

IN BLOOM

A PUBLICATION FROM WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS

FALL 2021



WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS



A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear friends, supporters and students of the Gardens,



Since our grand opening in 2019 our motto has been: Education *Leads* the Way. In 2019 we opened the Graeser Family Education Center (for events, and rentals), and this summer the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms. In 2020 and 2021, we provided 10 weeks of camp to over 100 campers of all ages, we put on two reGeneration Fairs for the community with over 2,000 guests involved

in environmental, science and art activities of all kinds, and we hosted over 100 classes for adults and youth.

Per our mission - To cultivate urban botanical gardens that educate, inspire, and enhance appreciation of the relationship between plant life and a healthy environment - we are educating the adults and youth of this community through tactile, active learning. In fact, a visit to the gardens is an education in itself.

There's nothing more inspiring, or distracting, for me than watching a child explore the gardens. Sitting in the conference room of the Graeser Family Education Center, often my "captain's seat," I get to watch visitors coming in all day. I observe what catches their attention, and what kinds of activities they engage in. I've seen young adults sit on a bench and listen to music, small children splash their hands in the fountain (only one has fallen in so far!), middle schoolers



marvel at the hummingbirds, young artists drawing or photographing the plants and flowers, proposals, weddings and adults positioning in the same pose as *Capriccio*, our bronze sculpture of a girl running through the gardens.

But, it's the small children that inspire me the most. I know that every interaction they have with a butterfly, a caterpillar, or an herb in the edible garden beds is changing their little brains. It's pretty powerful to be a part of something that will change one individual's life and future interests, but even more so, a garden that will change our community.

Join me at the gardens one day and witness the miracle of inspiration that is happening here. Every day, rain or shine, learning is happening in the gardens, a place of lifelong wonderment. Nature puts on a show every day. Come on out and learn with us.

Kasey Maier,
President and CEO



OUR VISION

Planting seeds and growing minds for more sustainable cities.

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Comments by Jamie Burghardt Director of Horticulture and Education

AT THE RIBBON CUTTING AND OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ELLEN T. LESLIE BOTANICAL CLASSROOMS. JULY 2, 2021

Writer and personal coach development company proprietor Karen Cudby believes in personal empowerment and each person's potential.

It's not merely coincidence that she looked at the plant kingdom to find inspiration to draft some life lessons for us humans. I'd like to share just a few of her words today:

- ❶ **Plants don't set limits in themselves;** they don't stop and think how big they can grow as much as they can.
- ❷ **Plant's struggle for daily existence are their very strength.** (Look at trees – they find themselves out on their own directly exposed to wind and the elements. And those trees respond by developing thicker roots and trunks.
- ❸ **Plants take only what they need to thrive.** They don't needlessly suck out all the resources in the soil – they utilize only what they need to grow, survive and thrive.
- ❹ **Plants turn to face the sun.** They soak up the rays and turn it into energy. They do not spend their time focused on the weed next to them or the predator nearby with impressive teeth.

- ❺ **Plants don't let their surroundings and circumstances define them.** Plants' mission is to grow as much as they can where the seed of life has planted them.
- ❻ **Plants focus on fulfilling their potential.** They do not look to the left or right to see how that competing tree, flower or shoot is doing compared to their own accomplishments. They do what they need to do to flourish and flower and set seed.
- ❼ **Plants create something of value for others.** They give us oxygen, calm us, provide medicine, nourishment and provoke a smile from time to time. We should prompt ourselves to ask, "What value am I bringing to others and the world around me?"

Today, with the opening of the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms, we at Waterfront Botanical Gardens (from all our departments) hope to reach our fullest potential as we grow. We hope you join us, Kentuckiana, to reach your fullest potential as well. Remember us in your personal journey to grow and build a better community. Whether you're an elementary age camper, a college-age intern or an inquisitive adult, be part of our vision of planting seeds and growing minds.

"Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, let's get this ribbon cutting started!"



COVER

Front: Chelsea Hicks, WBG Horticulturist and a camper.

