

annual report 2019-2020

norfolk
botanical
garden



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Norfolk Botanical Garden was honored to be chosen by the
Association of Fundraising Professionals as
Outstanding Non-Profit in Fundraising for 2019.

from the president



For this year's Annual Report to you, our beloved donors, I'd like to quote rock poet and musician Jerry Garcia who so eloquently put it when he wrote and sang: "What a long, strange trip it's been." This year has certainly been like no other. While our fiscal year ended in a worldwide pandemic that has upended all of our lives, it started as one of our most successful ever. Last summer's exhibit

"Barkitecture" featuring architect and designer dog houses was one of our most popular ever and pushed our annual attendance to over 430,000. A record.

We completed the epic restoration and renovation of NATO Tower, a project that had been in various stages of planning and on-and-off funding for nearly 17 years. We have thanked two board members for their combined service of 15 years: Betsy Murphy and former Board Chair Ryan Snow. We have also lost three dear friends and former board members: Bee McLeod, Cynthia Powell and Peggy Beale. We dedicate this year's Annual Report to them.

I believe Bee, Cynthia, Peggy and those who went before us would want us to consider what kind of world we want on the other side of this. A post-COVID world? I think one that is more just and verdant, more green and regenerative. An economy based on regeneration as opposed to one based on simple extraction. A world where we as humans see ourselves as part of nature not just in charge of nature. So what will we do? Hide and wait for COVID to end and go back to the normal that brought us to this point in the first place? Hardly. Now is the time to vision, plan and act for the future we want.

We, at NBG, have been very busy over the last year planning for a better tomorrow for the Garden and our living collection. Our plans to build "The Garden of Tomorrow" will debut soon: you're getting a sneak peek in this Annual Report and much more will come about this ambitious project in the future. Until then, be well and plant a better world!

from the chairman

This is my thank you to everyone who supports this Garden. I've just ended eight years on the Board of Directors, the past three as Chair. The new Chair is Gail Heagan, a very smart and inspiring leader. In my time at NBG, I've met hundreds of volunteers, staff, donors and visitors. I've also participated in a great deal of change and witnessed a buzz of excitement so real you can almost touch it.

My family and I love this place. We're not alone. This "hidden gem" has more than 14,000 members and 1,100 volunteers. Some 430,000 people visit each year. Nearly 100,000 follow us online. And in 2020, the U.S. Postal Service memorialized NBG forever on a U.S. stamp.

I remember interviewing candidates to become the new President and CEO. We did it in a small conference room at the airport, guided by Bee McLeod, one of my favorite friends on the Board. And we were blown away by one person: Michael Desplaines.

Michael and his staff are amazing. They are energetic, creative, thoughtful, hard-working and talented. Michael himself has been masterful at leading the Garden forward. He is an asset and a good friend.

Today, the Garden is a superstar in its class. We are in the midst of our largest capital campaign ever, with exciting plans for amazing new spaces. We've also introduced new concepts, like LanternAsia, which have proven wildly successful, resulting in hundreds of new visitors and memberships.

These successes have helped us advance our core missions, like environmental stewardship and action. We've also engaged the community, working with schools, neighborhoods, civic leagues, military groups, non-profits and city leaders.

And we've reemphasized our history, building on work of previous generations to identify and celebrate the 220 African-American women and men who created the original garden in 1938.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Sarah and our daughters, Zoey and Piper, for keeping everything magical. Second star to the right and straight on 'til morning. That gets you to Neverland. In my view, we have our own version right here, where grown-ups aren't even bad guys.

W. Ryan Snow
Board Chair 2017-2020
Ryan practices law at

Crenshaw, Ware & Martin, PLC in Norfolk, Virginia.





special

\$313,471+
in revenue from weddings
and rentals

184
weddings and private
event rentals

233
private photography
sessions

Weddings & Corporate Events

The Garden has always been an oasis for private events and continues to be a refuge to our clients during uncertain times. With options for safe, smaller-scale events, NBG has been a bright spot for many couples and their guests this year. NBG continues to be one of the most sought-after venues in Coastal Virginia, bringing in just over \$300,000 in revenue from 184 weddings, corporate events and private rentals. The Garden was also the backdrop for 233 private portrait photography sessions last year and welcomed 12,083 wedding and event guests during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Signature Events

The 2019 summer Honeybee and Butterfly festivals attracted more than just pollinators, bringing in over 5,600 visitors. The fall Butterfly Tag & Release and Barks & Brews events brought in more than 6,100 participants.



