



| On the cover: Opuntia (prickly pear) cactus





## The Garden closed 2022 with ...

- ✓ A \$16 million operating budget
- √ 15,000 Member households
- √ 31 new staff positions







# From our President & CEO

By all measures, 2022 was on track to be a remarkable year in terms of key indicators such as revenue and Member households.

We culminated our hugely successful 2021–22 season, *Intertwined*, and were ready to launch our biggest-ever year of programming, *Mexico:* A *Celebration of Plants & Culture*. We celebrated new partnerships with local cities that increasingly turn to the Garden for advice.

And then Hurricane Ian hit. The damage was serious, though not catastrophic. We focused on gathering data for long-term study, cleaning up the Garden, and supporting those in our community, including staff members who lost homes and vehicles.

We rebounded in a month, thanks to specialists from fellow botanical gardens, experienced volunteers, and, of course, our incredible staff. We reopened on November 1 to a community anxious for respite and a sense of normalcy. On that same day, we introduced our first exhibition of the season, *La Calavera Catrina*. A few days later, we hosted our inaugural Día de los Muertos Celebration. The sculptures, music, festivities, and spirituality uplifted moods during a difficult time.

Hurricane Ian no doubt will dominate our memories of 2022. But as this annual report reminds us, the year was about so much more. It's because of your support that we were able to accomplish the many things we celebrate here. Thank you, and I wish you and your families a prosperous (and hopefully, hurricane-free) year to come.

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**Donna McGinnis**President & CEO

What a year 2022 was! We broke ground on the Evenstad Horticulture Campus, which will give our staff state-of-the art growing facilities. We hosted the most successful Hats in the Garden ever, raising over \$1.6 million. We saw so many new Members and so many new families enjoying all the Garden has to offer.

When I think of the Garden, one word comes to mind: resilience. That trait showed itself early, with founding families, including mine, working for years to turn their vision of a world-class garden into reality. And it has shown itself often in recent years. I never imagined we would have to endure two major hurricanes and a pandemic in a five-year stretch. However, we learn something from every disaster and come back stronger than ever. Ian demonstrated that our stormwater system and wetlands are crucial to our survival. They minimized the impact to the Garden's cultivated areas. We have proven ourselves as an environmental authority, and the data we gather from each storm allows us to advise the community on best practices for storm resilience.

The Garden's perseverance is possible because of the dedication of you, our donors. Thanks to your trust in the Board and the staff, the Garden continues to grow and flourish. While we all hope for a calmer future, I know that the Garden will continue to be the place where plants and people thrive together, regardless of what comes our way.



**Kathleen Kapnick**Chair, Board of Directors

## **Expanding Operations**







### **Evenstad Horticulture Campus**

The Garden's most significant project in a decade broke ground last spring. Construction crews began work on the greenhouse, nursery, laboratory, and office complex that will serve as the heart of our operations. The campus will add **75,000 square feet of new growing space** and promises to revolutionize our horticultural operations. The campus is expected to open in mid-2023. You can watch the progress from the Scott Florida Garden chickee.

#### **Lipman Family Farms Greenhouse**

Thanks to the generosity of Lipman Family Farms, the Garden acquired the use of a **5-acre greenhouse**. Last summer, our staff finalized site preparation and a new irrigation system and now tends to thousands of plants. The greenhouse includes duplicates to important collections, such as the National Plumeria Collection, plants for display in the Garden, and plants for community projects. The Garden wants Southwest Florida communities to incorporate more heat- and weather-tolerant Caribbean species in their landscapes but first needs to introduce these trees and shrubs to commercial growers and landscapers. This facility enables us to do that.

## **Community Projects**

Resilience against increased temperatures, saltwater intrusion, erosion, and severe weather starts with plants. The Garden is working with local governments and civic groups to choose plants that benefit the environment, strengthen coastlines, and cool streets, while adding beauty and sense of place. Our newest collaborations include:





## **City of Fort Myers**

The Garden and City of Fort Myers signed a memorandum of understanding that paves the way for the Garden to consult with City leaders on plant-related policies and projects. The first undertaking: enhancing and improving the health of palms in Vivas Palm Park, a property that honors one of the city's founding families.

