

NAPLES  
BOTANICAL  
GARDEN

# Cultivate



SPRING 2024



**IN SEASON**

**MORNING SHOWERS BRING ORCHID FLOWERS:** Nick Ewy, Director of Collections, mists the orchids perched throughout the LaGrippe Orchid Garden. At any given time, more than 2,000 orchids are on display throughout the entire Garden. Read more about getting these enigmatic plants to bloom — and rebloom. See page 11.

Photo by John Eder



OUR MISSION

Where Plants & People Thrive Together

Naples Botanical Garden conserves the plants and habitats of the tropics, cultivates beauty, offers knowledge, and inspires the protection of nature.

ON THE COVER

Tropical beacon: The Tanya & Denny Glass Propagation House aglow during twilight. To learn more about this greenhouse, soon to be home to cacti, succulents, propagation materials, and conservation collections, see page 32. Photo: John Eder

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Hats in the Garden: 20 Years of Philanthropy, Fashion, and Friendship



CULTIVATE SPRING 2024

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## Naples Botanical Garden started as a community wish. Today, our newest dream has come true: the Evenstad Horticulture Campus.



**W**e've just made Garden history, and you are a part of it!

The nearly completed Evenstad Horticulture Campus marks a tremendous leap. If you have seen our jury-rigged nurseries or stuffed-to-the-rafters orchid house, you'll appreciate how far we've come.

I'm thinking more about how far we *will* go. With this facility, we can accelerate research into nature-based

environmental solutions. We can trial plants to identify the species most tolerant of changing climatic conditions. We can grow more head-turning horticultural displays and better safeguard tropical and subtropical plants — including those unique to Southwest Florida.

Naples Botanical Garden started as a community wish. In 1994, local plant enthusiasts gained nonprofit status for a botanical-garden-to-be. Five years later, Harvey Kapnick Jr. donated \$5 million to purchase this property. A decade after that — with significant financial support and volunteer assistance — the Garden opened its doors.

The Evenstad Horticulture Campus may have been plant professionals' vision this time, but the community made it happen. (See page 29.) As a private, nonprofit organization, we rely on ticket sales, membership, and

philanthropic gifts to fund our operations.

Which brings me to the Sustaining Leadership Council. These women raise millions each year through their personal contributions and by hosting *Hats in the Garden*. The SLC accounts for over 20% of our operating revenue. The *Hats Fund-a-Need* allows us to pursue special initiatives, thanks to guests' generosity. (See page 33.) *Hats* celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

A round of applause and tip of your hat to all the SLC has done.

I am so grateful to be a part of such a remarkable community. Thank you.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, flowing 'D' and 'M' that loops together.

**Donna McGinnis**

*President & CEO  
Naples Botanical Garden*

✉ Questions and letters to the editor may be sent to [email@naplesgarden.org](mailto:email@naplesgarden.org).

# MUSICAL SWINGS



## What's Happening

### Swing into Season

#### *Musical Swings*

Now - April 20

*Kapnick Caribbean Garden*

Swing — and simultaneously make music — in this collaborative installation that invites guests of all ages. A responsive soundtrack means that every musical composition is unique. Soar into a melody all your own this spring.

Created By  
Daily tous les jours

Supported By  
Fifth Third Bank  
Mary Avellina

## Endlessly Wild: New Work by Sara Abalan

Now – June 30

Fogg Café

Stop into Fogg Café for a chance to witness beauty in wildness. Sara Abalan, a Naples-based artist, captures the Garden's natural spaces in this spotlight exhibition.



Right: Sara Abalan, "Single Wart Fern"

## Patterns of Change

May 4 – June 30

Kapnick Hall

View works from members of The Batik Guild, an international group of artists, in this juried exhibition. Every piece in this show shares a common thread: each visualizes environmental change that the artists have experienced or observed. The exhibition, on display during a time of rapid and intense change in climate, is intended to inspire change and rouse hope.



Above: Muffy Clark Gill, "Agua XXIII Fading Memories," Rozome, 2016

**Music**  
**IN THE GARDEN**

Select Saturdays  
April & May, 2 – 4pm | June, 12 – 2pm

Palm trees sway, music floats, and feet tap, to the sounds of local musical talent. It's all right here in your Garden. Blankets and chairs encouraged.

Just **THREE SHOWS** left this season!

**April 27:** Moonstone Riders

**May 18:** Briz & Lady

**June 15:** Heat Latin Jazz Band



## Blooms & Brews

April 13 | 6 – 10pm

**Tickets on sale March 13! Members enjoy an exclusive discounted rate.**

It's that time of year — April is when we celebrate the plants that make our beer! During this annual beer-tasting experience, sample brews from a bevy of regional microbreweries as you listen to live music and soak up the Garden by sunset and stars.

Supported By **The Naples Press**

## NEW! Morning Mile

Join us on a guided, mile-long walk in the Garden! Enjoy views of our paved lake trail, participate in some light stretches, and learn about the natural ecosystems of Florida and the part they play in keeping our Earth healthy.



Select Mondays | Now – April | 9:15 – 10am

March 25

April 8

April 22

All events, installations, exhibits, and programs are included with Garden admission unless otherwise indicated.

## Introduction to Nature Journaling in the Garden

Learn the basics of this creative arts practice that brings you closer to the natural world. Budding artists will cultivate their artistic skills and creativity during this three-hour, in-person class; no prior art experience required. All supplies are included; just bring yourself and a curiosity about nature!



**March 30 or June 29**  
**9am – 12pm**

### Registration Fee

\$80 Member

\$100 Non-Member

*Space is limited; register today. Ages 16 +*



## Daily Tours

**10am, 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm & 3pm through May**

These popular tours offer an immersive stroll through the Garden with our expert staff. With topics ranging from Garden highlights to edible plants to native habitats, there's always something new to learn!

Check the schedule upon arrival for that day's tour; first come, first served.



## Dig Deeper

**Daily | 11:30am & 1pm**

Now is your chance to have your pressing botanical questions answered! Join us for these informal and informative chats with Garden staff. We cover topics ranging from the botany of brewing coffee to the perfumed punch of any number of tropical plants.

