

NAPLES  
BOTANICAL  
GARDEN

# Cultivate



SPRING/SUMMER 2022



**IN SEASON**

The sun sets over the Water Garden as dozens of species of waterlilies arch toward the last rays of sunlight. Read more on page 7 about waterlily happenings in the Garden this summer.

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

A *Victoria* first-night flower closes as the day begins. Photo: Paul Osborn.

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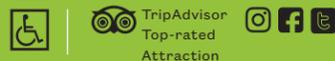
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**Seeds of Captivation**  
Hand pollinating the world's largest waterlilies in this new partnership with Longwood Gardens



CULTIVATE SPRING/SUMMER 2022

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All waterlilies belong to the plant family *Nymphaeaceae*. The word stems from the Greek “nymph,” referring to female nature spirits associated with the elements, such as wood, water, air, mountains.

How perfectly named! I find these flowers simply divine. I love how each plant floats within its own watery space, allowing for a study of its unique details—the pads, sometimes solid in color, sometimes mottled; the blooms—cup-shaped or star-shaped in an unimaginable array of hues.



We are so lucky here in the Garden to be able to exhibit waterlilies outdoors all year long. Our growing collection today includes about 150 species and hybrids and 500 plants on display at any given time. We’re honoring these special flowers in this edition of *Cultivate*.

Inside, you’ll learn about a new undertaking with Longwood Gardens, which is renowned for its seasonal displays of *Victoria* waterlilies. These giant water platters are so sturdy that my daughter was once photographed perched atop one of its pads. The Longwood team

asked us to help produce seeds of the *Victoria amazonica* and *Victoria cruziana* and the Longwood hybrid, a combination of the two, while their waterlily pools undergo renovation. Through this partnership, we will help ensure these awe-inspiring plants persist in botanical collections. (See page 23.)

In this issue, you’ll also get a first peek at plans for a new waterlily festival, coming up this Labor Day weekend, along with expert tips on how to create your own small-scale water garden at home.

Whether we’re talking about aquatic, terrestrial, or epiphytic plants, botanical gardens rely on plant collectors

to grow our collections. These individuals share their plants, passion, and expertise, offering access to rare, unusual, and charismatic species and hybrids that would be difficult to acquire otherwise. We delve inside the hidden world of plant collectors and our relationships with them on page 19. There’s much to do and see in the Garden this spring and summer. I’m happy to announce that we have multiple exhibitions to explore, with *STICKWORK* on the Kapnick Caribbean Lawn, *Woven: Fiber Arts Now* on view in Kapnick Hall through June 26, and starting July 15, *Christy Noonan: Meditations on Waterlilies*. July 2 marks the return of our much-awaited Tasting the Tropics fruit festival.

As always, thank you for your support. I can’t wait to see you in the Garden!



**Donna McGinnis**  
President & CEO

# What's happening



## Summer in the Garden

June 1–September 30

**🕒 Summer Hours**  
Dive into summer in the Garden!  
We're open 9am–2pm daily, 8am for Members.

### Summer Resident Discount

Residents of Collier, Lee, and Charlotte counties are in on a special secret during the summer months—more wide open spaces, and room to stretch out, breathe, and relax. To celebrate those who call our corner of the world home (canine companions included), we're offering discounted admission June 1–September 30.

**\$12–Adults**

**\$3–Children ages 4-17** (Children 3 and under are always free.)

**\$8–Dogs** (During Sunday and Tuesday dog walking days, 9–11am)

**Members always receive free Garden admission!**



## Music in the Garden

June 11 | 12–2pm

There's one more weekend this season to soak up the sounds of Music in the Garden. Kick back, relax, and tap your feet to the sound of Naples' own Havy Rodriguez & the Miami Splash Band. Blankets and lawn chairs are recommended.

**WOVEN**  
Fiber Arts Now

## Get Wrapped Up in Woven: Fiber Arts Now

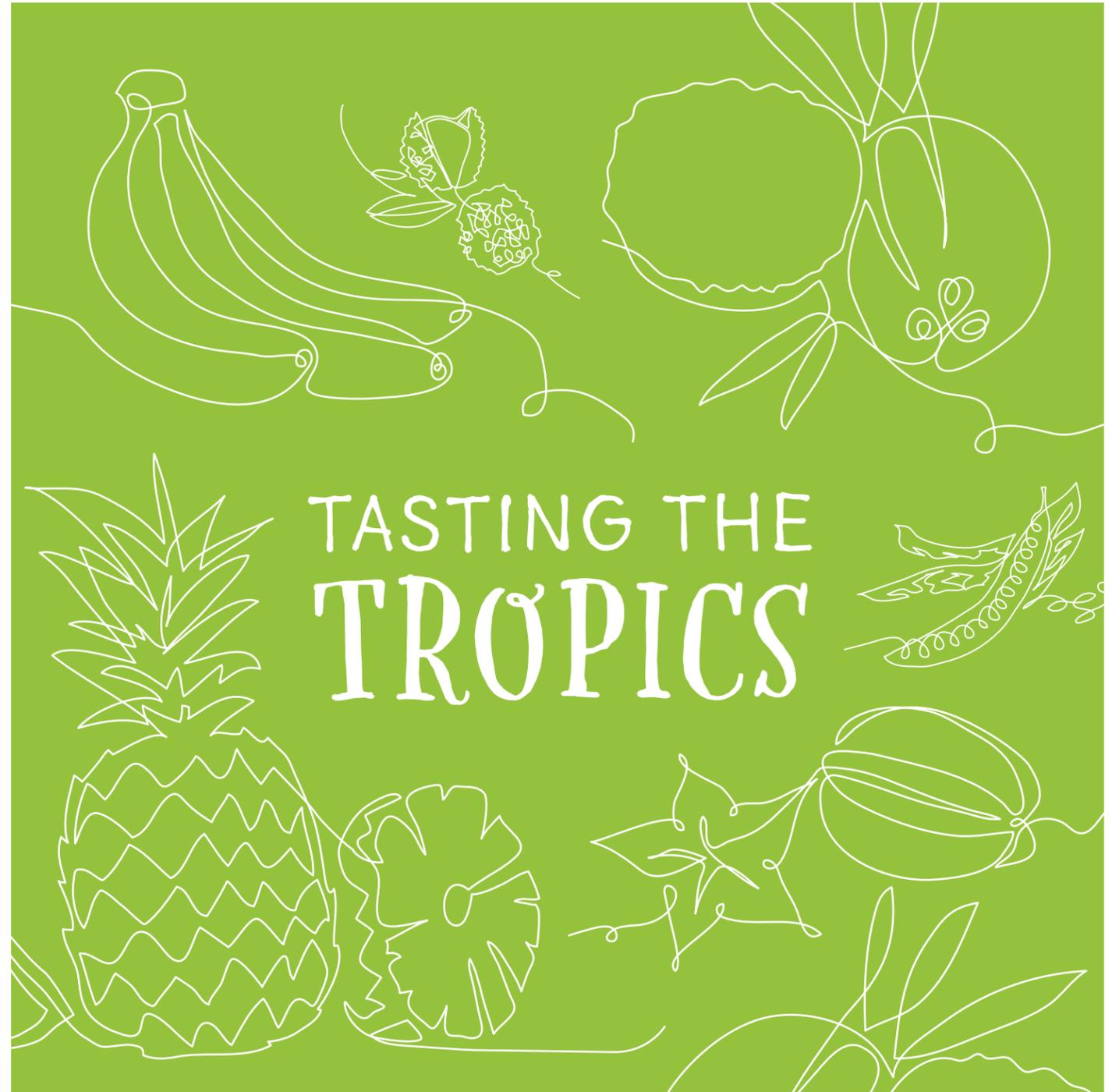
Discover the possibilities of fiber, the beauty of the Garden, and the infinite potential of nature with this synergistic exhibition in Kapnick Hall. On view just a few more weeks, through June 26, *Woven* features the never-before-seen works of five local artists, with materials ranging from pine needles and reed to cotton and silk. Plus, meet some of the artists on select dates:

- May 28:** Mary Day
- June 18:** Muffy Clark Gill
- June 25:** Dusty Holmes



*Sea Grapes Revisited, 2021,*  
Cheryl Costley

**📍 Visit [naplesgarden.org](http://naplesgarden.org) for more information!**

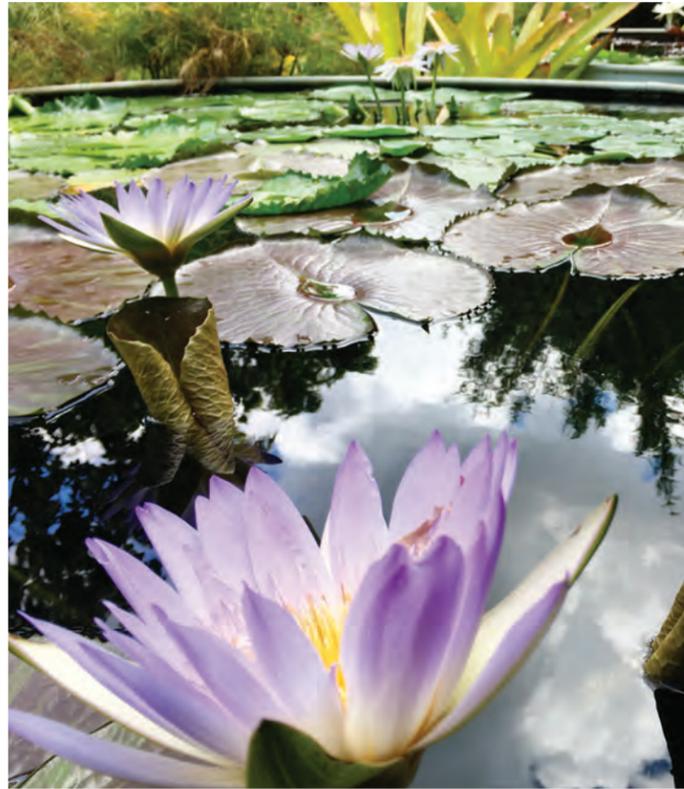


## Tasting the Tropics

July 2 | 9am–2pm

The bounty of the Garden comes in many forms—and flavors! Experience the tropical fruits grown around the globe, and right here in the Garden. Delight in samples with our tropical fruit tastings, lively tours, and hands-on demonstrations with Garden staff and experts. Finally, you can master cracking open that jackfruit or coconut.

**Music in the Garden, *Woven: Fiber Arts Now*, and Tasting the Tropics are all included with Garden admission.**



Waterfall Pond, 2022, Christy Noonan

**Christy Noonan:  
Meditations on Waterlilies**

**July 15–September 11  
Kapnick Hall**

Entranced by the Garden's waterlily collection, Christy Noonan uses her canvas to bring parts of the underwater world into our view. For over a year, she visited the Garden to study these floating wonders and capture their delicate, yet fierce, nature through her explorations of form, color, light, and movement. Noonan's waterlily series reveals her sensitivity to nature and celebrates painting as a reflection of one's self.

The exhibition will be closed for a portion of the day July 16 as Royal Palm Society Members gather in Kapnick Hall for a special event. Learn more about the benefits of Royal Palm Society membership on p. 33.

**New Waterlily Competition**

**June–September**

The Garden hosts the International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society New Waterlily Competition for a fourth year. Stop by the Grove, and watch these showstoppers as they unfold their petals into full bloom and arch skyward all summer long. Aquatic Areas team members receive these novel waterlilies in the forms of tubers and rhizomes from hybridizers all over the world, and tend them for several months, even taking measurements and photo documentation, until judging in the fall.

**New this Year! Waterlily Weekend**

**September 3 & 4**

Dive into the world of waterlilies as we celebrate these water nymphs that accent our collections.

Immerse yourself with our special exhibition, *Christy Noonan: Meditations on Waterlilies*, catch a guided waterlily tour, get up close and personal to new hybrids in the New Waterlily Competition, and enjoy family activities, curator talks, and demonstrations. Included with Garden admission.



Clockwise, from left: *Nymphaea* 'Tanzanite,' *Nymphaea* 'Stan Skinger,' and *Nymphaea* 'Innocence'

**Curated Waterlilies on Display**

As you meander along the boardwalk of the Water Garden, scan the water's surface. You'll see shades of purple, scarlet, and pink aglow with phosphorescence, the trademark styles of hybrids from Florida Aquatic Nurseries. It is the state's largest waterlily nursery, a family-owned operation in Fort Lauderdale growing aquatic plants for 65 years and counting.

This curated display will be on view through the end of summer.



**Small, but Mighty**

Just steps from the colossal *Victoria* water platters floating in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden water feature is a juxtaposition of botanical sorts. Nestled in the Nancy and Jonathan Hamill Reflecting Pool are *Nymphaea thermarum*, waterlilies with a distinction that is anything but miniscule. It is the smallest plant in the *Nymphaea* family, with blooms topping out at just several inches in diameter, and some pads spanning only an inch. We added this diminutive aquatic plant, now extinct in its native Rwanda, to our collections this spring.

**Can't get enough of our waterlilies?** Read more on page 23 about a growing partnership with Longwood Gardens to hand pollinate these iconic plants.



**Later this month:  
Family Wonder Days**

**May 28 & 29 | 9am–5pm (8am for Members)**  
Walk, observe, navigate, draw, explore, and read (W.O.N.D.E.R.) together during the new Family Wonder Days celebration! Garden-wide fun awaits with a weekend of *wonderful* games, activities, and scavenger hunts for the whole family.

Grab an activity guide, and follow Twiggy, the Garden's Wonder Pal, as you navigate through the Garden's lush landscape to observe our feathered friends, pollinators, and plants. Family-friendly live music will add to the fun.

**Daily programs as well as Family Wonder Days are included with Garden admission.**

**Walk & Learn**

Staff-led daily tours depart several times from the Smith Entry Prow. Immerse yourself in our tropical collections, and pick up some newfound knowledge gleaned from our Garden educators.

**Listen from Anywhere**  
Simply visit [bycell.co/bsgit](http://bycell.co/bsgit) to discover a world of Garden learning with our audio tours!



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

School's out for summer, but nature's classroom is always open. Pick up our W.O.N.D.E.R. Activity Packs, in English and Spanish, at Ticketing, or drop in for family-friendly programming at 10:30am daily. Locations vary based on the month's theme.

- May:** Celebrate the Earth
- June:** Popular Pollinators
- July:** Floating Flora
- August:** Art Naturally
- September:** Stormy Weather & Mangroves

**Plus, for adults seeking botanical inspiration,** Garden educators are on hand daily with **Dig Deeper**. Check the Garden schedule the day of your visit for topics and locations.

**A World of Botanical Resources at Your Fingertips**

**Feeling inspired from your last Garden venture?**  
Visit [naplesgarden.org/education](http://naplesgarden.org/education) for links to instructional blogs and videos for everything from container gardening and mounting orchids to backyard birding and tropical recipes!



Art: Susan, a nature journaling participant

**Nature Journaling**

Join us under the Kapnick Hall Terrace on June 4, from 8am–2pm, or through our virtual exhibit space, to celebrate artists in the Garden's creative aging program, Virtual Nature Journaling: Botany Through Art. This eight-week workshop series facilitates students' exploration of nature and self through nature journals. This program is supported by a grant from the Collier Community Foundation and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy.

Want to start a nature journal of your own, but don't know where to start? Adults 55 and up with a valid Gmail account and willingness to commit to an eight-week course may register for a space in the next available program. Virtual Nature Journaling is free, and all materials are provided.



**Breaking New Ground**

More growing space equals more plants! On March 21, the Garden team, along with over 100 donors, friends, and media, celebrated the groundbreaking of the Evenstad Horticulture Campus, representing approximately 66,000 square feet of greenhouses, nurseries, and laboratories. Construction will continue for the coming year, and upon completion, will bolster our impact in the protection of threatened plants, growth of partnerships in the Caribbean, and our capacity to provide storm-resilient plants for the Southwest Florida region.



Left to right: Ken Sumner, Board Member; Rep. Bob Rommel; Grace Evenstad, Board Member; Kathleen Kapnick, Board Chair; Donna McGinnis, President & CEO; Pastor Jean Paul, Naples Haitian Church of the Nazarene; Carl Crosetto, Board Member.

**Garden in the Community**



**Growing Where They're Planted**

As part of the Collier Community Foundation's \$450,000 Collier Trees initiative, the Garden has coordinated the planting of hundreds of trees, shrubs, and ground cover throughout the past year. Discover these recent plantings near you, and watch them grow!



**Environmental Challenges, Nature-Based Solutions**

The Garden and the City of Fort Myers recently signed an agreement to collaborate in development of best practices for the city's landscape design. A top priority is identifying nature-based solutions to environmental challenges, which means the Garden will advise its new partner in selecting plants that are compatible with Southwest Florida's unique climate and soil conditions; offer advice on building environmental resiliency through plants; and share knowledge about the role plants play in stormwater management.