## The City of Marco Island

Compared to other Southwest Florida communities, Marco Island has little tree cover. The Marco Island Beautification Committee, which advises the City Council, has proposed planting **10,000 trees in 10 years** to enhance the island's aesthetics and environmental health. Council members last summer agreed to a one-year pilot project. The Garden is working with city leaders on planting standards and tree selection.

#### **Bayshore District**

The Garden is deeply involved in its neighborhood. It is working with the Bayshore Gateway Triangle Community Redevelopment Agency to enhance medians along Bayshore Drive and to select plants that will line a new walking path connecting the neighborhood to Sugden Regional Park.



## Thank you, Volunteers!

Volunteers are as essential to the Garden as sunlight and water. Roughly 200 people gave about 9,400 hours, pulling weeds, tending young plants, assisting with administrative tasks, serving as Garden guides, and aiding myriad other projects. They were crucial to hurricane recovery efforts, spending more than 300 hours preparing the cultivated gardens and natural areas for reopening. We are grateful for the community's deep commitment to our mission.

# Learning in the Garden

The Garden aspires to be a global leader in environmental education for all ages and audiences. We achieve that through engaging activities, accurate information, and impactful experiences that illuminate plants' critical role in supporting all life on Earth. Our offerings range from daily drop-in activities to field trips to self-guided tours.



#### **NEW IN 2022**

# Nature journaling for Spanish speakers

The Garden introduced its acclaimed Nature Journaling: Botany Through Art program in Spanish to serve the region's sizeable population of older adults who speak Spanish as a first language.

#### Let's Grow!

We renamed and refreshed Collier Greens, the Garden's longtime school and community garden network. The change reflects our growing reach beyond Collier County and better describes the dynamic act of gardening.



Whether you prefer solitude or shared experiences, the Garden has a way to share our love of plants and knowledge of nature.

#### **CONTACTLESS PROGRAMMING**

#### W.O.N.D.E.R. Activity Packs

Our educators create these free, multilingual kits, which lead families on Garden adventures. We distributed **more than 15,000** in 2022.

## Self-guided audio tours

**Nearly 23,000 guests** accessed our self-guided tours on their cellphones and listened to Garden educators narrate their journeys through our cultivated gardens, exhibitions, and natural areas in English or Spanish.

#### **Text chat**

**More than 3,000** curious guests sent Garden educators questions in 2022 as they strolled our pathways. Garden educators responded in real time.

#### **IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING**

Just as our plants are ever-changing, so, too, are our in-person activities! Garden educators developed a slate of new tours and programs to support 2021–22's *Intertwined* and 2022–23's *Mexico: A Celebration of Plants & Culture* themes



#### **Daily Tours**

If the Garden is open, chances are you'll see a blue-shirted Garden educator trailed by curious guests. Some **13,000 people participated** in a daily tour in 2022.

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

In this fun-filled daily activity, children and families Walk, Observe, Navigate, Draw, Explore, and Read their way to a better understanding of nature's wonders. **More than 2,200** did so during the year.

## **Dig Deeper**

Our staff piqued the interest of some **5,300 guests** who stopped at the Dig Deeper cart to explore everything from the origins of kitchen spices to the botany of beer.





#### **GROUP ACTIVITIES**

## School field trips

School field trips are back to pre-pandemic numbers. We hope these experiences spur a lifelong love of science and nature and inspire the next generation of botanists, conservationists, horticulturists, and other plant-related professionals.

#### **Sensory-Friendly Saturdays**

On select Saturday afternoons, we minimize noise and distractions so that people with sensory sensitivities and their families can enjoy the benefits of nature.

# Festivals & Special Events

We might consider 2022 the Year of Public Engagement. The Garden held more festivals and events than ever before. These special programs give us an opportunity to celebrate the natural world and introduce ourselves to people who have not experienced a botanical garden.



#### **NEW IN 2022**

#### **Family Wonder Days**

Kids and their grown-up companions descended upon the Garden to follow the adventures of Twiggy, the Garden's Wonder Pal, and discovered the feathered friends, pollinators, and plants that call the Garden home.

