

# From the **PRESIDENT** -



This past year has ushered in an incredible wave of transformation, growth, and excitement for our future. January marks one year since we began construction of *The Garden of Tomorrow*, slated to open in 2025. The largest expansion in the Garden's history is becoming a reality with your help. With support from nearly 2,000 generous donors in our vibrant community, we will have space and capabilities to protect the most threatened and endangered plants from across the globe, while allowing us to expand our educational engagement with future generations.

It's worth reflecting on the profound impact plants have on our daily lives, from food on our tables to their pivotal role in the field of pharmacology, plants are the unsung heroes. Imagine, a single plant preserved through conservation holding the elixir to better health or the key to curing a life-threating disease. Your continued support makes all the difference.

Please take a look back at an extraordinary year through our annual report, included in this publication on page three. Beyond the meticulous care of our living plant collection, we hosted over 420,000 visitors and engaged more than 16,000 K–12 students and adults in our unique classes. Additionally, we introduced over 15,000 new plants into our community though donations and our fundraising sales. We were also honored to be chosen as the new home of the Blue Star Memorial Marker, to honor members of the armed services past, present and future. It has been an incredible year connecting our community to nature and inspiring future environmental stewards.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, amazing staff and myself, thank you for supporting Norfolk Botanical Garden. Your contributions, whether financial or through volunteering, directly support our non-profit mission to immerse visitors in a world of beauty, lead through environmental action and inspire through education and connection to nature. If you haven't

been out to the Garden lately, come back and see us! Take a moment to connect with nature, see all of the current blooms, enroll in a class and check out our construction progress. We are building something that will have a lasting impact on our community and environmental efforts overall. Together, we are making a difference.

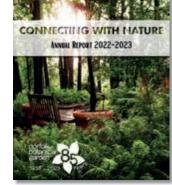


THE MISSION OF NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN:

IMMERSE VISITORS IN A WORLD OF BEAUTY

LEAD THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

INSPIRE THROUGH EDUCATION AND CONNECTION TO NATURE











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NBG is powered 100% by renewable energy.

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Food • Clean Air & Water • Shelter • Wellness • Medicine A world without plants could not exist.

We are taking critical action to save them!



Help us plant the future



### Thank You to All Our Garden of Tomorrow Donors!



Left to right: Doug Perry, Ryan Call, Theresa Augustin, Peter Schmidt, Maria & Doug Hillebrandt, Dawn Jacobs, Cathy Fitzgerald, Kathleen Rahman, Phil Jacobs, Christiane & Jim Valone, and Katie & Ben Schill.



Photo of Vice President of Facilities and Infrastructure Ryan Call (right) with donors touring the construction site of The Garden of Tomorrow.





#### **Protecting Rare Plants**

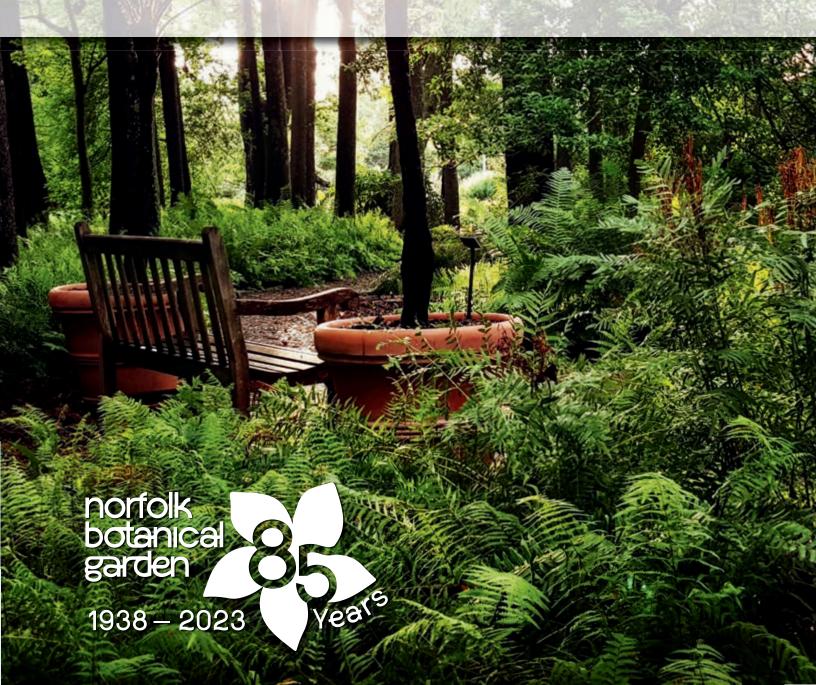
Off the coast of Southern California near Ventura lies a set of islands called the Channel Islands. These islands are often referred to as the "Galapagos Islands of North America" due to their rich and unique biodiversity. Of the islands' 2,000 plant and animal species, over 250 are only found here and nowhere else on Earth. The islands also have 14 federally recognized threatened or endangered species.