## Join Us on a Journey as We Explore Mexico

The incredible abundance and diversity of plants this country offers is unparalleled, home to more than 10% of the world's flora. Here in the Garden alone, more than 1,900 of our plants are native to Mexico. Starting this fall, we invite you to behold Mexico's vibrance through curated collections, inspiring art exhibitions, and thought-provoking educational experiences.



© Scott Dressel-Martin, courtesy Denver Botanic Gardens

## La Calavera Catrina

**On View October 1, 2022–  
January 29, 2023**

These larger-than-life skeletons from Los Angeles-based artist Ricardo Soltero serve as one of the most recognizable icons of Día de los Muertos. Born out of Mexican social satire depicting the upper classes, these sculptures will add an element of surprise during your Garden stroll, and blend with the surrounding landscape in unexpected ways. *La Calavera Catrina* is organized by Denver Botanic Gardens.



## Frida and her Garden

**On View January 14–September 10, 2023**

Be transported into the world of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) as you explore a re-creation of La Casa Azul, the artist's iconic blue home in Coyoacán, Mexico City. Immerse yourself in Kahlo's creative refuge and celebrate the plants that played an important role in her life and paintings. As you stroll the Garden, enjoy monumental Mexican *arte popular* sculptures representing animals that influenced Kahlo's life.



Special thanks to Banco de México Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo Museums Trust

# Your Water Garden at HOME

Dive into this primer with Aquatic Areas Manager Kathy Cahill, and learn how to create your own waterborne utopia.

There's a certain mystique about waterlilies, those stretching, arching dollops of color emerging from the water's surface.

You can admire myriad species within the family *Nymphaea* dotting more than 60,000 square feet of water features during any given Garden visit. While we enjoy the beauty above the water, Kathy is concerned with what goes on beneath the surface. Have you ever wondered what it takes to grow a water garden?

The setup is surprisingly simple: a combination of Florida topsoil, aquatic fertilizer, and, for the pot: "We'll plant in a milk crate lined with burlap, so roots can eventually escape," she says.

Not every public garden opts to grow its waterlilies this way.

"We keep everything in pots, so they don't grow wild," she says. "Once you put them in the ground, it's a whole

other ball game." In the Garden, where most of our water features are lined in concrete, planting them or tying these plants to a rock and letting them grow unabated simply isn't an option, especially since there is no soil to serve as anchor.

Kathy's growing process starts with tubers.

"Most tropical waterlilies—the majority of our collection—throw off tubers," Kathy explains. She places each one, similar in shape to a large walnut, into a zip-close bag ballooning with water. It's all the plant needs to germinate and sprout lily pads and roots.

Once planted, staff get in the water once a week to clean leaves and deadhead (remove) spent blooms. Repotting is a biannual affair.

For those of us wishing for a similar ambience at home, we can recreate on a small scale what the Garden does en masse, Kathy says.

## Tips for Northern gardeners

Opt for hardy waterlilies. Many can make it through the winter, depending on your location and their level of hardiness. For your marginal aquatic plants, take them out of the container, cut them back, and put them in a dark spot in your home (a garage or basement works well). Keep these dormant plants from completely desiccating by adding some water once in a while. In spring, take them back out, divide as you like, and resubmerge. With luck, they'll grow again.



### 1. Do your homework.

Research the waterlilies and plants you want to grow. How big will the plants get? I recommend a little research into your plants' normal growth habits, and then experimentation; [plants.iwgs.org](http://plants.iwgs.org) and [victoria-adventure.org](http://victoria-adventure.org) are trustworthy, beginner-friendly sites full of great information.



### 2. Find the vessel that fits the plants.

You can use almost anything: aquariums, wood barrels, metal tubs, and more. As a general rule, aquatic plants grow to the size of their container, unless you get a larger one to accommodate them.



### 3. Waterproof your vessel.

Make sure it will hold water.



### 4. Plan your location.

Prepare everything exactly where you want it to stay (no water-sloshing, post-planting relocation here). Waterlilies need bright light to thrive, but many aquatic marginal plants do well in shade.



### 5. Buy your plants.

Look for plants at your local nursery, or purchase online. The International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society website, [iwgs.org](http://iwgs.org), lists commercial members, many of which will ship to your door.



### 6. Pot your plants.

You can use milk crates like we do if your pool or decorative pot is large enough to accommodate, or use regular terra cotta or plastic plant pots. You may use potting soil, but avoid perlite, vermiculite, or anything that floats. Never bury the crowns of the plants.



### 7. Feed your plants.

Put some aquatic plant fertilizer in the pot. Look for products labeled specifically this way, and follow the manufacturer's directions.



### 8. Place waterlilies at the correct height.

Waterlilies will grow as long as the crown is submerged, but generally prefer a depth of 18 to 24 inches. Set the potted waterlilies at the bottom of your decorative container.



### 9. Accent your plants.

Add marginal aquatic plants, also known as pond plants, such as taro, alligator flag, or canna lilies. Even these, which eventually can grow quite large, can be grown in decorative pots for a season. They are called marginal plants because they like to be placed closer to the water's surface, going with the ebb and flow. Like any landscape design, you want to have something tall, and something that cascades.



### 10. Tend your plants.

You can't just fill your aquatic container garden once and walk away. Refresh the water, and maintain the plants with deadheading.



### 11. Enjoy your aquatic container garden,

and remember, it's a matter of trial and error. If your plants are grumpy, try again. It's just like any type of gardening.



Kathy Cahill, Aquatic Areas Manager, with her own waterlily hybrid, *Nymphaea* 'Garfield Park.' Cahill has been with the Garden since May 2021 and brings more than 12 years of public garden horticulture experience to her role.



## Planning Your Favorite Garden Programs

Kaitlyn Dillard, Education Programs Manager

For Kaitlyn Dillard, planning for the future starts with reverse engineering.

“We imagine the final, completed event, and we go backward in a timeline to see what needs to be done,” says Kaitlyn, the Garden’s Education Programs Manager.

And the amount of time required for said planning? “It’s definitely at least a year in advance,” she shares.

In her role, Kaitlyn oversees some of the Garden’s most cherished programs, including W.O.N.D.E.R., our drop-in programming for children. Also on her roster: Tasting the Tropics fruit festival, returning July 2, and the inaugural Family Wonder Days weekend, coming up May 28 and 29. She also coordinates the Garden’s Collier Greens program, providing resources and activities for school and community gardens.

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*“Seeing guests’ faces light up when they ... have an enjoyable experience from something that we planned so hard for, makes it all worth it.”*

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“Seeing guests’ faces light up when they learn something new or have an enjoyable experience from something that we planned so hard for, makes it all worth it,” Kaitlyn says. Like the time one student, exuberant at the end of her Garden field trip, hugged Kaitlyn’s waist before she boarded the bus, exclaiming she would return soon with her family.



I always wanted to be a teacher, and I’ve always had a passion for the environment. I like to educate, to share my passion, and to encourage people to care about the world we live in.

Nature is not a place to visit. It’s all around you. You don’t have to study it in school in order to appreciate it. It’s not a destination. It’s in your backyard, and you can love it the same as when you visit the lush Garden here.

I say that I herd cats, but in a good way. I co-lead a great team of educators by helping them prepare and lead programs. We spend a lot of time planning.

Along with seeing us out in the Garden delivering our programs like daily tours and Dig Deeper, we also spend time creating new programming to engage with guests in new ways. We are already researching and developing programs for our next annual theme, Mexico: A Celebration of Plants & Culture, launching in September of this year.

The biggest challenge (in our work) can be finding the right tone for a program for our targeted audience. We are taking scientific jargon and breaking it down into everyday language. That is the role of educators and interpreters. That is what we are here for, making the hard concepts easy to understand.

The mission of our team is to educate visitors and our community about plants’ value to all life on Earth. Working with a team of like-minded people who are just as passionate of the natural world really makes a difference in the work we do.




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*“Working with a team of like-minded people who are just as passionate of the natural world really makes a difference in the work we do.”*

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📍 Check [naplesgarden.org/education](https://naplesgarden.org/education) for more on our daily in-person programs and online offerings.

# A sweet new crop for Florida?

University of Florida professor encourages growers and hobbyists to try their hand at cultivating vanilla orchids

Behind the Pastore Family Caribbean House, vanilla vines wind their way up trellises, showing off slender stems, oblong leaves, and, during blooming season, yellow flowers. It's no coincidence that we display these orchids in a way suggesting their agricultural potential. A University of Florida professor is working with growers throughout South Florida—including Collier and Lee counties—on cultivating a new specialty crop for the Sunshine State.