**Members always receive free Garden admission!**



**PLUS: Discover our audio tours**

## W.O.N.D.E.R. with Us!

**Wednesdays – Sundays | 10:30am**

Every Garden adventure holds the possibility to learn something new — together. Join us to Walk, Observe, Navigate, Draw, Explore, and Read with a special, themed activity.

Continue the experience on your own

or as a family with our W.O.N.D.E.R. Activity Pack available at the Chabraja Visitor Center.



### Monthly themes

March: Fabulous Flowers

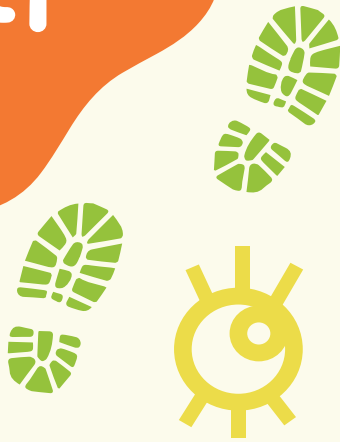
April: Bamboo-zled

May: Celebrate the Earth

June: Popular Pollinators



# Family Wonder Days



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Family Wonder Days**  
**May 25 & 26 | 10am - 2pm**

Garden-wide adventures await with *wonderful* games, activities, and scavenger hunts for the whole family! Grab an activity guide and journey through the lush landscape to observe the birds, pollinators, and plants that make the Garden special. Plus, enjoy family-friendly live music!



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## Evenings in the Garden

### Sunset Wednesdays

Wednesdays Now – April | 5 – 8pm

Enjoy the Garden mid-week as we stay open late Wednesdays. Take a stroll and see the plants and water features of your Garden awash in the vivid hues of sunset.



Fogg Café beckons with menu specials and half-price bottles of wine, and the Berger Shop is full of botanical mementos available for purchase as a reminder of your evening!

#### Specialty Programs

Get creative and crafty, discover more about plants, or use clues to complete a cocktail-themed scavenger hunt. Programs created with adults in mind; Cocktail Scavenger Hunt participants must be 21+.

Scan the QR code to register. Cost includes Garden admission, program fee, and complimentary beverage.



Supported By **WINTRUST**  
BANKING CENTER

### Friday After 5

April 26 & May 17 | 5 – 8pm

Welcome the weekend with an after-hours Garden visit! Sip on specialty themed cocktails, watch live performances, snag giveaways, and more. Fogg Café and the Berger Shop will be open, rounding out your evening Garden experience.



## Naples Flower Show & Garden Market



### A World of Wonders | April 5 & 6 | 9am – 5pm

Immerse yourself in a celebration of spectacular floral designs, botanical arts, displays, and demonstrations at one of the largest annual juried flowers shows in Florida. Plus, shop local and national vendors to find botanically inspired items and plants to take home.



Presented in Partnership with



Supported By



All events and exhibitions are sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Fellowship Forges Connections

This past fall, the Garden welcomed its first Development Fellow, Natacha Beaussejour, General Director and Head of Development & Marketing for Jardin Botanique des Cayes in Haiti.



The fellowship opportunity stems from a long-running partnership with Jardin Botanique des Cayes. Over the years, there have been myriad projects, ranging from germination and plant propagation training to joint presentations, most recently as panelists at the 32nd Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference at Florida Gulf Coast University. It's all part of efforts to strengthen collaboration with many of the 200 gardens throughout the Caribbean. A common thread that unites them all, Naples Botanical Garden included: our tropical plants and climate. The two gardens are part of the Caribbean and Central American Botanic Garden Network, which strives to conserve the region's plants.

As part of the fellowship, Beaussejour collaborated with staff on membership and communications best practices. She also focused on strengthening engagement with leaders of Naples' sizeable Haitian community, culminating in a Garden reception in November.

For Beaussejour, the fellowship experience was transformative.

"It's given me a newfound appreciation for the power of community gardens to foster connection, growth, and positive change, and the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in ensuring that the Garden truly reflects the community it serves," says Beaussejour. "Hearing Haitian voices and ensuring their needs are met is crucial for long-term success."



Join us on May 18 as we offer **free Garden admission** in celebration of **Haitian Flag Day**.

# The Orchid Doctors

Learn how to tend “spent” orchids and prompt new blooms, year after year

*Phalaenopsis* hybrid

Every week, staff freshen up the LaGrippe Orchid Garden by replacing waning orchids with blooms in their prime.

But what happens to all those spent plants? Are they doomed to the green waste pile?

Absolutely not!

At any given time, our staff and volunteers rehabilitate some 3,200 *Dendrobium*, *Vanda*, and *Oncidium* orchids. These are among the colorful, showy plants we use in rotational displays.

The team repots them if needed and feeds them a slow-release fertilizer, along with a weekly dose of liquid nutrition. They water the plants, monitor for pests,

remove dead leaves, and wait. The bloom cycle varies from species to species; some flower only once a year.

“When they start showing flower spikes, they are almost ready,” says Javier Blondet, who manages our Lipman Family Farms Greenhouse. Team members return them to the Garden once in bloom.

The orchid rehabilitation saves the Garden thousands of dollars.

“Before recycling all these, we had to buy this amount,” says Director of Collections Nick Ewy, standing amid endless rows of orchids. The plants, when properly tended, can thrive for years.

You, too, can see your orchids bloom again and again.

## Before you begin:

### Research light requirements.

- 1 *Phalaenopsis* can tolerate lower light conditions, such as a covered lanai; other species may need more direct sunlight to prompt blooming. If you wish to change your plant's location, give it time to acclimate to new lighting conditions.

### Choose pots with good drainage and airflow.

- 2 Plastic pots are OK for indoor use; clay ones will be better outdoors. Hanging baskets are also a good choice. Smaller is better. Orchids prefer confined spaces.

## When you are ready:

### Check your orchid's planting medium.

- 3 If it looks like it is breaking down or appears wet, replace it with a well-draining orchid mix.

### Remove dead or dry leaves and brown flower spikes.

- 4 If you use pruning tools, be certain to sterilize the blades between each plant to avoid potential disease spread.

### Water your orchid.

- 5 When watering, flush the plant with clean, fresh water. Allow the medium to dry between waterings. That "ice cube" rule (give an orchid an ice cube a week) is nonsense, Ewy says. "They're tropical plants. Don't put frozen things on tropical plants!"

