



DISCOVER | SHARE | PRESERVE | ENRICH

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Our mission is to **discover** and **share** knowledge about plants and their environment in order to **preserve** and **enrich** life.

On the cover: A portion of a water lily (*Nymphaea*) specimen in the Garden Herbarium, digitized and freely available for the study of students and scientists around the world.

PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA

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Rare Floral Bloom at the Garden

Commonly called a “corpse flower” or “titan arums,” the *Amorphophallus titanum* is a large, fast-growing plant in the Aroid family. Native to the western Indonesia island of Sumatra, the plant is known for emitting an intensely foul odor from a tall spike of small flowers during active blooming, which often lasts just 24 hours. The plant’s smell and coloration mimic rotting flesh in order to attract pollinating insects.

The Missouri Botanical Garden grows titan arums as part of its commitment to conserving rare and endangered species. A single corpse flower seed can take five to ten years to produce its first bloom. Here, “Augie” stands in full bloom at the restored Linnean House inside the Missouri Botanical Garden. More than 4,600 visitors made a special trip to the Garden in June 2024 to see and smell this unique plant, currently listed as Endangered in the wild by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Species.

PHOTO BY TOM INCROCCI



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE CONVINCED of the critical importance of this institution’s role in protecting the plant life that sustains our planet and the 8.2 billion people who call Earth home.

This year’s Annual Report suggests how strongly you agree, as do hundreds of like-minded members, volunteers, and donors.

No accomplishment shared here would be possible without your passion and generosity, and the year in review is an impressive one.

A landmark achievement came through a \$14.4 million gift to digitize the Garden’s vast herbarium collection. The Revolutionizing Species Identification Project will greatly accelerate species identification utilizing our extraordinary Herbarium, making our data even more accessible to advance the work of conservationists, scientists, and policymakers worldwide. It is a truly transformative initiative and the largest undertaking of its scope in the Garden’s history.

The Shoenberg Arid (formerly “Temperate”) House opened in 2024. The renovated space constitutes one of the Garden’s most botanically diverse and artfully planned displays. Popular exhibits continued to inform and delight the Garden’s one million visitors in 2024, with both the Japanese Festival and Best of Missouri Market enjoying record-breaking participation. Membership continued to climb, with first-time member households bringing the Garden’s growing family to more than 52,000.

I am confident that as I move to the role of President Emeritus, the Garden stands in a position of unprecedented strength. I know you join me in welcoming Dr. Lúcia Lohmann as she begins her tenure in leading this world-class institution into its next era of accomplishment.

While individual Garden leaders may change, our overall mission and guiding principles do not. With that, your support is the constant needed to advance the Garden as an international leader in plant conservation, advocate for global biodiversity and sustainability, pioneer of community outreach and education, icon of inclusion and equity, and premier purveyor of beauty for the ages.

Our world needs the vibrant, life-giving Missouri Botanical Garden that you and fellow supporters continue to cultivate. Thank you for the gift you are giving to generations to come.

I am eager for what the future holds for us both. Know that you and the Missouri Botanical Garden will forever hold a very special place in my heart.

DR. PETER WYSE JACKSON
President

FROM THE CHAIR

“TO PRESERVE AND ENRICH LIFE.” These words from the Missouri Botanical Garden’s mission statement were fulfilled in extraordinary ways throughout 2024.

The generosity of thousands of donors and friends is critical to the success of the Garden’s mission. Your support has allowed our community and our partners around the world to benefit from the Garden’s global efforts.

We began 2024 in a position of fiscal strength. One of the top priorities of our Board of Trustees is to steward donor gifts—the broad philanthropic support of individual and institutional grantors—with utmost diligence. Our Trustees provide oversight and engage with Garden staff to ensure that your charitable support is maximized to advance our mission.

Total numbers of donor gifts, volunteer hours, and new plants identified can be easily quantified and tracked. But no metric can measure the value of your support for the Garden or your passion to make a positive difference in the lives of generations to come.

These are priceless assets—and the most meaningful of all.

Time is of the essence in our shared support for the Garden’s work. Last fall, an editorial published in one of the world’s leading medical journals* began with this stark proposition. “The Earth is approaching a critical threshold of irreversible biodiversity loss.” Our own scientists work tirelessly to identify plant species before they are lost to us forever. We know diverse, vibrant ecosystems are key to producing healthy foods, clean water, and clear air.

I thank you for your continuing commitment to “preserving and enriching life” as a valued supporter of the world-leading plant science and conservation championed at the Garden. Your generosity has advanced critical plant research, preserved endangered species, kept our world-class facilities flourishing, and supported vital fieldwork and education underway worldwide.

In so many ways, you ARE the Missouri Botanical Garden.

MICHAEL K. STERN, PHD

Chair of the Board of Trustees

*The Lancet; Volume 404, Issue 10463; p1615; October 26, 2024

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WORLD-LEADING PLANT SCIENCE
AND CONSERVATION



Advancing Restoration and
Conservation through Taxonomy

IN 2024, the Missouri Botanical Garden’s science division marked a number of milestone achievements and discoveries, advancing knowledge worldwide.

A landmark \$14.4 million gift launched a transformative initiative to address the urgent global biodiversity crisis and help save the estimated one third of the world’s plants threatened with extinction.

The **Revolutionizing Species Identification (RSI)** project aims to accelerate and enhance the digitization of the Garden’s massive herbarium. Making nearly eight million specimens available to scientists around the world in as little as six years will advance species identification and transform plant conservation efforts worldwide.

“You can only conserve what you know,” notes Dr. Gunter Fischer, Senior Vice President of Science and Conservation at the Garden. “If a species remains unidentified, we cannot protect it. Modern technologies are helping us pinpoint rare and endangered plants, map those species under the greatest threat, and move faster than ever before to restore biodiversity before it is too late.”

The RSI project directly supports the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity’s Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and aligns with the United Nations’ goal to conserve 30% of the Earth’s land and water by 2030.

(continued)

(left) Assistant Curator Dr. Rosa Ortiz-Gentry studies an herbarium specimen through a microscope.

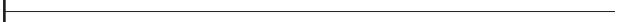
(top right) The Garden is in the process of digitizing nearly 8 million herbarium specimens to make the collection freely available for global scientific use.

(bottom right) Herbarium Director Dr. Jordan Teisher and his team care for an Herbarium of nearly 8 million specimens.





Dr. Charlotte Taylor holds an herbarium specimen of red lip flower (*Psychotria elata* (Sw.) Hammel) surrounded by hundreds of other specimens in the Garden Herbarium.



