How does our Garden grow? With plenty of help from you!

Surviving a pandemic is not a solo undertaking. Thanks to YOU, our Members, donors, community supporters, business sponsors, and visitors, our Garden continues to bloom brightly and provide a respite for all during challenging times.

- **13,000+** member households
- Membership generates 25% of the Garden’s income—thank you!
- **$400,000+** raised during #HatsInOurGardens
- Cheers to you, Sustaining Leadership Council.
- **181,758** visitors
- **40,432** Night Lights tickets purchased
  - That’s 95% of all tickets available.
- **2,500** new Members Welcome!
- **2,000+** lapsed Members rejoined
  - Welcome Back!
- **$670,000+** raised in last summer’s Thriving Garden campaign
  - $520,000 of that from our generous Board of Directors
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And we thought recovering from a natural disaster was hard!

The Garden has survived its share of storms, including the devastating Hurricane Irma in 2017. But no amount of wind damage compares to the unrelenting pressure and uncertainty of COVID-19. We closed the Garden to the community last March and did not fully reopen until July. In those long months, the Garden staff worked tirelessly to maintain the grounds, invent new digital offerings, and determine the protocols that would allow us to protect the health of our visitors and staff. I’m proud of their work and confident we’ve done everything possible to create the safest possible environment.

This annual report reflects three broad themes that defined 2020. You’ll see how we adapted to the challenges COVID-19 posed. You’ll understand how we persevered during trying times, remaining focused on our missions in spite of the obstacles. And you’ll learn how we served our community in new ways, initiatives that we intend to expand in the coming years.

My sincerest thanks to all those who supported us through 2020’s challenges. With your help, we continue to thrive. See you in the Garden!

Donna McGinnis
President & CEO

Naples Botanical Garden’s Board of Directors has always stood behind the Garden, but that was never more true than in 2020. Last year was like nothing any of us has ever seen. Thanks to donors like you and the Garden’s dedicated and talented team, the organization is better than ever. New initiatives like self-guided audio tours and self-service programming were introduced when COVID-19 prevented business as usual. The Garden continues to fulfill its mission of engaging and inspiring, but in new and innovative ways.

Thanks to the Garden’s Sustaining Leadership Council (SLC), the always popular Hats in the Garden moved online as #HatsInOurGardens with great success. We welcomed over 40,000 visitors to Night Lights in the Garden safely. And we engaged the community by offering complimentary general admission for essential workers and their families beginning with the reopening in July.

The Garden’s Board and staff have weathered a very different kind of storm. We thank each of you for your support throughout 2020, and we look forward to seeing you in the Garden.

Carl Crosetto
Chairman
Board of Directors
Closing the Garden was one of the most difficult things we’ve ever had to do.

We know we are a community gathering spot, a favorite outing for families, an educational resource, and a place to connect with nature. But slowing COVID-19’s spread was paramount. Our staff spent many weeks implementing measures to reopen safely and minimize the risk of virus exposure.

Protocols include:

- Timed entry 9am–5pm
  (New Members-only hour from 8am–9am daily)
- Plexi-glass ticketing windows and intercoms
- Hand sanitizer stations
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitation
- Masks required in indoor and high-traffic areas
  (Thanks for keeping each other safe!)
- Touchless water bottle filling stations
  (Bonus: We’re saving thousands of disposable bottles from the trash!)

Since reopening we’ve used:

1,000 gallons of disinfectant and cleaning sprays
208 gallons of hand sanitizer—that’s about 26 gallons per month
800+ gallons of hydrogen peroxide mist to purify the air in high-traffic areas

Our touchless water refill stations have saved the equivalent of 3,000+ disposable bottles.

Our public restrooms are cleaned every 15 minutes. That’s 32 times per day!
How do you connect with a community when you can’t talk face-to-face?

You “meet” in cyberspace. Within hours of closure, our educators and communicators began developing digital content to keep our audience engaged with nature-focused activities, readings, and videos as businesses and schools closed. Gardeners got in on the action, too, answering reader questions over Facebook and sharing images from the Garden. Check out our creative adaptations to our virus-altered world.

Meet us in the Garden, a program for adults with dementia and their caregivers, generally meets twice a month during season.

Our daily tours are usually packed!

Now, families pick up a free activity they need to discover more about the natural world together.

Meet Me in the Garden, a program for adults with dementia and their caregivers, generally meets twice a month during season.

Our educators developed special activities that families can do at home, distributing them through partnering senior organizations. Participants mastered the use of the paintbrush—and Zoom—instead!