Back: Skipper drinking nectar from an Arizona Sun blanketflower (*Gaillardia grandiflora*) by Terri Weber.

Nejma Piagentini
Vice-Chair
Environmental
Scientist

David Grey
Secretary
Brown-Forman

Susan Howard,
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Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms

Opened July, 2021

Waterfront Botanical Gardens continues to grow! On July 2nd staff, volunteers, supporters and fans gathered for the ribbon cutting of our newest addition, the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classroom Building.

The building features a teaching greenhouse, learning lab, culinary courtyard and horticulture workshop. In this building, youth and adults will learn about plants and nature through a variety of hands-on workshops and classes.



If you want to follow our progress check out the website at waterfrontgardens.org/master-plan

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING AREAS SPONSORED:

- Etscorn Foundation Teaching Greenhouse
- Samtec Cares Culinary Courtyard
- Horticulture Workshop sponsored in honor of the garden groups that founded Botanica, Inc.
The Hosta Society | The Daylily Society | The Iris Society

The Learning Lab is available for sponsorship. Contact Brett Shepherd, bshepherd@waterfrontgardens.org



“

There are so many ways for kids to learn. The one that we know is most important is that kids need to have experiential learning, they need to use their hands, they have to have that tactile development.

”

This is exactly the type of facility that children really need to engage in their learning, to be excited about their learning and one of the things that people don't know

is that when a child gets engaged in one subject or something they are passionate about, it actually helps them increase their achievement across the board.

- Abby Piper
Executive Administrator, Government/
Community Relations at Jefferson
County Public Schools

Seeds Sown

Minds Grown



Jamie Burghardt
Director of Horticulture
& Education

The Gardens will be two years old this October. While we remain in our infancy in the greater scheme of development, we are embracing our organizational vision of **“Planting seeds and growing minds...”**

We began with adult programs in gardening, art, environment and wellness and soon expanded into our first youth field trips to our teaching gardens at The Avish estate two summers ago. Since then, adult education offerings have expanded as well as offering Family Adventures and summer camps at The Avish, and most recently at the Gardens in the new Leslie Botanical Classrooms. Our first interpretive audio tours, interior educational exhibit and in-person Cultural Pass programs were successfully introduced this year, too.

CONNECTIONS

The theory of “biophilia” proposes that **humans instinctively have an urge to associate with other forms of life.** You may see that as simply being out in a grassy meadow or a forest, or watching wildlife through a window, or even enjoying physical contact with other people after lockdowns. The Gardens focuses on plants, but ecology leads to the realities of insect, bird, microbe, amphibian, lizard and mammals all finding habitat in our Gardens.

Sadly, technology has undermined our life experiences, to be mainly indoors. This is especially true for children. Most notably, during the pandemic we realized how much stepping out of our homes into the fresh air and sunshine made life tolerable. I look forward to the day that the word ‘zoom’ only refers to a sound a speeding race car makes. Social media and multiplayer video games eat up more time in our childrens’ lives. They are more comfortable in front of their screens (and it’s easier to plug-in another tech machine to fill their time and needs) than to have them enrich their life experience in the fresh air among trees, flowers, animals and the sun. Technology has offered us great benefits, but we’re overdue to ensure all youth spend more time out in nature. Recapture quality life experiences by observing, embracing and existing as a part of nature on Earth. Waterfront Botanical Gardens is among the finest in human experiences.



THE SEEDS

Investing in Gardens visitors – the metaphorical “planting seeds” – focuses on people of all ages. Regardless of their status or point in life, educational efforts aim to build a personal relationship with the Gardens. Connect the visitor, the student, the human with some aspect of nature, whether it be plant or animal life. Nurture some passion of the person with a Gardens asset to help them grow individually, find their calling, rejuvenate or encounter a positive and transformative experience.

The answer is not investing in more wifi routers or electrical outlets outdoors. It’s a commitment to get everyone outside again to truly soak up the beauty and wonder of nature and learn of the lessons (both triumphant and depressing) forever seen in the natural world. Focus on the soil and plants, and the rest of nature builds upon them.

