

Natural Connections

Visitor-Centric & Participatory Engagement

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“ **DISCOVER & SHARE** **PLANTS &**
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT
THEIR ENVIRONMENT,
ORDER TO **& ENRICH LIFE** ”
PRESERVE

– mission of the Missouri Botanical Garden



Roles of Public Gardens

- **Trainer** of horticultural techniques and in skills for growing food
- **Facilitator** of community conversations
- **Educator** of youth and general public
- **Technical Expert** of conservation techniques
- **Credibility Lender** to engage more established institutions
- **Community Host** for meetings and events
- **Catalyst** for change toward sustainable community development

MBG Priorities

- 🌿 Get people of all ages, abilities & backgrounds outside... exploring, caring.
- 🌿 Greatly strengthen and deepen environmental & ecological literacy .
- 🌿 Build the will, capacity, and skills to live more sustainably.
- 🌿 Protect plants and our natural world, both locally and globally.

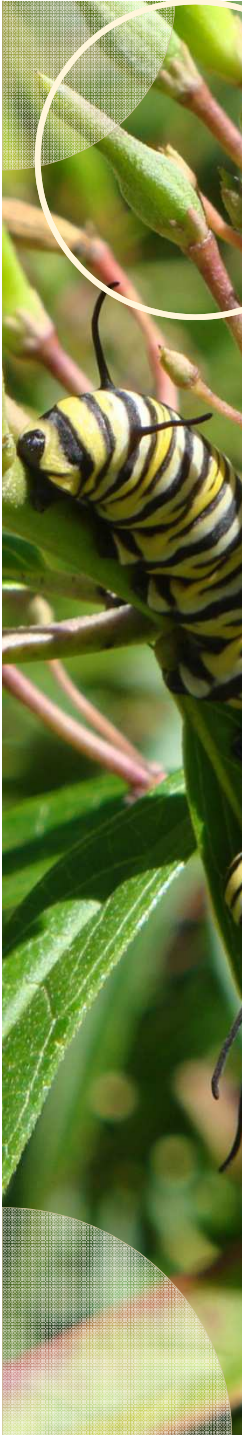


Opportunity and Obligation

The Garden has an opportunity, and an obligation, to better engage, empower, and involve our millions of visitors, in promoting conservation and sustainability, at home and around the world.

The Garden ***must be an active learning partner with our visitors, facilitating their experiences based on their motivations and interests***, inviting them to learn about plants and the Garden's efforts in ***personally relevant ways***, and enabling us to learn more about our visitors.





To serve today's visitors, we need to accommodate a range of learning styles, abilities, backgrounds, preferences, and ages.

Successful programs at the Garden must engage visitors in dialogue and interchange, inspiring and providing opportunities for them to react, editorialize, question, ponder, create, and share.



Meeting the Challenge



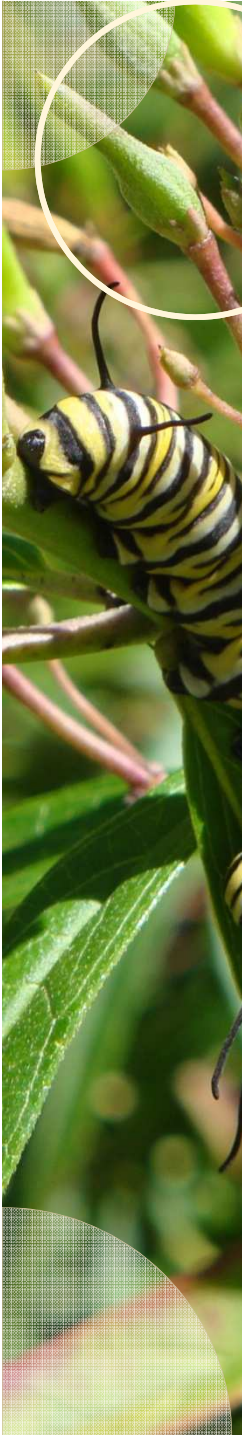
The Garden launched *Natural Connections*!



What is *Natural Connections*?

A comprehensive package of visitor engagement components, tactics, tools, technologies, and transformative experiences designed to better engage, involve, empower, and inspire our visitors.





Who are we connect with?