Families used to stop by our daily program, W.O.N.D.E.R., (Walk, Observe, Navigate, Draw, Explore, Read) for a nature-based activity.

We’ll resume live programming once it’s safe to do so, but we’ll keep our other outreach efforts, too. Here’s why:

● Between July and November, we gave out 2,510 W.O.N.D.E.R activity kits—twice as many as the number of kids who participated in live programming during those same months in 2019. In all, we distributed almost 4,000 kits through the end of December.

● Our Meet Me in the Garden kits went out to 480 people with dementia and their caregivers. On site, we see about 35 people per session.

● You engaged with us nearly 352,055 times on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!

Since COVID-19 struck last March, staff members produced more than 100 plant stories, tips and how-to, activities for all ages, and ecosystem lessons, including some 50 videos—a new endeavor for us. Our gardeners answered more than 75 reader questions on Facebook. You can find the archived content at naplesgarden.org/blog, naplesgarden.org/mygarden, and on our YouTube channel.

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We miss you (and we know you miss us), but our electronic bond gets stronger every day.

● 4,003 unique devices logged into audio tours following the platform’s September launch

● 25,303 of you “liked” us on Facebook (that’s up 12% over 2019)

● 10.5 million social media impressions

● 278,818 unique users visited naplesgarden.org for a total of 398,566 sessions

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Imagine running a business if you suddenly lost most of your workforce. In a way, that’s what happened when we closed the Garden to all but essential personnel. We suspended our volunteer program—an important measure to protect everyone’s safety—but lost hundreds of helping hands in the process.

You’d think maintaining 170 acres on their own would be enough work for our gardeners. But this crew acted as if it were any other year and took on all sorts of new projects, too.

Living fence
Is that a tree or a fence post? It’s both. Last summer, we created a “living fence” demonstration garden, identical to the kinds of backyard gardens seen all over the Caribbean. In this case, we used segments of a gumbo limbo tree. The segments will sprout roots and form new trees, which we’ll trim as needed. A great use of natural resources! Look for it in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden.

Vanilla trelis
There’s nothing bland about this vanilla! The favorite flavoring is derived from the cured seedpods of the vanilla orchid, which must be hand pollinated to produce (yes, that’s why that tiny bottle of extract has an outsized price). Find it in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden.

Fruit grove
Florida may be famed for citrus, but we’re betting that mangos, guavas, and Barbados cherries can give the almighty orange a run for its money. We planted some 80 trees of those fruits, plus avocados, feijoas (a New Zealand fruit) and pitangatuba (a Brazilian cherry) to evaluate them for taste, yield, pest resilience, and the like. The grove is accessible to staff only, but guests will reap the benefit when the trees start producing.

Obsessed with orchids
A new gift from the LaGrippe Orchid Garden’s namesake transformed the already beautiful space into a stunning explosion of color and shape. The funding supports the purchase of ornamental orchids for ever-rotating displays as well as the acquisition of new orchids for our collection. Meanwhile, an ambitious, multi-year effort to grow native orchids entered its final phase with our staff placing hundreds of native Florida orchids in the Preserve and along the Sönne Family Ghost Orchid Boardwalk.

Vanilla trellis
There’s nothing bland about this vanilla! The favorite flavoring is derived from the cured seedpods of the vanilla orchid, which must be hand pollinated to produce (yes, that’s why that tiny bottle of extract has an outsized price). Find it in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden.

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Save the trees!
We work to protect trees in general, but sometimes we perform actual tree “rescues” when an important specimen may be lost. Such was the case of a lignum vitae, transported from Big Cypress National Preserve, and a Cuban hat palm, Copernicia baileyana, lifted from a home in Fort Myers where it had been partially uprooted during Hurricane Irma. The rare palm weighed a whopping 12,500 pounds.

Other noteworthy items:
- In 2020, we added 2,818 new accessioned plants to our collection. That includes 579 bromeliads, 408 orchids, and 113 fruit trees.
- Gardeners sowed 20,000 seeds, now growing in our nurseries and greenhouses.
- We used the closure to take on a few big, messy projects, like draining 100,000 gallons of water from the lower pond in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden and hauling out 2,500 gallons of muck.
- A plant collector in Australia who knows one of the Garden’s longtime advisors sent us hundreds of seeds, which we’re growing in our nurseries to see if they are as good a fit for Southwest Florida’s climate as we think they are.
Beyond the Garden
The COVID-19 outbreak reinforced the precarious state of the natural world and compelled us to work harder than ever on environmental stewardship. Our staff delved into conservation and environmental education projects, made sweeping progress on seed banking and native plant research, joined new initiatives throughout the Caribbean, and advised community leaders on how to use plants to improve Southwest Florida's water and ecosystems.