14,000+

Views of stamp release video on social media with NBG President
& CEO Michael Desplaines

NBG was pleased to host the Virginia Camellia Society's fall Show & Sale with nearly 1,000 visitors. Barkitecture was a big hit in 2019! With more than 30 architect and designer dog houses filling the enchanted forest, dogs and their parents enjoyed exploring nature and the fancy pooch palaces. Many houses were auctioned off and the City of Norfolk's creative tree house was voted #1. The exhibit also received national attention and was featured on Animal Planet's annual Puppy Bowl.

Over 111,000 guests celebrated the holidays at the Garden. NBG and Dominion Energy hosted 100,000 visitors to our holiday lights, 900 starry-eyed children shared their lists with Santa and 1,100 fidos convinced their parents to bring them to our Barks & Bulbs event to ring in the New Year.



Voted top five best botanical garden light display two years in a row —
USATODAY/10BEST

Visitor Services & Membership

Over 430,000 guests came to learn, explore, play and celebrate this past year, proving that the Garden was a premier place of respite for thousands of people. Over 17% of our visiting families converted their admission into a Garden membership. This increased our member family total to 14,540. More than 5,200 “fidos” joined their family during our Sunday Dog Days.

Giving Back to the Community

Last year, we gave over 170 organizations a Family Fun Pass as part of our commitment to taking care of those in our community. Over a third of these passes went to schools and groups that provide educational support. We also helped health and human services organizations, scouts, civic leagues, military organizations, museums, sports & youth organizations, animal welfare agencies

and other entities dedicated to serving the community we all call home. Recipients can use the Family Fun Pass in ways that support their missions—raffle items to raise funds for classroom materials, rewards for volunteers, prizes for walkathons, sports tournaments, etc. Through the *PowerUp Norfolk* and *Museums for All* programs we hosted over 1,000 families. We also celebrated NATO by hosting 850 NATO family members.



\$1,122,281

in revenue from
holiday events

111,000+

guests celebrated the
holidays at the Garden

14,540

total members

431,278

total visitation

conservation

since 2017
water refill stations
have eliminated
130,000+
plastic water bottles
from the waste stream
averaging approximately
45,000+
plastic bottles per year

Environmental Stewardship

Every year, we strive to build upon our environmental achievements – everything from climate change awareness to inspiring sustainable gardening practices to encouraging earth-friendly lifestyle choices. By now, you're very familiar with our efforts to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in the waste stream. Since the ban on the sale of bottled water in our gift shop and cafe went into effect July 2018, we have prevented nearly 10,000 plastic water bottles from entering the landfill. With guests and staff using our water bottle refill stations, we have saved an additional 130,000 bottles from the landfill. You can make a difference in the campaign to reduce and eliminate the need for single-use plastics. Remember your refillable bottle and refuse unnecessary plastic packaging whenever possible.

Building on the success of our first educational symposium, we hosted our second one focused solely on the climate crisis and sea-level rise, a particularly relevant topic here in Coastal Virginia. The program was well received and the audience was introduced to the New York Times bestselling book edited by Paul Hawken: *Drawdown: the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reverse global warming*.

We were honored to be awarded Coastal Virginia Magazine Best Environmental Business 2019.



“The battle for conservation will go on endlessly. It is the universal battle between right and wrong.”

—John Muir

regeneration

Regeneration

Our mission is to inspire through education and connection to nature. What better way to continue a deeper connection to our natural world than by understanding the processes and mechanisms at play? As guests explore our new compost demonstration area and beehive colonies, they learn the how and why of each sustainable practice. By the way, our bee colonies are thriving! Last summer, the number of hives increased from one to five in three months. Our spring weather wasn't favorable for establishing an early spring swarm but a second swarm in May was very successful, resulting in the expansion of our colonies to seven. Next summer looks promising for adding an additional three colonies and possibly some honey extraction.

As our Horticulture Department cares for our beautifully landscaped grounds, we are mindful of our impact on the wider environment. Practicing the best horticultural techniques and reducing our chemical footprint are standard procedures. Thanks to a donation from Stihl, we were able to increase our collection of battery-operated equipment, which significantly reduces both noise and air pollution without sacrificing performance.