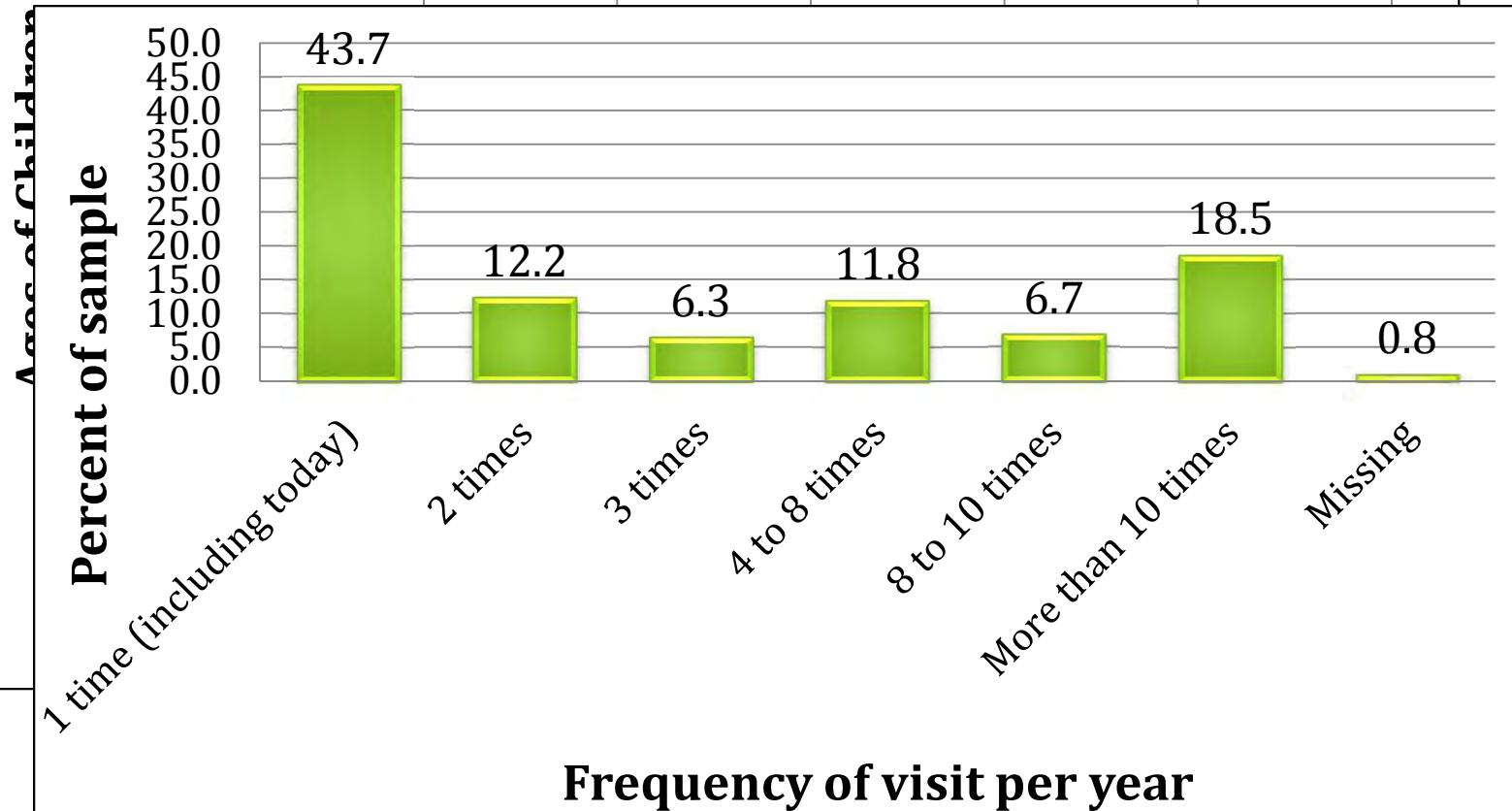
What do we know about our visitors?

With my family, including children...