## Ongoing:

### Watch orchids for signs of fungal infections or pests.

- 6 The Naples Orchid Society ([naplesorchidsociety.org](http://naplesorchidsociety.org)) and the St. Augustine Orchid Society website ([staugorchidsociety.org](http://staugorchidsociety.org)) have resources on recognizing and treating disease, along with general care tips.



*Phalaenopsis mannii*

### Want to simplify all this?

"Hang it in a tree," Blondet suggests. You can use zip ties to affix orchids to trees, placing the side of the plant with the newest growth closest to the trunk or branch. Even though orchids are fairly self-sufficient, you should monitor to ensure they receive adequate sunlight and water.

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*For orchids and tropical plants to add to your collection, join us for the Naples Flower Show & Garden Market, April 5 & 6, included with Garden admission, free for Members.*

## Did you know?



**Roots may expand beyond these small pots.** This exposure does not hurt the plants; in fact, orchids like dry roots. But if you don't like the aesthetics and choose to bury the roots, take care not to overwater. The roots are accustomed to the open air.



**You may notice secondary growths called keikis on flower stems.** You can remove or leave these on the plant. They can be potted and grown as clones.



**Some species produce pseudobulbs.** These are pod-like structures at the orchid's base. Leave those alone; they store water and nutrients. Some will even produce flowers.

“

Everything I do,  
I keep on being  
pulled to working  
with trees and  
sustainability.



Eighty trees. 500 shrubs. 3,000 groundcovers. Isabel Soto can rattle off these figures — along with inventory from other projects — with ease. As the Garden’s Horticulture Project Manager, she planned the placement of the thousands of plants used to landscape the Evenstad Horticulture Campus. The plants used on the 78,000 square-foot campus serve as a buffer to Bayshore Drive and a showcase for the potential of native plants. Soto, who started at the Garden in 2021, pulled from every

bit of her circuitous career experience for the project. Her range of expertise is extensive, from her first job designing the trails and signage at Jardín Botánico de Cali in Colombia, to her role coordinating the Collier County Master Gardener Extension program to running the thriving farm on her family’s property in Golden Gate Estates, cultivating rare microgreens for local chefs. Now, Soto shares more about one of her most ambitious undertakings to date.

# Planning & Planting

**Isabel Soto**

*Horticulture Project Manager*

The Evenstad Horticulture Campus is one of the biggest projects I've been involved with here in the Garden.

We created a plant list for the Bayshore Drive landscape buffer two years ago, and we actually started growing the plants then. Some of them are from the natural areas — the Garden's 90-acre Preserve. Then about a year ago, we got the plans from the landscape architect. He was very excited to see that we wanted to enhance his design. We utilized the regionally appropriate plant list (plants not only native to Southwest Florida, but also the Caribbean). After working with the landscape architect and deciding on the plant palette, we grew all the plants that are not readily available, and that time allowed.

We sourced plant material we couldn't grow — mostly trees — as they take a minimum of two years. Some of the trees were more challenging to find, as they needed to be very large (to meet Collier County's landscape code). Most large trees grown in containers have compromised root systems. I personally went to several nurseries locally and on the other coast to inspect and source the plant material.

There were many meetings. I had to learn the Collier County

landscape code. The Garden has a little bit of flexibility, but there are some requirements. The landscape designs must be very precise to pass inspections. Whatever you plant in the landscape must be on paper. It's a very diverse landscape. It's beautiful.

While my title is Project Manager, that's about 50 percent of what I do depending on time of year. I work closely with Brian Galligan, Vice President of Horticulture, and landscape architects on urban forestry and horticulture outside of the Garden. We work on sustainable landscaping practices and expanding that knowledge outside of the Garden walls.

I also provide support for our ongoing beach dunes projects, creating project plans with our Conservation Team, and helping provide a starting point on production costs to produce beach plants.

One thing that I often think about is, *How did I end up in the botanical garden world?* For some reason, trees keep on pulling me. Everything I do, I keep on being pulled to working with trees, and sustainability.

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*To read more about the Garden's Evenstad Horticulture Campus, see page 29.*

## Native Plants at the Evenstad Horticulture Campus

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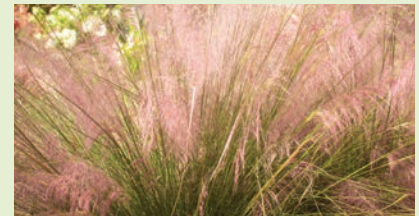
### Trees



**Satin leaf**  
(*Chrysophyllum oliviforme*)

We grew these at our Lipman Family Farms Greenhouse from seeds collected in our Preserve and the Garden.

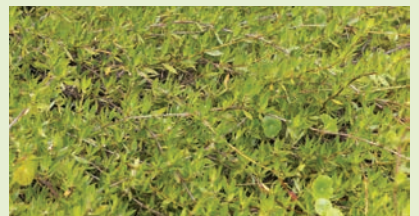
### Shrubs



**Muhly grass**  
(*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

We are using these plants for transition in the parking lot, nursery, and in landscape beds.

### Groundcover



**Golden creeper**  
(*Ernodea littoralis*)

See this groundcover in the parking lot islands.

Photos by John Eder



“

It's the little victories,  
not always the big  
stuff, that matter.

– Monica Feal

# Celebrating Growth Through Art

By Jennifer Reed

January's Sensory-Friendly Saturday gathering doubled as a celebration of creativity, self-expression, and accomplishment as the Garden hosted an art competition and exhibition for those with physical or intellectual conditions.

Additional Needs Inc., a Naples-based, national nonprofit, organized the third-annual "Celebration of Creation." The group offers resources to those with "additional needs," the group's preferred term to "special needs" or "disabilities." More than 50 people from across the country, ages 5 through adult, submitted artwork.

"It's just a wonderful experience," said Madalena Diosomito, an adult artist who has a visual impairment. She used a decoupage technique to adorn a vase.

Students of Melia Martin, an Oakridge Middle School exceptional student education teacher, crafted a clay flower using their handprints to form petals.