Speaking of energy, as of July 1, 2019, the Garden is powered by 100% renewable energy through the Dominion Energy Green Power Program.

Participating in programs such as this supports the expansion of new clean energy technologies. Consider making the switch yourselves.

Savings from solar panels

\$10,697

since 2018 installation

56.7 tons

of CO2 emissions saved,
which is equivalent
to planting

1,454 trees



2,547
adult class participants

20%
increase in class
registration

11,000+
volunteer hours
with a value of

\$305,401

Adult Education

With our new expanded programming, *Dig Deeper*, the Garden has had the privilege of hosting speakers from organizations like Old Dominion University and The Department of Forestry, bringing a wider variety of lectures to visitors and staff. Paired with the increase in the number of new programs and instructors, the Adult Education Department was on track to surpass the previous year's numbers of students, also increasing the amount of first-time class goers.

However, the challenges of COVID caused us to shift gears, because education doesn't stop when classes do. As the world slowed and classes were paused, our team had to regroup and projects we dreamed of doing were finally now possible. *Sow it Grows*, the Garden blog, was launched with great success, bringing attention to stories ranging from the science of color in plants, to

regenerative practices and resources. Videos highlighting our collections and at home projects are now online and virtual lectures are a staple in our curriculum. How education is delivered may have changed, but the passion to educate the public on environmental issues is as strong as ever.

All of the advancements here at the Garden wouldn't be possible without the devoted crew of volunteers, who generously share their time to help forward our mission. We want to thank these incredible volunteers for their work and eagerness to return to the Garden during these uncertain times. From helping with storm clean-up, to sewing masks for staff, our volunteers are essential when it comes to keeping the Garden going. One volunteer in particular won the South Hampton Roads Museum Forum Volunteer of the Year award for 2019—Ray Neubauer.



education programs

Youth Education

Each year, the WOW Children's Garden provides children and families with opportunities to learn about ecology, horticulture and other environmental and science-based fields through hands-on activities, self-guided discovery and guided programs designed to encourage participants to explore and appreciate the natural world around them. *Hip Habitats and Happening Homes* was the focus of our summer programming in 2019. Over 4,400 guests visited Discovery Stations hosted by Youth Education staff and participants in our teen volunteer program, which showcased information and activities relating to insects, wetlands, bird nests and other habitat-based topics.

While the 2019-2020 school year had an abrupt ending, over 4,500 students were able to participate in our Virginia Standards of Learning aligned guided and self-guided field trips and outreach programs. In light of a

changing world and the challenges ahead, the Youth Education Department has developed new interpretation opportunities to provide updated and accessible self-guided programs in the WOW Children's Garden, as well as new community partnerships to create hybrid and virtual school program content for elementary and middle school-aged students.

Outreach

Before the pandemic disrupted many of our planned outreaches, we were able to present 35 educational programs to a variety of garden clubs and professional organizations. We attended 16 festivals, expos and community events. This year, we were particularly delighted for staff to be guest speakers for multiple classes at Old Dominion University and Christopher Newport University. With public horticulture being a multi-faceted career path, we have the unique opportunity to inspire students across several disciplines.

4,500+
students participated in
guided field trips

2,500+
students and families
reached thru expos,
fairs and festivals

240+
pounds of vegetables
donated from the Potager
Kitchen Garden



growing

187

longleaf pine seedlings
provided by VA Dept. of
Forestry were planted in
partnership with IKEA

36,404

bulbs planted

4,044

perennials planted

425

shrubs planted

Living & Changing Landscapes

In a world of constant change, Norfolk Botanical Garden has always been a place of respite and refuge. That was especially true this spring. However, as anyone who regularly gets their hands dirty can tell you, gardens are not static. They, too, are constantly changing. NBG saw its share of change this past year, including the restoration of NATO Tower, surrounded by a new Mediterranean-inspired garden full of unusual plants. Our existing Winter Garden saw the addition of new beds, a new entrance, a new arbor, a new corten steel planter and many new plants. In the Rhododendron Garden we added many new herbaceous plants at the feet of the trees and shrubs already there —“shoes and socks” as our Director of Living Landscapes Brian O’Neil likes to say. Our horticulture staff also teamed with the staff at IKEA Norfolk last fall to plant the new longleaf pine savannah adjacent the Virginia Native Plant Garden.

