

IN BLOOM

A PUBLICATION FROM WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS

SPRING 2024



WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS



A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe that I am nearly six months into my role as President & CEO of Waterfront Botanical Gardens. In this relatively short span, we have experienced a flurry of activity, and I'm thrilled by our current trajectory. As a young, entrepreneurial nonprofit, the Gardens have and will continue to experience periods of rapid growth, in tandem with time for reflection and thoughtful consideration of our next steps forward. This is an exciting time, and I am grateful to be a part of it.

As we enter the Gardens' fifth growing season, a very significant achievement is the completion of **Phase 1 of our Master Plan**, a milestone we celebrate with great pride. The Graeser Family Education Center, Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms, Beargrass Creek Pathway, and the Rounsavall Family Foundation Plaza Fountain now stand as integral components of our beautifully designed Garden plazas.

Looking ahead, our sights are set on **the start of Phase 2, encompassing the Japanese Garden, the Tree Allée, and the Beargrass Creek Overlook**. Japanese Garden construction will begin with the Bonsai House and Graeser Family Bonsai Garden, which will allow us to properly house and display our growing collection of over three dozen bonsai trees.

In a recent and incredibly exciting development, I am thrilled to announce that Waterfront Botanical Gardens will receive **\$4 million from the Commonwealth of Kentucky**. This generous allocation underscores the confidence our elected officials have in our Garden's vibrant future as a landmark for education, conservation, and tourism.

Over the years, we've often invoked the phrase "From Landfill to Landmark," yet our Director of Horticulture, Andrew Hagerty, rightfully improved this tagline when he said, "We are more than a landmark, **we are a LIVING landmark.**" This subtle shift in perception underscores our commitment to nurturing and sustaining this living legacy for years to come.

Embracing **the theme of Forever Green for 2024**, we aim to infuse this idea into our programs, events, and operational ethos, cultivating not only a garden but a legacy of environmental stewardship and community enrichment that will endure for generations.

There are many ways you can be a part of our growth and support this necessary green space in Louisville's urban environment. Attend a program, sponsor an event, make a donation, become a Member, or consider adding the Gardens to your estate plans. **Every level of support plays a vital role in nurturing our growth** and ensuring the sustainability of your urban Gardens, an invaluable community asset.

Sincerely,



Philip Koester
President & CEO



Phil speaks to a sold-out audience at the Gardens' 3rd annual Fascinator Affair

OUR VISION

Planting seeds and growing minds for more sustainable cities.

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Community Leader
and Volunteer



**Frank (Tré)
Campisano**
Executive Director of Sales
at Globalair.com



Matthew Rutherford
Self-employed

GARDENS AGLIMMER RECAP

GARDENS AGLIMMER ATTENDANCE SURPASSES 10,000

In 2023, we welcomed **10,629 guests** to Gardens Aglitter - our highest attendance yet! A special thank you to presenting sponsor **Baird Private Wealth Management**, as well as Louisville Public Media, KPFF Consulting Engineers, Brown-Forman, Perkins&Will, Calhoun Construction Services, and Khalil Batshon.

Save the date! Mark your calendars for Gardens Aglitter 2024 opening night, **Friday, November 29, 2024**. For additional 2024 dates and details, visit gardensaglitter.com.



Scan the QR code to view a fly-through video of our 2023 light display. Courtesy of Steve Grider Photography.