“We are trying to help both homeowners and commercial entrepreneurs grow vanilla,”



Dr. Alan Chambers said during a UF/Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences' Collier Extension workshop at Naples Botanical Garden in March. Nick Ewy, the Garden's Director of Collections, joined him to give the primer on vanilla orchids, how to grow them—and the potential payoff of doing so.

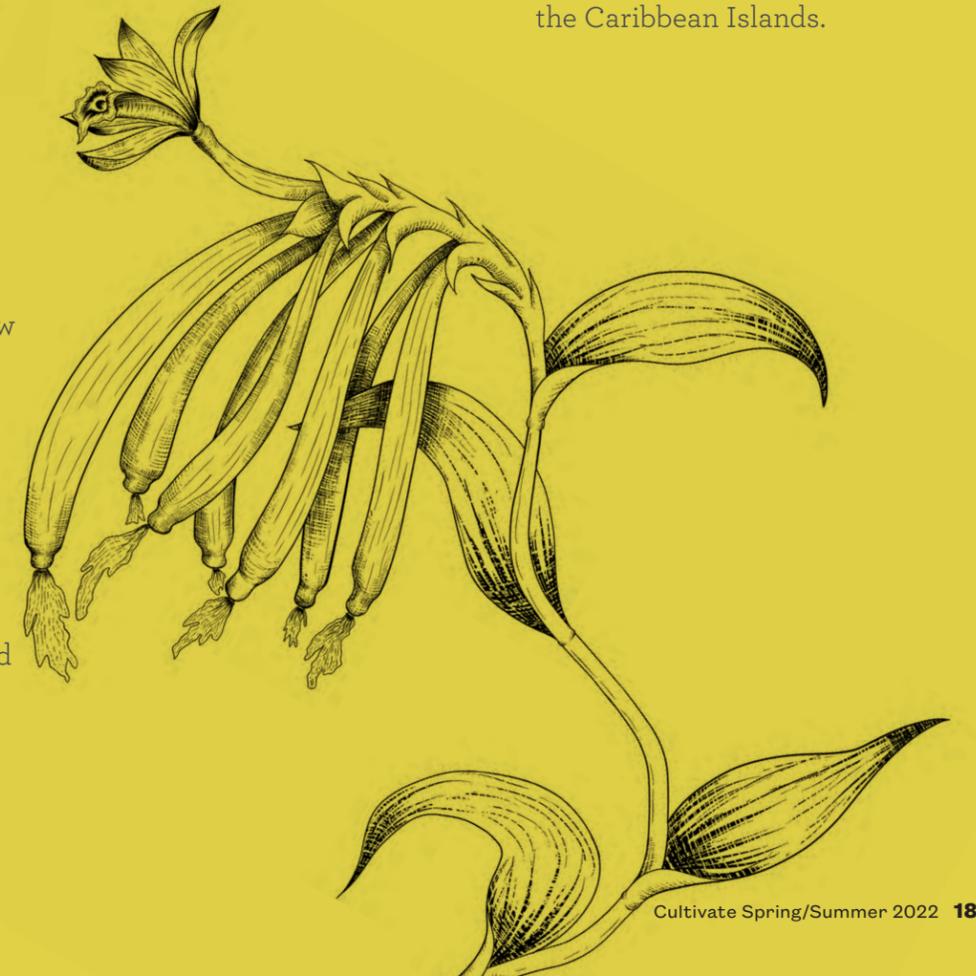
Vanilla could gross an estimated \$150,000 per acre, according to Chambers, an expert on tropical fruit breeding and genetics. (Strawberries, in contrast, gross about \$30,000.) A mere 200 cultivated acres could turn Florida into the world's fifth-largest producer of the favorite flavoring (Madagascar is No. 1). That aspiration may be years in the making, however. Vanilla

plants are hard to acquire; many sold online are not true *Vanilla planifolia* or *V. tahitensis*—the only species allowed to be sold as pure vanilla extract in the United States. And producing beans is a lot of work. Vanilla must be hand-pollinated, at least until a botanical mystery is solved.

**“We are trying to help both homeowners and commercial entrepreneurs grow vanilla”**

– Dr. Alan Chambers

On Lee County's Pine Island, a vanilla vine produces beans on its own. Chambers says neither he nor the grower has figured out which insect is doing the job.



“We just know year after year, the beans develop without (hand) pollination,” he said.

Fittingly, that vine grows up an ice cream bean tree (*Inga edulis*).

You can view vanilla vines growing on trees throughout the Garden, including a mahogany in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden and a raintree in front of the LaGrippe Orchid Garden. Note: Our vanilla collection includes *V. planifolia* and *V. tahitensis*, as well as other species. The vanilla trellis is located in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden, which also features a small agricultural area showing a backyard garden plot typical in the Caribbean Islands.



Bob Alonzo examines his robust and ever-growing collection of plants at his Naples home.

# Plantsmen unseen

## A behind-the-scenes look at how two plant collectors are literally helping the Garden grow

By Jennifer Reed, Editorial Director

**T**he visits generally come without warning, like on a February afternoon around lunchtime.

Bob Alonzo arrives at the Garden, Santa-like, with a botanical gift in hand.

“I’ve got something for Nick,” he announces, referring to Director of Collections Nick Ewy. The Naples resident is a collector of tropical plants and botanical books, as well-versed in horticulture as an industry professional but an avowed layperson who prefers to separate his passion from his occupation (he’s a retired FedEx representative). He combs the tropics and a network of equally ardent plant people to find the rare, the exceptional, the one-of-the-kind, the head-turners, and the specimens that simply make him smile.

“Plants have always been an interest of mine ever since I was a little kid,” he says.

Collectors like Alonzo are the secret fertilizer that help grow botanical collections. You need the right key to unlock their world—earned trust and goodwill—but once accepted, these individuals and their vast networks serve as invaluable conduits of new specimens.

“Plant collectors are very special people,” says Vice President of Horticulture Brian Galligan. It took our 12-year-old Garden time to demonstrate we had the means, expertise, and passion to care for their treasures.

Galligan understands their initial reluctance.

“When you are giving someone something, you’re giving them a legacy,” he explains.

Today, however, collectors routinely approach the Garden seeking a home for prized plants. Our staff reciprocates, gifting plants that match the collectors’ interests.

“When you go see someone, you always bring a plant,” Galligan says. “But you’ve got to make sure you bring something worthy of them.”

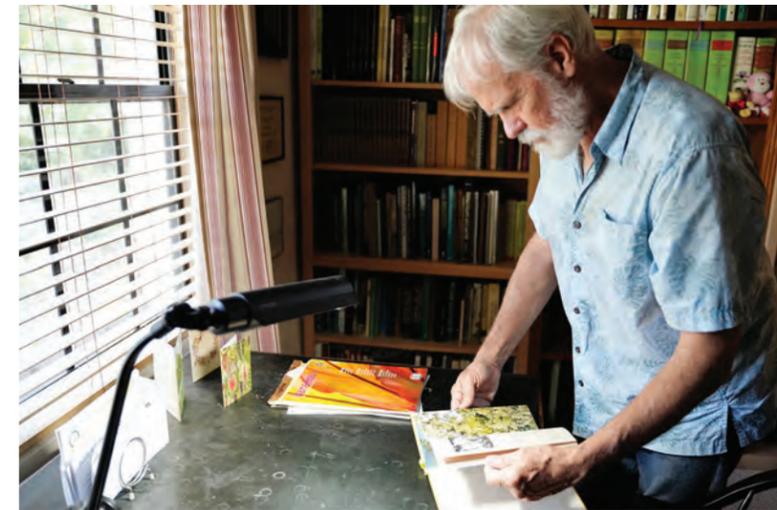
These days, the relationships between botanical gardens and collectors are especially important. The art of plant collecting is becoming a thing of the past as land costs, lifestyle changes, and shifting interests have led younger generations to devote their time and money elsewhere.

“I do worry about the future,” says Galligan, who hopes to see more young people spend time in nature or visit gardens to spark their interest in the botanical world. Here, we introduce you to two collectors, Alonzo, who collects myriad species with a particular fondness for crotons, and Adam Pollak, a *Ceiba* specialist in Loxahatchee, to offer a glimpse into their passion for plants and their relationship with the Garden.