We may not know what our impacts are for years in sowing a long-term relationship with youth and adult students at the Gardens. I can share some anecdotal observations that make me ponder what some have gained from their passive visit or active camp or class experiences over the past spring and summer. One adolescent with known behavioral issues seemed to adjust well to a surrounding of plants and fellow campers. Another art-loving youth spent hours alone and up-close with insects and plants, filling her portfolio with dozens of sketches and paintings. Other kids were boldly confident in planting annual flowers in the Edible Garden Planters. Inquiring families who were given the opportunity to taste leaves of Malabar spinach and sweetleaf were full of smiles and further questions. Others are inspired to learn that a former city dump is now in a renaissance, and of the importance of reducing waste, recycling more and leaving our urban landscape in a better condition for future generations.

THE MINDS (AND BODIES)

Gardens feed humanity's minds and bodies. In the last several decades, science has qualified increasing benefits and quantified research of being around plants to enrich and improve so many aspects of our lives, whether indoors or out. Our inaugural exhibit in the lobby of the Leslie Botanical Classrooms reveals how even being around plants indoors improves our well-being in classroom, hospital and workplace settings. Improved test scores, less classroom behavioral issues, heightened creativity, lower blood pressure, less pain medications, higher office comfort levels and productivity all are tied to the presence of plants in an interior room. Imagine the psychological benefits when abundant plants live outside those buildings!

Youth who pursue their life experiences out in nature gain tremendous personal growth opportunities. Unstructured play outdoors builds a child's confidence. Ultimately, a child outdoors must choose how to interact with (and hopefully respect) nature through the choice of his or her own actions. Observing the natural world also teaches responsibility. Fail to water a plant, give it sun or provide food for a critter and there are negative consequences. Regardless of what techies (or even librarians) say about their apps (or literature), nature provides so many more stimulations than a screen or book. Nature provides sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures to boost the overall human life experience.

Finally, time in nature reduces both stress and anxiety. Attention Restoration Theory poses that people living in urban settings are bombarded by daily, repetitive distractions that cause fatigue. Those city dwellers who observe and immerse themselves in natural environments experience what is called "soft fascinations" that leads to a feeling of pleasure, not exhaustion. This is true for all of us, regardless of our age.

THE WORK

We are starting our work of planting seeds to grow minds. It is only through time that we will know the transformative experience or personal relationship that today's work gave people. **What will summer campers, family visitors, high school volunteers, interns and any array of adult visitors recall of their time at Waterfront Botanical Gardens 10, 20 or 30 years from now?** Will their relationships to the Gardens be personal (i.e., it directed their professional decisions or a lifetime love of tinkering in the garden to rejuvenate and remain content) or more physical (i.e. remembering when that tree was tiny or before the conservatory was there it was a weedy field)? Whichever it may be, they will be seen as valuable, positive and a life experience worthy of remembering and passing on.

Our work remains current and important. Future generations will thank us.

So will nature.



Learn more about our Educational Programs on our website:
waterfrontgardens.org/events/category/youth-education

Blue Jays

How they help our ecosystem



Andrew Hagerty
Lead Horticulturist

There is no other tree in our Kentucky and Indiana forests more important than the oak. Oak trees support more types of life than any other tree. Studies have shown that a mature oak can support 2,300 different species of mammals, insects, birds, and fungi creating some of the most bio-diverse ecosystems in the United States. These life-sustaining trees have spread their bounty across the country with the help of a diligent ally, the blue jay.

Most people think of squirrels when envisioning an animal acorn farmer busily burying a cache of acorns for the winter, eating most, and forgetting a few that sprout as next spring's seedlings. Though squirrels do play a role in oak regeneration, they are not as proficient as the blue jay. **One of the reasons blue jays are overlooked as avid acorn collectors is because their work is not often seen. Blue jays do most of their gathering high up in the canopies** staying hidden from predators and beating the competition to the season's crop before the nuts drop to the ground. Up in the treetops a single blue jay can gather between 3,000 to 5,000 acorns a season. As they gather their multitude for the winter, they give each acorn a

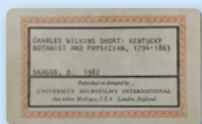
shake to test if it is viable. Those they consider not worthy of their time are left behind. They can carry an impressive 5 acorns while flying to where they will bury it for safekeeping holding one in their beak, one in their mouth, and three in their gullet. This acorn selection process results in 90% of their cache being made up of healthy acorns able to grow next spring.