23.5

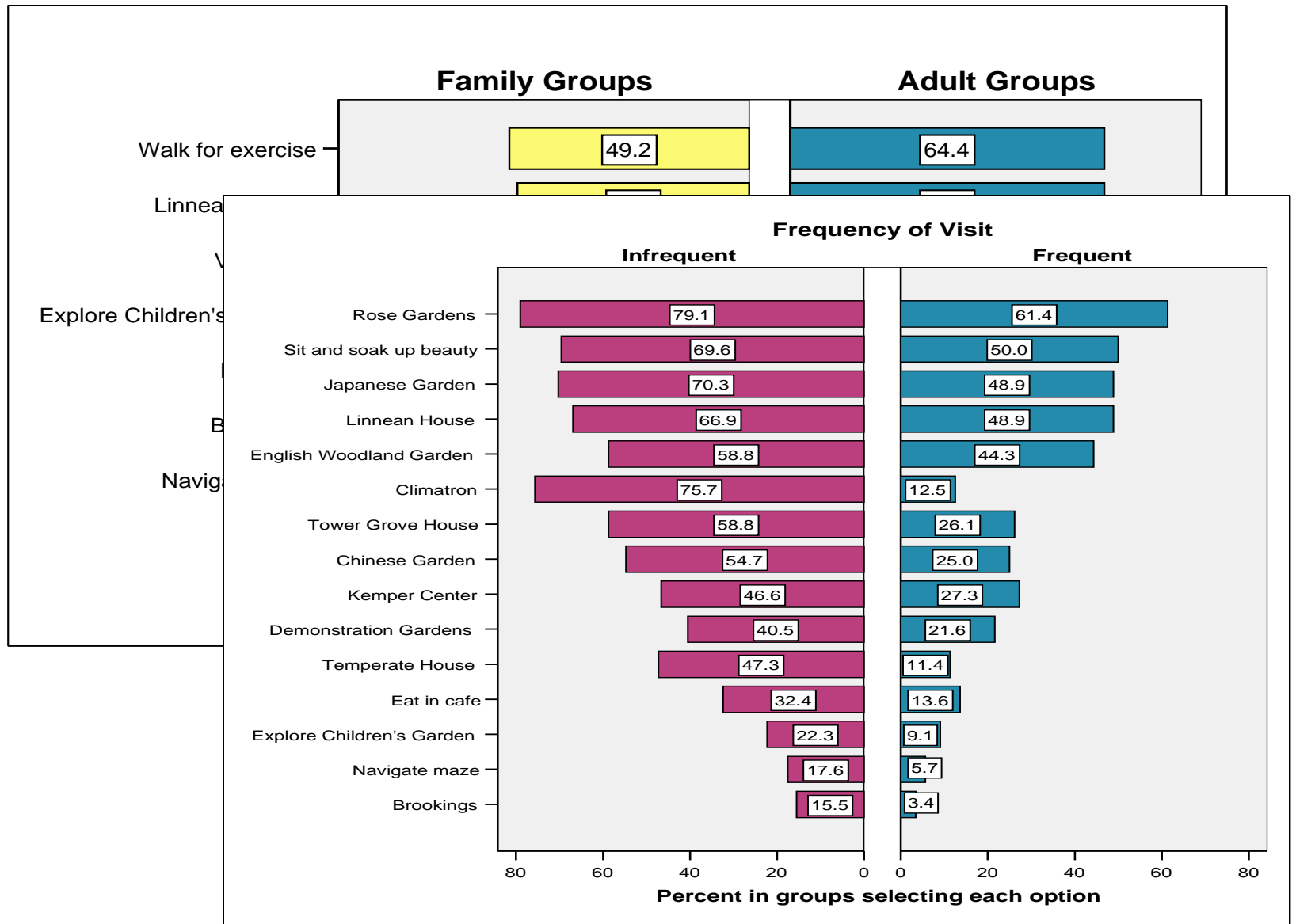
13 to 17 years old

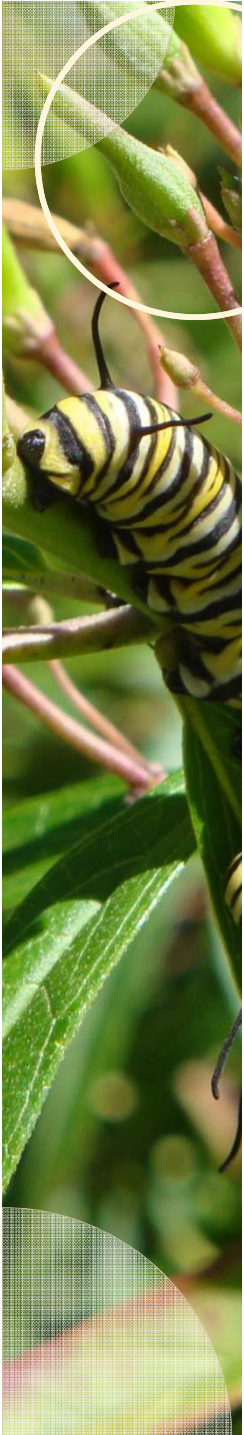
29.5





Why do they come and what do they do?





How are we connecting with them?

Social Media
Newsletters
Annual Report
News Releases
Adult Education
Youth Programs
Signage
Walking Tours
Digital Media
Print Material
Teacher PD
Family Programs
Lectures
Training Sessions



Germination Stations
Sponsorships
Volunteer Trainings
Student Programs
Website
Audio Tours
Community
Conversations
Outreach Programs
Horticulture Therapy
Presentations
Bulletin
Mailers
Events & Exhibits

OUTCOMES

1. Personally relevant, meaningful, satisfying, and memorable experience.
2. Greater awareness of plants and human reliance on plants for survival.
3. Increased knowledge of choices and actions to promote conservation and sustainability.
4. Strengthen visitor affinity and support for the Garden and its global mission.

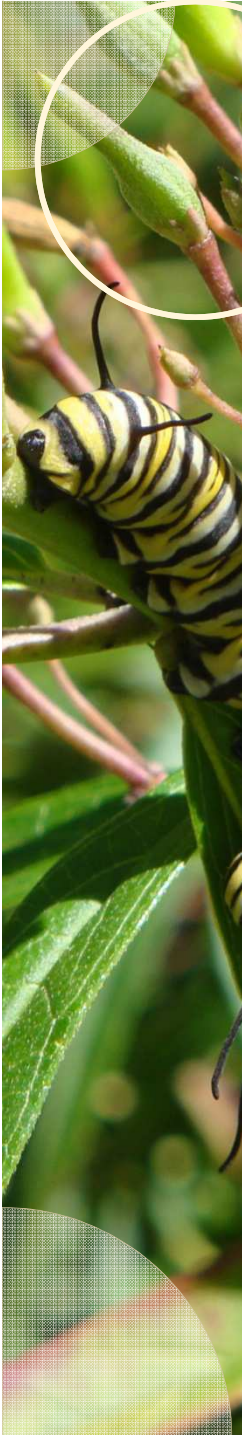




Priority Take-Away Messages

1. **Something provocative that I didn't know before...**
2. **What is the Garden is doing...**
3. **Something I can do...**





