

NAPLES
BOTANICAL
GARDEN

Cultivate



WINTER 2021



IN SEASON | Shaving Brush (*Pseudobombax ellipticum*)

OUR MISSION

Conserve & Discover. Engage & Inspire.

To develop and conserve collections and habitats representative of the flora and cultures between the 26th latitudes.
 To discover, research, and share knowledge about these plants and their gifts to us of beauty, tranquility, sustenance, and well-being.
 And to engage and inspire everyone to care for the plants around them and become stewards of the environment.

ON THE COVER

The prop roots of the screw pine (*Pandanus utilis*), which, despite its name, is not really a pine at all, bend and twist to form a distinctive support system. This charismatic monocot, native to Madagascar, sets the tone for our season, dedicated to an exploration of roots and other unseen forces of nature. Find it in Irma's Garden and near the meeting points of the Water Garden, Kapnick Brazilian Garden, and Kapnick Caribbean Garden.

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Nature Journaling

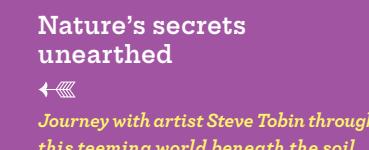
Here's what happened when this in-person program went digital.



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Winter-blooming Trees

Monochromatic frozen landscapes are far away this time of year as the Garden's viridescent flora frames our striking winter-blooming trees. Don't skirt the flame of the forest (*Butea monosperma*) in Irma's Garden as it sprinkles the Smith Entry Prow and pond with vibrant orange "flames," while the double buttercup tree (*Cochlospermum*



IN SEASON

vitifolium) at the top of Scott Florida Garden boasts buttery-yellow blooms. The shaving brush (*Pseudobombax spp.*) bursts with flamboyant florescence (pictured here) while the showstopping silver trumpet tree (*Tabebuia aurea*) and its golden blanket of flowers centered in the LaGrippe Orchid Garden entices passersby to stay a bit longer, and bask in the glowing hue.

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From the Garden Blog

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Contributors:

Erin Wolfe Bell, Tatiana Castro, Kristen Camisa, Peggy Farren, Jenny Fuentes
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TripAdvisor
 Top-rated Attraction



Thank you to Edwards Asset Management for support of this publication.

Cultivate is financed in part by U.S. Department of Treasury, Florida Division of Emergency Management, and Collier County Community and Human Services Division.



This magazine is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



Welcome to 2021!

As we start this new year, I find myself reflecting on the idea of "adaptability." Nature is the perfect teacher, adjusting to new conditions, rebounding from natural disasters, evolving to ensure survival.

Perhaps the most critical thing we learned in 2020 was the art of adaptation. We introduced new safety protocols, found different ways to interact with visitors, and launched new digital and at-home programs to serve those who were unable to be out in public. (See how we adapted our Nature Journaling program into an online learning opportunity on page 16, and discover the impact of the Sustaining Leadership Council's #HatsInOurGardens campaign, this year's digital stand-in for the beloved annual fundraiser, on page 28).

Ironically, those changes allow us to provide a sense of normalcy. You can still come to the Garden for solace, beauty, recreation, and connection with family and friends.



You can still enjoy dining in Fogg Café. And you can still find exciting new exhibitions, such as *Steve Tobin: Nature Underground* (see page 20), currently on display, or *America's Everglades: Through the Lens of Clyde Butcher*, opening April 15.

Inspired by Tobin, we are focusing much of our programming and content around the theme of *Roots: Power of the Unseen*. On the Garden's blog and YouTube

channel, you can learn about the fascinating world beneath our feet. We're sharing the unseen work that is at the "root" of the Garden's mission, too. In this issue, discover how we choose new species to add to our collections based on their showstopping appeal or because they need our protection (see pages 12 and 15).

For all who supported us last year, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish you and your families well in 2021, and I hope we'll see you often here in the Garden.



Donna McGinnis

President & CEO
 Naples Botanical Garden

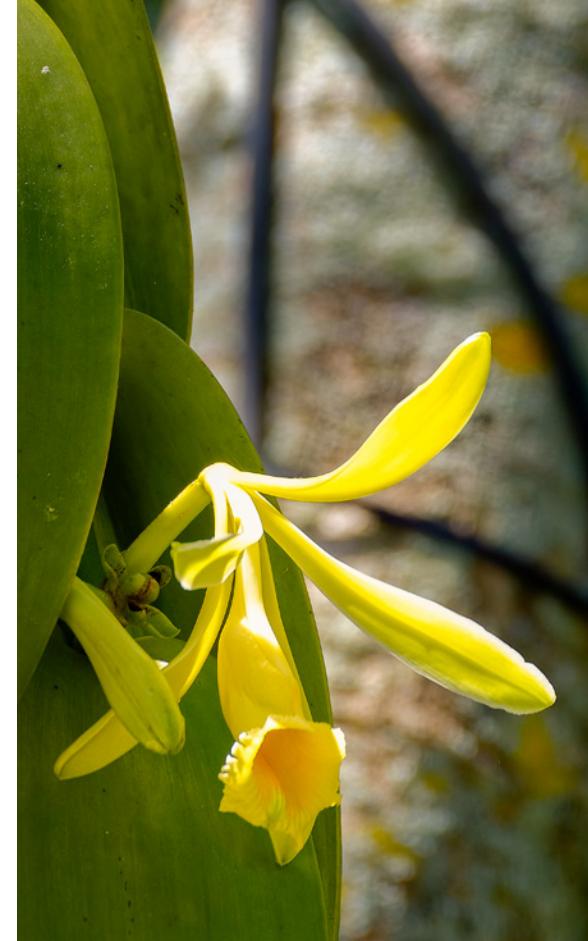
What's
happening



Orchids as far as the eye can see

More color and texture await in the LaGrippe Orchid Garden, as oolite pedestals now border this space, providing increased surface area to showcase, well,

more orchids. Expect to see an array of these plants in bloom next time you're in the Garden. Recent donor contributions helped support these enhancements, as well as the addition of more unique orchid species and varieties to add to our collections.



Stop and smell the vanilla

The next time you're in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden, you might notice a new trellis wrapped in green. That's *Vanilla planifolia*, a vine native to Mexico, and the only orchid that produces an edible fruit, the vanilla "bean." Once pollinated, this orchid's seedpod must ripen for nine months before it is edible. There's a chance you've seen vanilla growing the Garden before, and just didn't realize it. Hint: Look up!