Not only are blue jays selective while searching for acorns that will last through winter, they are also more likely to hide them individually. The lone acorns are less likely to be destroyed by fungus when hidden unlike the large stockpiles that squirrels create. Blue jays also spread the acorns up to a mile and a half away and into open spaces, where they are more likely to have access to sunlight and

DR. CHARLES WILKINS SHORT

Renowned Botanist, 1800s

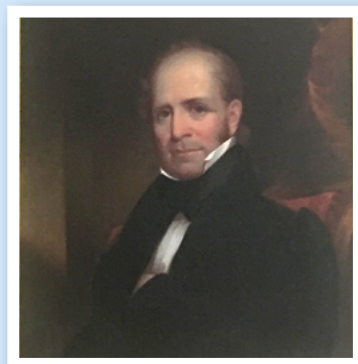
Earlier this year we completed a video about renowned botanist, Dr. Charles Wilkins Short. Short was born in Woodford County, Kentucky and attended Transylvania University. He also had ties to Louisville. He has many descendants in this area, including Dr. Tom Courtenay.



Dr. Tom Courtenay, direct descendant of Dr. Short

Short was a professor at the University of Louisville between 1838 and 1849, and upon retiring, the university's Board of Trustees named him Professor Emeritus of Materia Medica and Medical Botany. During his time at U of L, Short made a botanical expedition along the Ohio River, an event that was instrumental in him being known as, perhaps, Kentucky's greatest botanist.

Learn more about the famous botanist and the rare plants he discovered. One of these plants is currently growing at Waterfront Botanical Gardens.



Learn more about Dr. Charles Wilkins Short on our website:
waterfrontgardens.org



can grow away from the established pests, such as leaf defoliating caterpillars, found on older oaks. The unique harvesting style of blue jays helps explain how oak trees have been able to spread across the United States and is credited with bringing oaks back to the north after the last ice age glaciers receded. The relationship between oaks and blue jays is one of the fascinating ways nature combines its many links to build the complex web of life.

This fall, if you see a blue jay bullying birds by your feeder or greedily swallowing the best acorns from the tree, allow for some grace. It has an important job to do. **The blue jay is busy sustaining our ecosystem by spreading our most beneficial tree across our states and beyond.**



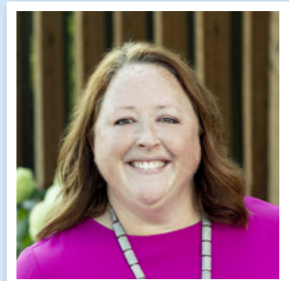
WELCOME NEW STAFF



Jen O'Connell
Special Events Manager



Erin Schepman
Development Manager



Molly Young
Membership and
Volunteer Manager

Our Volunteers



Molly Young
Membership and
Volunteer Manager

The volunteer experience at the Waterfront Botanical Gardens continues to evolve as we continue to grow. With more than 300 active volunteers, we are building a community of dedicated individuals whose impact can be seen and felt throughout the garden every day. Whether it's helping to maintain the beds through countless hours of watering, weeding, planting or clearing off bagworms from our tree line so we can maintain a healthy garden, our volunteers are committed to our vision.

In addition, our volunteers educate the public about the garden at community wide events as well as onsite through our Garden Guide program. Visitors often enjoy the garden with the help of our Garden Guides who serve as the frontline of our hospitality efforts. These individuals are informed through training sessions about the inner workings of the Garden and our historic site.