The Channel Islands are located in an area of confluence of two major ocean currents and on the border of two tectonic plates which cause persistent ocean upwelling and very productive and nutrient-rich ocean currents. The islands formed about five million years ago, and since they have always been separated from the mainland, they have unique plants and animals, just like the Galapagos Islands. As such, the islands also contain an interesting fossil record with evidence of unusual extinct species such as the pygmy mammoth and giant deer mouse.

Many of the native flora were nearly decimated by livestock introduction, but now that the livestock have been removed, studies are showing most species are recovering well. We recently acquired seeds of one endemic species, *Dudleya nesiotica*, also known as the Santa Cruz Island liveforever. It is endemic specifically to Santa Cruz Island and is a federally listed threatened species. The Garden intends to feature this succulent in the Perry Conservatory as an educational opportunity to share information about its unique location, island ecology and the harm of invasive plants and animals.



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



## NBG FISCAL YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

#### **Visitors**

Total Visitors:

Non-local Visitors:

International Visitors:

Free/Discounted Admissions:

Dominion Energy Garden of Lights:

423,070

24,639

165

10397

#### **Membership**

Total Member Households: 14,493
Renewals: 8,121
New Members: 4,390

#### Staff

Full-Time, Part-Time & Seasonal: 117

#### **Volunteers**

Total Volunteers: 1,143
Total Volunteer Hours: 13,516
Value of Volunteer Time: \$440,491

#### **Weddings & Event Rentals**

Weddings: 103
Weddings Revenue: \$420,345
Corporate/Social Events: 123
Corporate/Social Events Revenue: \$128,764

#### **Education Programs**

Total K-12 Students Engaged via
Outreach and Onsite Programs:

Total WOW Children's Garden
Activity Participants:

Grant-funded Scholarship Recipients:

Total Adult Classes:

603

Total Adult Class Participants:

8,064

Garden Walk & Talk Attendees:

#### Renewable Energy

Total Solar Panels: 592
Total Emissions Reduced: 363,311 lbs.
Equivalent of Planting: 2,745 Trees

#### **Composting On-site**

Average Per Month:



168 lbs.

#### **Living Plant Collection**

Plant Families: 204
Species 2,445
Accessions: 14,249

#### **New On-Site Plantings**

Bulbs Planted - Seasonal Display:
Bulbs Planted - Permanent Display:
Annuals Planted - Seasonal Display:
Herbaceous Plants:
Shrubs:
Trees:

13,900+
6,500+
32,300+
500+
500+

#### **Plant Sales**

Total Bulbs Sold: 9,900
Total Plugs Sold: 5,380
Total Trees & Shrubs Sold: 6,383
Total Plant Sale Revenue: \$102,317

#### **Community Outreach**

Community Presentations: 48
Community Events Attended: 15
Number of Schools Visited: 26
Total Number of Plants Donated: 1,710

#### **Communications**



Facebook Followers: 74K+
Instagram Followers: 27K+

Youth Education Field Trip

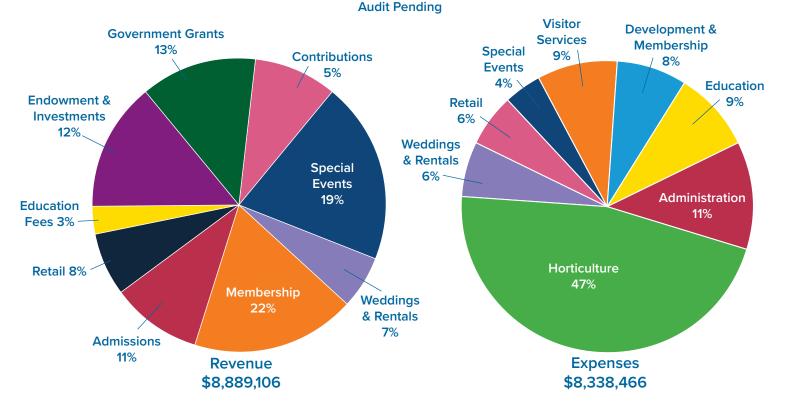
New Solar Panels Installed on the roof of Baker Hall & Education Center