WITH HIS CENTURY-OLD CAMERA, CLYDE BUTCHER HAS BEEN EXPLORING AND DOCUMENTING THE EVERGLADES FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES. THE RESULT IS A STUNNING COLLECTION OF LARGE-FORMAT BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS THAT CAPTURE UNTouched PARTS OF THE NATION'S LARGEST SUBTROPICAL WILDERNESS. HIS WORK CHALLENGES US TO EXPLORE THE HERITAGE WE SHARE IN THE NATURAL WORLD AND TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT IT.



APRIL 15 - JUNE 15

COMING SOON

AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

Through the Lens of Clyde Butcher



Explore the Garden as a family with a new W.O.N.D.E.R. Activity Packet every month! Simply stop by Ticketing for yours; included with Garden admission.

W.O.N.D.E.R.

Walk.

Observe.

Navigate.

Draw.

Explore.

Read.

SUNSET WEDNESDAYS

Presented by Wintrust Banking Center



Midweek gets a little sweeter starting February 3, as the Garden stays open until 8pm Wednesdays so you can stroll and savor the magic of a Naples sunset overlooking the Preserve. Experience the monumental sculptures from *Steve Tobin: Nature Underground* bathed in the light of sunset, and after nightfall, in simple garden illuminations. Members get in free. It's the perfect occasion for an outdoor dinner at Fogg Café and afterschool play dates with the kids.

WINTRUST
BANKING CENTER

- JANUARY
Feathered Friends
- FEBRUARY
Super Plants
- MARCH
Fabulous Flowers
- APRIL
Bamboo-zled
- MAY
Mother Earth, May I?



Steve Tobin:
Nature Underground

Let our interactive GPS map and corresponding audio tour guide you through this exhibition. While you'll learn more about the artist's perspective behind the pieces, expect to pick up some knowledge on the power of roots and what they mean to the plant world, and to us. Plus, during your next visit, be sure to look for details in the Garden on our text chat feature. Ask us questions about what you see in the Garden, as you see it.



Take the
audio tour:
bycell.co/ctfcn

Made possible by
Marilyn and Brit Bartter



**Share
and share
alike**

If there is one thing that drives botanical gardens and the plant people who work for them—well, aside from plants—it's a penchant to share. Clippings, seeds, even some wisdom—it's all fair game, which is why it's not surprising that on November 13, Garden team members made the short trip north to Bonita Springs to the Everglades Wonder Gardens and Shangri-La Springs, a boutique hotel, spa, and organic dining paradise.

Garden staff had the opportunity to learn more about operations at each locale, and to trade tips with fellow horticulturists at the Wonder Gardens on fertilizing and general care for plants that thrive in our region. Our thank you for the time spent with colleagues at each location: plant donations, with various plumeria among the offerings.

Repotting Plants

Step-by-step instructions
from Tatiana Castro,
Assistant Curator of Education
& Visitor Experience

Set up your workspace outside or in an area that is easy to sweep—this will get a bit messy!
To cut down on clean-up, ensure your plant—and its soil—are dry.

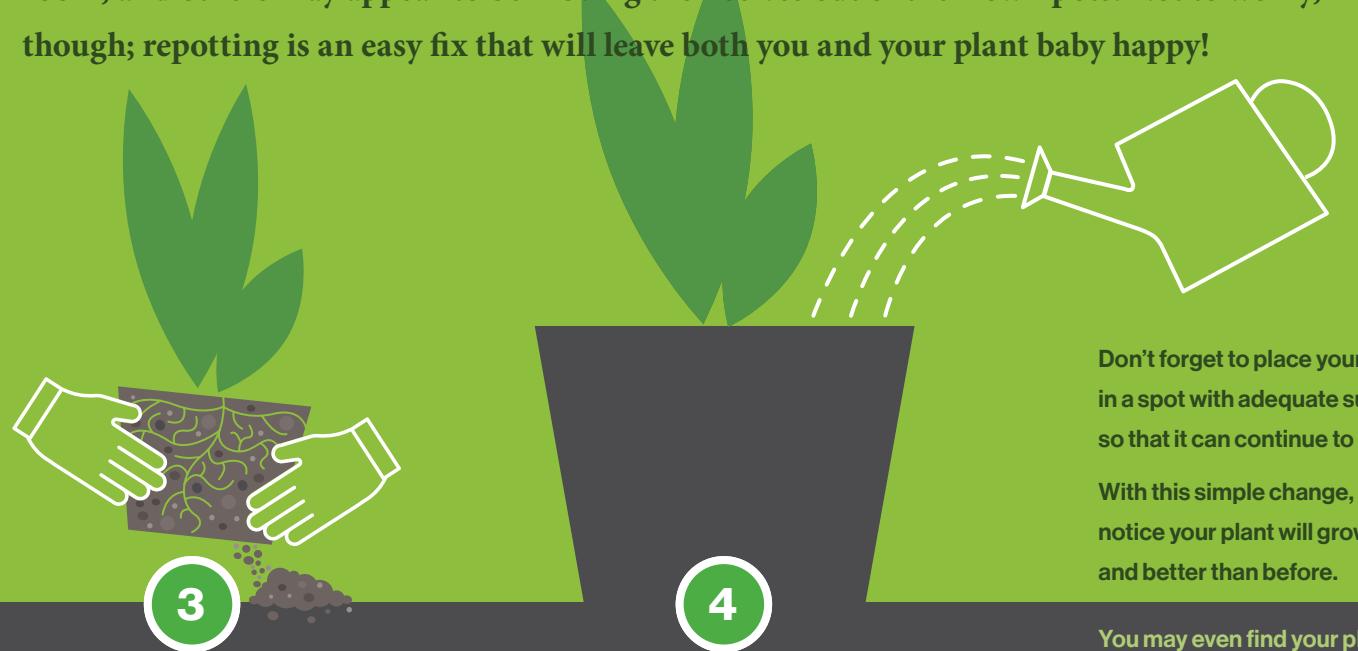
To do this, you will need:

A trowel and pair of gardening gloves
A container about twice as large as the current one
Potting soil fit for your plant (all-purpose, cactus mix, or a floral mix)



Prepare your larger container. Fill up the container about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top with fresh potting soil. Depending on the size of your plant, you will need to account for extra space to accommodate longer roots.