We are excited to add new Mentor and Group Guide roles to our existing Garden Guide program as well as increase the



2022 MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Access to members-only events including Sunset Sips, Member Mornings, Gardens Aglitter, the Annual Meeting and more

Access to exclusive members-only educational series

Discounts on tickets to more than 100 WBG special events & educational programs

Complimentary newsletter subscription

Early admission on select days

Complimentary WBG swag



If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Molly Young at myoung@waterfrontgardens.org.

number of active Garden Guides from 83 to 100 within the first quarter of 2022. These efforts will allow us to continue serving our guests as well as begin making the transition to a more robust program to one day support our forthcoming Japanese Garden.

Whether they work behind the scenes or at the forefront, WBG volunteers are the backbone of our garden and their tireless efforts ensure that our visitor experience is the best it can be.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Molly Young at myoung@waterfrontgardens.org.

Membership has its Benefits

Individuals have been supporting our work to build the gardens through our membership program for over 10 years. Memberships ultimately support our mission and vision while cultivating long term supports of the project.

This support continues to move us closer to our goals while creating opportunities to increase our presence in the community. As we enter the final stages of completing Phase I of our project, we reflect on our membership program, and how it can grow and be of value to our members in the years ahead.

Being a member of Waterfront Botanical Gardens provides an inside look at the gardens for individuals, families and businesses through access to members-only events, discounted pricing for special events and educational offerings. In 2022 we will be rolling out an improved membership program which will include new membership rates and increased benefits. Renew your membership today to take advantage of the current rates.





Adult Education



Kat Rivers
Adult Education
Coordinator

Growth and opportunities exist in WBG's Adult Education department. We focus on introducing adults to the botanical world through gardening, art, mindfulness, cooking, and much more. My role is to connect with local educators to bring explorative classes and workshops to the Gardens, offering our students new ways to connect with nature.

This past summer I started the series "Blooms 'n Brushes" that invites our adult students to try their hand at acrylic and watercolor painting by closely observing flowers in bloom. There is also the "Heart, Mind, Spirit Series" that focuses on the body and our connection to the world around us. Lastly, I'm committed to uplifting our local chefs demonstrating their connection to local food from the garden. Using our new Leslie Botanical Classroom space, local chefs will

introduce to us new recipes and new tastes while picking and harvesting food from the home garden - appropriately named, the "Garden-to-Fork: Culinary Series."

This is only the beginning of what WBG is capable of bringing to Kentuckiana. Next year, my plans are growing with the inauguration of our Speaker Series. Every other month, join us as a scientist delves into their world and opens the door to the latest discoveries all while you sip a cocktail with a view of the Gardens. As a lifelong learner, come on out and be prepared to get messy, nurture your creativity and expand your palette--discover a new learning experience here at Waterfront Botanical Gardens.



If you're interested in Adult Education at the gardens, message Kat at krivers@waterfrontgardens.org

Summer Camp

The addition of the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms in the summer of 2021 allowed for the expansion of our summer camp programming and created opportunities for Waterfront Botanical Gardens to foster partnerships with schools and cultural attractions in our area.

Made possible by a generous grant from the Norton Foundation, our first two weeks of camp were completely free to all attendees with transportation and lunch included. Our Week One campers were all rising 8th grade students from Nativity Academy at Saint Boniface. In addition to visiting the Gardens, these students participated in team building activities, investigated environmental issues like the biomagnification of plastics in our oceans, and took a guided paddle boat trip to learn about the history and ecology of our neighboring Beargrass Creek. For our second week, all

campers were 3rd or 4th grade students from neighboring Jefferson County Public Schools including: Shelby Traditional, Engelhard, and Breckinridge Franklin Elementary. These students spent time engaging with Next Generation Science concepts through games, art activities, and tactile experiences on grounds. It is our hope that these campers will utilize this experience as an artifact in their Backpack of Success defense that is now required for all JCPS students.

For our third and fourth weeks of camp in June, WBG partnered with Louisville Visual Arts to offer two weeks of Art & Nature Camp for ages 7 to 12 in our new classroom space. Campers spent half the day learning about the environment with our youth education team, and the other half of the day painting, printmaking, dying fabrics, and being inspired with local art educator Claire Krueger.



