

# About the Garden

*Conserve & Discover. Engage & Inspire.*



## Primary Gardens

In 1994, a visionary group of local plant enthusiasts gained nonprofit status and launched the creation of Naples Botanical Garden. Six years later, the late Harvey Kapnick Jr. donated \$5 million to purchase 170 acres where the Garden sits today. From the start, the Garden distinguished itself from similar institutions. The founders set aside half the property for conservation, research, and education on native habitats. They designated the rest for a subtropical paradise, showcasing plants unique to its climate zone. They assembled a team of renowned landscape architects to capture the spirit of Brazil, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and our own Southwest Florida. The Garden opened to the public in 2009.

## A Force for Good

Today, the Garden is a global player in plant conservation, specializing in the native species of Southwest Florida and the Caribbean. Garden researchers are breaking new ground in understanding how these plants function and grow, how to best protect them for the future, and how to use them for environmental restoration. Meanwhile, the Garden's professional educators lead programs\* for children and adults, including people with special needs; advise school and community gardens; lead tours, drop-in activities, and school field trips; host wellness programs; initiate citizen science projects; and develop digital learning opportunities and self-guided audio tours.

## A Community Hub

The Garden serves as a community gathering spot with frequent cultural exhibits, music programs, sunset strolls, and annual favorites such as flower shows and the holiday lighting display, Night Lights in the Garden. The Garden relishes its standing as a favorite tourist destination, but it also embraces its Southwest Florida neighbors by offering membership access programs, community appreciation incentives, and related offerings.

## A Regional Partner

The Garden's work hinges on the power of collaborative problem-solving and the use of nature-based solutions to address environmental issues such as sea-level rise and water contamination. It partners with other conservation organizations such as Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Fakahatchee Strand State Park Preserve on an array of projects, including seed banking. Beyond Southwest Florida, the Garden works collaboratively with peer institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean on global plant conservation strategies. Garden experts also advise county and municipal governments on environmentally friendly landscaping principles; teach homeowner associations and professional landscapers how to manage stormwater ponds; work to save historically significant community trees; and grow native plants for restoration and demonstration projects. The forthcoming Evenstad Horticulture Campus will vastly expand the Garden's ability to serve the community with state-of-the-art greenhouses, nurseries, and laboratories.

*\*COVID-19 safety protocols include a temporary suspension of on-site group programming with augmented digital and individual offerings developed in its place.*