Remove your plant from the original container carefully. You can use a trowel or use a gloved hand to help loosen the soil. Take care to avoid ripping the roots.



Check if your plant has a tangled root ball. You can gently loosen this section by hand, unraveling the roots and removing soil until the roots are no longer tangled.

Place the plant into the new container. Add enough soil to keep your plant upright and roots covered. Depending on the plant type and the last time it was watered, consider watering your plant again now that it is in its new home.

Don't forget to place your plant in a spot with adequate sunlight so that it can continue to grow.
With this simple change, you may notice your plant will grow bigger and better than before.

You may even find your plant developing new shoots, which you can propagate to add to your collection!
Keep an eye on your plant to ensure it is growing well. Remember: it is the unseen processes beneath the soil that play a crucial role in your plant's success.

Did you know that for most plants, there is as much growth below the soil as there is above it?

Over time, you may notice that your plant begins to droop, yellow, or simply appears too big for its container. The reason for these changes is that the soil that holds the roots could be unhealthy, too damp, or insufficient for the plant's size. Overgrowth of roots can look more drastic for some plants more than others. Some may not even look like they need more room, and others may appear to be moving themselves out of their own pots. Not to worry, though; repotting is an easy fix that will leave both you and your plant baby happy!

A living work of art

Botanical gardens: Where collections and culture meet

PERSPECTIVE FROM ERIN WOLFE BELL, DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

VISIT THE GARDEN on any given day, and there is a good chance you will round a corner and encounter an artist totally immersed in his or her latest creation. Photographers, painters, writers, and others all find inspiration within the beauty of our landscapes. Gardens are places where we naturally slow down and take a closer look at our surroundings. The act of observation and quiet reflection seems to bring out people's creative sides. As Director of Exhibitions & Special Programs, it always delights me to see their minds—and hands—at work when I am in the Garden.

To me, the Garden itself is the biggest work of art in our collection. It has color, form, texture, dimension, and meaning. Each square foot was created with purpose and intent. A visionary group of artists—landscape architects to be exact—conceived our cultivated gardens, and our artistically inclined team adds to their beauty year after year.

People don't always know the huge role that art and culture play in botanical gardens. I certainly didn't. While training in art history and museum studies, I envisioned myself working at an art museum, meticulously cataloging works of art in an enclosed, windowless building, which would have been my dream. Or so I thought. Instead, I get to work closely with artists, musicians, and cultural partners to plan and

coordinate exhibitions and festivals for the community—all of which are tied to the outdoors. Although I had never considered the exciting work of botanical gardens, now I can't imagine my life without them.

"We're so fortunate to have spaces and opportunities to use art and cultural programs as a stepping stone to help us talk about our mission."

I love sharing with people that art has always been part of the Garden's story. Well before the main Garden opened, the community created a one-of-a-kind tile wall that served as a focal point for the Mosaic Garden, a small space built to generate excitement and hint at the beauty to come. In building today's Garden, designers chose not a plant, but a piece of art to dominate the first viewshed guests see from the Smith Entry Prow. The Roberto Burle Marx mosaic sits atop the Kapnick Brazilian Garden—the only piece of the famed landscape architect's work on public display in North America. It's a place I visit often because it reminds me that I am exactly where I'm supposed to be.

The Garden's ever-changing rotation of exhibitions, along with the artistic display of holiday lights and stunning flower shows, have become an integral part of the Garden experience. When thinking about new exhibitions to bring to the Garden, I always focus on the fact that we are a garden first. In our case, each project is not art for art's sake; it must have a deep connection to our mission. This season's major exhibition, *Steve Tobin: Nature Underground*, is a perfect example. The sculptor's towering tree roots inspired us to celebrate these important lifelines and the power of the unseen all year long through special self-guided tours, digital content, family activity kits, and related offerings. We're so fortunate to have spaces and opportunities to use art and cultural programs as a stepping stone to help us talk about our mission, and while we strive to present world-class installations, what's even more important to me is that they're approachable for visitors. Look for a new programmatic theme in the fall to coincide with our next major exhibition debuting in November 2021.

Next time you are in the Garden, I invite you to think about it as a living work of art. Consider what colors and textures you gravitate toward and the compositions you can create as you move through the Garden. And next time, bring paper and a pencil to capture it.



MORE THAN A TRIP TO THE NURSERY

An inside look at how the Garden finds beautiful, rare, threatened and unique plants to put on display

HERE ARE some 391,000 known species of vascular plants in the world. How on earth does our staff decide which ones to pursue for display in the Garden?

There are obvious disqualifiers. Nothing from the chilly north (including even North Florida). Nothing from the mountains. Or from regions that boast rich, nutrient-dense soils. Or from places that receive regular rain rather than our cycles of extreme wet and dry.

No worries. The tropics and subtropics alone give our staff boundless opportunities to collect must-have plants. In this year of examining the “garden unseen,” we peer into the process of identifying new species to add to our cultivated gardens.

It starts with the Collections Committee. The group, including representatives from the Horticulture, Conservation, and Education departments, formed about a year ago to create a more process-driven, inclusive way of collecting and planting new plants.

“We decided we needed to get more consensus in terms of what’s going

where,” says Brian Galligan, Vice President of Horticulture.

In the Garden’s early days, inaugural staff scrambled to fill space and create a beautiful guest experience. But today, as a more mature and discerning organization, the staff is seeking higher-value plants. They want, for example: plants that come

“In deciding what to collect and where to put it, our team has to look at myriad questions ...”

from the wild, rather than a nursery; those with fascinating stories to tell; those that need protecting because their numbers have been depleted or their habitats are at risk; and, critically, those that can’t be grown outdoors anywhere else in the United States. Our Garden is one of a handful that can display tropical species in the landscape rather than encased in glass houses.

New magnolias, planted last summer, checked a lot of those boxes. The species, including *Magnolia rajaniana*, *M. chapensis*, and *M. foveolata*, hail from Asia, making them a natural fit for the Lea Asian Garden. They are well adapted to Southwest Florida’s climate and growing conditions. In time, they’ll produce star-like blooms and perfume the air around them. The trees come from a stellar source: Gary Knox, a University of Florida professor of environmental horticulture and past president of the Magnolia Society International.