COVER FLORA

Front: Stonecrop Sedum (*Hylotelephium spectabile* 'Neon')
Back: Merlin™ Lenten Rose (*Helleborus x ballardiae* 'COSEH 810'). Photos by Duncan Cherry

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Mac Willett
Owner, R. M. Willett
Properties and Willett
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Forever Green Transforming the Gardens' Programs

In our ever-changing world, Waterfront Botanical Gardens provides a calming sanctuary for rest and reflection. Here, green reigns supreme; a welcome contrast to the urban hustle and bustle beyond our 23-acre site. To honor the timeless wonder and allure of the Gardens, **we are embracing the theme of Forever Green in 2024.**

As a living archive of nature's beauty, the Gardens preserve and showcase native and exotic plant life, immersing visitors in the art and science of the natural world. From the beginning, Waterfront Botanical Gardens has been on a mission to bring nature to the city by **taking a lifeless landfill and cultivating a living landmark.** With Phase 1 of our Master Plan complete, including green buildings, geothermal systems, and various gardens and plantings, we are excited for Phase 2, which will feature the Japanese Garden starting with the Bonsai House, Graeser Family Bonsai Garden, Tree Allée, and Beargrass Creek Overlook.

Looking ahead, the possibilities for new programming are abundant. After all, **programs and events are important vehicles**



for sharing our mission with the community.

In the meantime, we are actively looking at what we offer, how we can provide greater opportunities and experiences to engage our guests, infuse more fun, all while efficiently and effectively meeting our mission. We have plenty of ideas!

YOUTH PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Waterfront Botanical Gardens offers programs for school groups, scouts, preschool, homeschool, and families. Engaging our youngest guests and their families is a special opportunity to cultivate a lifelong love for nature. We are excited for our 2nd annual **Kaleidoscope Family Festival on September 14, 2024.** This free day of family-friendly fun will look at the world through the lens of plants! Learn more at waterfrontgardens.org/kaleidoscope.

NEW LEARNING GARDEN

A new Learning Garden is in development and will be ready this summer. This versatile outdoor space includes a 20' x 30' tent, electricity, landscaping, and large raised plant beds to accompany our educator-led programs. The soil-filled beds will allow children to plant seedlings, sow seeds, and get their hands dirty. This space will also be available for event rentals.



ADULT CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

We have offered great classes in the past and we look forward to providing many of those along with some new ones. Fan favorites like our Gardens Walk & Talk led by WBG horticulture staff will take place every other Thursday starting May 30th. Visit waterfrontgardens.org/AdultEd to learn more.



We are excited for the future at Waterfront Botanical Gardens, where we are reminded of the enduring power of nature to inspire, educate, and connect. Join us in embracing our Forever Green theme, and **come have fun in your Gardens** for an upcoming program or event!

SAVE THE DATE! FOREVER GREEN GALA

The Gardens have established several key annual events including the Fascinator Affair, Earth Day, Kaleidoscope Family Festival, Bonsai Weekend, the annual gala, and Gardens Aglitter. This year, the annual gala will follow our theme of Forever Green - green tie optional! Save the date for **Friday, November 22, 2024**. More information to come at waterfrontgardens.org/gala.



Rendering of the Learning Garden

Endow Kentucky Tax Credit

Support the Gardens and receive a Kentucky income tax credit. The Endow Kentucky Tax Credit allows donors to **receive a charitable deduction and also a credit against your Kentucky income taxes**. The credit is 20% of your gift, up to \$10,000. This means an individual can give up to \$50,000, allowing for a \$10,000 tax credit. Gifts must be directed to the **Waterfront Botanical Gardens' Fund** at the Community Foundation of Louisville. Individuals must apply for the credit before making their gift.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the **Endow Kentucky Tax Credit**.



To learn more, contact Lori Kay Scott, Director of Development at lkscott@waterfrontgardens.org or **502-609-3580**



SAVE THE DATE! The 4th annual Fascinator Affair is **Thursday, April 10, 2025**. Scan the QR code to watch a recap video of the **3rd annual Fascinator Affair**. Or get more information at waterfrontgardens.org/fascinator



Mac and Catherine at the 3rd Annual Fascinator Affair with bugler Phil Thomas

At any budding nonprofit, there are early mission advocates who grow into the most devoted supporters, leading by example and showing up in the most crucial ways. At Waterfront Botanical Gardens, **we are honored by this level of commitment from Mac and Catherine Willett**. Neighbors to the Gardens and residents of Butchertown since 2003, Mac and Catherine learned about the Gardens while it was still in its infancy. Just four years earlier, Botanica member Helen Harrigan passed away, leaving behind a \$1.5 million trust to build a botanical garden and conservatory in Louisville.