Garden scientist **Dr. Charlotte Taylor** celebrated a major milestone in 2024. She has described more than 500 plant species, making her the most prolific living female author of new plant species and one of history’s most accomplished plant taxonomists.

Taylor’s achievements and media recognition catapulted her into the spotlight as a role model for young scientists—especially women pursuing careers in botany and biodiversity research. Taylor used these opportunities to emphasize the broader importance of plant taxonomy, herbaria, and the study of biodiversity. Her 2024 work also included describing 19 new plant species and continuing meticulous research on Rubiaceae, the coffee and quinine family.

As the world grapples with a biodiversity crisis, Taylor’s continuing work to document and describe plant species has never been more essential.



In 2024, Garden scientists and collaborators discovered and described a new orchid species in Central Madagascar. *Solenangis impraedita* has close ties to the famous “Darwin’s orchid” (*Angraecum sesquipedale*). Both orchids are endemic to Madagascar and pollinated by unique species of hawkmoths.

The Madagascar program is the Garden’s single largest permanent overseas project. The ongoing initiative addresses twin goals of achieving sustainable conservation while improving human livelihood and well-being. The Garden supports 11 protected areas across the island nation which currently safeguard more than one quarter of its 12,000 known plant species. Many of these plants bring cultural, spiritual, social, medicinal, and economic value to its people.

The orchid Solenangis impraedita is native to Madagascar and has the longest nectar spur of any known plant, relative to flower size.



PHOTOS BY NATHAN KWARTA, MARIE SAVIGNAC, TOM INCROCCI, DEMI STRIGLOS



The “Darwin orchid” Angraecum sesquipedale in the Garden’s living collection is an example of the species that predicted a hawkmoth pollinator discovered 50 years later.



In Latin America, Garden staff established **Bolivia’s first seed bank** dedicated to native plants. This pioneering initiative currently safeguards seeds from 46 native species, focusing on rare, endemic, and threatened plants from the La Paz Valley. The seed bank will serve as a vital repository for the country’s biodiversity and a resource for research, education, and outreach. It is part of a broader regional initiative that brings together institutions in Colombia, Guatemala, and Bolivia to bolster their capacity for ex-situ conservation through seed banking.

These efforts in plant science and conservation will continue to expand thanks in part to a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The National Leadership Grant from IMLS will help the Garden develop model practices for the conservation of imperiled plant species in living collections. By developing these practices, the Garden can multiply its conservation impact through botanical gardens and institutions worldwide.

Seed bank collections are essential to plant conservation efforts at the Garden and around the world.



Shaw Nature Reserve to Revive and Restore Native Biodiversity



The summer landscape along the Wetland Trail at Shaw Nature Reserve offers diverse beauty through active ecological restoration and land management.

SHAW NATURE RESERVE reached new benchmarks of progress in 2024 toward its commitment to revitalizing Missouri's native landscapes.

The **Linnemeyer Russell Restoration Center**, dedicated in September, marked a significant step forward in building capacity for ecological restoration. The Restoration Center was made possible through the generosity of Susie Russell, a 40-year volunteer at Shaw Nature Reserve committed to its long-term ecological restoration program. The facility provides the space needed to advance strategic initiatives to restore native Missouri ecosystems. That includes a plan to manage all of the Nature Reserve's 2,400 acres for native biodiversity by 2030 and to share best practices across the region. Revitalizing diverse natural habitats requires a variety of conservation measures, including invasive species control, prescribed burning, and collecting and sowing native seed.

A vital education venue at the Nature Reserve, the **Dana Brown Overnight Center**, was updated with key accessibility improvements. The historic log structures

date back to the 1800s. The facility serves primarily as an educational center for school groups, with private rentals available through the year. To improve navigation for all, the exterior paths were widened, and gravel trails were replaced with a compact mixture. A universally accessible patio was also created adjacent to the main building within the complex.

Progress continued on the 120-acre **Wolf Run Grassland Restoration** project; an additional 40 acres were seeded with hundreds of native species. These additional plantings are part of a five-year plan to restore the area to a rich tapestry of prairie, savanna, and oak woodland. The area was also included in the prescribed fire season, which ended with 914 carefully selected acres burned. This makes 2024 the largest usage of controlled fire in the Nature Reserve's 45-year history of using the method to steward natural habitats.

As Shaw Nature Reserve ushers in its 100th anniversary, Garden staff embrace the opportunity to broaden its global impact, preserving and enriching all life for generations to come.



PHOTOS BY MATILDA ADAMS, MIKE SAXTON

(top) The Linnemeyer Russell Restoration Center is a hub for ecological restoration, providing essential space for our growing program to thrive.

(center) Visitors enjoy a beautiful fall day at one of the historic cabins of the Dana Brown Overnight Center.

(bottom) Prescribed burns promote native biodiversity and are critical to the Nature Reserve's efforts to enhance ecosystem health.

BY THE NUMBERS



1,300

pounds of seed sown from 300+ native species over 46 acres to enhance biodiversity of natural communities



18,000+

participants in Nature Reserve educational programs, events, and services



220

species represented in seed collected from native plants for propagation and integration into the horticultural displays of the Whitmire Wildflower Garden and Ozark Ethnobotany Garden



51

Native Landscape Project consultations, designs, and design reviews in communities across St. Louis



The Garden's arid plant collections are extremely diverse, including 285 rare or endangered species.

Horticulture Programs Cultivate Flourishing Flora for Greener Tomorrow

THROUGHOUT 2024, the Garden's Horticulture staff furthered the Garden's mission to preserve and enrich life. Progress flowered both at home and in countries around the world.

Following extensive renovation, Shoenberg Temperate House reopened in September as the **Shoenberg Arid House**. The conservatory landscape invites visitors to explore its vast array of specimens from the Garden's historic collection of cacti, succulents, and other arid plants. The arid collection dates back more than 150 years and includes some 1,500 taxa.

The display maintains beloved hardscape elements while allowing the Garden to interpret a vast array of arid plant stories, from individual species conservation efforts to examples of similar traits evolving over different locations.

Many of the individual species had not been in the public eye for decades. Now, they are meticulously placed and artfully arranged within distinctive biomes and habitats inside the Arid House as one of the largest and most diverse of the Garden's displays.



Emerson Conservatory offers Garden visitors a year-round look at plants from Mediterranean regions.

In 2024, the **Emerson Conservatory** continued to grow its displays of Mediterranean plants inside the 4,600-square-foot floral showplace.