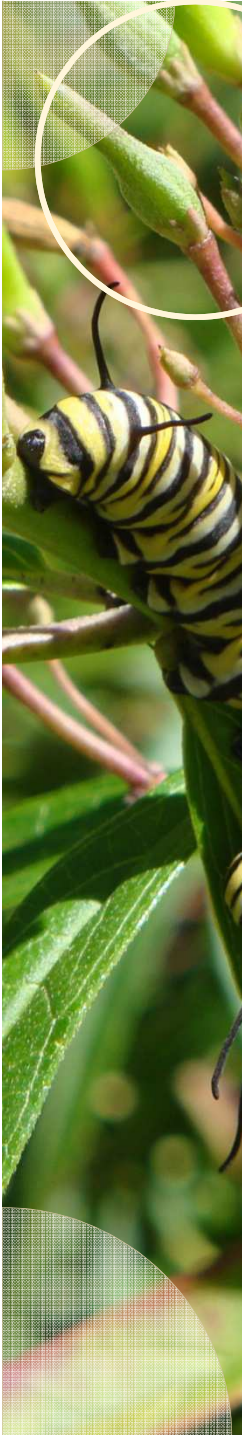
Upon arriving at the Garden...

Lots of activity...

- Visitor arrival
- Admissions, maps, and orientation
- Membership Desk, Garden Gate Shop
- Locating amenities

Plants are Our Passion...





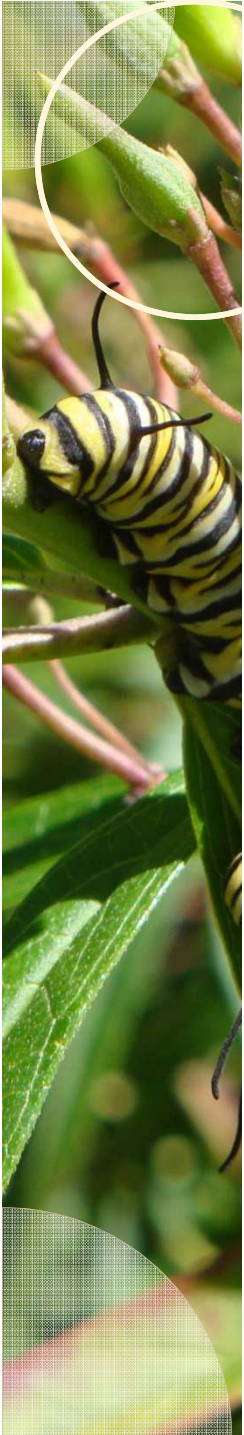
On the 2nd Floor...

Monsanto Hall

- Exhibits!
- Sassafras
- Information kiosks, event posters, rack cards, and brochures
- “What’s in Bloom”
- Public tour, daily

Visitor Engagement Station





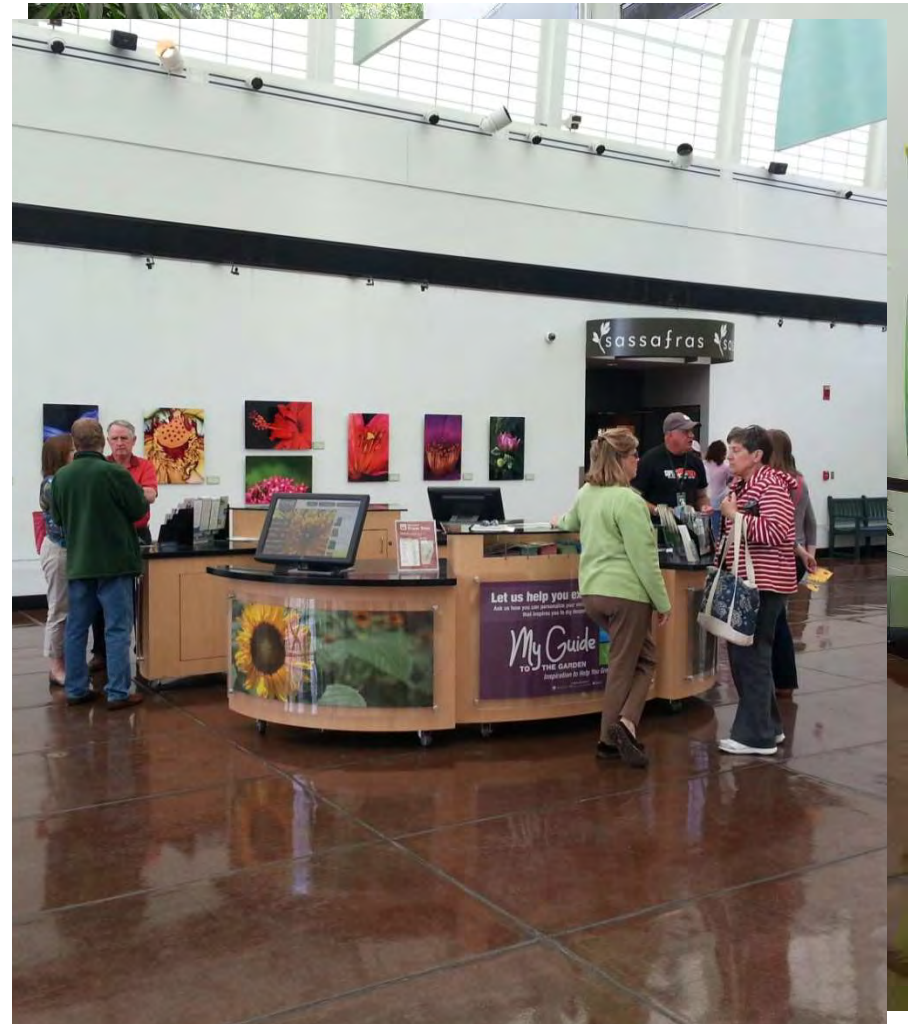
Visitor Engagement since 2010

Volunteers

- 7 days a week, sporadic

Engaged 67,946

- Increase visibility & consistent staffing
- Increase engagement opportunities
- Equip with digital kiosks and custom guide printing





