuals with differing abilities continued to evolve.

We debuted Sensory-Friendly Saturdays, a free opportunity for children with sensory challenges and their families to enjoy the Garden. To minimize noise and disturbances, the Garden holds these special, hands-on programs after hours. More than 300 people attended seven programs. The Garden is the only Collier County organization listed in the University of South Florida Center for Autism and Related Disorders' directory of certified autism-friendly venues. Also this year, the Garden continued Meet Me in the Garden, a therapeutic horticulture program for adults with dementia and their care partners. More than 300 individuals attended these programs, which feature an enriching sensory tour of the Garden and a social, plant-related activity.

Collier Greens

Collier Greens, the Garden's school and community support network, experienced continued success and growth in 2019, expanding north into Lee County to serve organizations seeking resources to grow and sustain their gardens. Representatives from more than 40 local schools, afterschool programs, community gardens, and other organizations attended Collier Greens workshops in 2019. Along with workshops, Collier Greens offers an EarthBox® lending library, garden manual, and most importantly, fellowship with other garden leaders.

More Opportunities to Learn

Audience research completed in 2018 indicated a need for more educational engagement in the Garden for visitors of all ages. As a result, we expanded our family drop-in program W.O.N.D.E.R. (walk, observe, navigate, draw, explore, read) from weekends to every day of the week. Every month of W.O.N.D.E.R. is themed around a different garden topic and features hands-on activities and stories. Participation in this program more than doubled in 2019 with nearly 2,500 children partaking.

Dig Deeper, a pop-up experience for guests of all ages, was introduced this year. These regularly occurring, informal programs invite guests to chat with Garden staff about various gardening topics such as adaptive garden tools, orchids, botanical names, and more. This brand-new program was a welcome addition, with 2,747 guests joining staff to “dig deeper!”



Garden for All

Recognizing the shifting demographics of Collier County, Naples Botanical Garden and the United Way of Collier County teamed up to introduce the Garden to working families whose household budgets typically don't allow for recreation and cultural enrichment. The program, modeled after a national Museums for All initiative, launched on October 5, 2019, with a welcome luncheon, activities, and invitation to explore the 170 acre property with special emphasis, of course, on the Vicky C. and David Byron Smith Children's Garden, its splash pad, and Pfeffer-Beach Butterfly House. The event drew 917 eager and smiling new faces. The project's next goal: for these families to return regularly.



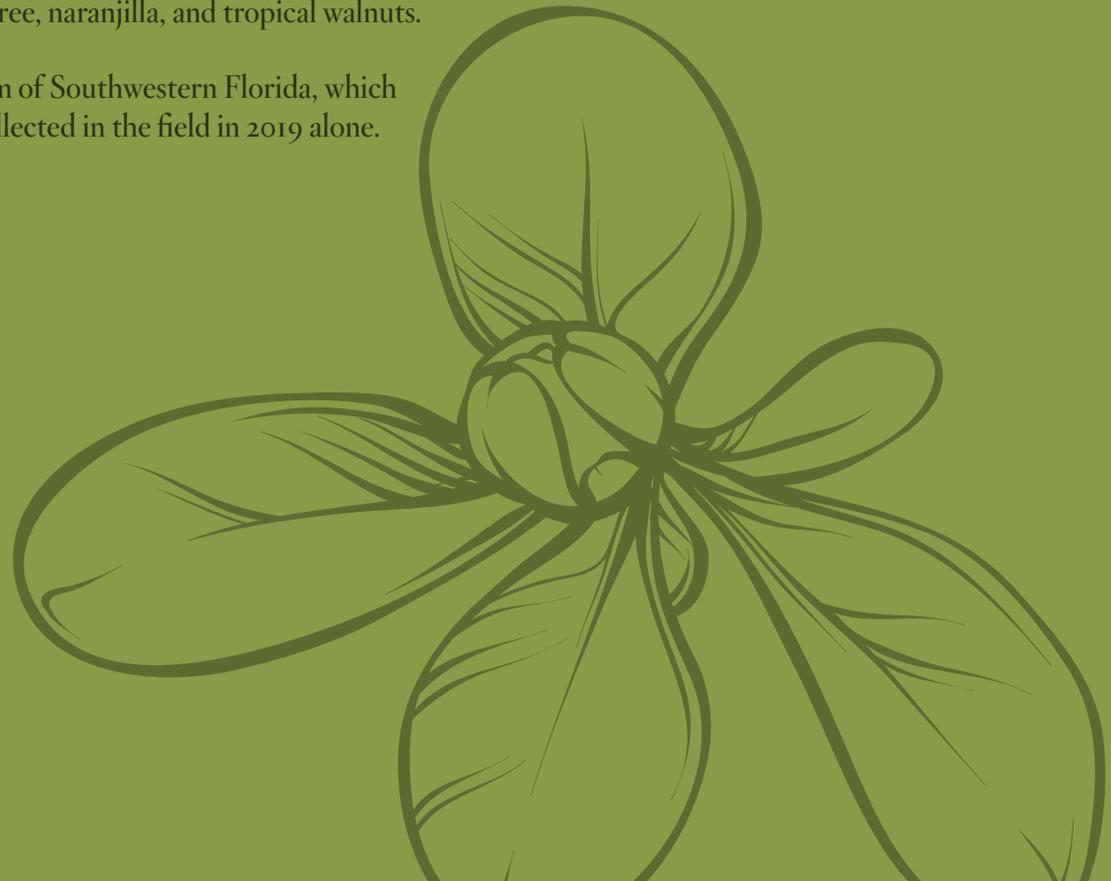
Typically, we think horticulture is all about hands-on digging in the dirt; lately, however, one of the team's biggest accomplishments took place at the computer keyboard.