450

# 2023 FISCAL REPORT

**Operating Revenue and Expenses** 



# **ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**

We endeavor to put the environment first and inspire our visitors to do the same. Expanding our investment in green energy is one of our most significant achievements to date. Installation of 472 solar panels on the roof of the Baker Hall Visitor Center and Education Building completed in fall 2022, along with 120 solar panels powering our propagation greenhouse since 2018, brings our solar panel total to 592. We are already seeing the benefits! The power needs for both buildings are covered 100% by solar power. This newest solar array is saving us over \$2,500.00 a month in power expenses. It's also helping us reduce our carbon footprint by saving annually over 250,000 lbs. of CO2 from polluting the environment—the equivalent of planting nearly 2,000 trees.

To further our commitment to conservation, we have strengthened our partnerships with local conservation groups. NBG is delighted to announce its membership in the Longleaf Cooperators Group of Virginia. Additionally, our Garden staff played an active role in planting 1,000 Atlantic white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) plugs in The Great Dismal Swamp and collaborated with the Virginia Herpetological Society to catalog the diverse array of reptiles and amphibians present on our property. In a significant milestone, we have also obtained certification through the U.S. Department of Interior to responsibly collect endangered species for protection in *The Garden of Tomorrow's* Perry Conservatory.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Teens With a Purpose Community Garden in Norfolk

Personally connecting with members of the community is one of the most rewarding aspects of public horticulture. Plants are a great common denominator; it's what brings us all together. Whether it's sharing our collection for student research or sharing plants and staff expertise at community fairs and festivals, our staff engaged with nearly 3,000 people and gave away hundreds of plants and seeds. Offsite educational outreach with garden clubs and various professional organizations provided the opportunity to engage with a little over 1,000 participants—a significant increase over last year. Virtual and hybrid presentations continue to be a viable way for us to connect with groups across the greater Hampton Roads Region.



# 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.

To view a complete list of donors and all the ways people have given to the Garden, scan this code:



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

FISCAL YEAR OF SERVICE 2022-2023

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Katherine W. Wynne



Path along canal bank opposite Le Jardin and the Colonial Garden

# **HORTICULTURE** Highlights



hen it comes to crapemyrtles, they are primarily known for their summer blooms. However, they can be just as stunning in the winter when the muscular structure of their bare branches can be seen. In addition, many varieties have striking bark, and one of those is our state champion 'Townhouse' (*Lagerstroemia fauriei* 'Townhouse') located in the Matson Garden. It's rich coffee and caramel colored bark is a real standout in the winter landscape, add a dusting of snow around its base and you have a magazine-worthy photo op!



ome plants get a bad rap when it comes to their common names, and such is the case with *Helleborus foetidus*, one of the more interesting hellebore species. Depending on which part of the globe you garden in, it can be called reeking hellebore, dungwort, stinkwort, stinking hellebore, and, thankfully, some people call it bearsfoot hellebore. While it does have an odd odor when crushed or bruised, its smelly reputation is overblown. That's a real shame since this evergreen, shade-loving plant is virtually pest-free and is covered with pale green, bell-shaped flowers that bloom in the middle of winter. Many of the petals will also be edged in maroon. It is a striking plant that can be seen in many spots around the Garden.



hododendron simsii 'Vittatum' is an old favorite here at NBG, not just for its gorgeous blossoms, but it is often the first azalea to bloom in the new season along with daffodils. March can still harbor cold winter winds, and to come upon a patch of these azaleas in full bloom gives one hope that spring is just around the corner. The large, open flowers can be solid white or a rich pink, but they can just as easily be a combination of the two with striping or dots of different hues. Usually, there are many different combinations all on the same shrub. The best place to experience these is on a path lined with them that leads from the gazebo in the Infinity Garden.



ayapple is an unusual native perennial (*Podophyllum peltatum*) that loves to grow in many shady places throughout the Garden. The handsome foliage on each individual plant consists of just two leaves, and it typically emerges in late winter or early spring to form lush colonies. Each plant also has a solitary, spring-blooming, white flower hidden by the two leaves. As a survival strategy, all parts of the plant are poisonous, except for the ripened fruit, and this fruit is relished by eastern box turtles. Mayapples rely on the turtles to disperse their seeds, and traveling through the digestive system of the turtle substantially increases the seeds' germination rates, enough so that we would likely not have mayapples without eastern box turtles.