"This project was a collaboration of friends working together to create a beautiful piece of art that we lovingly call 'the friendship flower,'" Martin said. "We used our *abilities* to do as much of the project as independently as possible by using clay to trace handprint impressions, choose glaze colors, and paint their hands in their own unique color."

Parent Monica Feal grew emotional — and nearly brought spectators to tears. Her 11-year-old son, Emilio Alfonso-Feal, is on the autism spectrum. It is challenging for him to sit still and focus. He practiced





Children take a hands-on approach to nature exploration during the January 20 Sensory-Friendly Saturday event.



Madalena Diosomito stands behind a display table. Her vase is in the foreground at center. At left is the sculpture by Melia Martin's students.



Emilio Alfonso-Feal receives a 2024 ANI Judge's Choice Award.

Photos by John Eder

those skills, a little each day, as he created a mixed-media landscape.

“It’s the little victories, not always the big stuff, that matter,” Feal said. “It’s the things you didn’t even know that your child can do.”

Emilio’s work included multi-layered construction paper grass, a tree with felt leaves, a stream with a sandy shoreline, a deep blue sky and yellow moon.

“It was a joy seeing it all come together,” Feal said.

*Sensory-Friendly Saturdays are offered monthly from January – May to guests, families, and individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other sensory processing needs. Guests can experience the peacefulness and fun of the Garden with minimized disturbances. An air-conditioned, take-a-break space is provided, as well as hands-on activities. Free admission applies to program participants from 4 – 6pm only.*

## Upcoming Sensory-Friendly Saturdays:

April 27 • May 11

See our website for details. Scan to RSVP.



# Your Garden Evenings, Here





## Cheers — for Burgers & Beer!

Spring in Southwest Florida is cause for celebration, punctuated with longer days and the coastal breeze. With extended after-hours events, now is the time to savor our seasonal favorites by sunset. And while you're at it, tip a glass to your favorite botanical brews.

**Here's your chance to make this crowd-pleaser at home:**

### Fogg Burger

Grill 'em up to your liking. We reveal our ingredients (and that sauce!) that leaves you wishing for just one more bite.

---

### Ingredients

**Burger** – wagyu ground beef, weighed out to two 4-ounce patties

**Buns** – brioche, toasted

**Sauce** – Mayonnaise and gochujang sauce mixed at a 2:1 ratio, with 2 cups mayo to 1 cup of gochujang

**American cheese**

**Bibb lettuce**

**Pickles**

**Salt, pepper**

---

### For the build

1. Spread butter on both burger patties; add salt and pepper.
2. Grill burger patties to your preference; add cheese as you finish grilling.
3. *(Optional)* Press the brioche buns in a sandwich press.
4. Spread sauce on inside of both buns. Place bibb lettuce, tomatoes, pickles, and burger patties on top of bottom bun. Close off with top bun. Use a toothpick to combine.

*Special thanks to the Fogg Café Team for its contributions to this article.*

Photo by John Eder



### Blooms & Brews

April 13, 6 – 10pm

21 & up

Tickets on sale now!

Embrace spring evenings with extended hours:

### Sunset Wednesdays

Every Wednesday, now through April 24, 5 – 8pm

### Friday After 5

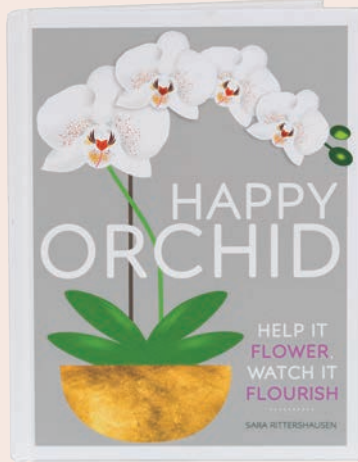
April 26 & May 17, 5 – 8pm



Naples Botanical Garden Orchid Tea Towel - \$20



Naples Botanical Garden Orchid Shimmer Mug - \$20



Happy Orchid Book by Sara Rittershausen - \$15.99

Phalaenopsis Orchids  
4" - \$20  
6" - \$35



Purple Orchid Paperweight - \$40



Photos by John Eder

Dendrobium Orchid - \$22



# An Orchid Oasis

By Dominique Caruso

The Jane and Chuck Berger Shop in the Garden carries a wide variety of orchid-inspired merchandise. From breakfast mugs for your morning coffee and tea towels for your kitchen to paperweights and must-reads, there's something for the orchid lover in all of us. Did you know we also carry an impressive stock of orchids? Stop by the Berger Shop to purchase a *Dendrobium*, *Phalaenopsis*, *Cattleya*, or the ever-popular *Vanda*.

Members save 10% every day!

# Member News & Events

## Exclusively for Members



### Members-Only Sunset Saturday

**March 30, 5 – 8pm**



**Sunset: 7:42pm**

You won't want to miss this much-awaited Member event! Bring chairs, blankets, and your own picnic, or purchase dinner from Fogg Café. Enjoy an evening of special entertainment with a beautiful Naples sunset at the center of it all. Featuring FLORA Top Hits Band! Scan the QR code for details and to register.



### Members-Only Preview: *Patterns of Change*

**May 3, 5:30 – 8pm**

Be among the first to see *Patterns of Change*, an exhibition organized by Naples Botanical Garden in partnership with The Batik Guild. The exhibit is designed to inspire action and rouse hope in the face of environmental change. Meet the artists, dine at Fogg Café, and enjoy an evening stroll through the Garden. Scan the QR code to learn more.



### Downloading Your Digital Membership Card is Easy!

Make the most of your Member resources with digital membership cards. This helps our efforts to create a sustainable future with a convenient perk: access to your digital membership card anytime, anywhere. Scan the QR code to get started!



An aerial photograph of a dense, lush forest. A narrow, light-colored path or road winds through the trees, starting from the bottom left and curving towards the top right. The forest is composed of various types of trees, including palm trees and broadleaf species. The lighting is bright, creating strong shadows and highlights on the foliage. A solid yellow vertical bar is positioned on the far left edge of the image.

# Walk on the *Wild Side*

By Jennifer Reed | Photos by John Eder

Look for these icons throughout the article and discover ways to stay in the *Here and Now* on your next walk through the Preserve.



If a botanical garden is a museum of plants, surely our 90-acre Preserve comprises its galleries.