“We became very involved in the neighborhood,” said Mac, “and after the Gardens received the land from the city, we wanted to become more engaged. We started off by becoming WBG Members so we could follow along with the progress. **Over the years, our support has grown.**”

Mac’s early connection to the Gardens wasn’t just by proximity, it included family ties as well. “My mother’s sister, Mary Webb, was a landscape architect and she was involved in developing the Gardens for years. I knew all about it through her. In fact, there is a bench named in her honor at the Gardens, and the bridge on the Beargrass Creek Pathway is named in her daughter-in-law’s memory.”

Mac and Catherine are well aware of the value of botanical gardens in most cities, and that they are typically among the top five most visited attractions. Understanding that **the Gardens could become a unique and valuable asset to Louisville and the region**, they became more proactive in their relationship with the Gardens. Mac said, “The former Chairperson of the Board, Jon Salomon, lived across the street from us. I called him up and said, ‘John, it’s time for me to give back a little. I would love to be on your Board.’” The rest is history, so to speak.



Helen Harrigan LEGACY SOCIETY

Members of the Helen Harrigan Legacy Society help the Gardens **cultivate a legacy that will continue to bloom for generations**. When you include Waterfront Botanical Gardens in your estate plans, you become a member of the Helen Harrigan Legacy Society. Planned gift giving enables you to show your generosity and dedication to our community and the environment, without compromising your present-day financial comfort.

To learn more about planned giving and the Helen Harrigan Legacy Society, or if you have already included the Gardens in your plans, please contact Lori Kay Scott, Director of Development, at lkscott@waterfrontgardens.org | 502-609-3580

Seeds of Support

Recognizing Mac and Catherine Willett

Mac has served on the Gardens' Board of Directors since 2021. In that time, he has also participated in numerous committees, with a primary focus on resource development. Whether hosting gatherings at their homes in Louisville and Florida, introducing friends to the Gardens, or writing thank you letters to supporters, **Mac and Catherine model support for the Gardens in countless ways.** Their engagement extends beyond Kentucky, and also involves neighbors who spend part of their year in Florida. Between lunches, parties, and casual conversations, the Willetts are cultivating relationships and interest in the Gardens even from afar.

In 2023, the Willetts became the Presenting Sponsors of the 2nd Annual Fascinator Affair, a Derby season luncheon and fashion show fundraiser in support of the Gardens' mission. After the success of the event, they were eager to reclaim the title of Presenting Sponsor of the 3rd Annual Fascinator Affair in 2024. "Catherine loves this event," said Mac, "and it is a wonderful way for us to introduce people to the Gardens in a fun, social setting." After a sold-out event this year, they are already looking forward to the 4th Annual Fascinator Affair scheduled for April 10, 2025.

In the future, **the Willetts hope their legacy of support for the Gardens will continue to grow for generations to come.** As members of the Helen Harrigan Legacy Society, Mac and Catherine have included Waterfront Botanical Gardens in their estate plans. Mac said, "We have been so committed during our lifetime, that when we are gone from here, I hope that our contribution will help sustain the Gardens into the future." Mac also shared that supporting the Gardens' endowment fund is a top priority to ensure the longevity of this public asset.

The Japanese Garden is high on the list of things that Mac and Catherine are looking forward to at Waterfront Botanical Gardens. As the son of a World War II veteran, Mac believes his father would be thrilled to know of this vision for the Gardens. **"I see the Japanese Garden as a symbol. It is a symbol of Japanese and American friendship.** Visitors are going to put this on their 'must see' list when they are in Kentucky, and to me, that would be the greatest thing."