COMING SOON: SPRING PLANT SALE THIS APRIL

# **SCIENCE** & Conservation

### **Bluebird Update**

Since the establishment of a bluebird trail in 2021, our bluebird conservation effort has exhibited remarkable success. This year's breeding season kicked off in late February, which is a bit earlier than usual, nonetheless, it was very positive with a 90% success rate from egg to fledge. When the season wound down in August, 51 bluebirds had fledged from 10 different clutches.

We also observed an extremely rare clutch of white eggs. Typically, the eggs are blue with only 4% of females laying white eggs.



# Pilot Workforce Training Program HIPterns and The Power of Plants

Partially funded by Community Leadership Partners of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation and Bank of America Charitable Foundation

This past spring and summer, Norfolk Botanical Garden partnered with Teens With a Purpose (TWP) to launch a horticulture-focused workforce training program — HIPterns and the Power of Plants. The HIPterns of TWP, who help tend to the community garden Purpose Park, were able to join us in this pilot program that ran March through August. Overall, we worked with 13 individuals, ages 12 to 18. The teens were introduced to foundational subjects like soil sciences and botany, while developing hands-on skill sets through programs like pruning and



Jayla and Arius using our new microscopes to compare different flower structures.

propagation. Our Director of Adult Education Alexandra Cantwell, along with horticulture staff, led a diverse selection of programs throughout the season, focusing on opening the doors to the vast array of career options in the green industry. As students progressed through the horticulture training program, they were also developing everyday job skills. They received certificates of completion at the end of the summer, with one student even returning to the Garden as a volunteer on behalf of TWP. The teens then took the concepts they learned, be it tending to their gardens at Purpose Park, or the positive mental impacts of plants in a home, and shared it with not just their peers at TWP, but also with the community during the annual FUSEFest celebration. We're incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have worked with this group, as the passion for their community was evident throughout the duration of the program. From working out green solutions to runoff and pollution in neighborhoods, to creating habitat for the wildlife that also calls Purpose Park home, the pride and connection these teens have with TWP is inspiring, and we look forward to working with future participants as we approach the opening of *The Garden of Tomorrow*.

### Atlantic White Cedar Restoration at The Great Dismal Swamp

For the second consecutive year, NBG Staff assisted in the planting of 1,000 Atlantic white cedar plugs (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*). These planting events are an ongoing effort to restore this vital ecosystem which has been decimated by fires in 2008 and 2011. Over 50% of last year's plugs are thriving! This truly highlights the remarkable resilience of these trees, considering they are left to contend with the elements on their own once planted.



NBG staff L-R: Horticulturist II Steve Saunders, VP of Education Theresa Augustin, Horticulturist I Chrissie Harney and Facilities Manager Nicole Marlowe.

# Community CONNECTIONS

### 15TH Annual WPA Garden Heritage Celebration

This year's annual event was sponsored by Truist. Over 350 people attended the 15<sup>™</sup> Annual WPA (Works Progress Administration) Garden Heritage Celebration in September 17, 2023. Abra Lee, International Speaker, Author, Historian and Horticulturist was our featured Guest Speaker. Groundbreaker awards were given to

environmental careers.

L-R: Former NBG Board Chair Clenise Platt, NBG President & CEO Peter Schmidt and current NBG Board Treasurer LaMont Henry with the bench presented to Clenise for her service to the board.

individuals who are making an impact on their community. Recipients included Dr. Rex Ellis, Abra Lee, Becky Livas and Thomas Ransom. The Garden was honored to announce the President's Council on Inclusion and Diversity Scholarship, sponsored in part by Truist, encouraging more diversity in horticulture and TRUIST HH



The descendants of Mrs. Virginia Chavis attended the celebration to honor the hard work of their ancestor who helped build the garden we enjoy today.



We were thrilled to attend the 35TH Annual Nansemond Indian POWWOW! To celebrate our shared commitment to environmental stewardship, we gave away around 100 native plants of various species. L-R: NBG Director of Adult Education Alex Cantwell and Tribal Council Vice Chair Nikki Bass.



NBG staff gave away an assortment of nearly 300 plants and answered questions at the FUSEFest event held in the thriving community garden Purpose Park in Norfolk, VA. L-R: NBG Director of Adult Education Alex Cantwell, Horticulturist II Kent Lewark and Horticulturist II Steve Saunders.