Armed with a new database and software package, staff curators began a meticulous data collection project. They've chronicled 18,334 individual plants, representing 13,037 species within 6,200 taxa, or groupings.

The collections are ever-expanding. The newest additions are the camellias—those lovely, layered flowers native to Asia and favorites of Southern gardeners. They appear in the Robert and Karen Scott Florida Garden and the Marcia and L. Bates Lea Asian Garden. Other recent acquisitions? New palm species, 160 of them, many of which have never been grown at the Garden. The plants arrived in early 2018 and spent about 18 months growing in our nursery. Horticulturalists began planting them in the Garden over the summer.

The fastest-growing collection is the tropical fruit collection. In September 2019, the Garden accessed dozens of species from Hawaii not previously in the database. These included the Marula tree, naranjilla, and tropical walnuts.

Naples Botanical Garden is also home to the Herbarium of Southwestern Florida, which contains 42,266 specimens. Over 1,100 of those were collected in the field in 2019 alone.



Naples Botanical Garden is hard at work year-round to ensure we maintain, aid and propagate plant species from around the world between the 26th latitudes north and south.

- The Garden has 18,334 individual plants in the database with 13,037 total species
- Approximately 120 countries are represented among the Garden's collections
- The Garden protects 30 species listed as critically endangered and 60 endangered by the IUCN Red List
- The Garden protects 59 species listed as critically endangered and 26 vulnerable in the State of Florida



As environment pressures mount, the Garden has intensified efforts to identify and protect threatened plants, as well as find nature-based solutions to threats such as sea-level rise and harmful algal blooms.

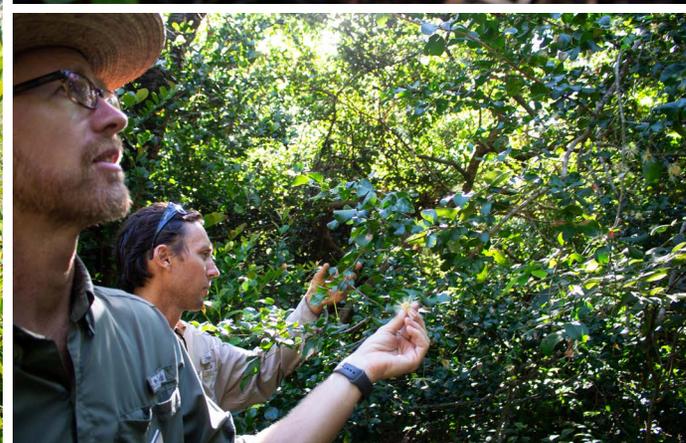
Broadly, plant conservation focuses on two goals: Protecting species within their natural habitats and bringing plants into botanical collections where their genetic material can be safeguarded. The Garden collaborates on these fronts with regional environmental organizations and a growing international network throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, regions that share Naples' plant matter, weather patterns, soil conditions, temperature range, as well as environmental threats.