With visionaries and advocates like Mac and Catherine Willett, the future of Waterfront Botanical Gardens is bright. They demonstrate the many ways one can support the Gardens' mission, whether through annual membership, volunteering, making introductions, event sponsorship, and legacy giving. "At the end of the day, we want to see the Gardens be successful," said Mac. "We are proud to be a part of this legacy."



Mac and Catherine at the Gardens' Japanese Gala in October 2022



Why Bonsai?

Andrew Hagerty
Director of Horticulture

Bonsai appreciation extends beyond viewing them as living sculptures. They represent devoted craftsmanship, guided by art and horticulture, manifested in breathtaking masterpieces. **Bonsai are illustrations of history, understanding, and appreciation**, serving as symbols of hope and preservation of peace; faith that the time and care given will be continued by each coming generation.

It is easy to understand why deep connections are formed with bonsai, because the practices needed to cultivate bonsai mirror philosophies for leading a fulfilling life. As far back as 700 AD when the Chinese began practicing penjing, the early beginnings of bonsai, these plants were revered as luxurious gifts and meditated upon for their magical qualities.

Caring for a bonsai is an opportunity to be present, to quiet distractions, and connect with nature. It is a chance to contemplate a tree's form and encourage it to reach its full potential. A chance to be patient in waiting and adapt to unexpected challenges; to amend any damage done, or revere the scars as a part of its journey.

There are many techniques, philosophies, and styles to choose from when growing bonsai, and some core principles have been used for thousands of years.

Leave No Trace: It is important that an artist leaves no trace of their work. The tree should appear as if it naturally grew into its shape with no visible, obvious signs of pruning or wiring.



Balance: Another requirement is that the tree's roots, trunk, foliage, and branches need to be balanced. Even the negative space between the different parts of the tree should not attract too much attention.

Proportion: It is important to ensure that the tree is proportioned to resemble a full-grown tree. For instance, a bonsai's branches should not dwarf the trunk or have leaves that are too large for the size of the tree.

Though some are easier to transform than others, enough skill and effort can turn any woody plant species into a bonsai, allowing for an abundance of diversity in these miniaturized trees. Bonsai can be conifers, deciduous, or tropical species bearing fruit or pine cones, or azaleas or wisteria covered in a display of flowers.

No matter the type of plant, each bonsai tells a unique story. Some are newly planted by novice bonsai artists, while others tell tales of generational dedication and hold the memories of their caretakers. Some have been passed down from one keeper to another for hundreds of years. **The oldest bonsai is estimated to be over 1,000 years old.**



Bonsai can enjoy long lifespans thanks to their caretakers' meticulous attention. Fertilizers are carefully measured and applied, special soils are crafted for their roots, watering is precise, and any disease or pest is treated quickly. The painstaking effort to cultivate these horticultural works of art is just one aspect of the creator's gratification.

A 41-year-old
Satsuki Azalea
Rhododendron cv.

Save the Date! The 2nd Annual Bonsai Weekend featuring the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society is **August 23 - 25, 2024**. For details and tickets, scan the QR code or visit waterfrontgardens.org/bonsai



Bonsai Weekend 2023

Waterfront Botanical Gardens' bonsai collection continues to grow thanks to generous donors. The trees given to the Gardens are there to be appreciated by our community and to inspire others to learn about the delights of bonsai. Our budding collection currently consists of 36 trees and 18 different species. As the stewards of such valuable gifts, **we are happy to announce our bonsai collection will be on display for the public to view** in the Samtec Cares Courtyard adjacent to the Ellen T. Leslie Botanical Classrooms. A sincere thank you to Cosentino, Artesian Stone, Jim Doiron, and the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society whose donated time and material made this display possible.

In addition to the new bonsai display, we also look forward to our **second annual Bonsai Weekend in partnership with the Greater Louisville Bonsai Society from August 23 - 25, 2024**. This event will once again celebrate the work of our region's bonsai communities. With over 2,000 attendees at the inaugural event, this year will be even more festive and will include vendors to provide for all your bonsai needs, Asian-inspired cuisine, performers, as well workshops and demonstrations on caring for and creating your own bonsai.