My Guide

TO THE GARDEN



Inspiration to Help You Grow

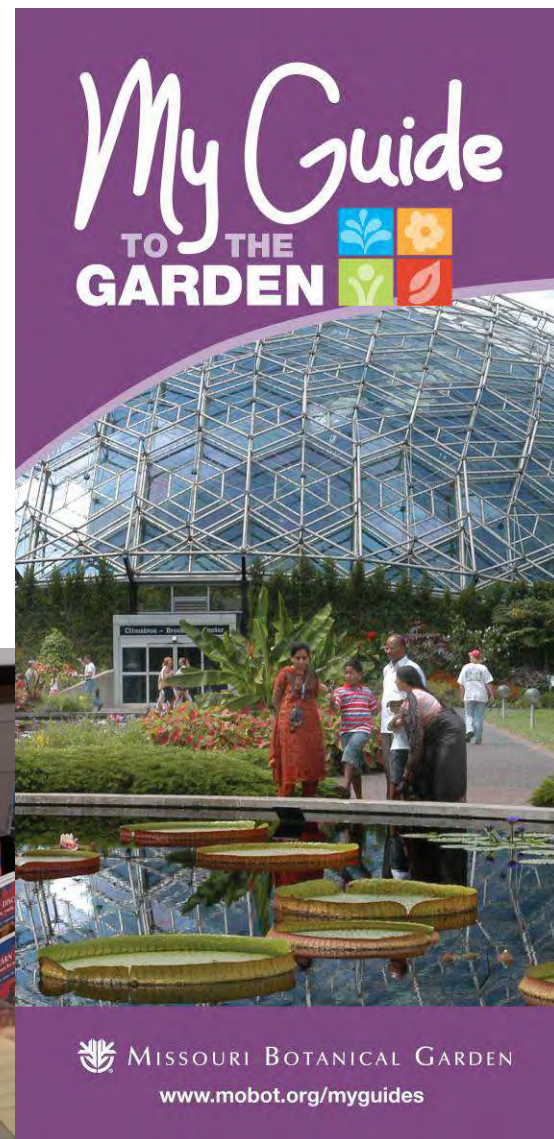
a collaboration between



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN



Maritz



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

www.mobot.org/myguides



MyGuide *to the Garden* 2014

- 18,508 engaged visitors
- 80+ new volunteers trained
- **New Tours:** Member Pilot
 - 5 new tours
 - 332 distributed
 - 26 completed survey

Topics of Interest to Members

- Birding in the Garden
- Missouri Native Plants
- Wicked Little Plants
- Poisonous Plants
- Carnivorous Plants
- Popular Wedding Flowers
- Animal-named Plants
- Shaw Trees



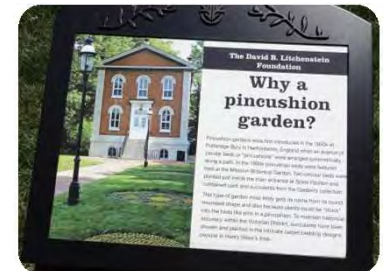
We found the German garden and dry bed garden for the 1st time after being Garden members for 8+ years!

Keep up the great work!

Been coming here since 1980s, couldn't figure out where the rock garden is in the brochure.