#### **Waterlily Weekend**

Few, it seems, can resist the allure of waterlilies. Guests viewed the **500+ waterlilies** from our collection, including the massive *Victoria* water platters, participated in special tours and demonstrations, and viewed stunning new hybrids vying for global recognition in the International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society's New Waterlily Competition.

#### **Sunset Wednesdays**

Adults deserve playtime, too! The Garden debuted special Sunset Wednesday activities, such as a paint-and-sip gathering and cocktail scavenger hunt. The midweek festivities are here to stay with even more offerings in 2023.

#### Día de los Muertos Celebration

We kicked off our yearlong theme, *Mexico: A Celebration of Plants & Culture*, with our first Day of the Dead Celebration. The two-day affair included traditional Mexican dance, music, crafts, and foods. The focal point was a stunning ofrenda inspired by artist Ricardo Soltero, an homage to departed loved ones and a chance to honor their memories.

#### **RETURNING FAVORITES:**

**Tasting the Tropics**, our annual celebration of tropical fruits, both familiar and not

**Blooms & Brews**, our tribute to the plants that produce our favorite pints



Johnsonville Night Lights in the Garden, our seasonal tradition, sets the Garden—and hearts—aglow.

The sold-out event **(53,000 tickets!)** generated more than **\$1.3 million.**Proceeds support the Garden's mission in plant conservation,
horticultural excellence, and environmental education.













In its 18th year, the Hats in the Garden fundraiser returned to its in-person splendor. "Hats" is a time-honored tradition of the Sustaining Leadership Council, a group of women who serve as steadfast Garden supporters and advocates.

The "Tropical Splendor" theme was the creative vision of Chair Linda Koehn. Thanks to the unprecedented support of **more than 600 guests**, and the generosity of our sponsors, donors, and friends, *Hats in the Garden* raised a record **\$1.6 million**, including more than **\$339,000** to support our 2022 Fund-a-Need, the Garden for All program, which seeks to make the Garden more accessible to more Southwest Florida residents, with a special focus on essential workers such as educators.







## Art in the Garden

The Garden hosts artists both homegrown and far-flung. Their works inspire us to see nature in a different light.

Our 2022 exhibitions were:

#### Woven: Fiber Arts Now

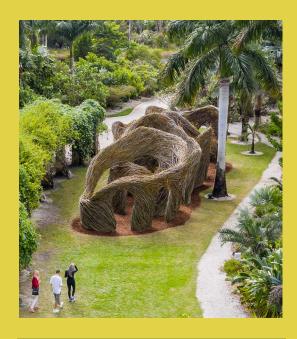
Five local textile artists wove intricate works of art using various mediums. The show supported the *Intertwined* theme.

## Christy Noonan: Meditations on Waterlilies

Christy Noonan's *Meditations on Waterlilies* offered a bold, imaginative interpretation of our aquatic plant collection.

#### La Calavera Catrina

The towering *Catrina* sculptures by Mexican-born artist Ricardo Soltero loomed over the Scott Florida Garden, surprising and delighting guests and setting the stage for our 2022–23 Mexico-themed programming. The exhibition was organized by Denver Botanic Gardens.



#### **HURRICANE SURVIVOR**

In what we can only describe as a testament to the power of natural materials and traditional craftsmanship, the STICKWORK sculpture created exclusively for the Garden by North Carolina-based artist Patrick Dougherty withstood Hurricane Ian as if it were a mere coastal breeze. The piece, dubbed Sea Change, is composed of some 30,000 pounds of willow saplings and remains on display in the Kapnick Caribbean Garden.

## Horticulture Projects





#### **Celebrating waterlilies**

2022 was all about lilies! Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania turned to Naples Botanical Garden for help producing seeds from its famed Victoria waterlilies while its pools were under renovation. Our staff learned how to hand pollinate these giant plants to prompt seed development. Longwood distributes Victoria seeds to botanical gardens around the world.

The Garden also hosted the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society's annual symposium, attracting an international group of growers, and its New Waterlily Competition, in which hybridizers showcase their newest creations and vie for top honors.