The permanent collections feature specimens from the world's Mediterranean regions, including some of the most diverse, beautiful, and rare species in the world. The Emerson Conservatory features an unsurpassed level of environmental control, which is crucial to sustaining the collection's viability. State-of-the-art systems allow the temperature, shade, ventilation, and airflow to be meticulously tracked and managed by the Horticulture team. Both the permanent and seasonal displays are irrigated by the Garden's underground rainwater collection system, which preserves and purifies runoff rainwater. This superior quality of hydration is especially vital for sensitive and rare plant species.

Horticulture efforts extend beyond the region to botanical garden partners around the world. The Garden forged a new partnership with a Tajikistani botanic garden and a nonprofit organization dedicated to maintaining ecosystems across the Central Asian country. Garden horticulturists traveled to Tajikistan to meet with representatives of the **Kulob Botanic Garden** and **Ganji Tabiat**, after which a joint Memorandum of Understanding was signed. The collaboration will grow over the coming years, with aims to:

- identify and restore endangered flora, focusing on irises and tulips.
- support the country's conservation horticulture efforts.
- implement Geographic Information System mapping.
- build capacity among local partners and collaborators.

PHOTOS BY NATHAN KWARTA

Beyond these new initiatives, the Horticulture team continued to fulfill the Garden's mission through programs and projects which:

- protect Missouri's native orchid species threatened by habitat loss, lack of genetic diversity, and loss of pollinators.
- design and maintain the Missouri Botanical Garden public display gardens, featuring 17,500 different taxa arranged in a broad array of landscape styles matched by few peer institutions.
- conduct world-leading curation of living collections to support global research, education, and conservation.
- educate thousands of gardeners in-person and online by providing information through the William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening demonstration gardens.
- share plant samples with partner organizations to support external research and conservation efforts worldwide.
- collaborate internationally to develop and deliver conservation horticulture projects.

The grass pink orchid (*Calpogon tuberosus*) is one of 30 orchid species native to Missouri.



PHOTO BY JUSTINE KANDRA

BY THE NUMBERS



120,000

plants produced for seasonal and permanent living collections



7,259

plant photos added to the Garden's Living Collection Management System



420

field collections made across 6 states and 3 countries



33

tours, talks, local/national media interviews involving the work of the Kemper Center for Home Gardening

Hundreds of species are on display in the gardens south of the Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center, including these these blackfoot daisies (*Melampodium leucanthum*).



GARDEN NUMBERS

VISITORS

Attendance at all locations	1,074,815
Highest Garden daily attendance in 2024	15,697 (September 1)
Highest nonevent attendance	6,723 (May 12)
Lowest nonevent attendance	52 (January 16)
Visitors to the Children's Garden	103,336
Visitors to Brookings Exploration Center	137,495
Visitors to Tower Grove House	82,943
Visitors to the Sachs Museum	35,008
Visitors to the Butterfly House	130,625
Visitors to the Dana Brown Overnight Center	4,366
Field experiences at Litzinger Road Ecology Center	4,202

MEMBERS

Total member households	52,040
Total member visits	508,847

PERSONNEL

Staff	460
Volunteers	1,678
Volunteer supervisors	116
Total volunteer hours	70,890

COMMUNICATIONS

Total website page views	17,477,072
Unique online visitors	4,955,476
Total email subscriber base	302,798
Social network followers	Facebook: 202,000 Instagram: 115,000 X (formerly Twitter): 55,400 YouTube: 7,420 TikTok: 4,070

HOME GARDENING

Horticulture Answer Service	calls: 3,016 walk-ins: 4,778 emails: 1,886
Plant Doctor walk-in questions	4,343

HORTICULTURE

Total accessions	35,271
Wild source accessions	11,576
Total taxa/unique types of plants	17,527
Total rare or threatened (endangered) species	1,469
Total accessions in the Seed Bank	6,156
Total genera	2,490
Total species	9,171
Total plantings	58,192

EDUCATION

Education program total participation	321,472
Students participating in school programs	28,978
Teachers using workshops and instructional materials	795
Scouts and leaders in education programs	1,500
Adults in adult education programs	6,341
Youth and families in education programs	2,970
Participants in therapeutic horticulture programs	10,745
Visitors experiencing drop-in education opportunities	263,158
Student programs at Shaw Nature Reserve	6,985

SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

Staff publications	214
New species described	188
Countries where fieldwork is done	presence in 54 countries
Graduate students	62 students from 15 countries
Herbarium total specimens	7,851,022
Mounted specimens added to Herbarium	42,695
Specimens fully digitized, with images	1,140,655
Tropicos® global botanical database	specimens: 7,370,189 plant names: 1,394,416 hits/year: 150,216,262
Articles published in MBG Press's two journals, <i>Novon</i> and <i>Annals</i>	29 <i>Novon</i> articles (202 pages) 11 <i>Annals</i> articles (516 pages)
New books and journals added to the Peter H. Raven Library	933 books 1,148 print issues of journals
Interlibrary loans provided	217
Interlibrary loans received	177
Reference questions	1,274

PHOTO BY ERIK ANDERSON

CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT



A Robust Year of Events Serves the St. Louis Community

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS across the Missouri Botanical Garden are designed to educate, entertain, and inspire visitors of all ages with the diverse beauty of the natural world. Events in 2024 deepened community partnerships, sustained the Garden's reputation as a destination for fun, and curated new experiences.

January's annual **Orchid Show** drew more than 41,000 visitors to Emerson Conservatory to enjoy a gorgeous display of the historic orchid collection, which featured conservation efforts for the many endangered species.

Nearly 300 guests attended **Flourish: A Gardener's Gathering**, in April. The new annual luncheon celebrated spring, the joy of gardening, and the vital work of the Garden. The inaugural event raised \$70,000 to benefit the Garden's extensive living collections and our global leadership in plant science, horticulture, and education.

Chinese Culture Days once again celebrated the majesty, history, and horticulture of China in May. A full weekend of activities across the Garden grounds delighted thousands of springtime visitors.

In May, the Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum opened the exhibition **Kernels of Culture: Maize around the World**. The unique presentation explored the history and global significance of the grass species *Zea mays*, commonly known as maize or corn. The exhibition combined the Garden's historic maize specimens

(continued)

(left) Japanese Festival remains the most popular weekend event across the Garden's public venues.

(top right) Emerson Conservatory provides a bright new home for the beloved annual Orchid Show.

(center right) Community partnerships are essential to the success of Chinese Culture Days, including presentations from performers in traditional garb.

(bottom right) Ecological papermaking artist Megan Singleton in the Sachs Museum with her artwork installation Transposable Elements, 2024.



PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

PHOTOS BY MARY LOULOLSON, COURTESY OF ST. LOUIS CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL, NATHAN KWARTA

and modern artworks juxtaposed with ancient and contemporary objects used to process and enjoy corn as food and drink. It also highlighted contemporary maize farmers and scientists researching corn genetics and diversity. An entire gallery was devoted to art by St. Louis-area students celebrating corn.

June’s **Green Living Festival** brought together 50 local exhibitors, experts, and business owners in a collaborative event aimed at helping community members live a more sustainable life. More than 2,500 attendees learned about eco-friendly businesses and received practical advice to make their daily lives a little greener.

The triennial **St. Louis Garden Tour** returned in June, inviting members to take a self-guided tour of ten spectacular home gardens across St. Louis City and County and ask questions of Master Gardeners on hand at each location. More than 700 guests attended, raising more than \$68,000 to support the Garden’s mission.

Japanese Festival drew a record 54,000 attendees to the Garden over Labor Day weekend. Visitors enjoyed a cultural immersion taste of Japan through music, dancing, martial arts, anime, artwork, and the diverse beauty of Japanese gardening, bonsai, and ikebana flower arranging.

October’s **Best of Missouri Market**® kicked off the holiday shopping season for 29,000 visitors with a record 149 vendors showcasing handcrafted products, artisan goods, local food and drink, live music, and more.

Nearly 2,000 people attended **Shaw Nature Reserve’s annual Art Show** on the first weekend in November. The boutique art show features St. Louis-area artists who interpret the natural world in glass, ceramic, wood, painting, photography, and other media.

Garden Glow featured new plant-themed displays in the 2024 holiday season, including vibrantly glowing faux oak trees and a shimmering golden meadow mimicking the prairie restoration work underway at Shaw Nature Reserve. More than 221,000 guests enjoyed the holiday light show during its 48-night run at the Garden.



(top) Community partners educate thousands of visitors about sustainable options for both public and private spaces during the Green Living Festival.

(center) Audience participation allows Garden visitors to become immersed in art at Japanese Festival.

(bottom) Best of Missouri Market connects hundreds of local vendors with an audience of sustainable shoppers.

PHOTOS BY RICHARD REILLY, MARGARET SCHMIDT, LISA DELORENZO

PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

BY THE NUMBERS

April 9

Jack C. Taylor Visitor Center awarded LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold® status by the U.S. Green Building Council.

May 24

8,800 Garden members responded to a comprehensive survey to deepen understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and motivations for volunteerism and philanthropic support.

September 9

Garden announced Dr. Lúcia G. Lohmann as incoming president and director upon the transition of Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson to president emeritus at the end of the year.

Garden Glow adds new experiences to the iconic light display and continues to delight the St. Louis community each holiday season.





The Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House provides a tropical getaway throughout the year, including on a crisp fall day.

Cicadas, Corpse Flowers, and Chrysalides

Butterfly House Marks a Busy Year

THE SOPHIA M. SACHS BUTTERFLY HOUSE helped our region with a natural spectacle in 2024. In early spring, many U.S. states experienced a rare dual cicada brood emergence. As trillions of the noisy insects made their way above ground across the Midwest in May and June, Garden entomologists were called upon to share their expertise to help educate St. Louisans about what to expect during the memorable season.

In addition to the dozens of spring and summer events the Butterfly House offers each year, 2024 included **cicada-focused presentations, blog posts, and activities.** Senior Entomologist Tad Yankoski hosted a cicada cooking demonstration, noting that an estimated

two billion people worldwide routinely eat insects. They are nutritious and some say delicious, and insect farming is much more eco-friendly than traditional farming.

In June, the Butterfly House hosted the popular **Fireflies and Friends Festival**, showcasing one of the beloved insects of summer with hands-on activities for all ages. Later in the summer, the Butterfly House hosted their first **bloom of a titan arum** (*Amorphophallus titanum*), one of the Garden's corpse flowers. More than 660 visitors headed to the Butterfly House to see—and smell—the bloom of this endangered species. The night-blooming corpse flower “Calli” was on display for a special one-night exhibition. Local media outlets covered the event,

and Butterfly House staff highlighted the crucial role insects play in botany with discussions of the flies that pollinate titan arums.

The Butterfly House had to close in early November due to damage caused by heavy rain and local flooding. The 9-inch deluge thankfully caused no harm or loss of life to animals, staff, or guests. However, two feet of water in the basement jeopardized the heating and cooling systems essential to the health of the Butterfly House living collections, which include more than 60 tropical butterfly species and 150 tropical plant species. Propane heaters were moved into the Tropical Conservatory to sustain the plants and animals inside. Garden staff sprang into action to minimize further damage from the still-rising waters. Water pumps brought from the Garden and Shaw Nature Reserve eased the threat and supported a round-the-clock effort of a team from all three Garden locations.

Following daily meetings and quick action to repair damages, the Butterfly House reopened to the public on November 20, just 15 days after the historic rainfall. The dedicated and speedy response of the Butterfly House team was commended by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums during their next accreditation inspection. The Butterfly House was the first facility dedicated to insects to be accredited by the AZA more than 20 years ago and goes through the rigorous accreditation process every five years.

(top right) “Bug Chef” and entomologist Tad Yankoski serves up cicadas at an educational cooking demonstration.

(bottom right) The Fireflies and Friends Festival is one of dozens of community-focused programs the Butterfly House offers each year.

PHOTO BY NING HE



PHOTOS BY NATHAN KWARTA, MARGARET SCHMIDT

BY THE NUMBERS



1,000

pounds of bananas used to feed butterflies and beetles



1,680

tagged butterflies were released into the Tropical Conservatory for active study, representing 5% of the total population



28,131

butterfly and moth chrysalides cultivated for emergence



PHOTO BY MARY LOU OLSON

Belonging in Full Bloom

Building Community, Honoring Diversity

FOR MORE THAN 165 YEARS, the Missouri Botanical Garden has been a part of the landscape of St. Louis and a community partner for dozens of organizations and programs. This commitment to community remained strong throughout 2024.

“In 2024, neighbors from racially, ethnically, and economically diverse communities engaged with the Garden in greater numbers and in more ways than ever before,” says Michelle Martin Bonner, Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. “Our commitment to improving the world continues as we inspire understanding, celebrate diversity, honor our values, and deepen connections to nature for all people.”

The Garden expanded its participation in the nation’s second largest African American metropolitan parade, the **Annie Malone May Day Parade** in St. Louis City.

For the first time, the Garden attended and shared information about our institution at regional **Pride festivals**, deepening connections to persons in the LGBTQ+ communities.