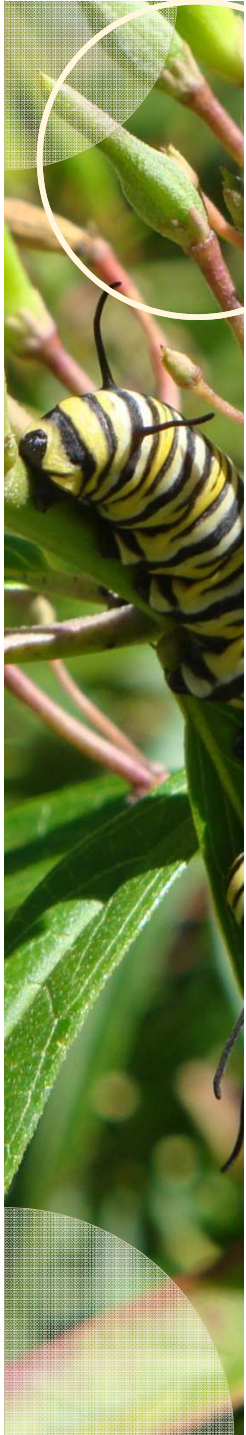
Display Gardens





Annual Floral Shows





Pot-a-Plant Activities



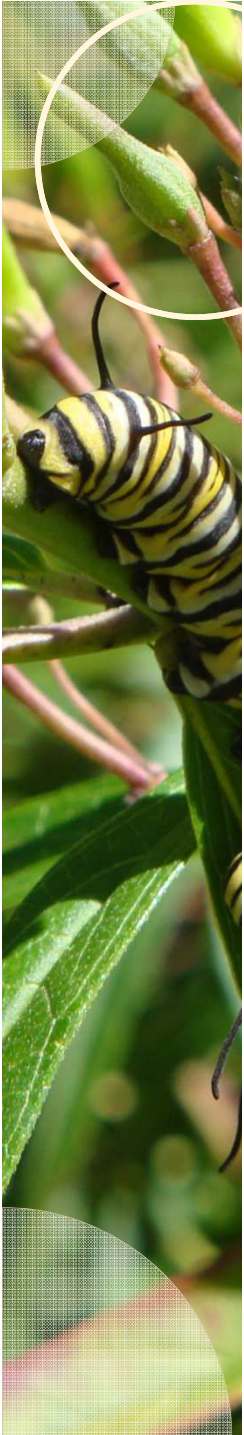
Edible Landscapes

- Children's Garden

Herb & Heirlooms

- Herb Garden
- June-August
- St. Louis Herb Society
- First 150 visitors
- Plugs from our greenhouse

Visitor Impacts!!



Children's Garden Happenings



EDIBLE GARDEN EVALUATION

- 47 parents surveyed June-July
- 17 were Garden members
- 21 visit 2 to 4 times per year and 5 visit more than 10 times.
- 42 had never heard about programming in the Edible Garden.
- 43 were participating for the first time.
- 12 participated as a family while 27 reported that just their children participated.
- 50% agreed that programming provided their children with new knowledge.

*"My son can't identify cauliflower!
Must make some."*

*"New veggies to try, some grow
underground; How bees help the plants."*

*"He plants a garden with Dad, so this is great for
him to see here! We love the Children's Garden!!"*

***"We can grow our own food and gives
kids more variety."***

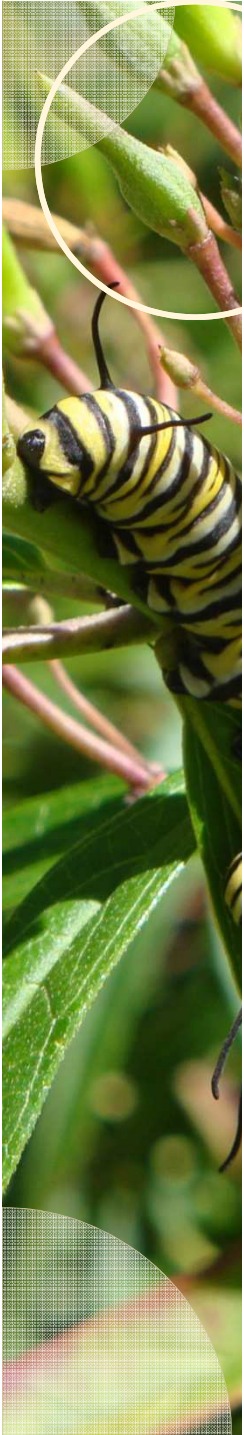


***"We would participate more if we got
a postcard or e-mail reminder."***



Tower Grove House





Brookings Interpretive Center





Exhibit Lineup:

- *2008: Exploring Trees Inside and Out*
- *2009: Living the Green Life*
- *2010: DinoQuest*
- *2011: TREEmendous*
- *2012: Plants & People: China*
- *2013: Foodology*
- *2014: Nature in Your Neighborhood*



BROOKINGS INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Nature in Your Neighborhood

What are visitors doing?

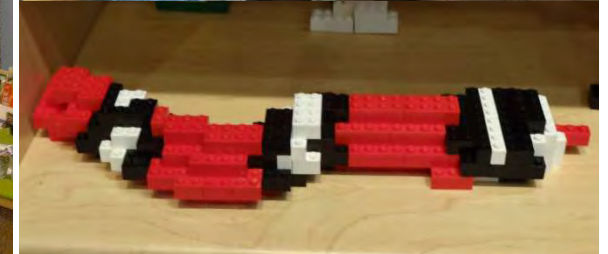
- Making Nature Art
- Building Tents
- Playing with Puppets, Costumes, Puzzles, and Blocks
- Reading Great Tales
- Exploring Urban Greening
- Discovering Missouri Natives
- Mapping and Drawing Nature in their Neighborhoods
- Pledging to Plant the Future

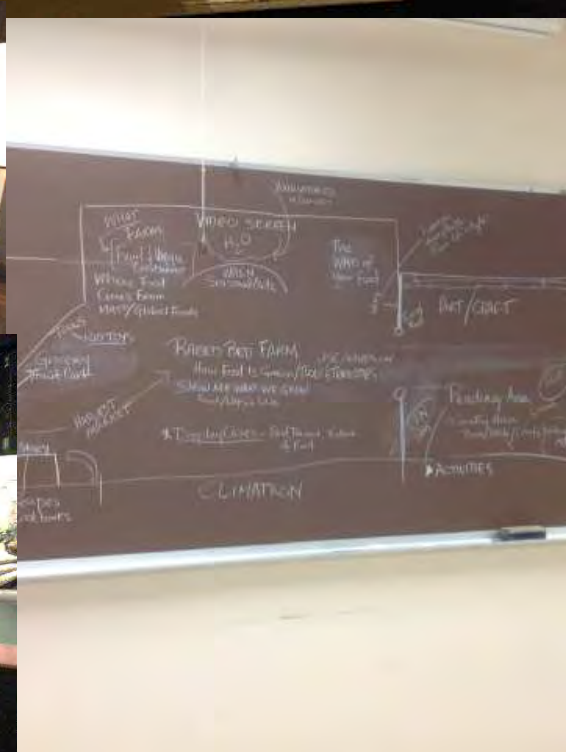
And let's not forget...