In a moderate timespan — 60 to 90 minutes depending on your pace and power of observation — you can peer across a marsh, trek through a sandy coastal scrub, study a pine flatwood’s needled canopy, traverse elevated forest patches known as “hammocks,” and tromp across a pond apple swamp (ghost orchid habitat), safely dry-footed on a boardwalk.

“I think it’s neat that in a small space, we have a pretty varied, diverse landscape,” says Natural Resources Director Eric Foht. “There are places where you could buy this much land, and it would all be pine flatwoods.” The habitat variation is nature’s doing, not ours, but Foht and his team are charged with managing the land in a way that maintains each ecosystem’s characteristics.

This year’s *Hats in the Garden* Fund-a-Need will go toward increasing visitor access to the Preserve by laying the groundwork for future enhancements and guest amenities. (See pages 33 and 35 for more on *Hats*.)

What makes the Preserve special? For one, it’s rare for a botanical garden to manage both cultivated spaces and natural ecosystems on a single property. Our guests, in turn, can admire plants as human-designed artistry and plants as arranged by Mother Nature’s design. The Preserve is crucial for conservation, where we protect Southwest Florida native plants in their own habitats, as well as collect their seeds for long-term storage. We use it for research — to study matters such as stormwater management, for example — and offer access to scientists, professors, and students.

The land is critical wildlife habitat, as Conservation Horticulture Manager Jessica DeYoung points out: “Wildland in Florida is disappearing. Preserves are becoming that much more important, even if they are fragments and not connected. They still serve as a respite.”

The Preserve is a respite for humans, too, and that’s where we’ll start.

“

There’s just something different about a place that wasn’t designed by humans.

– Eric Foht,  
Director of  
Natural Resources



Curtiss' milkweed  
(*Asclepias curtissii*)



Smell the fragrant bouquet of Florida native plants in bloom.



Goldenaster  
(*Chrysopsis scabrella*)

### How to enjoy the Preserve

“(The Preserve) is like a screenshot to the past, but it still exists in the present,” DeYoung muses. It is how Southwest Florida appeared in the centuries before it became a tourism mecca and development hotspot.

“There’s just something different about a place that wasn’t designed by humans,” Foht says.

Our theme for 2023 – 24 is *Here and Now*, and a walk through the Preserve embodies the spirit of being present. “It’s easy to walk by everything because you’re trying to get somewhere,” Foht says. The Preserve is great for exercise — the Lake Trail loop is about a mile. But there’s something to be said for wandering.

Foht suggests “scanning” the landscape to take it all in. “Try to listen, and feel, and hear, and smell. There is a wealth of things to notice if you put yourself in that mindset.”

Look up and glimpse an osprey. Look down and see wildflowers or animal tracks. Listen for the wind in the pines or the pecking of a pileated woodpecker. Inhale. Can you smell the Gulf?

### An abundance of native plants

You might wonder what’s growing in all those habitats. Dr. George Wilder can tell you. Precisely.

For a little over a year, Wilder, a botanist and curator of the Herbarium of Southwestern Florida, combed the Preserve seeking to understand its plant





Walk along the Sonne Family Ghost Orchid Boardwalk.

diversity and the boundaries of the different habitats. Foht, along with Kate Talano, a former Garden GIS (geographic information systems) specialist, and local ecologist Jean McCollom worked with him.

There are 576 species, 414 of which are native. Thirteen are endemic to Florida. That means they grow only here. Twenty-three are considered rare in Florida. They include the fuzzywuzzy airplant (*Tillandsia pruinosa*), Jameson's waterlily (*Nymphaea jamesoniana*), Curtiss' milkweed (*Asclepias curtissii*), and golden leather fern (*Acrostichum aureum*).

Alas, we don't know how all these plants have fared. During Hurricane Ian, the Preserve took on as much as 8 feet of water, lessening damage to the cultivated garden, nurseries, and office

buildings. It was a testament to the protective power of undeveloped land.

But Wilder, whose survey took place before the storm, suspects plants may have been lost. Though he has not embarked on a follow-up study, he has noticed an absence of some plants, including the rare waterlily. "It is my opinion that things changed after the hurricane. I would anticipate less diversity and a less pristine habitat," he says.

The potential for loss is why our conservation horticulture specialists spend so much of their time collecting seeds of native plants in our Preserve and in places such as Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The seed bank holds more than 230,000 seeds.



The peace and tranquility of the Garden, along with finding the resident and migrating birds and making lifelong friends, make Naples Botanical Garden magical.

– Suzanne Lyons, Garden birding enthusiast



Pink sundew  
(*Drosera capillaris*)

“There’s a lot of untapped potential there,” DeYoung says later when we talk about the pawpaws. She notes something I had not thought about: What other secret uses might the plants in the Preserve harbor? There’s a lot we don’t know about Southwest Florida’s native species and their potential as food or medicine or the important roles they play in their ecosystems, she says.

### Surprises at every turn

Foht and I tour the Preserve on a December morning. He points out the state-endangered fuzzywuzzy airplant that Wilder had noted. *Tillandsia* are epiphytic plants, meaning they don’t need soil. This one had implanted itself at shoulder height on a tree, out of reach of floods. *Tillandsia utriculata*, the giant airplant, also grows out there. Over the past 40 or so years, an invasive bug decimated its population in South Florida. The Preserve, indeed, is a refuge.

We bump into Conservation Associate Ryan Horvath, who is monitoring for invasive plants that can crowd out native species if left unchecked.

“Hey, did you know there’s *Drosera* right here?” he asks, gesturing to our feet. We had broken our rule and failed to scan

our surroundings. This tuft (*Drosera capillaris*) is a native plant known as pink sundew. It eats insects.

To fully appreciate the sundew, you need to crouch and examine its red tentacles and glands that emit a sticky, bug-catching mucilage. To me, they look like aliens.

Nearby, Foht points out a long, slender netted pawpaw stem. *Asimina reticulata* is distantly related to the edible pawpaw fruit (*Asimina triloba*). The latter currently is not widely cultivated but has culinary potential. Scientists are studying how to hybridize wild-growing relatives with farmed crops, such as *A. reticulata* and *A. triloba*, to improve disease resilience, heat and cold tolerance, drought resistance and related stressors.