## Bob Alonzo is a born collector.

His extended family included both plant and book collectors, such as a great uncle who worked for the Library of Congress as a book conservator and relatives who have been collecting crotons—his love—for a century.

“It kind of runs in my blood,” Alonzo says with a grin.



**E**ven as a child, he pored through botanical books. One was *Florida’s Beautiful Crotons* by Dr. B. Frank Brown. The author included his address at the book’s end, inviting plant aficionados to look him up should they be in town. Alonzo did.

“I was too young to drive. I had my mom take me over there and tapped on his door. We just clicked. We became best friends,” Alonzo remembers. He was about 15.

Over time, Alonzo encountered some of the most respected horticulturists of their day: Edwin Menninger, known as “The Flowering Tree Man” for his prolific writing on the subject; Jack Holmes, the landscape architect behind Busch Gardens; and Albert Greenberg, credited as the founder of Florida’s aquaculture industry.

The latter became his mentor.

“He made me realize I had a special gift—embrace it,” Alonzo says. Greenberg also instilled in Alonzo a creed of sorts: “He taught me to be a selector, not a collector,” Alonzo says. “There are too many plant people who obsess about, ‘I have to have this, and I have to have that.’ You will be a lot happier if you have just a few of the finest quality things.”

He lives in Naples on an idyllic, 2-acre property punctuated by a stream and shaded by towering oaks. He is surrounded by the things he loves—plants, books, art. Everything has a story.

“I don’t like cactus, but I like *Rhipsalis*,” he says, gesturing to a tree where the epiphytic cactus drapes from the branches. This variety grows pink berries, rather than the typical white. There’s an assortment of crotons, including a pink-veined ‘Lucille Alonzo,’ named for his aunt, a croton collector who inspired his fascination with the species. In another part of the yard, he points out a *Saraca indica* with orange flowers that resemble *ixoras*. They came from the yard of Edwin Menninger, the Flowering Tree Man.

“I only met him once, but it was such an honor,” Alonzo reflects.



This flower spike is *Aechmea cephaloides*; it is growing in the Kapnick Brazilian Garden, a gift from Bob Alonzo.

Treasures abound inside too, in his rare botanical book and magazine collection. Alonzo’s holdings include: a complete set of *The American Orchid Society’s Bulletin*, a journal dating back to June 1932; a collection of *The Aquarium*, a turn-of-the-century magazine “issued in the study, care, and breeding of aquatic life;” and a monumental find: *Reichenbachia*, a 19th-century series by Frederick Sander, Queen Victoria’s orchid grower. It features life-sized, full-color illustrations of nearly 200 orchids. His are from the “Imperial Edition.” Only 100 of these sets were ever printed; they were signed by Sander and gifted to select individuals. Alonzo purchased his through an auction house.

Our horticulturists rely on Alonzo’s deep knowledge and discerning eye to help grow our collections.

“A collector will visit a nursery, and zero in on what’s unusual,” says Ewy. “It’s great to have an extra set of eyes out there. He’s got feelers out all the time.”

“With Bob,” says Galligan, “you know he’s gonna share something. You know you’re gonna learn something. And you know you’re gonna hear good stories.”

Alonzo’s contributions are sprinkled throughout the Garden: a *Quesnelia edmundoi* bromeliad growing in a tabebuia tree; a *Pitcairnia sanguinea* hybrid that produces stunning red tubular flowers; a *Brassavola grandiflora*, or Lady of the Night orchid, known for its nocturnal blooms and delicate fragrance; a set of cycads that Alonzo helped the Garden acquire from another collector. Ewy keeps other gifts from Alonzo in the orchid house until they are ready for display, including a *Cymbidium aloifolium*, an unusual dark maroon version of the orchid.

“It’ll be really pretty,” Ewy says. “I’m always giving him stuff, too,” he adds. “That back-and-forth goes a long way.”

And sure enough, after Alonzo offers a tour of his property for this article, he picks up a tiny root from a ginger plant.

“Give this to Nick,” he says.

## Pollak is an unlikely plantsman.

He studied engineering but ultimately went into the family business, horses. His parents owned a 26-acre horse showing and boarding facility, White Fences Equestrian Center, in Palm Beach County. Pollak took ownership in 2009.

He's not sure how or when he became smitten by trees, though he suspects an encounter with a majestic kapok near the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach may have helped spark his fascination. He pulls up a photo on his cellphone. The tree dwarfs him.



Adam Pollak alongside a *Ceiba* hybrid grown from a cutting of the Garden's "Dancing Tree"

Until 2014, his property was mostly open fields divided by its namesake fences

Then, Pollak planted a *Ficus altissima*, the first of hundreds of plants that promise to turn the property into as much of a botanical showcase as it is an equestrian one.

Pollak enjoys tropical trees in general, but his particular interest is the *Ceibas*, with their spiked bark, showy flowers, and pods that produce tufts of silk. They are commonly called "silk floss" or "floss silk" trees.



| A close-up of *Ceiba erianthos* at White Fences

To start his collection,

Pollak combed neighborhoods throughout Broward, Miami and the Acreage, a semi-rural region in Palm Beach County. When specimens caught his eye, he knocked on doors and asked to take cuttings.

Eventually, he exhausted the supply of interesting specimens to acquire locally, but he realized he could create his own unique varieties. He began to experiment, mixing genetics to produce trees that bloom with unique colors, patterns, shapes, and sizes. He also crossed highly fragrant trees with those that produce eye-catching flowers in the hopes of getting the best of both. Pollak can't predict which seed will yield the most desired new silk floss—each seed pod contains countless variations—so he gave away seedlings to residents, schools, and parks. He asked recipients to grow them and send photos of the trees once they bloomed.

In all, he distributed some 1,500 seedlings through his White Fences Floss Silk Project. He takes cuttings of the ones that captivate him and grafts them to other seed-grown *Ceibas* to create clones.

"When I drive through the Acreage, I see my trees, which is pretty cool," he says.

In the fall-blooming season, his property is awash in silk floss flowers. That's when our horticulture managers visited him and went "shopping."

"It was neat to see the variety," says Ewy. He, Galligan, and Liz Chehayl, the Brian Holley Curator of Collections, asked Pollak for about 25 specimens to add to our collection. The trees feature an assortment of fragrances, petal shapes, sizes, and hues—including a "rainbow" colored one that "doesn't even look like a *Ceiba*," Ewy says. Pollak grafted those trees this past March and shipped them to the Garden where we will grow them in pots until they are ready to be planted.

The relationship goes

both ways. When Pollak started collecting trees, he visited Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach, Leu Gardens in Orlando, and Naples Botanical Garden to learn more and to grow his collection. Our Garden included a *Ceiba erianthos* crossed with a *Ceiba speciosa*. He requested permission to take a cutting, which has since grown into an impressive tree near a quiet pond. Pollak has used it as a parent for all sorts of crosses, including varieties our team requested—a full-circle botanical partnership.

That wasn't just any tree, Galligan notes. The cutting we gave Pollak was from "The Dancing Tree," a descendent of a *Ceiba* the legendary Brazilian landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx had grown. We lost it during Hurricane Irma.

That tree's fate is a reason why Pollak distributes his trees as widely as possible.

"That concept of having back-up trees is hugely important," he says. "One lightning strike or hurricane, and a one-of-a-kind tree is gone forever." Since planting that first *Ficus* years ago, Pollak has added hundreds more plants. Last year alone, he planted 60 *Ceiba* in his trial area and 312 plants representing various species, including flowering trees, palms, and cycads.

Fittingly, he amended the name of his property to White Horses Equestrian Center and Arboretum.

"It's just so impressive what he's doing," Chehayl says.



*Bulnesia arborea* lining the White Fences property. Photo: Adam Pollak. |



*Butea monosperma* |

# Mystique in the Water

When Longwood Gardens, the world's largest producer of giant water platters, began renovations on its waterlily pools, it turned to the Garden for help. Here's more on our journey of hand-pollinating these colossal plants.

By Jennifer Reed, Editorial Director



Top right: This cross section of a second-night *Victoria cruziana* flower reveals its reproductive parts and fresh pollen on the anthers. The stamen will be removed and used to pollinate a first-night flower.



On an overcast morning last August, the Water Garden's boardwalk feels a little bit like an operating room.

Tim Jennings, Senior Horticulturist at Pennsylvania's Longwood Gardens, and Kathy Cahill, Naples Botanical Garden's Aquatic Areas Manager, bend over a tightly closed pink and white *Victoria* waterlily they had removed from a nearby plant. *Snip, snip!* Scissors in hand, Jennings makes a few deft cuts to reveal its insides. Cahill, using tweezers, removes several strands of stamen and examines them for pollen grains.