Significant strides were made in fostering understanding, inclusion, and connection through initiatives that highlight the importance of conservation, culture, and community. Increased numbers of historically marginalized persons attended the Garden’s celebrations of **Black History Month**, **Juneteenth**, **Asian American Pacific Islander Month**, and **Indigenous People’s Day**.

In August, the Garden welcomed author and renowned horticulturist **Abra Lee** to share her insights into extraordinary Black Americans who used plants to

Black History Month programs bring celebrations through community partnerships, like this performance from the Sunshine Cultural Center.

PHOTOS BY LISA DELORENZO, SUNDOS SCHNEIDER



enrich their own lives—and the lives of others. Lee’s book *Conquer the Soil* magnifies the legacy of Black horticulturalists, fostering appreciation for their diverse contributions to the field.

The Garden expanded its youth-focused conservation efforts in **partnership with the Kappa League**, one of the country’s oldest and most successful male youth mentorship programs. Mentees were engaged to carry out meaningful community service projects that built their own knowledge of nature while cultivating environmental awareness among the next generation.

Latinx Art meetings, poetry evenings, collaboration with Black landscape artists, a partnership with Black Girls Need Sun, and a Kwanzaa celebration rounded out the year’s programming. All activities aimed to deepen the Garden’s engagement with underrepresented voices and unify community members with the gifts of the natural world.

PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER



In 1998, national legislation created the Network to Freedom (NTF) program. NTF honors, preserves, and promotes the history of the “Underground Railroad,” resistance to enslavement through escape and flight. The Tower Grove House on the grounds of the Missouri Botanical Garden is recognized among the country’s 800+ Network to Freedom sites.

In October 2024, the Garden was awarded a grant through NTF to fund a new interpretation of the institution’s history with enslaved persons seeking freedom. The **Tower Grove Freedom Seekers Project** will advance the historical interpretation, accessibility, and preservation of this significant site, shining a light on the overlooked history of enslaved persons owned by Henry Shaw and their attempts to flee the inhumane oppression and regain their self-determination.

The nearly \$100,000 grant will help provide key information to all Garden visitors through unique programs, interpretive panels, exhibits, printed resources, and digital engagement. The Garden is committed to telling a full, honest, and accurate history about these enslaved people.

(top left) Activities and programs through the year bring the community together.

(bottom left) Whitaker Music Festival brings a wide collection of artists and music styles to the Garden over 10 weeks of summer concerts.

(bottom) The Garden continues to strive to be a destination of respite and welcome for everyone in St. Louis and beyond.



Education programs at the Garden provide access for school groups from around the region.

Cultivating Tomorrow's Environmental Stewards

THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN'S team of educators realized an expansive impact in 2024 across all of our sites. Their work reconnected people with nature, inspired learners of all ages, and reached new heights in promoting academic interest in science and conservation. "For learners, the Garden is both a window and a mirror," says Dr. Sean Doherty, Vice President of Education. "It can be a window into plants, nature, and the environment. We also want it to be a mirror—a place where individuals can see themselves immersed in the natural world."

With support from a generous donor, the Education Division expanded its therapeutic horticulture program to include **serving families in residence at the 72-bedroom capacity Grove Ronald McDonald House**. Garden staff offered nature-related, stress-relieving activities to parents and children bearing the emotional burden of dealing with serious pediatric illnesses while far from home.

The Garden's education programs establish a lifelong trajectory of learning opportunities to develop the next generation of environmental stewards and problem-solvers. Children as young as two years benefit from **Little Years** offerings. School-aged youth can access field experiences. Teens can take part in experiential learning programs, fellowships, and internships.

In 2024, Garden educators were awarded a grant to create a nature playscape and provide educational opportunities for students and staff at **Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center**, an urban preschool committed to creating natural outdoor learning spaces for their young learners.

The Garden also served first-year college students through a new partnership with **Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (SIUE)**. Staff tailored an immersive learning experience to support Black, Latinx, Pell-eligible, or first-generation SIUE students. While deepening their understanding of the Garden, the students gained practical knowledge and skills, enhancing their educational journey and preparing them for future careers in science, conservation, and community engagement.

The division celebrated the graduation of 10 graduate-level students from the Garden's **Advanced Inquiry Program (AIP)** in 2024. AIP offers an online master's degree combining web-based courses through Miami University with face-to-face field studies led by staff from the Litzsinger Road Ecology Center. Sharing ideas with peers and faculty nationally, students are encouraged to improve their communities through investigation and action.

Education offerings also enhance the experience of daily Garden visitors. In 2024, the team launched the **Nature Speaks** program, an opportunity for visitors to build stronger connections to nature through self-expression. The inaugural theme focused on artistic expression and learning. Partnering with the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Missouri Plein Air Painters' Association, visitors attended talks about nature in art, engaged with artists who were creating works onsite, and created their own nature art through an open studio experience.

This diverse mix of outreach efforts and public programs furthered our community's understanding of the importance of plants, making the world a better place for all.

PHOTO BY CLAIRE COHEN



PHOTOS BY NATHAN KWARTA, REBECCA PAVELKA, MARGARET SCHMIDT

(top) Education programs help young visitors explore botanical careers through hands-on experiences, like flower pressing.

(center) Creative activities reinforce the roles of pollinators for visitors to the Butterfly House.

(bottom) Creative activities also allow adults to combine artistic expression and connection to the natural world.



Volunteers provide essential support to all aspects of the Garden's mission, including seasonal horticultural displays.

EXEMPLARY SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING GARDEN STAFF RETIRED IN 2024 following decades of exemplary service. The Garden is grateful for their years of vision, passion, and commitment.

Doug Holland
30 Years with Science and Conservation



Pete Lowry
37 Years with Science and Conservation



Myriam Fica Luquez
36 Years with Information Technology



Jean Ponzi
23 Years with Sustainability



Martha Schermann
25 Years with the
Litzinger Road Ecology Center



Darman Williams
46 Years with Horticulture

IN 2024, THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEERS celebrated significant service milestones.

45 YEARS
Nancy Thompson

35 YEARS
Karen Mondale

30 YEARS
Steve Feiner
Suzanne Moak
Mary Jo Nowobilski

25 YEARS
Eva Maria Adams
Paulette Bliss
Kathleen Ferrell
Pam Hass
Barbara Lehmier
Lavonne McClain
Cheryl Rafert
Betty Salih
Sandra Sher
Carol Swink

20 YEARS
Bonnie Bailes
Marilyn Claggett
Mary Foley
Ann Gulick
Mary Hammer
Judy Headley
Armella Jenkins
Elizabeth Powell
Stephanie Prade

PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA

Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson

IN 2024, Missouri Botanical Garden President Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson announced his transition to the role of President Emeritus.