# **CELEBRATING** Black History Month



# DIVERSITY GALLERY EXHIBIT Baker Hall Visitor Center • January & February

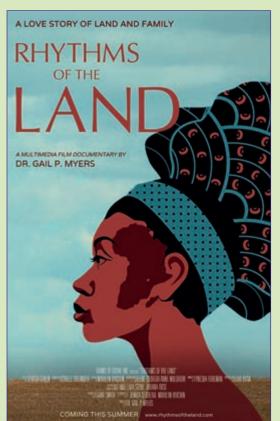
The Garden is a space where diverse backgrounds and perspectives converge to celebrate the beauty of nature. The diversity gallery was created to highlight the talented underrepresented minority artists in the Hampton Roads area. Chris Green is one of many local artisans who will display their work in the first-ever diversity gallery in the Baker Hall Visitor Center during the months of January and February. Chris paints the totality of the Black experience from his home studio in Norfolk, VA. Focusing on the struggles, triumphs, and everything in between, Green uses vibrant colors to illustrate African Americans in a beautiful way. He has made significant lifelong contributions to the Hampton Roads area by painting various murals on storefronts as well as showcasing his work in numerous exhibitions, enriching our communities with his captivating art.

Speaking Life
Acrylic on canvas by Chris Green



# FREE Thursdays in February Celebrating Black History Month

Norfolk Botanical Garden strives to be a Garden for all and a space to connect with nature. Visit norfolkbotanicalgarden.org for more information and ticketing reservations.



# FILM SCREENING: Rhythms of the Land Saturday, February 24 • 1:00 – 4:00PM

Community Partner: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.
Chesapeake - Virginia Alumnae Chapter

Rhythms of the Land documentary is a valentine to generations of black farmers in the United States from the enslavement period to the present. The goal of this documentary is to preserve their stories and honor their lives and agrarian legacies.

In 1920, there were over 920,000 black families farming in the United States, although the majority were sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Today there are just over 48,697, a 95% decrease in 100 years. Black farming families have lost their land and their stories are quickly disappearing. Scan code to learn more and reserve your ticket.

Sponsored by:

BANK OF AMERICA



Join us in fostering conservation awareness through our seasonal Butterfly House featuring locally raised native butterflies. With a donation of \$200, you can support the thriving butterfly habitat in the Butterfly House and the complementing educational programming. Add your name or a loved one's to our list of nature enthusiasts, featured on a sign in the 2024 Summer Butterfly House from mid-June to mid-September. Secure your spot—donate now!

MARCH 1 thru APRIL 30

### **ART in BAKER HALL**

Included with Garden Admission

Paintings in Watercolor, Acrylic, Oil and Mixed Media by Southside Artists Association









### Membership Swap Coming March 2024









## **Board Member SPOTLIGHT**

#### Jane Wimbush

It takes a lot of hard work, expertise, passion and vision to make an organization like Norfolk Botanical Garden grow and continue to be a valuable community resource decade after decade. Part of our success is due to the dedicated members of our Board of Directors. These volunteers are charged with guiding the Garden's governance and strategic planning efforts that ensure we are meeting the needs of those we serve. The Garden strives to recruit leaders who share our passion for green spaces, the environment and connecting with the public. Jane Wimbush is one of those leaders.

Jane's career as a civil engineer, her passion for gardening that she got from her mother, and her dedication to the Hampton Roads community mean that she understands the importance of our mission and has not hesitated to step up and meet the challenge. She became actively involved with the Garden well before becoming a Board member. Several years ago, a former Garden Board member requested her help with organizing an environmental day for students. Since then, Jane has served on both the Education Committee and the Building and Infrastructure Committee prior to joining the Board. She loves the Garden's various stories and deep connection to the community.

Jane is eager to help us realize our vision of *The Garden of Tomorrow*. She sees this project as a wonderful example of the Garden making changes to meet the future needs of the community. "Through my board membership, I hope to help NBG continue its positive transition by anticipating what appeals to our community and beyond. I want to be the eyes and ears of NBG to ensure it remains relevant and well connected to our community," Jane said. She encourages everyone to think about volunteering, explore the wide variety of amenities that the Garden has to offer and continue to learn and grow.

## In Memoriam: Richard Gray

Paper Artist Richard Gray, a beloved and dedicated instructor at NBG since 2009, passed away on October 15, 2023. Rich was always eager to work with his students. As a teacher, Rich was warm, patient and kind. Often times, those who attended an origami class at the Garden became repeat students excited to see what creations Rich had in store for them next. His passion for a lifetime of learning was contagious and inspiring.