## **Long-term visioning**

Horticulturists not only tend the Garden in its present state, but they also work toward its future. Last summer, they moved a banyan tree they'd been growing in a holding area to its permanent spot in the Lea Asian Garden. The tree stands at the intersection of pathways. The staff placed four more banyans at the paths' corners. Eventually, these trees will connect and create an arboreal gateway to the Candi Sukuh temple ruins.





# Preparing for Frida and Her Garden

Much of 2022 was spent preparing for our signature exhibition of 2023, *Frida* and *Her Garden*, celebrating the home and gardens of famed Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo. This ambitious undertaking required the creation of a new exhibition area, tucked between the Kapnick Caribbean Garden and the Kapnick Brazilian Garden. Staff moved nearly **20 trees** and some **60 understory shrubs**, added **30 cubic yards of fill dirt**, installed irrigation systems, carved pathways, and created new garden beds. The exhibition runs from January 14–September 10, 2023.

#### **HURRICANE RECOVERY**



As soon as it was safe to do so, staff rushed back to the Garden to assess Hurricane lan's damage and save plants. For nearly a month, staff hauled debris, pruned wind-damaged plants, drained and cleaned ponds, raked, mulched, and replanted ... and replanted ... and replanted and replanted to brighten the Garden and replace damaged plants, we installed nearly 800 bromeliads, 300 aroids, and some 2,000 annuals.

We're grateful for many extra helping hands, such as a crew from Signature Tree, which helped upright about 15 trees, and from fellow botanical gardens, including Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Vizcaya Museum & Gardens, Missouri Botanical Garden, and Holden Forests & Gardens. Staff from across the organization also served as temporary gardeners, helping ready the grounds for the November 1 reopening.

# New to the Collections

No longer an upstart,
Naples Botanical Garden
has demonstrated its high
horticultural standards to serious
plant collectors, who turn to us
when they wish to donate or sell
prized botanical treasures.
Over the past year, we received
two significant contributions:



#### **Palms**

From the esteemed Florida palm collector George Zammas, the Garden acquired **37 palm trees** representing **16 species**. One is listed as "endangered," and three are "critically endangered," including Pelagodoxa henryana, which originated in the South Pacific's Marquesas Islands. These specimens add diversity and distinction to our robust palm collection. A grant from the Martin Foundation supported the palms' acquisition and relocation.



#### Sansevieria

We acquired a collection of approximately 200 Sansevierias from the man who literally wrote the book on the species. B. Juan Chahinian, formerly of Naples, is a world-renowned expert on Sansevieria, which include the popular "snake plant," commonly displayed indoors. The former president of the International Sansevieria Society, Chahinian described many plants that comprise the genus, hybridized them, and authored The Splendid Sansevieria and The Sansevieria Trifasciata Varieties: A Presentation of All Cultivated Varieties. Chahinian sold his home and the contents within to his friend and neighbor David Resch, who in turn donated his plants, books, and experimental notes to the Garden.



#### MORE ABOUT THE COLLECTIONS:

In 2022, the Garden logged more than **1,200** new accessions.

Each accession represents one species, acquired on a specific day, from a specific source. It may be a single cutting, 20 plants, or 1,000 seeds, for example. Of the 2022 accessions, **400+** new plants were placed in the Garden.

These don't include annuals, such as the **6,000 marigolds** that were planted to complement our *Mexico: A Celebration of Plants & Culture* programming.

We have **20,000** plants in our collections.

Our biggest and best-known collections include: aroids, palms, bromeliads, orchids, plumeria, gingers, tropical fruits, and aquatic plants.

More staff. More equipment. And more requests than ever to address the region's environmental challenges. In 2022, the Garden took on everything from national conservation collaborations to local restoration projects.

## **Plant Conservation**

Plants are the foundation of all life on Earth, and our primary mission is to protect them. We do that by nurturing them in their native habitats, growing them on our site, and preserving their seeds for future use.



## Seedbanking

- The Garden specializes in conserving native plants of Southwest Florida and the Caribbean. As of 2022, conservationists had amassed some 233,000 seeds, representing 57 species. Of those, eight are endemic to Florida, meaning their native range is limited to our peninsula; and 11 are endemic to the Caribbean.
- A new seed counter allows staff members to count an astounding **1,000 seeds per second**. The device revolutionizes the turnaround time for processing field collections and frees staff to take on other critical projects. It, along with other specialized equipment, was purchased with a significant gift from philanthropists Tanya and Denny Glass.



