

WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS



Phase 2 Press Kit

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Our Mission

To develop an urban botanical garden by transforming a landfill and creating a place where nature prospers and people thrive through education, entertainment, community, and tourism.

History

Waterfront Botanical Gardens was started by Botanica, an umbrella organization for the local gardening community started in 1993. In 2001, a bequest from member Helen Harrigan led to the creation of Waterfront Botanical Gardens. The Gardens' site was selected in 2009, the Master Plan was created in 2014, and the Gardens opened to the public in 2019 with the completion of the Graeser Family Education Center. In 2021, the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms were built as the educational hub for Adult and Youth Education programs. As of 2024, Waterfront Botanical Gardens has completed Phase 1 of a 4-Phase Master Plan. Phase 2 construction will begin in 2025.



[Click for All Photo Assets](#)

About the Gardens

Waterfront Botanical Gardens is located just beyond downtown Louisville and welcomes over 57,000 visitors annually. As an urban botanical garden, WBG gives the metro region a necessary green space for recreation and relaxation. The Gardens' special events and programs promote cultural exchange, community connection, and highlight the importance of nature.

**BY THE
NUMBERS**
(2023)

91
Youth
Programs

132
Adult
Programs

14,962
Event
Attendees

97
Facility
Rentals



Youth Education

The Gardens offers spring break and summer camps, field trips, story time, scout programs, and more!



Adult Education

Lifelong learners are invited to deepen their connection with the botanical world through tours, workshops, and lectures.



Special Events

Visit the Gardens for seasonal events like Fascinator Affair, Music Series, Bonsai Weekend, Kaleidoscope Family Festival, and Gardens Aglimmer



Facility Rentals

Rent the Gardens' buildings and plazas for your special event. From weddings and showers to luncheons and galas, we look forward to hosting you.



[Events & Programs Photo Assets](#)

The Master Plan

Waterfront Botanical Gardens' Master Plan spans 23 acres and is split into 4 Phases of construction.

PHASE 1: COMPLETE ✓

- 5+ acres
- 57,000+ annual visitors
- 5,000+ students

PHASE 2:

- Tree Allée
- Beargrass Creek Overlook
- Japanese Garden

PHASE 3:

- Visitors Center
- Children's Garden

PHASE 4:

- Conservatory



[Master Plan Photo Assets](#)

Current Phase: 2A

The planned focus of Phase 2A is the development of the Graeser Family Bonsai Garden, Tree Allée, and Beargrass Creek Overlook. Our Bonsai Garden will house our ever-growing collection of over 40 bonsai trees, and allow space for them to be cared for and curated, as well as stored for dormancy.



A Tree Allée of 24 American Dream Swamp® White Oak trees will lead to the Overlook which has a beautiful view of Beargrass Creek.



[Phase 2A Photo Assets](#)

Support for Phase 2

March 2024

\$4 Million
General
Assembly

June 2024

\$1 Million
Louisville
Metro

"This unprecedented support from the Kentucky General Assembly and Louisville Metro marks a pivotal moment in the growth of Waterfront Botanical Gardens. As we embark on Phase 2 of construction, we are excited to create even more opportunities for people to connect with nature and enjoy this unique urban oasis. We are deeply grateful for the confidence they've shown in our vision for a greener, healthier Kentucky." **-Philip Koester, President & CEO, Waterfront Botanical Gardens**

"Our gratitude to the Kentucky General Assembly and Louisville Metro for their generous support cannot be overstated. This funding allows us to move forward with Phase 2 of our Master Plan, expanding the Waterfront Botanical Gardens as a thriving green space for education, conservation, and community engagement. Their joint investment in our mission will help us continue to cultivate a vibrant and sustainable future for Kentucky and the region." **-Margaret Bell, Chairperson, Waterfront Botanical Gardens Board of Directors**

"Waterfront Botanical Gardens stands for what was once a blight on Louisville's landscape, transforming it into a beacon of possibility, repurposed with vision into something that inspires and uplifts. In addition to creating a uniquely beautiful green space, Waterfront Botanical Gardens provides environmental education and community events, which mean opportunities for economic development. The \$4 million investment in this project is an investment in the quality of life for Kentuckians, and we are proud to showcase Kentucky as a vibrant arts and cultural destination for visitors from the region and around the world." **-Senate President Robert Stivers**