Wanda Peck
Youth Education Specialist



2021 Events

JULY 24TH JAPANESE GARDEN DEDICATION & JASK SUMMER CELEBRATION



Brett Shepherd
Director of Capital Campaigns

July 24th was a remarkable day in the history of Waterfront Botanical Gardens, as the land for the future two-acre Japanese Garden was officially dedicated. We were joined by a distinguished guest, Japanese Consul-General Kayoko Fukushima, from Nashville, who shared words of encouragement and inspiration on behalf of Japan.

Days prior to the dedication, the two acres encompassing the future location of the Japanese Garden were cleared and appropriately outlined with Japanese and American flags. In addition, several colored flags were placed throughout the site, marking the locations of prominent features such as the Main Gate, Tea House, Arched Bridge & Waterfall, and the Graeser Family Bonsai Garden. Guests who attended the dedication,



Consul-General Kayoko Fukushima spoke at the dedication of the land for the Japanese Garden



Japanese Tako drummers, Wadaiko Gouken

JAPANESE GARDEN SPONSORSHIPS

We need your support to build the Japanese Garden. If you wish to visibly or anonymously leave a permanent mark on the future world-class Japanese Garden at WBG, a multitude of sponsorship opportunities are available. **Sponsorships for these distinctive traditional elements located throughout the Japanese Garden and within the Bonsai Garden will feature recognition plaques honoring those who have made philanthropic investment in the project.** A unique treasure for Greater Louisville, The Commonwealth, and the entire region, the Japanese Garden will provide an unprecedented experience to those near and far.

We are pleased to have secured several sponsorships in the early stages of fundraising. Most notably, the Bonsai Garden has been sponsored by members of the Graeser Family, as the legacy of Emil and Nancy Graeser continues to inspire.

In addition to the **Graeser Family Bonsai Garden**, the following elements have been sponsored:

- **Zig Zag Bridge:** Shelly and Kenny Zegart
- **Cherry Tree Promenade:** Mary Beth and Charlie Clark
- **Tea Garden:** Matthew Rutherford and Grace Brown
- **Stone Bridge #1 and #2:** Judy and Bob Ayotte
- **Pebble Beach:** Maureen and Gary Kingry

For more details on available sponsorship opportunities for you or your company, please contact **Brett Shepherd, Director of Capital Campaigns**, at 502.494.0370 or bshepherd@waterfrontgardens.org.

including Louisville Metro Council President David James, were invited to explore the newly cleared space following the short program.

Later that evening, Waterfront Botanical Gardens co-hosted the Japan/America Society of Kentucky's Summer Celebration. Guests from all around

the Commonwealth gathered for traditional Japanese food and spirits, entertainment including a koto player and Taiko drummers, and an official introduction to the Japanese Garden project. A short program featured remarks by Kentucky Senate President, Robert Stivers, Louisville Metro Council

President, David James, and Consul-General of Japan, Kayoko Fukushima. Kentucky music legend, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, closed out the program with a performance of "This Is Far From Over," and guests enjoyed sake on the plaza following a traditional sake barrel breaking ceremony.



Learn more about events on our website:
waterfrontgardens.org/events



Future visitor to the WBG Japanese Garden



Breaking of the sake cask ceremony at the JASK Summer Celebration



WBG staff at the JASK Summer Celebration

UPCOMING EVENTS



Gardens Aglitter

THURSDAY-SATURDAY:
DEC 2-4, 9-11, 16-23, 26-30

WEDNESDAYS (MEMBERS ONLY):
DEC 1, 8

Annual Meeting

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING:

**"East is East and West is West:
will the two ever meet?"**

Panayoti Kelaidis,
Director of Outreach & Senior Curator
Denver Botanic Gardens



“

What's so important about the Waterfront Botanical Gardens is that it's my garden. If I want it to be, I'm welcome here. Anyone is welcome here.

This is our garden.

”

Dawne Gee