Last fall our Plant Collections Committee designated “Acers” as one of our special collections. With the goal of national recognition, we have since been finding spots for more, especially Japanese maples. We also applied for and were awarded two grants from the American Conifer Society to both expand our collection and to create educational signage for this large group of plants. Speaking of education, our staff created a display at the Virginia Flower and Garden Expo in January extolling the virtues and benefits of backyard gardening. Attendees also got a sneak peek of Nature Connects® Art with LEGO® Bricks, as well as Flamazing Flamings. We had 70 topiary flamingos fly in for the summer, each planted with over 60 begonias.

Unforeseen circumstances brought change to the Garden this past year. A severe storm late last summer damaged the roof of our production greenhouse, but replacement with new, much needed parts gave the building an



extended life span. Spring storms brought down several large trees throughout the Garden—they were already compromised—so Mother Nature did a little needed pruning for us, creating room for other plants in the process. This winter the annual Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course (a local education and certification event produced by the Virginia Horticultural Foundation) changed their location to Norfolk Botanical Garden. Our staff volunteered in many roles and the event gave the attendees a chance to see our Garden, which is beautiful in any season.

COVID-19 also led us to move our annual plant sale to an on-line, curbside pick-up platform, but the feedback was very positive and people still went home with some great plants. With \$70,000 in revenue, it proved an overwhelming success and inspired our new online gift shop that goes live this fall.

Virginia Wesleyan University Partnership

For the third year in a row, our Director of Living Landscapes spends half his time here at the Garden, designing most of the projects mentioned and the other half of his time at Virginia Wesleyan University (VWU). He works with staff, students and one on-site NBG horticulturist to design and create gardens campus wide. Most notably is the new design for the Marlin Meadow Garden that is scheduled to be planted fall 2020. This new garden will include 960 new coastal plain native plants, a footbridge over a drainage swale, solar charging stations for mobile devices, outdoor seating and more. It will include a rain garden complete with carnivorous pitcher plants. VWU students have been preparing for this garden for the past year, removing turf and weeds using cardboard they collected and weighted down with mulch. A great environmentally safe and chemically free way to get rid of unwanted weeds.

170+

plants donated to grade schools and at community festivals

6,300+

plants sold through annual spring plant sale generating

\$70,000+

in revenue

planting the garden of tomorrow

The Klines



Two generous families with a common thread: a connection to the Garden, a love of nature and passion to pay it forward. Though the Schaubach and Kline families have never met and are at different places in their lives, both share a strong desire to give back to the community which led them to participate in The Garden of Tomorrow campaign. “It’s personal for me. My family has enjoyed the Garden so much,” Danny Kline said. “Based on prior generations who built what we have today—we have to pay it forward for the next generation, If you enjoy something, you want others to enjoy it—you need to take action.”

Danny Kline took over the family business as President of Payday Payroll in 2006. He and his wife Jennylyn have two young daughters who are their top priority and are what brought them to Norfolk Botanical Garden. The WOW Children’s Garden and the ever-changing seasons, activities and events have kept them coming back. “Walking around the Garden, off the beaten path, was a game changer,” Kline said. “I truly believe the Garden is one of the nation’s best botanical gardens and we want to make sure it stays that way.”

Dwight and Jane Schaubach have a long history here in Coastal Virginia as successful business owners, current owners of John Brothers and past owners of Bay Disposal. Just as important as running multiple large businesses is being good stewards of the natural world, which is vital to the well-being of the community.

The Schaubachs



“We believe in giving back to the community and what better way than the future for our children and grandchildren,” Jane Schaubach said. “We are very lucky to have the Garden. We should be good stewards and take care of it and that costs money. It’s money very well spent.”

The future of the Garden depends on the generosity of donors like the Schaubachs and the Klines. The Garden of Tomorrow campaign began with a bold vision that will be brought to life with conservation, beauty and accessibility for all for years to come.

“It was a time in our life that we had the opportunity to give something to the Garden,” Dwight Schaubach said. “We like it so much that we want other people to know about it.”

The Garden is building a pathway for future generations to enjoy new spaces that nurture a deeper connection with nature.

“I don’t think people in this area know what a great asset we have,” Kline said. “We want to make sure the Garden is bigger and better.”