### Fire as protector

Last year, for the first time in the Garden’s history, we burned portions of the Preserve under carefully controlled conditions. Florida habitats need fire to function as nature designed.

The blazes do everything from release seeds to reduce plant overgrowth. This allows plants that were previously crowded or unable to receive light to take root. We’re in a global biodiversity crisis — with many regions converting to near monocultures — so we’re happy to do what we can to increase species diversity.

“You see that yellow plant?”



Foht asks at one of the burn sites, pointing to a small flower a few inches off the ground. “It’s a *Polygala rugelii*. I don’t know if it has been observed here before the fire.” This yellow milkwort is among our endemic plants – those that only grow in this area.

In another area, he’s noticed a dwarf oak species (*Quercus pumila*) in far greater number than before. Foht also pointed out wire grass (*Aristida stricta*) that is flowering and setting seed. Scientific literature suggests fire prompts the plant to reproduce. “It’s doing just that,” he says.

Not to be discounted: Controlled fire is good for people. The Garden is in a residential area. By burning plant debris, such as fallen leaves and pine needles, we reduce the risk of a wildfire starting and spreading.

We are entering our second year of prescribed burning.

There is still a lot to learn, such as how pine trees after years without a fire respond to a blaze and how to best manage some types of invasive plants using fire.

### A home for wildlife

On a slightly overcast morning, Art Mattson sets out on his circuit to check the Garden’s wildlife cameras. There are six along the Lake Trail and one by the Sönne Family Ghost Orchid Boardwalk. Mattson, a volunteer, has been monitoring our cameras since 2018. They’re set to detect movement and take images after dark.

“Most of the time, I’ll be just going through images, and then, all of a sudden, ‘Wow!’” Mattson says.

The “wow” could be coyotes or bobcats – a whole family of which has been spotted. More rarely, a river otter will appear. A couple of Christmases ago, when humans were sequestered in COVID-19 isolation, a panther strolled through the Preserve, likely on its way to larger conservation lands. Mattson

alerted Foht right away, and the photo made a tremendous splash on the Garden’s social media feeds. A panther sighting is magical; the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) believes there are only 120 to 230 left in the wild.

Typically, Mattson will see five to 10 noteworthy critters and as many as 15 when wildlife activity surges.

In addition to mammals, the Preserve is a haven for gopher tortoises. The reptiles are listed as “threatened” in Florida, and they and their burrows are protected under state law. Look for crescent-shaped burrows along sandy pathways and keep your eyes peeled along the Lake Path where they might be ambling. (Naturally, we ask that you keep your distance from the tortoises and their homes.)

Birders love the Garden – a regular group meets every Tuesday – and have recorded 219 species on Cornell University’s eBird citizen science site.

“The peace and tranquility of the Garden, along with finding resident and migrating birds and making lifelong friends, make Naples Botanical Garden magical,” says Suzanne Lyons, a birding regular.

In July 2022, Jordan Donini, a Florida Southwestern State College biology professor and founder of the Southwest Florida Turtle Project, released 34 turtles into the Garden. They had been part of a poaching ring that the FWC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service infiltrated. Once the ensuing trial ended, and the turtles were deemed disease-free and able to live on their own, FWC connected with Donini. The professor agreed to manage their release and monitor them to see how they fared. He tagged 14 with radio transmitters.

A few months ago, Donini offered Garden staff an update on the project. A few signals were lost



Trail cameras capture images of wildlife. From top to bottom: White-tailed deer, bobcat kitten, opossum (also known as Virginia opossum), river otter, coyote pack, Florida black bear



Listen for sounds of daytime wildlife.

over time. One of three Florida mud turtles is known to have survived. All but one striped mud turtle survived even with Hurricane Ian's storm surge. Eggs were documented in two females.

"That means they were not only surviving but thriving," Donini says.

### How to access the Preserve

**From the Smith Entry Prow:** Head toward the Kapnick Brazilian Garden and veer to the right when you see the sign for the Preserve. This will take you to the Sönne Family Ghost Orchid Boardwalk and to the wooded trails on its opposite side. These trails connect to the paved Lake Trail.

**From the Kapnick Caribbean Garden:** You can pick up the Lake Trail from Nina's Pavilion.

**From the Scott Florida Garden:** Cross the Bergauer Bridge at the water feature and stay to your right. You'll pass through a short, forested stretch and connect with a footbridge leading to the Lake Trail.



Narrowleaf yellowtops  
(*Flaveria linearis*)



Look for flowering plants.



Blazing star  
(*Liatris chapmanii*)





# Introducing the Evenstad Horticulture Campus



**A** project five years in the making — and a dream that dates back much longer — has come into being.

On January 16, we dedicated the new Evenstad Horticulture Campus, the facility that will catapult Naples Botanical Garden into its future.

“In less than 15 years, this special Garden has emerged from bare ground ... to become a horticultural anchor in our community and an expert in nature-based solutions for some of our region’s most serious environmental challenges,” President & CEO Donna McGinnis told the

200-plus attendees and staff, which crowded into a loft to watch. For many of them, the campus will transform their work.

“We did it with nurseries made up of more duct tape and concrete blocks and zip ties and old shipping containers than I care to confess,” McGinnis continued. “But, finally, today we have the research and development and growing facilities worthy of the amazing gardens that we have built.”



**Left to right:** Brian Galligan, Vice President of Horticulture; Donna McGinnis, President & CEO; Ken Sumner, Board Member; Pastor Jean Paul, Bayshore Community Church; Carl Crosetto, Board Member; Priscillia Grannis, Rep. Bob Rommel's office; Kathleen Kapnick, Board Chair; Grace Evenstad, namesake donor, along with her late husband, Ken; Dan Kowal, Collier County Commissioner; Chad Washburn, Vice President of Conservation



# Explore the Evenstad Horticulture Campus

## 1. Sun Nursery

An acre of land divided into beds will hold collections such as cycads, trees, vegetables, cacti, succulents, as well as annual plants for rotational displays.

## 2. Potting Pavilion

An open-air structure designed to step up plants into larger containers.



## 3. Maintenance Shop

This is the epicenter of operations, where staff can access the tools and machinery needed to complete daily tasks.