“He was bringing us tropical magnolias that probably wouldn’t grow in any other place but South Florida,”

says Liz Chehayl, the Brian Holley Curator of Collections. The rare tree is just one of a variety of plant species the Garden can display that can’t be grown elsewhere in the continental US.

They’re just saplings now, placed in various spots around the Lea Asian Garden, but in time, they’ll tower over surrounding plants. That raises an important point. In deciding what to collect and where to put it, our team has to look at myriad questions: What’s the plant’s growth pattern? Is there enough space for its roots? Will it block a pathway? Disrupt a viewshed? Is it fragrant? When does it bloom? Does it go dormant during our peak season? Will it complement surrounding plants? Is it too similar to nearby species? Will it get adequate sunlight?

“There’s so much that goes into it,” Galligan says.

“We look at whether a plant is in any other garden collections. If no one is conserving it, it’s a good opportunity for us to do so.”

Then comes the question of where to get the plants.

“It’s all relationships. You can’t buy these things online,” Galligan says. Some contributions come from other botanical gardens with climates similar to ours. The *Coussapoa* sp., a ficus relative that can be found in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden, is a good example.



▲
Costus acreanus (left) and
Costus arabicus (right) are examples
of the species Costus collector
Dave Skinner has given the Garden.

Our staff grew it from a clipping offered by Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, which got theirs from a clipping from The Huntington, a botanical garden, library, and museum in California.

During a visit to The Huntington a few years ago, our staff saw the mother plant and learned its history—it had been grown from the seed of a wild *coussapoa* found in a cave in Costa Rica.

“Botanical gardens are some of the best sources. They’re repositories of plants from all over the world,” says Galligan. Now that our collection has matured, we offer seeds or cuttings to fellow gardens.

Many other contributions come from plant collectors—people like Knox and Stephen Brady, a tropical fruit tree obsessive (he was featured in a documentary on the subject), who has contributed his plants and knowledge to



▲
Relationships with
collectors such as Skinner
are a primary way we
acquire new species.



▲
Copernicia gigas,
a Cuban palm, also
a gift from a collector.



▲
The detail shows the broad leaves of the coussapoa,
a fast-growing ficus relative located near the Roberto Burle
Marx mosaic in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden.

“Our Garden is one of a handful that can display tropical species in the landscape rather than encased in glass houses.”

the Garden for years. Or Dave Skinner, a collector and expert on the Costus family of plants, who treks Central and South America in pursuit of new specimens.

Building the relationships isn't an overnight process—plant collectors are a quirky bunch—but once you win their trust, they'll open their collections to you and open doors for you. That's how last summer we got seeds from 56 species of Australian plants; a collector friend of Brady sent them to our horticulture staff, who are trialing them now in our nursery. That's a big part of the collections process, too. After taking precautions to make sure they don't introduce something invasive or otherwise harmful, our horticulturalists experiment with

plants from other parts of the world to see how they fare here. Their findings may result in new display gardens for our grounds or in sharing new species with growers and landscapers to beautify Southwest Florida.

RELENTLESSLY MATTER when it comes to collecting plants for conservation, as well. The Garden has built a network among peer organizations throughout the Caribbean. These partnering gardens share rare and threatened plants in order to protect them.

“We look at whether a plant is in any other garden collections. If no one is conserving it, it's a good opportunity for us to do so,” says Chad Washburn, Vice President of Conservation. They also consider whether a potential addition is endemic to a certain region, meaning it grows only there. Such species tend to be at higher risk than those found in a wide geographic range. Our partners in Haiti, for example, recently shared seeds

of the *Pseudophoenix lediniana*, a rare palm native only to a small region in the island's southwest. (To learn more about how we identify the plants most in need of protection, see sidebar below.)

We don't only seek the rare.

“We want to go beyond that,” Washburn says. As part of the collections process, the team considers more common plants whose futures are at risk because of invasive pests or threatened habitats. The swamp bay tree is a good example; a fungus carried by the redbay ambrosia beetle, an invasive pest from Asia, is causing laurel wilt disease and felling swamp bay and its relatives by the millions.

“Some gardens you go to, especially the older, established ones might have

Botanical institutions encourage appreciation of these conservation-worthy species by displaying them for guests to enjoy. They also preserve their genetic material for restoration projects. Our seed bank holds tens of thousands of seeds of any given species.

OUR APPROACH to showcasing our collections differs from older botanical gardens, which may group plants by family. We intersperse species throughout our cultivated gardens, making our landscapes more about art than science.

Galligan agrees.

“We're a botanical garden. We're based on collections,” he says. “But at the end of the day, most guests want to see a beautiful garden, a beautiful space.”

fewer collections, including 15 that are in no collections. Many were also found to be under some level of threat by IUCN standards.

“We could really make a difference through seed banking and bringing plants into the Garden,” Roland says.

Once the assessments are reviewed and published, they may identify land that warrants protection, inspire research projects, and steer conservation efforts. Take, for example, *Guilandina culebrae*, a vine with yellow flowers recorded only on Culebra, a small island off the east coast of Puerto Rico, and on Cayo Diablo, a tiny cay nearby. Its extremely small geographic range makes the species a prime candidate for conservation.

“This is such a great opportunity for high-risk plants like this to be brought into a botanical collection, both to share with the public and to safeguard their genetic material for future recovery efforts,” Roland says.

Making a priority list

A data-driven approach to determine the plants most at threat of extinction

The next time you walk in the woods, take a look at all the plants that surround you. If you had to pick one species to save for the future, how would you choose?

In a way, that's a question our conservation experts wrestle with, too.

Naples Botanical Garden focuses on protecting the plants of South Florida and the Caribbean. But even when we team up with other botanical gardens, we don't have the resources to save everything.

That's why the Conservation Team, led by Conservation Associate Carly Roland, has embarked on a major effort to assess select plants through the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List process. By determining which species are most at risk of extinction,



Photo: Christian Torres-Santana
LEFT This particular specimen of *Guilandina culebrae* was planted at a private residence on the island of Culebra, just off the coast of Puerto Rico. The seeds were gathered from nearby Cayo Diablo. **RIGHT** Carly Roland, Conservation Associate



we can best prioritize the ones we need to collect and conserve.

Together with experts from partnering botanical gardens, Roland combs databases to investigate targeted plants, examining how prevalent they

are in their native ranges, whether their habitats are at risk, and whether they are under the protection of botanic gardens anywhere in the world.