Both Rich and his wife Pam are celebrated artists in the Hampton Roads art community. Rich was a self-taught artist who primarily focused on origami and paper making. His favorite part about teaching his paper arts was the "Aha moment" when a student began to fully understand the steps in their creation. A firm believer in doing what makes you happy, Rich kept that spirit in his classes and in his work. Rich Gray was a beacon of light and will be dearly missed at Norfolk Botanical Garden and throughout the Tidewater region.



Rich helped volunteers fold hundreds of paper ornaments and cranes that decorated the Christmas tree in the Baker Hall Visitor Center in 2017.

### Volunteer **SPOTLIGHT**-



With a life-long interest in being outdoors and connecting with nature, NBG Volunteer Ned Williams has flourished as a volunteer and become a staff favorite. "Ned has been working with me for several years now and he truly enjoys getting his hands dirty and is ready for anything," said NBG Horticulturist Scott Blair. Ned has enjoyed learning more about horticulture practices, especially when it comes to camellias. The camellia garden and the woodland areas around it have become one of his favorite places and he highly recommends visiting. "I have expanded my appreciation of the complexity and beauty of the natural environment," Ned said.

As a volunteer for more than three years and accumulating a total of 172 hours, we can't thank him enough. His commitment and that of the Garden's many volunteers enable us to fulfill our mission and create a beautiful space for families to enjoy all year long.

"I think Ned's passion for landscaping in part comes from his passion for creating useful and enjoyable spaces for people with attention to form and function," said Blair. In addition to volunteering, Ned and his wife Debra are supporters of *The Garden of Tomorrow* who have chosen to sponsor a plant in the new conservatory to help in our effort to preserve endangered plants. Thanks Ned and Debra for being great friends to the Garden!

#### Interested in Volunteering at NBG?

Contact our Community Outreach Manager Taylor Lyons by email at volunteer@nbgs.org or by phone (757) 441-5830 ext. 364. Scan this code to learn more about volunteering at the Garden.





The beauty, wonder and serenity of the Garden combine to create a perfect setting to honor a loved one, pay tribute to a friend, or mark a special anniversary or milestone. Select from a number of sites in the Garden to place our teakwood bench, complete with commemorative plaque. Please call Cathy Fitzgerald at 757-441-5830 ext. 319 or email her at cathy.fitzgerald@nbgs.org to make an appointment to discuss this \$25,000 tribute opportunity.



#### **Evergreen Society Members**

If you are interested in learning more about the Evergreen Society, or letting us know about a gift in your estate plan including IRA's, please contact cathy.fitzgerald@nbgs.org.

Dan Allison, Annette Averitt, I.M. & Sarah Lee Baker, Shasha Best & Peter Schmidt, Ty & Martha Brown, Elizabeth Bruce, Blanche C. Chappell, Robert & Janie Creecy, Cindy Cutler & Craig Haines, Sandra L. Dashney, Michael Desplaines, William W. Eley, Richard & Eleanor Evans, Cathy Fitzgerald, Joe Foreman, R. Michael & Patricia Fuller, Jane Frazier, Robert M. Gostel, Craig & Sue Grube, Randy Harrison, June Hoye, Kit E. Johnson, Karen S. Gershman, Karen L. Hines, Edward C. & Betty Lou Johnston, Sr., Patricia A. Kiefer, Patty L. Landrum, Virginia T. Lawrence, Eleanor Marshall, Bee McLeod & Goody Tyler, Rick Morsink, Susan Elise Morton, Nancy Nelson, Edward & Gayle Nichols, Susan L. Oldridge, Brian O'Neil, Dana Parker, Stephanie Pope, Mildred Amsinger Powers, Judy Pravecek, Kathleen Keogh Rahman, Ann Rathbone, Pamela Read, Alan Rohanna, Kurt & Debbie Schroeder, Sam Strickland, George & Nancy Sutcliffe, Sylvia E. Simons Trembelas, Jim & Christiane Valone, Richard & Ann Weber, Pearl Windle, 3 anonymous.



### norfolk botanical garden

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# FIDO FRIDAYS IN FEBRUARY

Explore the Garden with your canine best friend. Members & their dogs are FREE

Not-Yet-Members' Dogs \$5 (Human Admission applies)









Show your love for NBG with some gift shop swag!

SWAG





Tram Tours, Bike Nights and WOW Splash Pads Return in April