- Creating with 40,000 LEGO bricks.

What's next?

- ***Brookings 2.0 & Addition in 2016!!***
- We want your ideas on additional experiences we can add to the space.



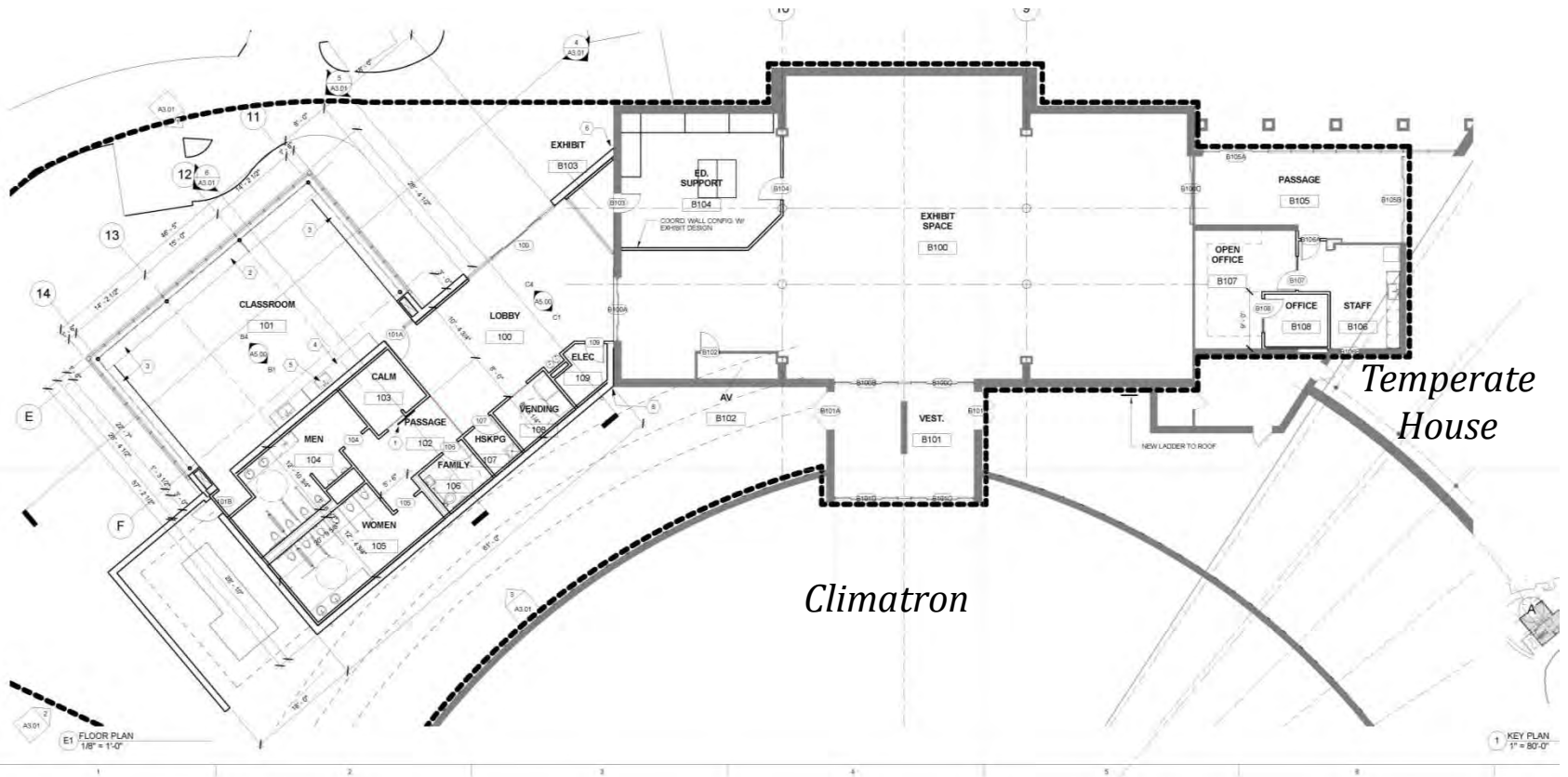




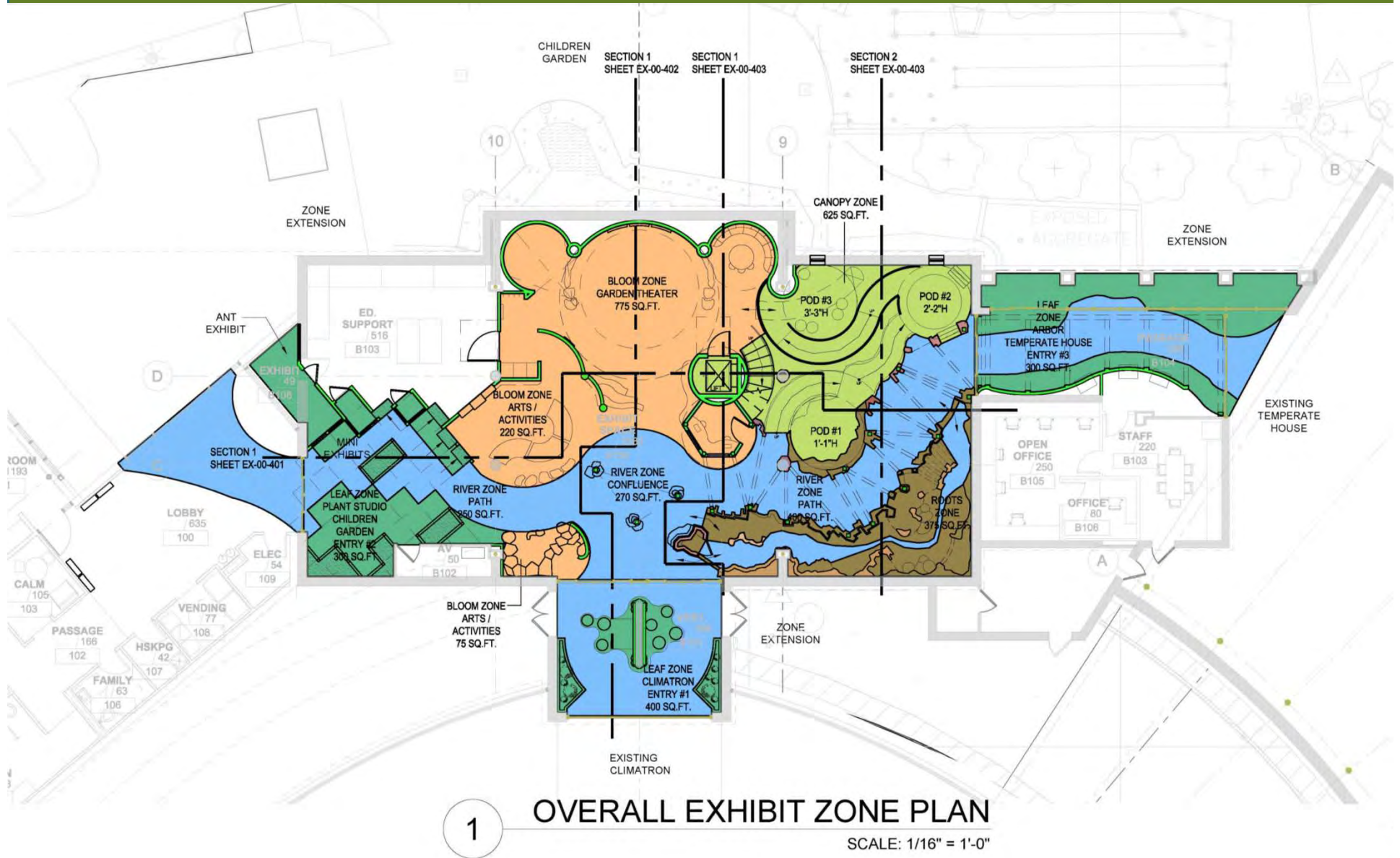


Brookings Interpretive Center 2.0

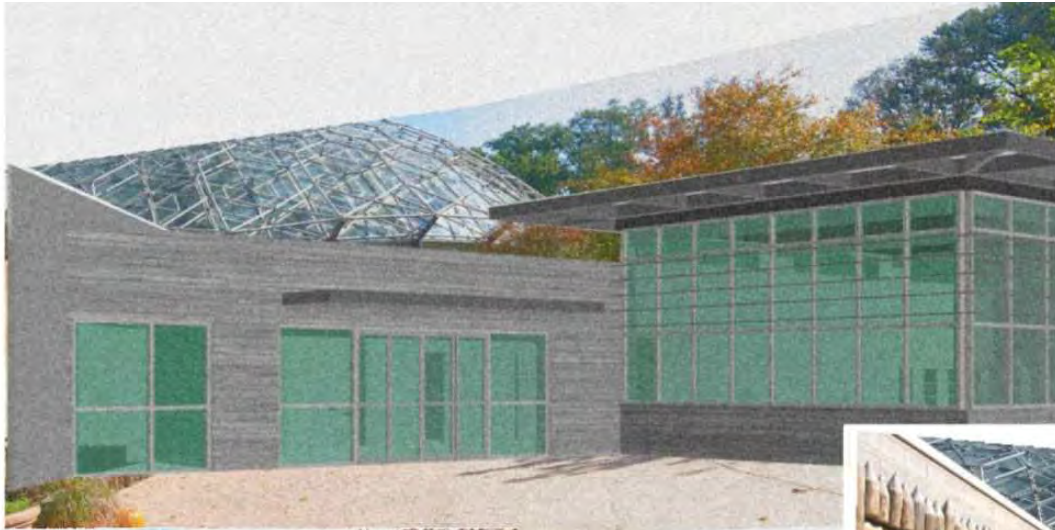
Children's Garden



Renovation & Expansion Project
Ground Breaking – September 2015







Natural Connections

Outcomes and benefits...



- ✓ Greater diversity of experiences; increased length of stay
- ✓ Customizable, repeatable experiences
- ✓ Active, unique learning experiences
- ✓ Increased diversity of visitors
- ✓ ...and more members too!

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