## 4. Office Building & Lab

The office building provides specialists — currently scattered across the campus — with a communal workspace for team meetings, collaborative projects, and administrative duties. The laboratory suite features the sterile facilities and equipment needed to work with our most sensitive collections, including native Florida orchids.

## 5. Generators & Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment

Two catchment tanks, one for raw water and one for treated, will hold 15,000 gallons each.

## 6. Marcia & L. Bates Lea Shade House

10,000 square feet of growing space and 20-foot ceilings allow for the tending of young plants. This structure will house many of our understory plants, such as bromeliads, gingers, and aroids, and can accommodate trees and palms of virtually any size.

## 7. North Greenhouse

This structure will house horticulture and conservation collections, such as an extensive begonia collection and the threatened Puerto Rican cacti. The greenhouse will include rare tropical ornamental trees and sensitive fruit species, such as chocolate.

Scan the QR code to learn more about contributing to the Evenstad Horticulture Campus and the Garden's work throughout Southwest Florida and the Caribbean. To discuss recognition opportunities for significant gifts, contact Rhea Merrill, Director of Development, at **239.571.3806** or [rmerrill@naplesgarden.org](mailto:rmerrill@naplesgarden.org).





## 8. Blair Foundation Greenhouse

(Includes the Patricia & Don Altorfer Orchid Collection Zone)

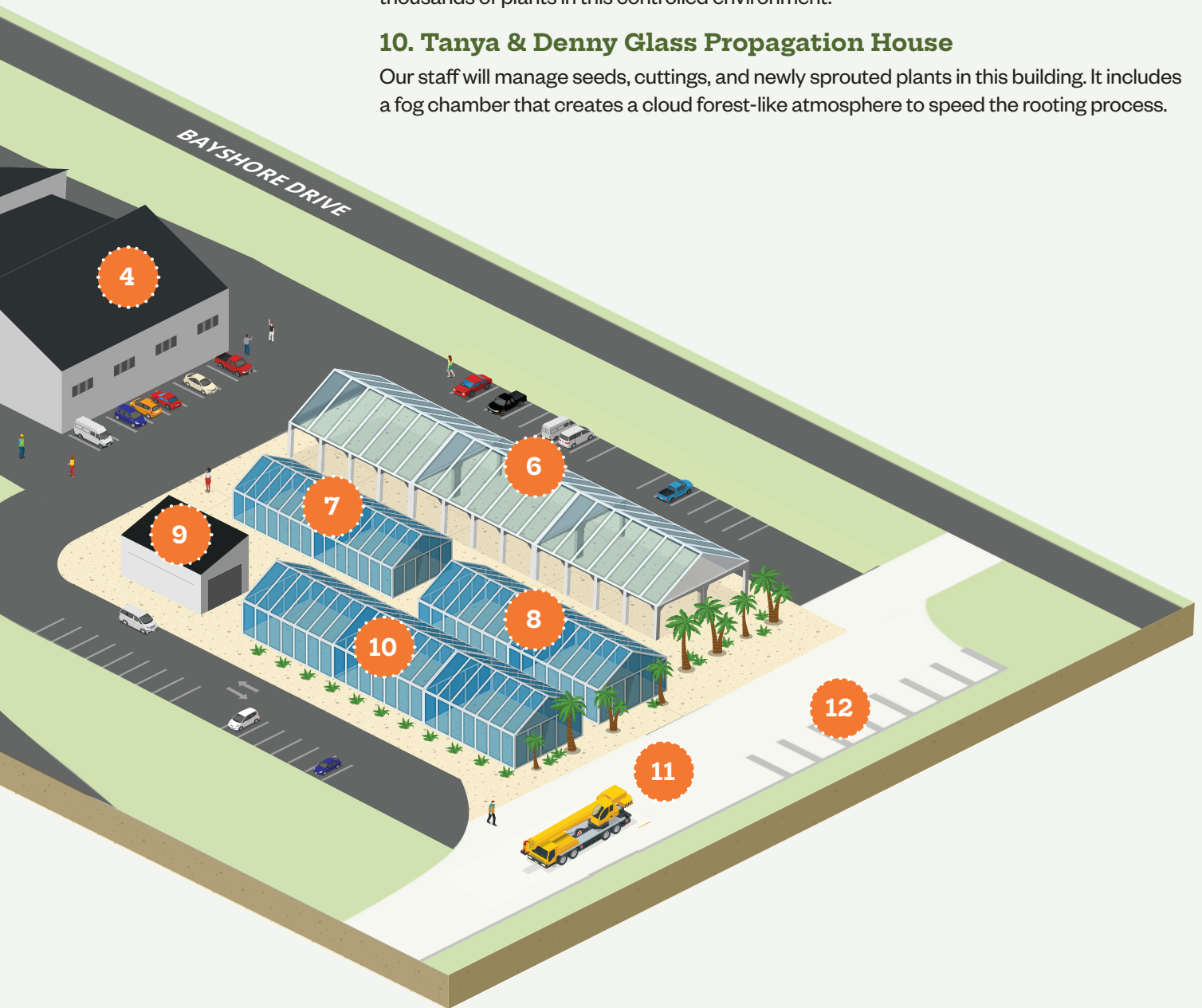
This extensive structure will house primary collections, such as accessioned orchids, gingers, ultra-tropical plants, and plants designated for rotational displays.

## 9. M.D. Stephenson Potting House

Early nurturing is the key to plant health, longevity, and performance. Staff can pot thousands of plants in this controlled environment.

## 10. Tanya & Denny Glass Propagation House

Our staff will manage seeds, cuttings, and newly sprouted plants in this building. It includes a fog chamber that creates a cloud forest-like atmosphere to speed the rooting process.



## 11. Green Waste Recycling Area

Staff hauls horticultural debris to our industrial grinder, dubbed The Beast®, which reduces it to mulch for use in our cultivated gardens.

## 12. Bulk Material Storage

Mulch, stone, sand, and soil is stored here.

# Tip Your Hat to Barbie Hills

By Jennifer Reed

Photo by John Eder

When Barbie Hills moved to Naples from Barrington Hills, Illinois, in 2003, *Hats in the Garden* was the runway that launched her into the community and social fabric of Naples. It provided an entry into the Garden’s multilayered mission. And she intends for *Hats 2024* — the event’s 20th anniversary — to pave the way toward a better understanding of nature.