As we continue to share the great features of bonsai, we eagerly await the first addition to Phase Two of the Gardens' Master Plan: the Bonsai House and Graeser Family Bonsai Garden. The Garden will consist of five different "rooms," each of which is inspired by the Japanese philosophy godai, or "The Five Great," referring to the elements earth, water, fire, wind, and void. From the materials used to create each space, to the plants inhabiting them, each room in the Bonsai Garden will be influenced by one of the elements.

Waterfront Botanical Gardens is fortunate to have the encouragement of so many different people eager to share their love of bonsai. Their dedication goes beyond their trees, as they help the Gardens and support our efforts in their display, plan our growing annual event, and embark upon our next phase of construction. This opportunity also gives us the chance to emulate the lessons learned from the bonsai under our care. **The dedication and effort required to develop and care for a centuries-old bonsai is the same commitment we bring in transforming a landfill into a living landmark appreciated by generations to come.**



GROWING A GREENER FUTURE WITH TREESLOUISVILLE

Megan Bibelhauser
Director of Marketing & Communications

There is a quiet transformation underway in Louisville, led by nonprofits like **Waterfront Botanical Gardens and TreesLouisville, who are finding ways to bring nature into the urban environment** and improve quality of life for residents of Jefferson County.

Cindi Sullivan, a horticulturist and certified arborist with a green thumb and a heart for trees, wears many hats as the President and Executive Director of TreesLouisville. She has embraced this role since TreesLouisville's inception in 2015. Today, there are six employees and approximately 30 active volunteers operating under **four core pillars: education, advocacy, collaboration, and funding projects in low canopy neighborhoods.**

TreesLouisville was established at the recommendation of the Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission. After performing a tree canopy assessment spanning 2004 to 2012, their findings were stark: Louisville's tree canopy was shrinking, with only 38% coverage recorded in that time frame.

"West and south Louisville have the lowest tree canopy. These neighborhoods have been historically marginalized, and are currently underserved. Tree maintenance can be very expensive, so homeowners don't want to plant new

trees," said Cindi. TreesLouisville now helps to fund projects in these areas through philanthropy, partnerships, and grants.

TreesLouisville performed a second assessment from 2012 to 2019 and recorded a **1% increase in canopy coverage, pushing the needle to 39%.**

It may sound like a modest gain, but the original assessment also found that without active changes, the tree canopy would dip below 30% by 2025. With their sights set on a goal of 45% coverage, every percentage point counts.



In the northwestern corner of the Gardens' parking lot lies **a makeshift compost research station managed by Ryan Lewis**, owner of City Tilth and Trees. While it appears as just a collection of mulch and dirt to the casual observer, Ryan's methods are both varied and intentional on his quest to perfect compost production.

Ryan's journey began over two decades ago in tree work, primarily focused on removal and risk mitigation rather than tree health. However, frustration and a growing curiosity led him to delve deeper into arboriculture, focusing on the pivotal role of soil in tree health.

He shared, "The textbook understanding that anyone studying arboriculture would acknowledge, is that **9 out of 10 tree problems originate below ground.** One would think that 90% of our work is addressing soil problems. Actually, it is probably less than 1%."

Upon becoming the City Forester for Audubon Park, known for their annual Dogwood Festival, Ryan faced a challenge as the dogwoods were declining rapidly. "About three years ago, I suggested the dogwoods were being lost, both the young and the mature, and they may be left with a spring flower festival, because the dogwoods weren't going to survive." Tackling the challenge head on by **adopting a holistic approach, he emphasized overall tree health rather than merely treating symptoms** with harsh chemicals. By developing a more robust soil ecology and minimizing stressors, the city has effectively halted tree attrition, and the trees' health is rebounding.