Stormwater education
In Southwest Florida, one of the biggest sources of water pollution is... more water. Stormwater picks up pollutants such as nitrogen and phosphorus along its way to canals, ponds, rivers, and the Gulf of Mexico. The result: algae outbreaks, ocean "dead zones," dying seagrass, and declining fish populations. What we plant and how we plant can make a big difference in our water's health. Our experts led or participated in 13 classes or community forums addressing stormwater and nutrient pollution, reaching more than 600 people.

Seed banking
Our staff surely sees seeds in their sleep. In a little over a year, we've amassed 85,744 seeds, representing 22 species in our seed bank. We focus on the plants of Southwest Florida and the Caribbean, ensuring we preserve their genetics in case of habitat loss or natural disaster and to grow plants for future restoration projects. Some plants in our seed collection are common—for now, anyway—while others are quite rare. A few notables... • Meriana brevipedunculata, a woody flowering shrub, that is found only in two to four places in Massif de la Hotte, a mountain range in Haiti.
• Erythrina eggersii, or cockspur, an endangered plant found only in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, where there are fewer than 100 individuals.
• Asclepias incarnata, swamp milkweed. It's a common plant in North America, but our partners at Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve have noticed a drastic decline in numbers. They are giving us seeds to conserve and restore the original population.

Paradise Coast Sports Complex
Look beyond the athletic fields to the landscape at the county's new, $104 million, state-of-the-art athletic venue. The Garden spearheaded a demonstration landscape spotlighting Caribbean species that could be beneficial for Southwest Florida’s environment because they tolerate heat, require little fertilizer, withstand storms and have other attributes that we think make them a good—and cost effective—choice for public lands. Together with our county partners, we’ll evaluate the plants over the long term to guide future landscape decisions.

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Our conservation experts are working with Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve scientists to map the locations of 152 targeted native plants and determine the extent of their populations. We’re also collecting and storing seed that can be used for conservation and for future restoration work—a critical undertaking as sea levels rise and threaten shoreline plants.

Red Listing
With hundreds of thousands of plant species on Earth, how do you figure out which ones to save? By determining which are at greatest risk. We began a partnership with several botanical gardens in the Caribbean and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to assess Caribbean species for their risk of extinction using the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List process.

Around the Caribbean
Remember when we raised money for Bahamas National Trust after Hurricane Dorian’s devastation? Those funds, plus a new grant from The Nature Conservancy, will help rebuild the Band Nature Center and botanical garden on the island of Grand Bahama. BNT, the nation’s park service, is one of our closest regional partners. We're happy to serve as advisors on this project, which will have far-reaching implications for tropical plant conservation, along with other benefits.

In Haiti, we’re supporting a new initiative to inventory the island’s plant life—the first such undertaking in a century. The data will help scientists and policymakers in Haiti prioritize conservation efforts, manage land, and determine development policies. Our partners in Haiti send seeds of imperiled plants to us as a line of defense, while our staff offers training on seed saving and propagation techniques so that they can conserve plants at home.
Since reopening last summer, we …

Hosted three major art exhibitions:
- *The Impressionist’s Garden: Plein Air Paintings by Paul Arsenault*
- *Steve Tobin: Nature Underground*
- *Carmelo Blandino: Convergence*

Cranked up the kitchen at Fogg Café

Welcomed more than 40,000 visitors to Night Lights in the Garden

Welcomed new management at the Berger Shop and watched them reinvigorate the shop with a new look and carefully assembled collection of nature-themed gifts.

Life may have slowed down, but we know life can’t stop.

In addition to fully reopening, we continued to host special events and exhibitions, offer dining in Fogg Café, and shopping in the Berger Shop in the Garden. We implemented extra safety precautions and capacity limits, but we were determined to make 2020 as “normal” as possible.

By the numbers

- 18,000 number of pounds of one of Tobin’s sculptures
- 1,200 miles between Tobin’s Pennsylvania workshop and the Garden
- 4 flatbed trucks needed to transport the sculptures to Naples
- 400 hours it took to install the Tobin exhibit
- 15 new, Garden-inspired works created by painters Paul Arsenault and Carmelo Blandino for their exhibitions in Kapnick Hall
- 3,530 Fogg Burgers sold
- 1,323 pounds of beef to make those burgers
- 7,000 pounds of potatoes used to make 3,980+ orders of fries!
- 500 gallons of ice tea served
Our Garden was founded by the community for the community. Last year, we intensified efforts to serve our fellow residents, from offering discounts and vouchers for Garden admission to growing trees to beautify Collier County to helping supply basic needs for those who lost income during the pandemic.