Throughout his 15 years of distinguished service, Dr. Wyse Jackson built on the Garden’s legacy across the St. Louis region and cemented the institution’s place as a world-leading botanical garden advancing plant research, conservation, horticulture, and education.

During his tenure, Garden membership rose by 40%, and the endowment more than doubled in value. Major events and exhibitions were established for the St. Louis community, including the beloved Garden Glow holiday experience. Through it all, the Garden advanced as a global leader in plant science and conservation.

To recognize and carry on his work of international renown, the Garden established the Peter Wyse Jackson Distinguished Lecture on Global Plant Conservation in 2024. The lecture will connect the Garden’s mission with global ecological challenges by sharing best practices that can safeguard the natural world and reverse the alarming loss of biodiversity.



Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson was awarded the prestigious Henry Shaw Medal in recognition of his commitment to plants and to the Garden’s global mission.



Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson participated in many community events, including serving as the Grand Marshal for the St. Louis City St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

On September 29, St. Louis City Mayor Tishaura Jones presented Dr. Wyse Jackson with a proclamation honoring his service to the Garden and the St. Louis community, declaring that date as Peter Wyse Jackson Day in St. Louis.

In October, Dr. Wyse Jackson was awarded the Garden’s highest honor, the Henry Shaw Medal. Garden Board Chair Dr. Michael Stern noted: “We have been very fortunate. I can’t imagine a better leader for our organization during an era marked by unprecedented economic and climate challenges. Dr. Wyse Jackson’s thoughtful, measured, and innovative approach has kept the Garden on firm footing.”



“As President Emeritus, I will continue to be an advocate for the Garden and support our mission...working with our broader botanical community to protect our beloved Garden and plants worldwide... **I thank you for your commitment to the Garden, your support, and your friendship.**”



PHOTO BY SUZY GORMAN

PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA

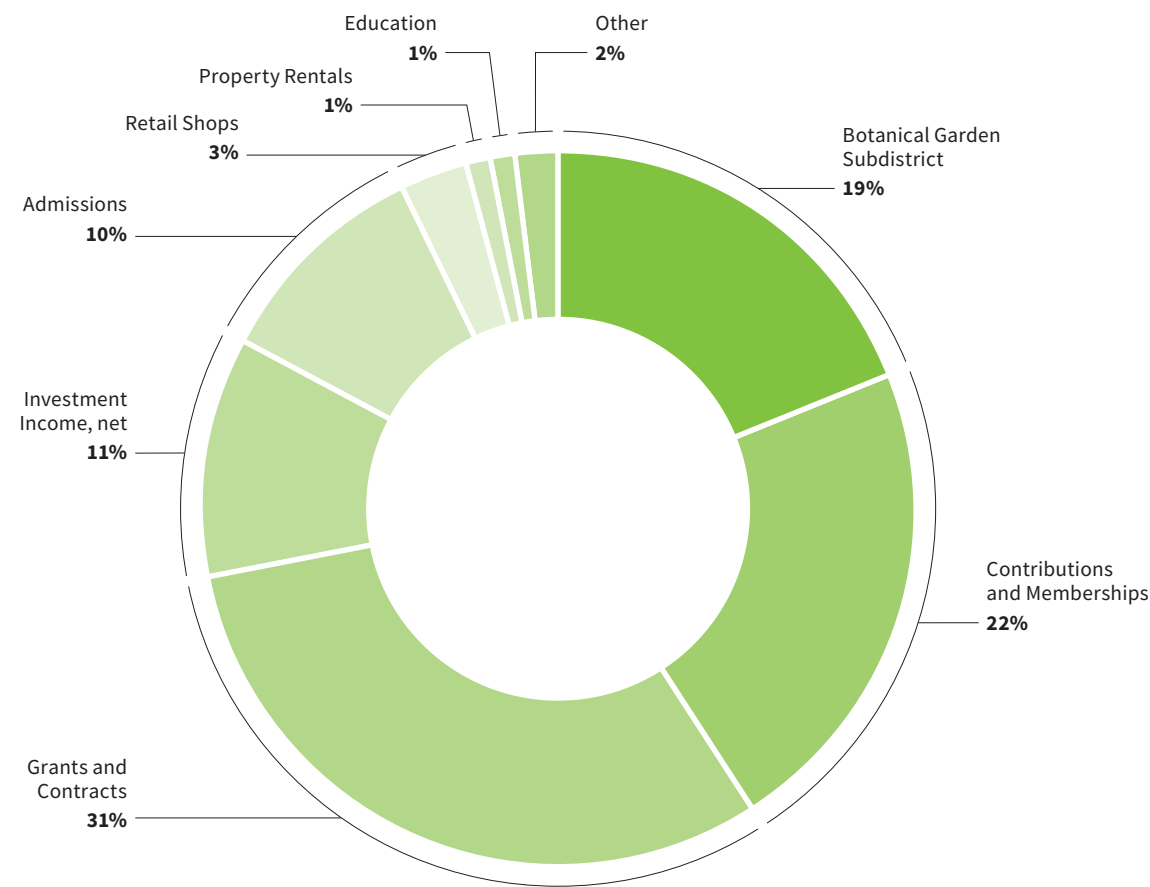


The historic ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba) is one of the oldest trees on Garden grounds, offering visitors a glorious golden display each fall.

FINANCIALS

(fiscal year ended September 30, 2024)