So far, she and the working group have assessed 52 species. Of those, 37 are in three or

Can online learning fill in for in-person instruction?

These older adults think so. ☺

Forced to suspend group activities, the Garden transforms its nature journaling program into a digital experience, arming older adults with new tools—both artistic and technical.

Since 2019, the Garden has offered Nature Journaling: Botany Through Art, eight-week courses for older adults that teach the fundamentals of watercolor painting and the art of chronicling nature through picture and word.

When COVID-19 halted group activities, Garden educators and the program's funder, Aroha Philanthropies, worried about the well-being of older adults sequestered at home. At the foundation's invitation, the Garden applied for—and won—a grant to create a virtual experience. We launched an online program for nature journaling alums, expanding the fundamentals and—more critically—keeping them engaged

and connected during isolating times.

For students, it was not only an extension of their art instruction, but it was also a technological crash course. They took class over Zoom and shared their work, critiques, and questions via a Facebook group. By the end of the sessions, participants shattered whatever stereotypes exist about older people and technology.

"Zoom and art are an excellent combination," one wrote in her course evaluation.

Follow along for snapshots of what transpired.

Learning to Zoom

"It does take a little bit of time to get used to the virtual aspect," says Mary Helen Reuter, the Curator of Education and Visitor Experience and staff facilitator for the nature journaling program. Some participants had used the Zoom video conferencing platform in the past, but for most, it was a new experience. The first week was "quiet," Reuter reports. But once members learned to post their work on Facebook and navigate Zoom's chat feature, "it started blowing up," she says. "It was like opening new doors."





A new way of teaching

"Well, there were challenges and benefits," says artist Elizabeth Smith, the instructor. "I did not get the immediate feedback you get when you are together in person. And overcoming the technology bridge was difficult for some students."

But the new format had its perks. Reuter posted the Zoom sessions to a private YouTube channel where participants could review lessons.

"They could go back and watch them, stop them, or paint along with me," Smith says. "They could re-watch the video as many times as they wanted."

▼ Here's one example of the online interaction.

Dayle Founding Members · 1h

I used watercolor liquid paints and pen and ink. I wanted to try silhouettes. I was trying to explore showing things in distance I had trouble with depth of field moon is too large.

You and 1 other Love Comment

Carrie I really like your pen and ink texture on the palm trees! Did you paint first or after pen and ink? Like Reply 1h

Dayle Carrie yes Like · Reply · 1h Write a reply...

Anne High 5s for trying something new and exploring! The sky colors are very Floridian and I like the silhouettes. Yes, the moon is too large. But, you learn from these explorations and next time, you'll make adjustments. Like Reply 55m

Pandemic spurs practice



Because the participants had taken a nature journaling class before, the online sessions were designed to take their skills to the next level. And they did. Mary Raymond is a botanist by trade, a Garden volunteer, and a floral design judge for the Garden Club of America. She spent the pandemic honing her nature-inspired art, taking not only the Garden's online course but also other web offerings. Being a part of an organized group helped motivate her to practice, she says. And practicing allowed her to immerse herself in something meaningful.

"During these times, we need a distraction. We have all this time on our hands. (Art) takes time, and concentration and quiet. It's kind of selfish, but sometimes we need something that belongs to us and no one else."

Elizabeth Founding Members · 23m

Here is the partial watercolor from this morning's demo, plus the reference photo for comparison. Feel free to try this yourselves!

Location: Florida Garden at the Naples Botanical Garden. Will add more later, but am anxious to see what everyone's been working on!

Media is noted on the color test side, but feel free to ask if it's not easy to see.

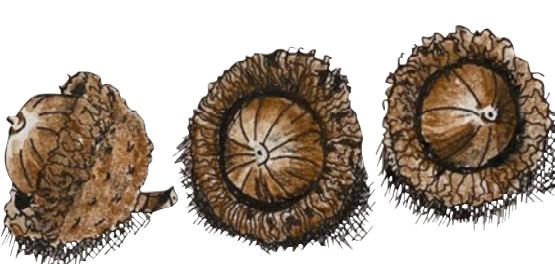
Seen by 2

Elizabeth Smith



Finding light in trying times

By the end of the sessions, participants shattered whatever stereotypes exist about older people and technology.



Mary Raymond

Carmina Rodriguez Villa loved the in-person experience of her previous nature journaling session.

"But under the circumstances, it couldn't be better," she says of the online format. "I thought Elizabeth was wonderful in how she went over everything and how patient she was."

"(Zoom) was a good way to see each other's faces," she adds, "though I miss greeting people in the Garden." In normal circumstances, Rodriguez Villa volunteers for the Garden and

several other organizations between visits to family throughout the country. She misses the interaction, though at 75 she knows she needs to protect her health.

"This was a little ray of sunshine," she says of the course. "They made us appreciate the nature around us. We're a little bit down, but nature is up."



I painted (free-hand) These flowers w/tube aquarelle. I think this is my best medium. The background is sponge effect.

Morning

10 Oct. 2020 When I woke up this morning and looked out at the flowers in nature, I thought "they are sharply defined." Then I used ink to define my paintings and I'm much happier with the results.

Carmina Rodriguez Villa

The next Nature Journaling: Botany Through Art exhibition will be March 5-6 in Kapnick Hall.

At the Garden this year, life underground is upended, unearthed, and its secrets unleashed. A major, yearlong exhibition of artist Steve Tobin's monumental roots sculptures opened in October 2020 and will dominate the landscape through September.

The exhibition *Steve Tobin: Nature Underground* pays homage to intricate terrestrial ecosystems, forgotten in their invisibility but fundamental to all life on Earth. The exhibition is the focal point of the Garden's 2020-21 season, *Roots: Power of the Unseen*, which celebrates the complex world beneath our feet and the unnoticed parts of the natural world.

"Steve Tobin has been on our radar for several years, and we always knew his work would be a great fit for the Garden," says Erin Wolfe Bell, Director of Exhibitions & Special Programs. "All of his pieces are closely connected to nature, but we specifically wanted to bring his Roots series and explore that topic deeply to truly make this an educational experience for both children and adults. It's an honor to be able to bring this kind of world-class exhibition to the community."