"It looks like there could be some there," Jennings says. He swirls a paint brush around the flower's middle and inspects the bristles for further evidence. Convinced that there could be, the pair don boots, wade through water, and insert the stamen into another bloom still affixed to its pedicel or flower stem.

Their task?

To produce seeds.

A new collaboration charges Naples Botanical Garden with generating seeds of the *Victoria* waterlilies, giant aquatic plants that are among the botanical world's most alluring specimens. Longwood is renowned for its seasonal *Victoria* displays—and for producing and germinating seeds to maintain its collection and share with botanical gardens around the world. But Longwood's lily pools are closed for renovations for the first time in its 65-year history. To ensure that adequate seed is produced during the renovation period, Longwood horticulturists turned to our Garden for help.

Under a three-year agreement, Naples will produce seeds of the *Victoria amazonica*, *Victoria cruziana*, and the Longwood hybrid, a cross of the two. The partnership will ensure these magnificent plants remain a viable part of botanical collections. The collaboration runs through 2024 and may evolve into further opportunities beyond that.

It's a project both gardens have embraced—a chance to observe seed production in a new setting with a longer growing season, an opportunity for botanical detective work and troubleshooting, and a venture that brings together a legacy garden with an adolescent one.

"I never thought that within 15 years we'd be working with one of the greatest gardens in the world," says Naples Vice President of Horticulture Brian Galligan.

Longwood horticulturists began growing and displaying *Victoria* waterlilies in 1957 and became the first to successfully hybridize the two species in 1961. In the decades since, they have shared the Longwood hybrid with more than 140 botanical gardens around the world.

"Our partnership with Naples Botanical Garden is enabling us to continue the seed production of *Victoria amazonica* and *Victoria cruziana* while our own waterlily display is on hiatus," explains Longwood Gardens Vice President of Horticulture Sharon Loving. "Together, we are ensuring that these amazing plants can continue to grow and thrive at public gardens around the world."



One of five waterlily pools at Longwood Gardens. Photo: Longwood Gardens.

Native to South America, *Victoria* waterlilies were first shared with the wider world in the early 1800s and have captivated their audiences since. Thaddaeus Haenke, the first botanist to systematically explore South America, is believed to have been the first non-indigenous person to spot them during his 1801 exploration of the Mamoré River, a tributary of the Amazon. In 1835, another botanist, Aimé Bonpland, sent the water platter's seeds to the head of Jardin des Plantes in Paris. He had no idea if they had reached their destination until his 1849 visit to the Brazilian city Rio Pardo where he spotted illustrations of *Victoria* waterlilies on ladies' fans and in Britain's *Penny Magazine* and *The Illustrated London News*.

Meanwhile, German botanist Robert Hermann Schomburgk stumbled upon the giant lilies while on a British-sponsored expedition through Guyana. He sent notes, drawings, and samples to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, where botanist John Lindley established that they belonged in their own genus. Lindley in 1837 named the species *Victoria regia* in honor of Queen Victoria. (Longwood Curator of Plants Tomasz Anisko documented the plant's full history in his 2013 tome *Victoria the Seductress: A Cultural and Natural History of the World's Greatest Water Lily*.)

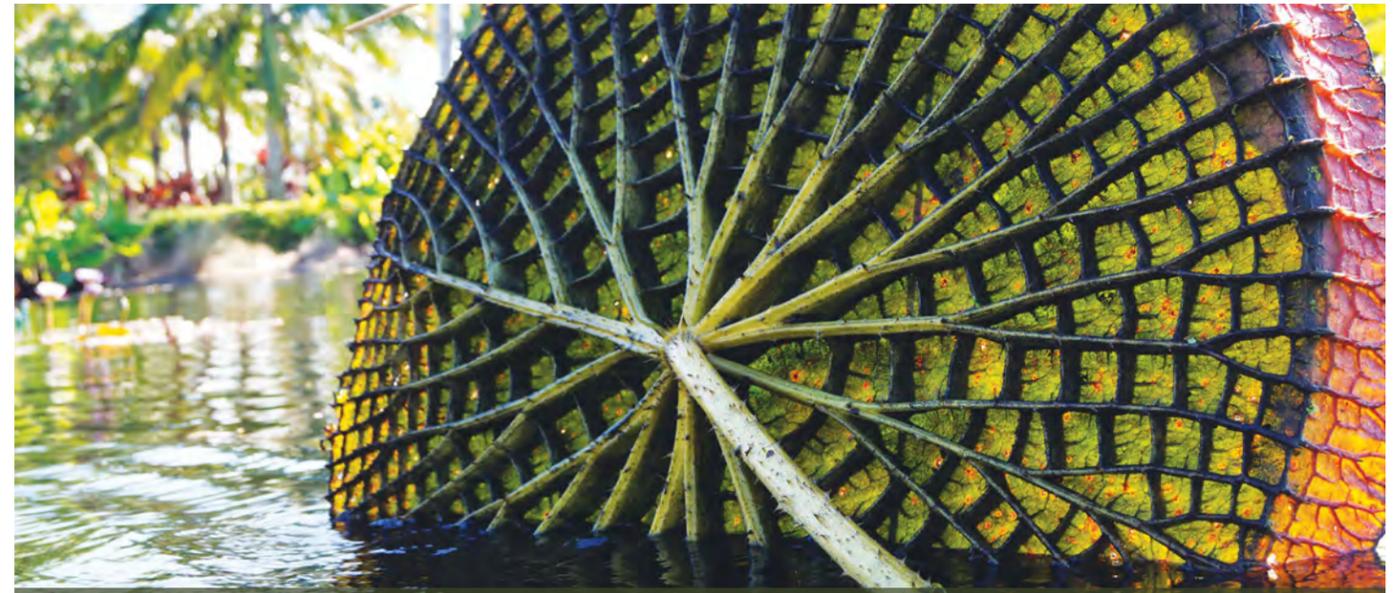
The plant's size alone awes its spectators. In cultivation, lily pads of the *V. amazonica*, the larger of the two species, span some 6 to 7 feet with 15-inch blooms. The more cold-tolerant *V. cruziana* is slightly smaller with a pronounced lip around the pad's edges. For both species, as well as the Longwood hybrid, new pads emerge like closed fists and unfurl to those great expanses.

**“Together, we are ensuring that these amazing plants can continue to grow and thrive at public gardens around the world.”**

**- SHARON LOVING, VICE PRESIDENT OF HORTICULTURE, LONGWOOD GARDENS**



Tim Jennings, front left, coaches Kathy Cahill, front right, on hand-pollination techniques while Gabrielle Vignet-Williams and Danny Cox look on.



A tightly connected framework of veins along with a spiky, barbed underside give this *Victoria* Longwood Hybrid its distinctive appearance.



Cahill and Jennings hand pollinate a *Victoria* waterlily by placing the anthers of one into the stigmatic cup of another.



**“Their leaves are so unique. Their flowers are so unique. And the more you dive into them, the more they just beg you to look closer ...”**

**- TIM JENNINGS, SENIOR HORTICULTURIST, LONGWOOD GARDENS**

Beneath their surface-level beauty, these waterlilies are fierce: Razor-sharp prickles cover the stems and the undersides of pads, warding off predators. The plants' structure is an architectural feat: A lattice of ribs support the pads, which can hold an inordinate amount of weight—65 or more pounds on mid- to larger-sized pads. Air trapped within the ribs enables the pads to float.

The plants, in fact, inspired 19th-century architect Joseph Paxton, who reportedly based his design of London's Crystal Palace, built in 1851 to house the Great Exhibition, on the underside of a *Victoria* pad. The 128-foot-high structure was composed of more than 1,000 iron columns and 900,000 square feet of plate glass.

The flowers are just as intriguing. On their first night's opening, they are white, emit a fruity fragrance, and generate a surprising internal heat. The warmth and the scent attract their pollinators, scarab beetles. The blooms turn pink on their second night and begin producing pollen. Thus, when horticulturists such as Cahill and Jennings pollinate by hand, they take the pollen from a second-night bloom and insert it into a first-night one.

“Their leaves are so unique. Their flowers are so unique. And the more you dive into them, the more they just beg you to look closer,” Jennings says. “And the closer you look, the more you realize you don't know about them.”