Thank you, essential workers! We offered codes for free admission to hundreds of area businesses—from supermarkets to hospitals—to share with their employees and their families. Over 9,500 people visited the Garden using them. Proceeds from #HatsInOurGardens will help us expand this program in 2021.

Quarantines, economic stress, housebound children, and “doom scrolling” tendencies took their toll on everyone. Last summer, we slashed admission fees to residents of Lee and Collier counties. Almost 6,000 locals visited during the discount admission period from July to September. We’re glad to be a respite during trying times.

Like a good book, we want great partnerships—such as the ones with the Collier County and Lee County library systems—to never end. We offered several free admission days to library cardholders and welcomed 2,677 adults and kids. Watch for more library cardholder days this year!

We partnered with the nonprofit Brighter Bites to distribute 50,000 pounds of fresh food to people needing help last summer. Late in 2020 we joined with Our Daily Bread Food Pantry and its partners, Al’s Pals, For the Love of Cats and the Alliance for Period Supplies of Southwest Florida, and set up a distribution area at the Garden. We were happy to help serve 117 families, 90% of whom were first-time recipients from Our Daily Bread’s pantry.

Back in the “before times,” 2019, the Community Foundation of Collier County approached us with a special request for its 35th anniversary—growing 3,500 trees for residents and select human service organizations to plant in Collier County. No one anticipated a pandemic interrupting their operations! But when COVID-19 closed our doors, our nursery manager took the tiny seedlings home to tend until we could resume operations. By the end of last summer, all 3,500 trees had found new homes.

Thank you to our leaders! The story of the Garden’s founding is one of dedicated and visionary volunteer leaders. COVID-19 brought challenges none of us ever imagined, and we relied on their vision and support more than ever. From virtual meetings to reconfigured events to online giving campaigns, these dedicated donors found new and inventive ways to make sure the Garden continued to thrive. We are incredibly grateful to our Board of Directors and the Sustaining Leadership Council for their continued commitment to the Garden’s success.

2020 Board of Directors
Mr. Carl J. Crosetto, Chairman
Mrs. Marilyn M. Bartter
Mrs. Jane Purdy Berger
Mrs. Mary Ann E. Brinley
Mr. John B. Buettner
Mrs. Elaine G. Chabranja
Mr. Ronald S. Costa
Mrs. Grace B. Crecestral
Mr. Adam D. Crecestral
Mrs. Grace E. Crecestral
Mr. Leslie C.K. Fogg
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Mr. Mark C. Gansel
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Mr. John Kallergis
Mr. Kathleen G. Kapnick—Director in Memoriam
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Mrs. Lisa K. Merritt
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Deborah L. Russell, Esq.
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Mrs. Shirley D. Zeitchik
Mrs. Linda G. White

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Like a good book, we want great partnerships—such as the ones with the Collier County and Lee County library systems—to never end. We offered several free admission days to library cardholders and welcomed 2,677 adults and kids. Watch for more library cardholder days this year!

We partnered with the nonprofit Brighter Bites to distribute 50,000 pounds of fresh food to people needing help last summer. Late in 2020 we joined with Our Daily Bread Food Pantry and its partners, Al’s Pals, For the Love of Cats and the Alliance for Period Supplies of Southwest Florida, and set up a distribution area at the Garden. We were happy to help serve 117 families, 90% of whom were first-time recipients from Our Daily Bread’s pantry.

Back in the “before times,” 2019, the Community Foundation of Collier County approached us with a special request for its 35th anniversary—growing 3,500 trees for residents and select human service organizations to plant in Collier County. No one anticipated a pandemic interrupting their operations! But when COVID-19 closed our doors, our nursery manager took the tiny seedlings home to tend until we could resume operations. By the end of last summer, all 3,500 trees had found new homes.
Thank you for your generous support!

Annual giving to the Garden includes membership donations, gifts to the annual fund, grants, sponsorships, and other donations. These gifts have a lasting impact on the health of our cultivated gardens and Preserves, the quality of our educational programs and outreach initiatives, and the success of our conservation work throughout the Caribbean. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize those donors who made annual contributions of $1,500 or more in 2020—continue to join our members of the Royal Palm Society. Thank you for all you have done—and continue to do—to ensure the Garden's future.

Palm Society. Thank you for your generous support!
Conserve & Discover. Engage & Inspire.