Among their many field excursions, conservationists scoured Rookery Bay National
Estuarine Research Reserve looking for native plant species included in the Florida
Plant Rescue, an initiative of the Center for Plant Conservation, which had spearheaded
a similar conservation push in its home state of California. Our team collected several
species on the CPC's target list and found a new population of Euphorbia cumulicola, a
low-growing, state-endangered plant, at Railhead Scrub Preserve.





# Advanced plant-preservation techniques

Conservation specialists Jessica
DeYoung and Dan Agis traveled to
the Huntington Library, Art Museum,
and Gardens in California to study
cryopreservation, a specialized
method of deep-freezing plant cells.

## **Crop wild relatives**

Rising temperatures, weather pattern changes, and other stressors make plant experts worried about the fate of food crops. The Garden joined a national effort to identify and conserve "crop wild relatives," the uncultivated cousins of domesticated vegetables, grains, fruits, and nuts. These wild genes, when crossed with cultivated plants, may help crops resist heat, pests, and droughts. Our Garden is working with netted pawpaw, a relative of the domesticated fruit, and swamp bay, which is kin to avocado.







# **Restoration Projects**

#### **Railhead Scrub Preserve**

Conservation Collier and Naples
Botanical Garden have partnered to
restore Railhead Scrub Preserve in
North Naples, one of the region's last
remaining coastal scrub habitats.
Illegal all-terrain vehicle use has
damaged the ecosystem. This is a longterm project that will involve collecting
seeds from the preserve, growing
plants, and replanting portions of the
130-acre property.

## **Naples Beach**

In 2021, the Garden and City of Naples collaborated on a pilot project testing the Garden's multitiered, multispecies approach to beach dune restoration. Unlike the sea oats that dominate large swaths of Naples Beach, the plants at our pilot sites survived Hurricane Ian. We are in talks to take on more of these restoration areas.





# Water Quality Initiatives

#### Fred W. Coyle Freedom Park Canal

The South Florida Water Management District's Big Cypress Basin manages hundreds of miles of canals, most of which are lined with grass that requires mowing. Grass clippings infiltrate the water, adding excess organic matter such as carbon and nitrogen. In summer 2022, the Garden replanted a portion of the canal banks at Freedom Park in Naples with native grasses that reduce erosion, require less mowing, and absorb pollutants from stormwater runoff. The District and Garden hope to demonstrate improved water quality and reduced maintenance over time.

#### **Hamilton Avenue Swale**

A new county boat ramp and extended roadside parking area means more pavement and runoff. The Garden began planting a stormwater swale using plants from our Preserve. The project will demonstrate how a diversely planted stormwater swale can absorb the contaminants rainwater picks up as it flows over pavement.



#### **HURRICANE RESPONSE**

Garden scientists are determined to learn all they can from Hurricane Ian.
Following the storm, they took water samples to determine salinity and the source of flooding (ours was more from freshwater inland sources than the Gulf); examined the Preserve's role in holding floodwater and reducing damage to the cultivated gardens; and began routine aerial monitoring to understand nature's response to wind and water. They also tracked tree species that appeared to hold up to the storm and those that didn't. We'll share our findings with the community.

# **Community Access**

Gardens are gathering spots for families, friends, and communities to bond over a shared love of nature. We honor that tradition by making the Garden accessible for people from all walks of life and by using our campus to meet community needs.

#### **Garden for All**

Thanks to the generosity of *Hats in the Garden* patrons, the Garden grew its Garden for All: Community Access program. Through this initiative, we work with United Way partner agencies to offer free memberships to working families whose budgets do not allow for cultural experiences. We also partner with area employers to offer free admission to sectors that are deemed "essential" to the community, including educators and first responders.

The Garden strives to make guests feel welcome during their visits. For many, that means offering tours and signage in their first languages. We now provide signage in three languages: English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.







# Free and discounted admission

Collier, Lee, and Charlotte county residents can visit the Garden for free on library card days, held annually in the summer. **Nearly 3,000** took advantage of this perk, made possible through the Garden's long-standing partnership with the library system.