In the past year, Garden has:



- Signed a memorandum of understanding with Jardín Botánico Nacional in Havana to collaborate on plant conservation, research, and education. The Conservation Department also partners with gardens in Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Participated in a plant assessment in Havana for the International Union for Conservation of Nature, determining the status of 48 different species using the IUCN's extinction risk scale.
- Started a seed bank. The initial emphasis is on native plants found on the Garden's property.
- Added 20 new native species to the Garden's collections. These are plants found in the Garden's 90-acre preserve that previously had little or no protection in botanical garden holdings anywhere.
- Received permission to collect native plants in the 110,000-acre Rookery Bay National Estuarine Reserve for the purposes of research and conservation.
- Begun studying the impact of sea-level rise on the *Thrinax radiata*, or thatch palm, with fellow scientists from Rookery Bay. Garden experts are identifying land management strategies that may protect the palm in its native habitat, as well as ensuring the tree is housed within botanical garden collections.
- Continued an ongoing, multi-organization effort to save Tillandsias, or air plants, in the Fakahatchee Strand from the invasive Mexican bromeliad weevil.

The Garden is also taking a bigger role in regional environmental affairs. In September, Collier County commissioners approved a pilot project at the Sports and Special Event Complex, under development in East Naples. The Garden will develop a landscape that celebrates the uniqueness of Collier’s subtropical climate while demonstrating better growing standards, sustainable practices, and how to build a more resilient landscape through plant selection and design. Informing those practices is the Garden’s participation in an international, multi-garden collaboration to build a database of plants that fare well in urban environments and require relatively little human intervention. Additionally, our team had the opportunity to meet with Florida’s Chief Science Officer, Dr. Thomas Frazer, and members of the state’s Blue-Green Algae Task Force and show them our award-winning stormwater treatment system, a model for using nature-based solutions to challenges such as nutrient pollution.



HORTICULTURE CAMPUS



We have learned a lot from the development of our Garden, the lessons of Hurricane Irma and red tide, and from our emerging international partnerships that offer new opportunities for research and the sharing of plant material that could benefit our community.

Now, we're ready to launch into our next phase with a new, state-of-the-art Horticulture Campus. This \$13.3 million facility will deepen our commitment to conservation, science, horticultural education, and community involvement by enabling us to study and preserve threatened plants; trade plant material with other gardens; grow more plants for our display gardens; expand our educational offerings; and cultivate a diverse array of climate- and storm-resilient plants for use in public and residential spaces in Southwest Florida.

The Horticulture Campus is vital to the future of the Garden and our ability to care for our current display gardens, grow our living collections, collect and exchange seeds and cuttings with garden colleagues around the world, develop as a teaching campus, serve as a resource to our local community, and expand our conservation leadership with climatically similar gardens in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Phase I: 10,000 sq. ft. Recycling Center — *Completed*

The new recycling center creates an efficient, durable, high-capacity storage system for the gravel, shells, mulch, soil, and other materials we use and reuse on our grounds.



Phase II: 22,000 sq. ft. Greenhouse Complex and 43,000 sq. ft. Sun Nursery

The Greenhouse Complex is the heart of the Horticulture Campus and will consist of the Potting House, Propagation House, Greenhouses, Shade House, and Sun Nursery. This complex will provide the space needed to manage the accession of all seeds, plants, and trees in our collection. Covered structures such as the Greenhouses will protect smaller plants from excess sun, rain, or cold, while the Sun Nursery will nurture plants that thrive in full sun or are too large for the Shade House.



Phase III: 10,800 sq. ft. Horticulture Operations Center

The Horticulture Operations Center will consist of two buildings that will provide the space needed for our growing horticulture staff and the tools that support their work such as laboratory space for horticultural research, cultivation, and seed saving. This new complex promotes greater efficiency and collaboration by unifying our horticultural team, currently split among multiple buildings, and moving them to an area that is more accessible to the designed gardens and natural areas than their existing workspace.

Conserve & Discover. Engage & Inspire.

Naples Botanical
GARDEN

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