2024 OPERATING REVENUE



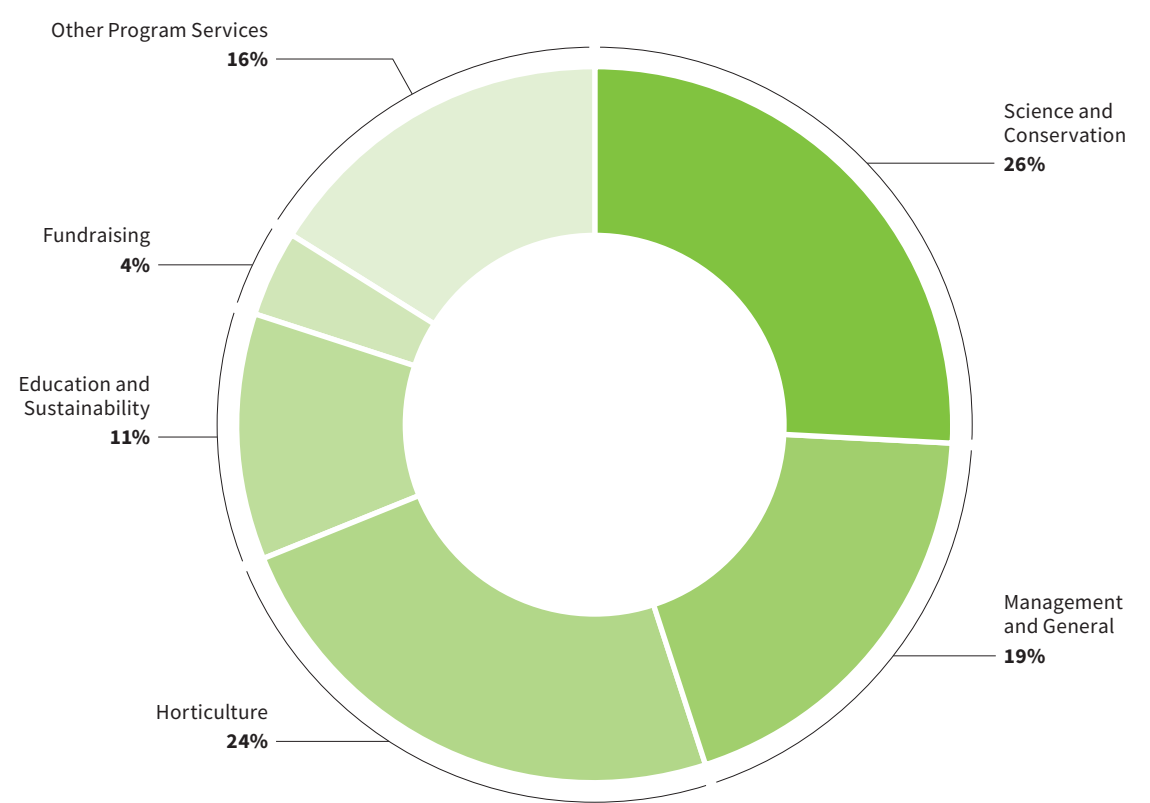
2024 Operating Revenue

Revenue	
Botanical Garden Subdistrict*	\$ 13,645,560
Contributions and memberships	16,497,551
Grants and contracts	22,702,812
Investment income, net	7,900,646
Admissions	7,057,483
Retail shops	2,488,040
Property rentals	494,527
Education	349,777
Other	1,560,116
Total Operating Revenue	<u>\$ 72,696,512</u>

2024 Operating Expenses

Program Services	
Science and Conservation	\$ 13,941,122
Horticulture	12,524,448
Education and Sustainability	6,037,843
Other	8,237,096
Total program services	<u>40,740,509</u>
Supporting Services	
Management and General	10,301,415
Fundraising	2,179,245
Total supporting services	<u>12,480,660</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$ 53,221,169</u>

2024 OPERATING EXPENSES



2024 Fund Balances

Operating Fund	
Total operating support and revenue	\$ 72,696,512
Total operating expenses	(53,221,169)
Total operating transfers	(2,237,386)
2024 Operating fund excess/(deficit)	<u>17,237,957</u>
10/1/23 Operating fund balance	<u>15,096,974</u>
9/30/24 Operating Fund	<u>32,334,931</u>
Endowment Funds	
Land, Building, and Equipment Fund	207,506,902
Gift Annuity Fund	160,406,385
Total All Funds	<u>\$ 400,260,683</u>

***Botanical Garden Subdistrict**
Since 1972, residents of St. Louis City and County have generously supported the Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District (ZMD). The ZMD is a property tax-supported district that distributes funds through five cultural subdistricts, which include the Botanical Garden Subdistrict. The Botanical Garden Subdistrict has provided support for the Missouri Botanical Garden since 1983. The Garden is grateful for the continued support of the Botanical Garden Subdistrict and the residents of St. Louis City and County.

Financial information used in this report was obtained from the 2024 Missouri Botanical Garden audited consolidated financial statements. These financial statements can be obtained by visiting mobot.org/reports.

Zoological Park and Museum District

The Metropolitan Zoological Park and Museum District (ZMD) is a tax-supported cultural district governed by an eight-member board of directors, each appointed for a four-year term by the Mayor of the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis County Executive.

Michelle Harris, *Chair*
Thomas C. Mummert, *Vice Chair*
Jill Nowak, *Treasurer*
Bradley Bakker, *Secretary*

Darnetta Clinkscale, *Past Chair*
Christine A. Chadwick
Shelia A. Hudson
Kenneth S. Powell, III

Botanical Garden Subdistrict

The ZMD levies an annual tax on property on behalf of five subdistricts, including the Botanical Garden Subdistrict. The subdistrict contracts with the Garden to provide botanical services.

James F. Hoffmeister, *Chair*
Kristin Thompson Poelker, *Vice Chair*
Sal Martinez, *Treasurer*
Marcia B. Mellitz, *Secretary*
Diego Abente
Adrian E. Bracy
Betsy Cohen

Hung-Gay Fung
Charlotte Hammond
Lydia Padilla

Nonvoting Advisory Members
Olakunle Ayeni
Daniel J. Welsh

Board of Trustees Mission Councils and Advisory Groups

The Garden’s Board of Trustees oversees several mission councils and advisory groups focused on specific areas of governance. We are grateful to the following members supporting the Trustees through these councils and groups.

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Timothy W. Gamma
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Kristin Thompson Poelker
Nancy Ross
Lori Samuels
Nancy R. Siwak
Andrea Van Cleve
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M. Ehsan Dulloo, PhD
Allison J. Miller, PhD
Natalie G. Mueller, PhD
Ari Novy, PhD

PHOTO BY MARYLOU OLSON



Canary Island foxglove (Isoplexis canariensis) on display in Emerson Conservatory.

Members’ Board

The Members’ Board leadership group organizes the activities and events that enhance and encourage membership, expand awareness in the community, and increase financial support for the Garden’s mission.