Volunteers assist with tree planting at Waterfront Botanical Gardens' overflow parking lot

“The biggest barrier for tree canopy improvement is the lack of awareness of its value,” said Cindi. **“A robust tree canopy provides real environmental, economic, social, and human health value.”**

Waterfront Botanical Gardens has been connected with TreesLouisville from the beginning. Within the first weeks of Cindi’s appointment as Executive Director, she reached out to the Gardens team to find ways to collaborate. The first project, a tree planting made possible by a grant from CSX, allowed the Gardens to plant 90 trees along a steep hillside behind the Graeser Family Education Center.

Most recently, funding and volunteers from Angel’s Envy enabled TreesLouisville to donate and plant **48 trees in the Gardens’ newly completed overflow parking lot** in fall 2023.

“This is not something one organization can do alone. We have to have partners,” shared Cindi. Teaming up with mission-aligned organizations like Louisville Metro Urban Forestry and Waterfront Botanical Gardens, TreesLouisville is transforming Louisville’s urban landscape one tree at a time. From securing grant funding for tree maintenance in underserved areas,

to hosting community events that inspire the next generation of tree enthusiasts, their impact is felt far and wide.

In Louisville’s urban environment, organizations like TreesLouisville and Waterfront Botanical Gardens are here to remind everyone that with a little care and a lot of heart, **we can all play a part in growing a brighter, greener future for generations to come.**



Visit treeslouisville.org to learn more.



Ryan measures the internal temperature of a compost pile

The compost station bordering the Gardens’ parking lot, initiated in October 2023, marks an important era in Ryan’s journey. By partnering with the Gardens, he receives access to much-needed space and spent plant materials for testing his process, while also **providing the Gardens with highly nutritious compost for our soil.**

Ryan’s composting endeavors are multifaceted, with each mound of organic matter subject to unique variables. His goal is to identify the most effective practices and scale them up for broader impact.

NURTURING ROOTS: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF URBAN COMPOSTING WITH RYAN LEWIS

Beyond compost production, Ryan aims to cultivate a community of soil health advocates to reform landscaping practices across the metro area. “I can’t change soils in all of Louisville, but there are a lot of companies that could. I want to be a part of that.”

Sharing resources with values-aligned innovators like Ryan is one way Waterfront Botanical Gardens is advancing our mission. Through education and collaboration, we can inspire broader changes, fostering a sustainable future for Louisville’s urban environment and our neighbors who live here.



To learn more, Contact Ryan at rklewistrees@gmail.com

2023 KALEIDOSCOPE FAMILY FESTIVAL THROUGH THE LENS OF PLANTS

On September 16, 2023, the Gardens buzzed with activity as over 2,000 visitors journeyed into the vibrant world of plants. The 2023 Kaleidoscope Family Festival, formerly known as ReGeneration Fair, was a **free, family-friendly celebration of all things plant-related.**

The event was named for the standalone kaleidoscopes found throughout the Gardens plaza, courtesy of our **presenting sponsors Darla Bailey and Liz Sneed.** These kaleidoscopes aren't just for show; they symbolize the kaleidoscopic beauty and diversity of the botanical world.

As guests strolled through the Gardens, they were surrounded by an array of vendors sharing the secrets of their products' botanical origins. From delicious snow cones infused with real

fruit purees to face-painting creations using plant-based paints, **every experience was a testament to the incredible versatility of plants.**

Visitors were also able to interact with many of the Gardens' community partners. The Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association, TreesLouisville, Louisville Water Company, Wright Brothers Honey, and the Louisville Folk School are just a few of the organizations that brought their unique flair to the festivities.



Learn more at waterfrontgardens.org/volunteer or contact Molly Young, Membership & Volunteer Manager at myoung@waterfrontgardens.org.