Tobin's repertoire is vast and includes works in glass, clay, mixed media, stainless steel, and bronze and steel, from which he created his two distinct series of root sculptures. His compositions are eclectic but bound by a reverence for nature: sections of forest floors immortalized in bronze; awe-inspiring waterfalls fashioned from glass; African termite hills—skyscrapers of the insect world—glorified through molds and metal. His newest series depicts clouds; our Garden is the first venue to publicly display one of these works.

In a wide-ranging conversation last fall from his home in Pennsylvania, Tobin shares the origins of his ideas and the inspiration he finds in the outdoors.

Tobin's fascination with roots started when he came across a toppled pine tree that bared its underside. An epiphany, he says of that moment.

"It was probably about the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, and for me, beauty is complex," he says. Tobin, who studied theoretical mathematics, likens himself to the



"Seeing things out of context allows you to see things again for the first time."

character of Raymond Babbitt in the movie "Rain Man." Like Raymond, Tobin has extraordinary numeric-related talents. In Tobin's case, an ability to discern patterns and count the objects that comprise them, such as the number of leaves on a tree.

"Part of the beauty of (the pine roots) may have been the patterns, which in hindsight, could be expressed



Nature's Secrets Unearthed

STEVE TOBIN ON A CAREER SPENT BRINGING THE UNSEEN INTO THE LIGHT



Head in the Clouds, 2020, in the Lea Asian Garden

in terms of fractal relationships from large to small. There's a kind of profound beauty, I guess I would call it."

He sketched the roots, changing their axis from horizontal to vertical. A shift in perspective, he explains, forces viewers to stop and reconsider something so familiar it fades into the landscape.

"Seeing things out of context allows you to see things again for the first time," he says. "When you take something out of context, it allows you to see it in a way you haven't been able to since you were an infant."

The human mind, he explains, is programmed to "recognize and dismiss" common sights, lest we suffer from sensory and information overload. "What I'm doing in my work is recontextualizing nature."

For the Bronze Roots, he used actual trees (nonliving ones, Tobin assures), and in doing so, he captured the textures, twists, knobs, fissures, complexity of the structures. The roots dwarf the viewers—a stark reminder of the outsized hold nature has on us. Tobin works in metaphor.

"I took the roots from unseen to seen. I shined light into the shadows, and by taking them above ground, it decontextualizes from hidden, and they stand on their own. They are about bringing unseen power to light," the artist says.

His sole interpretive touch was in how he and his team arranged various sections of the roots once cast.

"We reassemble them in lyrical ways. They are not as they were, but as they could have been," he says. "I don't think I'm defying their biology, but I am having a little artistic expression."

Tobin culminated his Bronze Roots series with Trinity Root, created from the enormous roots of a shattered sycamore tree that shielded New York's St. Paul's Church during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It was installed in the courtyard of Trinity Church, the parent church in that Episcopal diocese.

Tobin continued to find inspiration underground, but expressed himself in an entirely new way, shifting from naturalist to modernist.

"I made the biggest move of my career, which was metal roots to metal roots," he quips. "It doesn't sound like much of a change, but I went from literal cast bronze to modernist bent roots that were more metaphorically roots."

The bronze sculptures are twisting and angular. The steel ones graceful and arching, "cathedral like," to their creator.

"It's like they are churches, and the content of the church is nature," Tobin says.

The pieces intertwine, but each component has its own defined space and pathway. Tobin, during a stint in Japan, developed a fascination with traditional calligraphy. Those who know the Asian characters will spot them embedded within the sculptures or in the shadows they cast. The shadows, incidentally, are as much as a part of each sculpture as the metal pieces themselves.

Nature Underground contains two additional sculptures, showcasing nature's many forms and an artist's career three decades in the making.

The first is a work depicting potted bamboo, an important botanic collection at the Garden. He cast circular holes in the reeds, giving it both visual and auditory interest. On windy days, you can hear the air rushing through them.

The other: a selection from his new cloud series, located in the Helen and Richard Thomas Lotus Pool within the Lea Asian Garden. Mirror-polished stainless steel draws the out-of-reach sky down to earth.

Steve Tobin: *Nature Underground* will be on display through September 6 and is included in regular Garden admission. For hours, ticket prices, and COVID-19 safety protocols, visit naplesgarden.org.

Bamboo, 2009, in the Grove



How to get the most out of Nature Underground

Steve Tobin generally doesn't name his work. This is so viewers may derive their own interpretations.

"The less I have to title pieces, the less they have to read about my process, then the more they have a blank canvas of experience to write their own reaction and responses and what they learned, and not have to study what the artist intended," he says. (There's one notable exception, a pair of sculptures entitled *Romeo and Juliet* for obvious reasons. Those pieces are located in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden.) Tobin offers suggestions on how to best experience his work:

Visit often.



"Every moment," he says, "is different from every other moment ... I encourage you to come back multiple times, and look at the same pieces from the same position because with the different light and the different angle of the sun, the piece will be different."

Look between the lines.



The Steelroots may wow and inspire for their scope and shape, but there's art between the lines. "You see the object—the metal—but it's the negative space that's the content," Tobin says.

Steel pillars dissect the space around them, creating "landscape paintings," sections of foliage or sky or groundcover framed by richly colored metal. The pictures change as your relationship to the sculpture changes.

Yes, please touch!



When you approach the steel sculptures, notice the textures. Tobin works with recycled steel pipes.

"They have the texture of the history they've lived," he says. The pockmarks and the divots are not imperfections; they are stories.

Feel with your emotions, too.



Tune into your feelings as you view the works. How do the steel structures make you feel? The bronze ones? Does the cloud trigger a reaction? That, of course, is the essence of art: using an object to provoke ideas and emotions.

"I know how they are going to look; I have control over all my mediums now. But I don't know how they are going to feel."

That, he says, is up to you.



From root to table

Spice up your kitchen with Fogg Café
Chef Jack Raben's tasty turmeric curry chicken wings
recipe, the perfect meal for a cozy night at home
or with friends outdoors!

The Horticulture Team at Naples Botanical Garden harvested turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) this fall in the Marcia and L. Bates Lea Asian Garden. Native to South Asia, turmeric is a member of the ginger family Zingiberaceae and is an herbaceous perennial. Turmeric's active ingredient, curcumin, which comes from its roots, helps give the herb its golden color and is used to make curry powder. Curcumin also serves as a natural antioxidant that has anti-inflammatory benefits to treat fatigue, reduce pain, and help fight off free radicals.