Learn more about how you and your family can be a part of the future of Norfolk Botanical Garden, visit www.GardenOfTomorrow.org.

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The Garden of Tomorrow Campaign May 2017 — August 2020

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July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

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garden foundation

The Norfolk Botanical Garden Foundation is a separate 501(c)(3) whose sole mission is the support of Norfolk Botanical Garden. The Foundation invests the Garden's endowment funds and makes an annual distribution from the funds' earnings to assist the Garden in fulfilling its mission.

The following are current members of the Foundation's board of directors as of June 30, 2020:

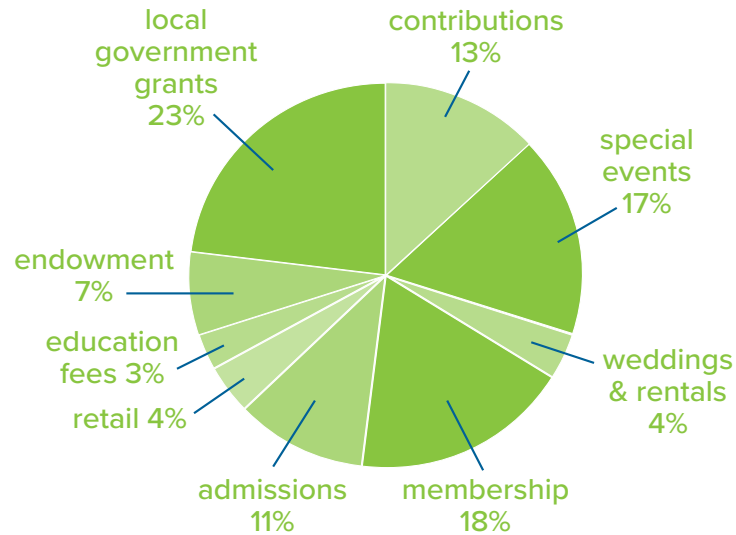
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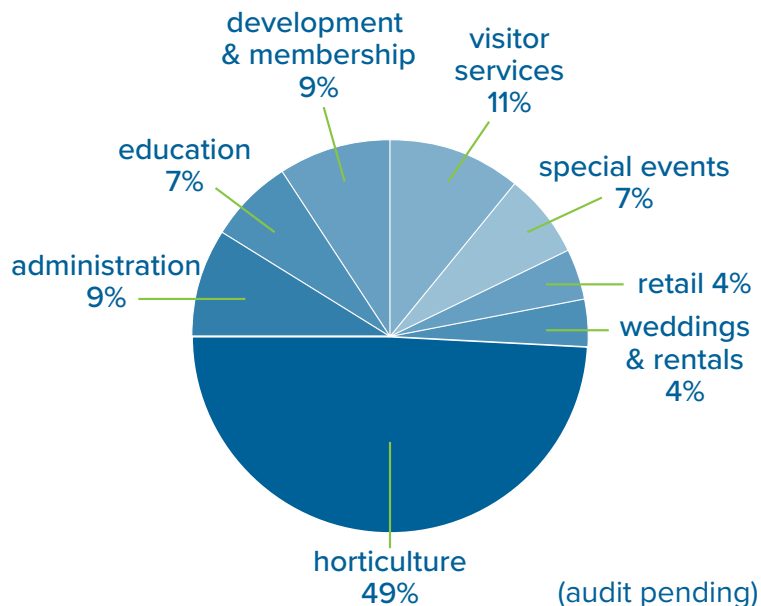
The Foundation would like to thank its donors, past and present, who have had the foresight and generosity to contribute to the Foundation, helping to ensure the viability of Norfolk Botanical Garden for generations to come.

fiscal report

revenues fy 2020
\$6,529,357



expenses fy 2020
\$6,127,338



strategic plan 2019 — 2022

- Lead in environmental action and advocacy
- Deepen the Garden's engagement with - and impact in - the community
- Provide a dynamic, high quality and welcoming experience that connects people to nature
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability
- Maintain organizational leadership excellence

mission

- Immerse visitors in a world of beauty
- Lead through environmental action
- Inspire through education and connection to nature

Thank You

You have made a remarkable difference in helping the Garden flourish. You help us connect with local communities, provide educational programs for children & adults and inspire environmental stewardship.

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