Yes, *Runways* is this year’s theme, a clever play off the luncheon’s fashion show and symbol of the benefits attendees may derive, as Barbie, the chair, discovered.

“I wanted to pick something that would be exciting and important,” she says. “Out there, in those 90 acres, we have runways, and they need to be widened.”

This year’s Fund-a-Need will lay the foundation for long-term enhancement projects in the Preserve, including shade shelters, seating, a tram system, and increased educational programming. “We’re readying the runway,” offers Garden Director of Development Rhea Merrill. (See page 21 for more on the Preserve.)

Barbie is a natural hostess — with her husband, Paul, she has chaired the Naples Winter Wine Festival and several of its associated vintner dinners — and she’s excited to add her stamp to *Hats*.

“This party should be about the people who come to the party,” she says. “Each one of them is like a princess at the party. I want to emphasize that.”

“But I won’t reveal how,” she adds, surreptitiously, keeping details under wraps.

One thing she will disclose: Her son-in-law, Fox News anchor Bret Baier, will serve as the emcee. “He promised he would be the master of ceremonies if I ever chaired.”

For Barbie, *Hats* is a family affair. Her daughter, Amy, two daughters-in-law, and two granddaughters attend every year, outfitted in coordinating dresses and headpieces. “It’s a guarantee that we get together. Maybe your lives get too busy or you’re too far apart, but we always come back for *Hats*,” she says. “[*Hats*] just connects people.”

The event is more than a luncheon, fashion show, reunion, or cherished excuse to dress up, Barbie adds. It offers purpose. “You can get so much done here by putting people together at a party. It’s amazing to me,” she says.

*Hats* generates over \$2.6 million toward the Garden’s operating budget, including Fund-a-Need revenue.

Barbie’s love of nature stems from childhood on her family farm, where she remembers weaving bridal wreath sprigs into crowns and turning hollyhock blooms into dancing ladies.

“The Garden, to me, is a place that’s safe. It’s a place that’s friendly. It promotes beauty,” she says. But most of all, she associates the Garden with “friendship,” a special kind that blossomed when she bought her first ticket to *Hats* all those years ago.

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**For more on the 20-year impact of *Hats in the Garden*, continue reading on page 35.**

“

The Garden, to me, is a place that's safe. It's a place that's friendly. It promotes beauty.





# Hats in the Garden

## Celebrating 20 years

By Jenny Fuentes

**T**alk with any of the philanthropic women involved in *Hats in the Garden* over the years, and you'll quickly learn that this time-honored tradition is not merely an event. It represents memories made, friendships forged, and a level of financial support that has served as a stabilizing force for Naples Botanical Garden for two decades and counting.

Over the years, *Hats in the Garden* has raised millions of dollars for the Garden while simultaneously showcasing incredible themes, millinery, and designer fashions and florals. Fund-a-Need pledges taken during the luncheon support crucial causes, ranging from community access programs to coastal resilience measures.



“

**The first *Hats in the Garden* was the beginning of greatness for our Garden.**

**- Jane Purdy Berger**

As we celebrate *Hats in the Garden's* 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary on March 20, look back at milestone moments from this jewel of Naples' social season — a legacy steeped in philanthropy.



## 2004

### *Hats in the Garden is born.*

In an event tent pitched in the parking lot, years before the Garden opened, \_\_\_ women gathered for lunch, artfully packaged in a hat box. “We hot glued décor to the boxes before the event, which was a party in itself,” says Jane Purdy Berger, who founded *Hats in the Garden* with Barbara Finn, Leslie Fogg, and Anne LaGrippe. “The first *Hats in the Garden* was the beginning of greatness for our Garden; what a delightful journey it has been.”



## 2009

### *The Sustaining Leadership Council is created.*

The world was reeling with the financial crisis, and Naples was no exception. Cultivated gardens that were set to open in 2009 had to be postponed. Garden supporters, many *Hats* planners and attendees, contributed pledges to keep progress on track. “It was out of critical need,” recalls Karen Scott, a founding SLC member. “We called it the Inaugural Leadership Council, which became the SLC. That group has become a crucial part of the Garden’s operating budget. A lot of the same people are still on the SLC, and that is remarkable. It has a lot of history and dedication and loyalty.” To this day, SLC members make annual Garden gifts and plan each *Hats* fundraiser.



## 2020

### *A global pandemic creates cause to pivot.*

COVID-19 may have halted an in-person *Hats*, but SLC members were undeterred. They strategized a way to celebrate, even if from afar, with #HatsInOurGardens. The fundraiser went virtual. Select members led video tours of their home gardens, and a photo montage showcased participants’ trademark hats. A style shoot featured Marissa Collections, and curated gift bags were delivered to Naples participants. Social media opened the fundraiser to more people than ever. In 2022, *Hats* returned to its in-person format. “My favorite moment was watching Linda Koehn’s *Hats* come to fruition after years of planning during COVID,” recalls Rhea Merrill, Director of Development.



## 2017

### *Resilience reigns supreme.*

Eleanor Chabraja recalls when Hurricane Irma rolled through Collier County on September 10, 2017, less than two months before *Hats*. It was her year as Chair. “Irma played havoc with our Garden — but due to the heroic efforts of our staff, volunteers, and assistance from gardens across the country, *Hats* took place as scheduled and funded *Replant and Regrow*, which focused on the Garden’s recovery,” says Eleanor. As a result, the Garden received impactful aid during a crucial recovery period.



## 2024 & Beyond

### *What lies ahead.*

Now, on the eve of *Hats*’ 20th anniversary, those closest to the fundraiser eagerly await the return of friends, a first glimpse at the 2024 fall season’s latest fashions, and the chance to, once again, support the Garden they love. The 2024 event has drawn its highest attendance ever with more than 700 guests. Click the QR code at right to learn what Sustaining Leadership Council members have to say about *Hats*.



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**“He’s a skulker. He just moves through the grasses ...  
Maybe this winter he’ll come back. We’ve had him,  
I think, for about six winters in a row.”**

— Ed Kemnitzer, Garden volunteer and birding guide,  
*on searching for the American Bittern in the Preserve*

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