Turmeric Curry Chicken

SERVES 4-6

Brine

- 2-3 pounds chicken
 - 2 quarts water
 - ½ cup kosher salt
 - 5 fresh bay leaves, if available, or dry
 - 6-7 sprigs thyme
 - 3 tablespoons fresh turmeric, peeled and sliced thin
 - 1 lime, juiced and zested
 - 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
 - 2 cups sugar
- Combine and marinate chicken for 4 to 24 hours. Remove chicken and pat dry, and discard brine when finished.



Vegetables are another option. This can work as a vegan recipe by omitting the fish sauce and using only vegetables.



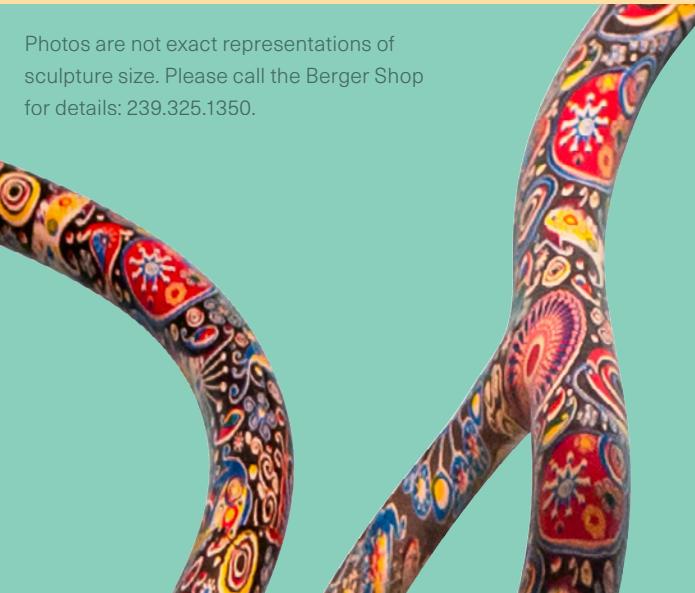
Thanks to Chef Jack Raben for this recipe.

To see a full menu of what the Fogg Café team is serving up this winter, visit naplesgarden.org.

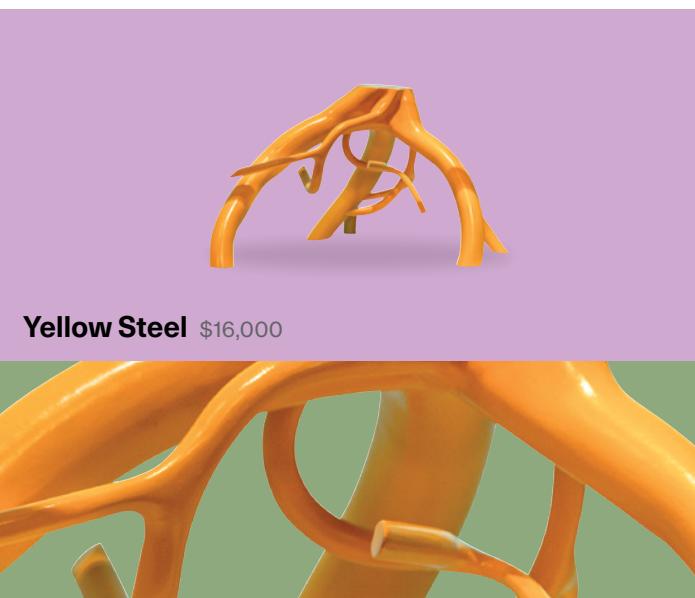
Members save 10% on purchases in Fogg Café and the Berger Shop in the Garden.



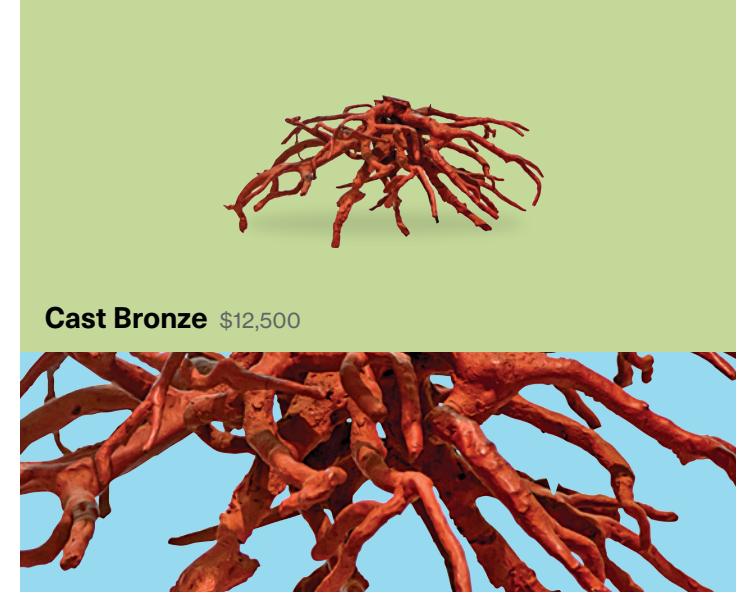
Color Dip Steel \$4,500



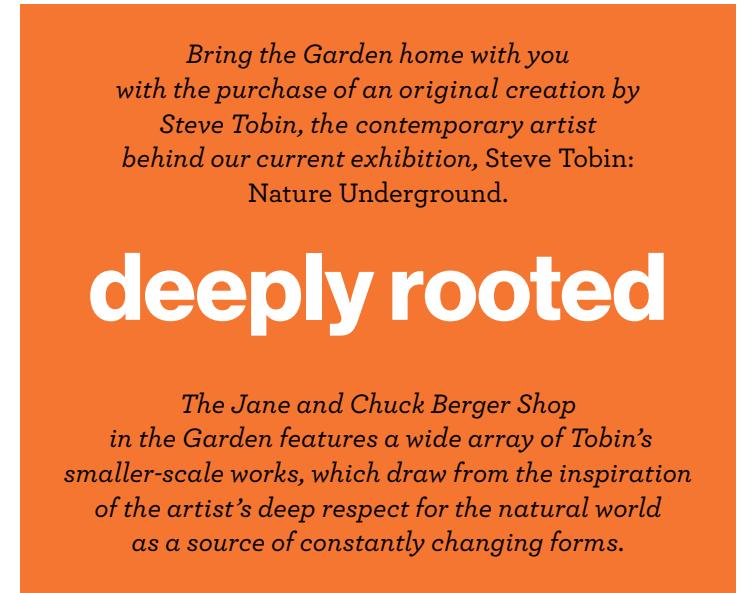
Photos are not exact representations of sculpture size. Please call the Berger Shop for details: 239.325.1350.