Martha LaFata, <i>President</i> Gwen Arenberg Victoria Bader Joan Ball Pauline Cella Cuppie Chivetta Megan Clinton Susan A. Cohen Jeanie C. Davis Mary Kay Denning Ellen Dubinsky Priscilla B. Evans Carola Gloyd* Alisa Bowen Goessling Irene Hasegawa	Lise Herren Carol Higgins Sandra J. Holmes Laure B. Hullverson Cindy Hults Ginny Johnson Celeste D. Kennedy Kristen Cornett Knapp Martha Reitz Kratzer Sally Kriegel Janet B. Lange Holly Liebig Stephanie K. Littlefield Megan S. Maher Charlotte A. Martin	Pamela Mathews Ginny McCook Parker B. McMillan Janet N. Mika Denise Miller Isabelle C. Morris Timothy P. O’Connor Gary Pulliam Jan Simons Raiser Sue M. Rapp Ann Rice Beth Roehm Marsha J. Rusnack Nancy L. Sauerhoff Susan Schoeninger	Susie Littmann Schulte Teresa Schulz Patricia Seeler Terry Sibbitts Carol A. Squires Karen Stern Nora R. Stern Mary Steward Annette Stowers Elizabeth Teasdale Jane S. Tschudy Joice Valentine Linn Wells Pamela Wingbermuehle *deceased
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Young Friends Council

The Young Friends Council leadership board engages young professionals of the St. Louis community with the global network of the Garden, developing events and initiatives to grow a younger Garden audience.

Doug Gaehle, <i>Chair</i> Matthew Hutchinson, <i>Co-Chair</i> Megan Ahlering Jack Arnold Susan R. Meyer Kate Bennett Samantha Brady Jamie Brown Sandy Chesterton Jessy Chisholm Terrence Cotton	Kat Dockery Madeline DuCharme Mary Foley Thomas Fonseca Emily Hood Alzana Jakupovic Erin Jones Jake King Constance Lambdin Katie Littlefield Castelino Tina Liu	Claire Hofius MacDonald Andrew J. Martin Jennie Meresak Jennifer Merritt Elisa Morales Jessica Nelson Emma Prince Elise Puma Gabi Randall Brittany M. Root Han Sauer	Glee Schmitt Alexandria Seay Brenna Slavens Kate Tichelkamp Mary Tiernan Jessica Valdes Adam Vorel Elizabeth U. Wells
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Corporate Council

The dedicated representatives of the Corporate Council collaborate with the Garden to further relationships with the business community through education, sustainable business programs, volunteer opportunities, and special events.

Julie E. Bahr, <i>Chair</i> , Clayton Financial Group Emily Andrews, U.S. Green Building Council – Missouri Gateway Chapter Nicholas Arb, Guarantee Electric Company Crystal Barker, PNC Bank Michael Bernard, Centene Corporation Patrick Bousquet, Hepler Broom Lauren Brenner, Mid-America Transplant Tom Brown, CSI Leasing, Inc. Michele Bugh, Alberici Constructors Emily Cantwell, Lathrop GPM Timothy Carpenter, Graybar John Caulfield, Sovereign Insurance Group Larry Corley, Maritz Holdings, Inc. Christi Dixon, Benson Hill Melissa Earthman, The Northern Trust Company Jay Ellington, CDG Engineers Tom Fisher, FISHCO GROUP Timothy W. Gamma, Gamma Tree Experts Gregory J. Gorman, Nidec Motor Corporation Brad Goss, Amundsen Davis, LLC	Diane Grimsley, Tarlton Corporation Joseph Hankins, Regions Bank Lauren Harrington, Lochmueller Group Chip Hiemenz, Hunter Engineering Company Jesse Hill, Edward Jones Bruce B. Holland, Holland Construction Services, Inc. Missy Kelley, Anders CPA + Advisors Jenna Knatt, CI Select Carleen S. Kramer, Catering St. Louis Nick Kriegel, Safety National Casualty Corp. Tracy Lauer, Anheuser-Busch Kevin Lee, Mid-America Transplant Katie Little, Husch Blackwell LLP C. Eric Lobser, Spire Diane Porthouse Lochner, PGAV, Inc. Kelly Malone, Caleres Wally McClellan, Office Essentials, Inc. Gayla A. Nunn, ABNA Engineering, Inc. Steve O’Rourke, EnerGuidance Becky Patel, Cambridge Air Solutions	Russ Perfetti, International Paper Mary Petropoulos, GadellNet Consulting Services LLC Christi Reiter, Cass Information Systems, Inc. Megan Ridgeway, Arcturis Julie Ring, MiTek Inc. Elaine Roth, HBM Holdings Company Lacey R. Searfoss, Thompson Coburn LLP Deborah A. Seidel, Bunge North America, Inc. Taylor St. Eve, Commerce Bank Eric Stange, Accenture Julie Steininger, Standing Partnership Michael J. Torney, Moneta Group Peter D. Van Cleve, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner Diane E. Van Rees, Chemia Corporation Matt Villa, Villa Lighting Supply Steve H. Wang, Protiviti Inc. Robert M. Williams, Jr., Williams Patent Crusher & Pulverizer Co., Inc.
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PHOTO BY ROBERT SCHMIDT

Corporate Partners

Businesses participating in the Corporate Partners Program make an annual membership gift. In return, they receive recognition and benefits throughout the year for their employees.



The Shoenberg Arid House includes unusual species like these candle plant (Euphorbia unispina) succulents.

PHOTO BY SUNDOS SCHNEIDER

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- St. Louis Trust & Family Office
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Standing Partnership
Summit Real Estate Group
Thompson Coburn LLP
U.S. Green Building Council—
Missouri Gateway Chapter
Villa Lighting Supply Inc.
Williams Patent Crusher & Pulverizer Co., Inc.
Wolff Properties

“The Missouri Botanical Garden creates a space where **beauty and learning flourish in harmony**. It is a destination for those across the region, enriching and uniting our community through diverse experiences that foster reflection and a shared sense of wonder.”

Missy Kelley, Chief Growth Officer at Anders CPA and member of the Corporate Council

Event Sponsors

We are grateful to the following event sponsors for making gifts of \$1,000 or more in 2024.

- Alberici Constructors
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Admundsen Davis
Ann and Douglas Brown Family Foundation
Bowood Farms
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Cigna
Clayton Financial Group
Commerce Bank
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CSI Leasing, Inc.
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Wells Fargo Advisors
Whitaker Foundation
Wies Offsite
Williams Patent Crusher & Pulverizer Co., Inc.

“The Missouri Botanical Garden offers a serene escape into nature’s beauty, where **every visit leaves you with a refreshed perspective**. The best part is, this escape is available to all of our community members through the various programs the Garden offers.”

Vianey Beltran, Vice President of Community Relations, Wells Fargo

A drone image captures the popular dashi procession at Japanese Festival.



PHOTO BY NATHAN KWARTA

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PHOTO BY MATILDA ADAMS



A ruby-throated hummingbird (Archilochus colubris) drinks from a cardinal flower (Lobelia cardinalis) at Shaw Nature Reserve.



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

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