The Bank of America Museums on Us program allows cardholders to visit cultural institutions including the Garden for free on the first full weekend of each month. We saw more than **4,400 guests** through this program.

Summertime is a perfect time for our year-round residents to enjoy their hometown Garden. More than **7,700 residents** from Collier, Lee, and Charlotte counties took advantage of our half-price admission for Southwest Floridians.

# Helping with Hurricane Recovery

The Garden has a long-standing relationship with **Our Daily Bread**. During 2022, the food pantry used our parking lot as a distribution site, ensuring local families did not go hungry. Half of recipients during that time period lived in the Garden's zip code. Demand was particularly high following Hurricane lan, and we were glad to help neighbors get through those challenging times.



The Garden hosted the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation's hurricane relief event, where 425 local families received aid. The Foundation is an international

humanitarian organization whose services include disaster relief.













## Global Expertise

Staff members lent their expertise to numerous botanical garden conferences in the past year. We are honored to share our experiences in everything from conservation to community relations.

## Global Botanic Gardens Congress

Five Garden leaders traveled to Australia for the Botanic Gardens Conservation International's global gathering of botanical garden professionals where they spoke about topics ranging from improving environmental health through community landscaping to safeguarding the genetic diversity of cacti to student-directed garden experiences.

#### **CommUNITY of Gardens**

Twenty-one staff members sharpened their management skills at this annual gathering of the American Public Gardens Association. Seven led discussions on topics ranging from audience development to community relations.

### Botanical Bridges Congress: Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network

The Garden, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, and the Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve in Eleuthera brought together plant professionals from around the region to exchange ideas about the role botanical gardens play in plant conservation, sustainable development goals, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

# Thank you to our leaders!

Plants and people thrive at Naples Botanical Garden. That's because the organization is nourished by the generosity, support, expertise, and guidance of the Board of Directors and Sustaining Leadership Council.

These individuals helped steer the Garden through the challenges of 2022, brought us closer to the community, and kept us charging ahead—even when Mother Nature tossed obstacles in our path. As you cheer the successes outlined in this annual report, be certain to applaud the supporters who make them happen!

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#### Generosity makes gardens grow

Like plants in need of regular watering, our Garden depends on ongoing financial support to carry out its mission. Memberships, gifts to the annual fund, grants, sponsorships, and other contributions ensure we serve as a regional leader in plant conservation, environmental education, and horticultural excellence. Thank you to our Royal Palm Society Members, whose annual contributions of \$1,500 or more in 2022 continue to enhance our efforts for years to come.

#### **Royal Palm Society and Special Friends**

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#### **Garden Visionaries**

Our new and highest level of recognition, Garden Visionaries, honors those who have forged the Garden into what it is today. Because of these individuals, we can embrace our role as a world-class showcase for tropical horticulture, as a cornerstone of Caribbean plant conservation, and as a place where plants and people thrive together.

In special recognition of this inaugural cohort of Garden Visionaries, gift commitments for this group are recognized from January 1, 2021–December 31, 2022. Gift commitments will be recognized on an annual basis in the future.

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## Horticulture Campus namesake celebrates the start of construction

#### **Grace Evenstad**

The Garden's biggest moment of 2022 was the one in which Grace Evenstad stepped up to the podium and addressed the crowd assembled for the groundbreaking of the Horticulture Campus that bears her name.

Garden leaders announced their intention to build the complex following 2017's Hurricane



Irma, vowing to not simply recover but to reimagine the organization. Grace and her late husband, Ken, impressed with the Garden's drive and direction, wanted to make that vision a reality. Their gift propelled planning and fundraising efforts.

Grace is among the Garden's most committed advocates. She is a longtime member of the Sustaining Leadership Council, a former member of the Board of Directors and has been involved in the organization since its earliest days.

"Watching the construction progress is so exciting. I'm deeply impressed with all that the Garden has accomplished in its young life, and Ken and I were honored by the opportunity to help shape its future," Evenstad says. "Our community depends on the Garden's expertise, and this campus will allow the organization to deepen its commitment to environmental health and horticultural excellence."



where plants ullet and people ullet thrive together  $^{\scriptscriptstyle{\mathrm{TM}}}$ 



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