Yellow Steel \$16,000



Cast Bronze \$12,500



Bring the Garden home with you with the purchase of an original creation by Steve Tobin, the contemporary artist behind our current exhibition, Steve Tobin: Nature Underground.

deeply rooted

The Jane and Chuck Berger Shop in the Garden features a wide array of Tobin's smaller-scale works, which draw from the inspiration of the artist's deep respect for the natural world as a source of constantly changing forms.

Because of Members In 2020, the Garden:

WELCOMED
more than
200,000
VISITORS

REOPENED

following a
3-month closure due
to COVID-19

COMPLETE WITH CRUCIAL SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

(timed tickets,
plexiglass barriers,
touchless water
bottle stations)

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*with colleagues
from around
the Caribbean*

TO IDENTIFY ENDANGERED

PLANTS

*and make plans to
conserve them*

The Garden's 13,000 member households generate over \$2 million in annual support. Membership alone makes up over 25% of the Garden's income. Those funds are essential for the Garden's day-to-day activities, especially now.

PLANNED GIVING

In times of uncertainty, nature is where we find solace, strength for our footing, and connection to the world around us.

You can play a vital part in ensuring this important role of the Garden to connect people with the plant world, both now, and for generations to come.

Making a gift to the Garden in your estate plans isn't merely a future event. The Perennial Legacy Society offers the opportunity to learn and grow through informative lectures and exclusive Garden experiences. Explore firsthand the impact of the Garden's community and conservation programs through behind-the-scenes presentations as you get to know fellow Society members.

Now, more than ever, see how your support and commitment shapes the future of the Garden, today. If you have already included the Garden in your estate plans, simply let us know, so that we may invite you to Society events. To inform us of your future gift intention, or for a free "how-to" legacy brochure, contact Cindy Learned at 239.325.1927 or clearned@naplesgarden.org.

PERENNIAL LEGACY SOCIETY



Royal Palm Society

Why We Give

**A few minutes in the Garden
with Mike Atkins and Sherry Turner**



You know you're fully invested in the Garden when you can rattle off, in great detail, a list of favorite trees. By that measure alone, Mike Atkins and Sherry Turner, Royal Palm Society members, are "all in."

In a recent conversation, they shared the ones that delight them most. The old man palm (*Coccothrinax crinita*) catches their attention first, just as they step off the Smith Entry Prow Boardwalk. The quirky tree with its fibrous husk that wraps in wiry layers around the trunk never ceases to evoke a smile.

"We always laugh at the old man palms when we first walk in. We look for them," says Sherry Turner. "And then there's Mike's favorite, 'the back scratch tree.'" Turner's husband, Mike Atkins, elaborates on the staple here on

our grounds: the silk floss (*Ceiba speciosa*). They show it to everyone they bring to the Garden. "I'm just amazed at how sharp those points are," Atkins marvels. And of course, there's the rainbow eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus deglupta*) trees. They both get nostalgic when remembering the majestic specimen that used to greet guests near the Naples Garden Club Idea Garden, before it was relocated. Now, they share a bit more about what they think makes the Garden unique, and why they give to benefit our mission.

To learn more about becoming a Royal Palm Society member, visit naplesgarden.org/membership.

What brought you to the Garden

"The thing that caused us to visit was the Garden's outreach to the community—we went to explore it on Mothers' Day. Mothers were free that day. I think that's what sets the Garden apart; it works with the community, it has a lot of outreach, and its team tries to find ways to bring people into the Garden, and to open up the doors to where they'll come and experience it." — MIKE

Favorite thing

"We've often said that we should mark our calendar at the beginning of every month and go, and just walk through, and look at what's not blooming that was blooming the month before, and see all the changes. It's just amazing. We're in there frequently, and we always walk by something, and one of us will look and say, 'I don't think I've ever seen that before.'" — SHERRY

Why you give to the Garden

"The only things that motivate us to give of any significance, as we've looked back, either has to be something that breaks our heart, or the alternative would be the Garden, which makes you happy. Every time you walk in the door, it makes you smile, it makes you happy. And the way you are recognized and appreciated makes you happy." — MIKE

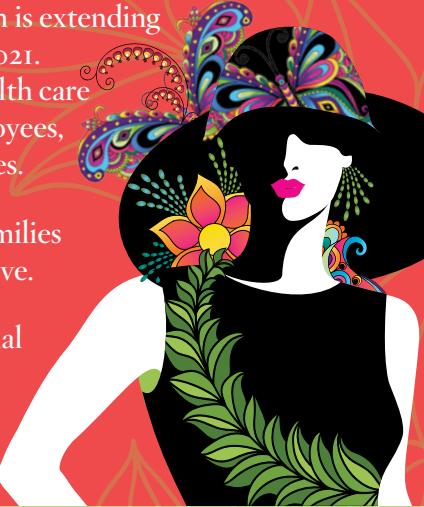
#Hats IN OUR GARDENS

As a result of the generous support of the Sustaining Leadership Council and #HatsInOurGardens participants, Naples Botanical Garden is extending its Community Appreciation Program through May 2021.

This program offers complimentary Garden access for health care and essential service employers to share with their employees, providing a place of respite during these difficult times.

To date, more than 7,000 essential workers and their families have enjoyed time in the Garden thanks to this initiative.

If you are a health care provider or oversee an essential business, and wish to enroll your company in the Community Appreciation Program, please contact corporate@naplesgarden.org.



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Walk the Steve Tobin: *Nature Underground* exhibition with the artist in this Notes from the Garden blog post:
naplesgarden.org/nature-unearthed-artists-guide-to-the-exhibition.

“... if you have them outside, they bring the clouds and the blue sky down to the ground, and the surroundings go into the clouds. As our dreams do.”

Artist Steve Tobin on the effect of mirror-polished stainless steel used to create Head in the Clouds, 2020, on view in the Lea Asian Garden water features.

Naples Botanical GARDEN

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