More than 100 freshly harvested Longwood hybrid seeds with their arils still intact, harvested New Year's Eve, 2021

**N**ot everyone can grow Victorias, particularly *V. amazonica*. Perhaps that's part of the reason they maintain their mystique.

For starters, *V. amazonica* seeds can be difficult to germinate. Longwood is one of a handful of botanical gardens and aquatic nurseries to successfully do so, ensuring both the species and the Longwood hybrid continue to persist. The seeds have a short shelf life; *V. amazonica* seeds harvested during one season must be used during the next. Germination rates vary from 20 to 40%, and an even smaller number grow to maturity.

Seed production in Naples was sluggish at first. By the first week of November 2021, Cahill had produced some, but not nearly what she had hoped for. Jennings generally performs 18 to 20 hand pollinations each year, which yield between 50 to 100 seeds a piece, giving him a seasonal harvest of 1,500 to 2,000. Cahill, whose pollination window is much longer due to our climate, had produced three bags with 15 to 20 seeds a piece. Two other bags had failed.

"It's a learning process," reassures Jennings, who is at the Garden checking on progress. Cahill had followed the pollination protocols correctly, he confirms. There are lots of variables to consider—the water's depth, acidity, and temperature; sunlight levels; soil differences; pollen viability.

"Small things can make big differences," Cahill says.

"We're going to just test as many variables as we can," Jennings concludes.



Cahill and Jennings in the Water Garden in August 2021

**T**hey didn't need to undertake a full-blown botanical investigation because two months later, Cahill announces: "It's a slam dunk!" She had started staking the seed pods to keep them from floating away from the parent plant, a step that seems to have helped turn the tide. Beyond that factor, she's not sure why the plants suddenly started producing.

By the end of December, Cahill had amassed 864 *V. cruziana* seeds, 75 *V. amazonica* ones, and 391 of the hybrid. This year, she and Jennings will standardize some variables, such as pots and fertilizer, to better guarantee production. They decide to house the *Victorias* used for seed production in the upper portion of the Kapnick Brazilian Garden, the pond by the Burle Marx Mosaic. It's nearly as deep as Longwood's pools and offers the greatest hours of direct sunlight. Longwood heats its pools, while we do not.

"It'll be the maternity ward," Cahill quips.

In February, Cahill announces more good news.

"Germination happening!" she exclaims in a text message, accompanied by a photo. In her office, a few pea-sized *V. amazonica* seeds sprout spindly roots. They were seeds from Longwood not Naples, but cause for celebration, nonetheless. Cahill will continue trying to coax *V. amazonica* seeds from plants grown in our Garden to germinate this year.

"Tim and I both are completely captivated by these plants," she says. "They're hypnotic, they're enormous, they're finicky, they're dangerous. All these years later, they're still exciting. They just keep fascinating me."



**"They're hypnotic, they're enormous, they're finicky, they're dangerous. All these years later, they're still exciting. They just keep fascinating me."**

**- KATHY CAHILL,  
AQUATIC AREAS MANAGER, NAPLES BOTANICAL GARDEN**

The *Victoria* waterlilies will be on display starting this summer and will remain in our water features through the rest of the calendar year. In the upper Brazilian Garden pool, guests can observe *V. cruziana* on one side, *V. amazonica* on the other and at least one hybrid in the middle. Guests this summer and fall may catch Cahill in the act of hand pollinating in early mornings or see evidence of her work in the form of white bags encasing newly pollinated flowers. More Longwood hybrids will be displayed in the lower Brazilian pool, and the Water Garden will feature additional *V. cruziana*. The plants evolve quickly. Visit often, and you can witness the blooms transform from white to pink and observe the pads expand into the massive platters that inspired botanical expeditions of the past and continue to amaze audiences in the present.



What's better than a refreshing cold soup on a hot summer day?  
**A Souper Summer Special**

**Ajo blanco, also known as white gazpacho, is referred to as Spain's chilled summer soup.**

For this recipe, Fogg Café Chef Andrew Foyt combines coconut milk, almond, garlic clove, and cucumber for a creamy soup brightened by mint oil and garnished with pickled mint leaves and parsley.

To add a pop of texture, the chef adds roasted grapes, while the mint oil provides a hint of spice to the rich soup. Drizzle the oil in a decorative aesthetic on top of the soup to wow your dinner guests. Enjoy this creamy summer dish with flavors that will melt in your mouth! Make this soup at home, and try it at the Garden's Fogg Café during Tasting the Tropics on Saturday, July 2 from 9am-2pm.

*Chef Andrew sourced the coconut and garnish herbs from the Garden with harvesting help from Matt Herrman, Tropical Fruit Specialist.*

**Ingredients**

**Coconut Gazpacho:**

- 1 quart coconut milk
- 1 cup blanched and sliced almonds
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- ¾ cup cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup lime juice
- pinch kosher salt

**Mint Oil:**

- 1 cup pickled mint leaves
- 1 cup parsley leaves
- ½ cup canola oil, or any neutral oil

**Roasted Grapes:**

- 2 cups red seedless grapes
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

**For the Gazpacho:**

Place all ingredients in a blender, and blend on high for one minute, or until well emulsified. Pour into a separate container, and chill for at least two hours.

**For the Mint Oil:**

Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a small pot. Once boiling, steep mint and parsley leaves in water for 30 seconds, or until they turn bright green. Scoop herbs into a prepared ice bath to "shock" herbs and stop the cooking process. After a few minutes, remove the herbs from the ice bath, and squeeze out the excess water. Put the herbs on a cloth napkin, roll over the edge, and wring out leftover water. Once dried, place the herbs into a blender with the oil, and blend on high until smooth and bright green. Transfer to another container; let chill.

**For the Grape Garnish:**

Pick the grapes off the vine, and toss in the sugar, salt, and oil. Transfer to a sheet pan lined with parchment paper, and roast in a 300-degree oven for 30 minutes. Transfer to a container; let chill.

**Assembly:**

Pour chilled gazpacho into your preferred soup cup, arrange 4-5 roasted grapes on top, and drizzle with mint oil.

**MEMBERS SAVE 10% in Fogg Café and in the Berger Shop in the Garden!**



**Experiment with Outdoor Science**

by Nick Arnold

For kids, it is never too early to grow your green thumb. Get hands-on experience in the garden with outdoor experiments! Watering is required, so you'll need a child-sized watering can.



\$15.95

**Rock Painting Kit**



\$18

On a rainy day, spark your imagination as you paint rocks with friends.



\$30

**Wildflower Seed Pop**

Looking to learn about pollinators? Kids can plant a Wildflower Seed Pop, and watch the wild bergamot, black-eyed Susans, purple coneflowers, and other wildflowers as they bloom and attract pollinators. Make sure to track your garden's process with the activity mat. Use binoculars so you don't miss all the buzz!



**Nature**

by Ainsley Arment

Nature truly is the best classroom! Go through these 25 creative ideas to engage with the great outdoors. Kids can cultivate a garden plot, create a mud kitchen in the backyard, or set up a birdwatching station in the front window, equipped with notebooks, binoculars, and bird guides.

\$22.99

**Grow Green:**

*Tips and Advice for Gardening with Intention*  
 by Jen Chillingsworth



Book: \$12.99



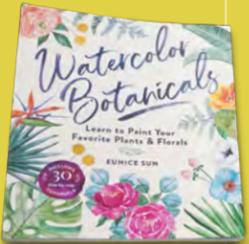
Seed Packets: \$5 (each)

Do you love gardens but don't know how to start your own? Use these guides and seed packets to jump-start your backyard dreams!

**Watercolor Botanicals**

by Eunice Sun

For adults, learn to paint your favorite plants in watercolor, design flower arrangements, or bake floral-infused cookies.



\$19.95



**Butterfly Migration Puzzle**

Butterflies are truly fascinating creatures. Learn about the different types and their migration patterns through a challenging puzzle and engaging matching game.

\$24.99

**Summer Skill Starters!**

Get a pen and paper, and draft your summer bucket list. Summer is a great time to slow down, and learn a new skill or hobby while having fun! Look no further than the Berger Shop in the Garden to provide endless activities for all ages.



# Your Membership Questions — *Answered!*

## How can I contact the Membership Office?

The Garden's Membership Office is staffed Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm. You can contact the Membership Team by email at [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org), or call 239.325.1916.

## How can I locate my membership ID?

Your membership ID is located on your membership card and at the top of our monthly Members-Only email. If you need your membership ID, you can contact the Membership Office by email at [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org), or call 239.325.1916, Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm.

## How can I update my name or contact information?

Please email [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org) to let us know about changes to your:

- Name
- Address(es)
- Phone number(s)
- Email address(es)
- Or to add/change a secondary member (for *Family* level and above).

## I lost my membership card. What should I do?

- **Admission without a card:**  
Members should never worry about admission to the Garden! Simply provide your name at Visitor Services, and we can confirm your membership.
- **Digital membership cards:**  
Should you need assistance with your digital download, our Visitor Services Team is happy to help during your next Garden visit.
- **Success of our digital card program:**  
We introduced digital membership cards less than a year ago, and the response has been wonderful! We are so grateful that our Members have embraced this program, which helps to reduce reliance on single-use plastics and saves resources that can be redirected toward improvements to the Garden's plantings and programs. The digital membership card program is a success, and we have YOU to thank!
- **How to get a digital download link:**  
Email us at [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org) to obtain a download link.

## I don't have a smartphone, so I cannot use the digital membership card. What can I do?

- A plastic card can be requested by emailing [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org).
- You will be opted out of the digital card program.
- Your membership ID will remain the same.
- The new card will be mailed within two weeks of receipt of your request.

## Can I have two membership cards?

- **Digital membership cards:** We distribute digital membership card links to a maximum of **two** email addresses or cellphone numbers per Member household for *Family* level and above, and up to **one** email address/cell number for *Individual* Members.
- **Plastic membership cards:** One membership card is issued per Member number. If you don't have your card handy, simply provide your name at Visitor Services, and we can confirm your membership.
- **Send both types of membership card requests** to [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org).

## I'm not receiving email updates from the Garden. Can you add my email address to my membership account?

We provide announcements on the Garden's upcoming events and Member benefits by email, and we don't want you to miss out on anything! Please send an email to [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org) with your full name, address, and the email address(es) you would like us to add.

To help ensure that you receive our email communications, please add the following email addresses to your email contact list:

- [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org)
- [tickets@naplesgarden.org](mailto:tickets@naplesgarden.org)
- [email@naplesgarden.org](mailto:email@naplesgarden.org)

## Where can I find information on reciprocal garden partners, claim my bonus magazine offer, and find the most recent issue of *Cultivate*, the Garden magazine?

Members can visit [naplesgarden.org/membership](http://naplesgarden.org/membership) to find information on benefits at each membership level, plus much more. From this page, you can also view a list of reciprocal garden partners across the state, claim your complimentary subscription to *Better Homes & Gardens* or *Martha Stewart Living*, and download the most recent issue of *Cultivate*, the Garden magazine.

## Can I upgrade my membership?

Yes! Membership can be upgraded simply by paying the difference between levels. The month of expiration will remain the same, allowing you extra time with your new benefits. However, if the expiration date is five months away or less, we ask that you renew your membership at the new level. Please call us at 239.325.1354, and we will be happy to assist you.

## Why am I receiving a renewal reminder before my expiration date?

The Garden sends a series of renewal reminders roughly three months ahead of your membership expiration date. You never lose any time by renewing early. We simply add 12 months to your current expiration date.

## Why did I receive a renewal reminder after making a membership contribution?

On occasion, you may receive an additional reminder after renewing. Our mailing lists are created a few weeks prior to the mailing. If your membership contribution was processed after the list was created, you may receive an additional reminder. You can always confirm your most recent membership contribution by emailing [membership@naplesgarden.org](mailto:membership@naplesgarden.org) or by calling 239.325.1916.

*Learn More!*



Membership FAQ



Digital Card FAQ



## Consider the Impact of a Royal Palm Society Membership

Your gifts of \$1,500 or more as Royal Palm Society members aid in the Garden's conservation, horticulture, and education initiatives.

When you make a gift to the Garden at this level, you increase our ability to guide our community in creating storm-resistant, drought-tolerant landscapes and to collaborate with partners throughout the Caribbean. These and related efforts help threatened plants thrive in the Garden and to strengthen vital connections between plants and people.

To learn more about becoming a Royal Palm Society Member, and the exclusive events and behind-the-scenes educational opportunities that await, please visit [naplesgarden.org/membership](https://naplesgarden.org/membership), or email [development@naplesgarden.org](mailto:development@naplesgarden.org).

ROYAL PALM SOCIETY  
Naples Botanical Garden



## Grow the Garden's Future Through the Perennial Legacy Society

Including the Garden in your estate plans is a vital step to connect people with the plant world, both now and for generations to come. If you're interested in including the Garden in your estate plans, we encourage you to speak with your financial adviser, and access our planned giving resources at [naplesgarden.org/support/donate](https://naplesgarden.org/support/donate).

To inform us of your future gift intention and become a part of the Perennial Legacy Society, contact Rhea Merrill, Director of Development, at 239.571.3806 or [rmerrill@naplesgarden.org](mailto:rmerrill@naplesgarden.org).



# Why I Give

**Linda Koehn**



**Two years, four months, and 11 days.**

That's how long Linda Koehn served as chair for *Hats in the Garden*, the Sustaining Leadership Council's signature event. Koehn's unusually long tenure is due to the pandemic; she had been tapped to lead

the fundraiser in 2020, but COVID-19 prompted the SLC to create a virtual event instead.

Good things, they say, come to those who wait.

The event, held in March, drew more than 600 attendees and raised a historic \$1.6 million, resources that will support the Garden's multi-pronged mission and the event's special focus: making the Garden more accessible to area residents.

During the luncheon, the SLC awarded Koehn the Jane Purdy Berger Distinguished Service Award for her exceptional leadership. She's only the second person to receive it; the first was Berger herself in 2018.

Koehn's deep love for the Garden is evident in both her commitment to Hats and in her many years of service and giving to the organization through the SLC.

She's been coming to the Garden since its early days, as it took shape from vision to reality.

"I would come and walk around the lake," she remembers. A botanical garden, she believes, is a vital part of a community's natural and cultural infrastructure, which is why she began directing her philanthropy toward its development. Koehn attended the first Hats in the Garden in 2004 and joined the SLC in 2014.

"I believe that the natural world benefits human beings, that it heals their spirits," she says.

That was particularly true during the pandemic when the Garden became a respite for her and for so many others.

"Against the calming backdrop of a palm canopy, there was always something to interest, inspire, and amaze us," she reflects. "This may be why the botanical garden has been so popular over the last two years."

This year's Fund-a-Need supports Garden for All, which strives to remove financial, linguistic, and cultural barriers that may prevent Southwest Florida residents from visiting the Garden. This year, the program focuses on offering complimentary access for the region's educators—among the pandemic's most critical professions.

"We need to do more," Koehn said during the event, in urging attendees to contribute. "We need to reach more COVID-affected people who will benefit from the healing touch of the natural world."

Koehn and her husband, Tom, are deeply involved in cultural, academic, and community institutions in the communities in which they reside, Naples and Des Moines, Iowa. Either individually or as a couple, the Koehns have supported and held leadership positions at organizations including the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, the Des Moines Metro Opera, the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, the Des Moines Symphony and the Des Moines Art Center. The Koehns were honored with this year's "Bravo Award," presented annually to a person, family, or foundation whose commitments to arts, culture, and heritage have had an enduring positive effect on the Central Iowa region.

Locally, the couple supports the Garden, Naples Zoo, and the Naples Children & Educational Foundation where they are trustees, as well as past chairs of the Naples Winter Wine Festival.

To Linda Koehn, the Garden is a beautiful blend of culture and the outdoors—a kind of living, four-dimensional art.

"I like the ever-changing surprise," she says. "Nature will surprise and amaze us. It is always giving us something new."

## *Hats in the Garden Tropical Splendor*

PRESENTED BY WILLIAM RAVEIS REAL ESTATE

*Wednesday, March 30, 2022*

HATS IN THE GARDEN CHAIR | LINDA KOEHN

Naples Botanical Garden wishes to thank the Sustaining Leadership Council for their longtime commitment to the Garden. Congratulations on making *Hats in the Garden 2022* a tremendous success!

Thanks to the incredible show of support from our guests, our Fund-a-Need, the *Garden for All* program, received extraordinary support.

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“Hopefully, you pick some good ones, but if not, you just try it again next year. It’s a numbers game.”

— Brandon McLane, president of Florida Aquatic Nurseries, on germinating hundreds of seeds each season to achieve the nursery’s signature purple and scarlet hues

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**Read about this Fort Lauderdale-based nursery’s award-winning waterlilies on display in the Garden through the end of summer: [naplesgarden.org/waterlily-blooms](https://naplesgarden.org/waterlily-blooms)**



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