In 2023, Waterfront Botanical Gardens' volunteers collectively worked **5,082 hours** in support of the Gardens' mission. Leading the instrumental work of our 293 active volunteers are the devoted members of our **Volunteer Committee: Ann Adams, Joyce Clark, Mark Gaff, Lynn Luking, Ned Price, Amanda Wade Schmitt, Trudi Cooke, and Mike Hanks.** Since its inception, the Volunteer Committee has represented all WBG volunteers. As the primary volunteer leadership group, they assist WBG staff with all aspects of maintaining a successful volunteer program to support the day-to-day operations of the Gardens. This group's commitment goes beyond mere service to the Gardens; it embodies a profound dedication to environmental stewardship, community engagement, and education.

The Volunteer Committee was established in 2019 when the Gardens first opened to the public. The Committee played a pivotal role in helping to establish the Gardens through event support, volunteer recruitment, and community outreach to build the Gardens' visibility in the community. After a lull brought on by the pandemic, Membership and Volunteer Manager, Molly Young, revived the group and continues to rely on their support and leadership. **"This group of volunteers is exceptional in their dedication to WBG.** They work alongside me in every way and I am often humbled by their willingness to serve and to lead. They are a great representation of the Gardens' community of volunteers and their tremendous spirit."



Kay Coyte and Amanda Wade Schmitt at Gardens Glimmer



Live musical performances included tunes by the Derby City Dandies and the whimsical melodies of Molly McCormack.



Perhaps the most unique spectacle was the demonstration by Rhythm Science Sound, where sensors connected to plant leaves transformed their electrical signals into a symphony of sound.

This **epic day of botanical discovery** would not have been possible without our sponsors, Darla Bailey and Liz Sneed, and Rainbow Blossom Natural Food Markets.



Save the Date! The 2024 Kaleidoscope Family Festival is **Saturday, September 14, 2024**. Admission is free. Learn more at waterfrontgardens.org/kaleidoscope

THE GARDENS WELCOME 'ALL THE BUZZ'

Standing confidently near the Gardens' entrance is a shiny new four-legged friend, **Gallopalooza horse 'All the Buzz.'** This beautiful horse dons a coat of honeycomb and buzzing bees, and serves as a perfect companion for our beautiful, blooming flowers! A sincere thank you to **artist Josh Wilkes** and **sponsor Olivia Naber** for bringing this beautiful exhibit to life. Waterfront Botanical Gardens will proudly host 'All the Buzz' until fall 2024.



THE VITAL ROLE OF VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AT WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS

Among the first members of the Committee was Amanda Wade Schmitt. Amanda's history with the Gardens begins with her parents and dates back to the 1980s with our founding nonprofit, Botanica. Amanda's mother, Dot Wade, was a member of Botanica's original Board of Directors. In 2015, Botanica formed a Volunteer Committee that Amanda and her sister joined. After the Gardens opened in 2019, Amanda shares, "I was in the first class of Garden Guides, and **actually having a garden to talk about with visitors was a big change after years of saying there would 'one day' be a garden in Louisville!**"

By sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for Waterfront Botanical Gardens, Committee members like Amanda inspire a deeper appreciation for the natural world and foster a sense of environmental responsibility within the community.

"I love being a part of this group," says Committee member Mark Gaff. "I like being a sounding board, and helping to develop new ways to engage volunteers to help realize the mission of WBG."

Through their thousands of interactions on behalf of the Gardens, our volunteers build relationships that transcend boundaries, creating a shared sense of purpose and pride in our mission. With a staff team of just 17, volunteers are able to multiply our impact an extraordinary amount! In 2023, the value of the Gardens' volunteer time reached an all-time high of **\$161,669**.

We are so grateful for all Gardens volunteers, with special appreciation for the Volunteer Committee. Through their passion, expertise, and dedication, the Committee enriches every aspect of the Gardens' operations. "Volunteering is important for me to continue my family's mission to bring a botanical garden to Louisville. **WBG is truly my happy place,**" says Amanda.



Molly Young
Membership &
Volunteer Manager

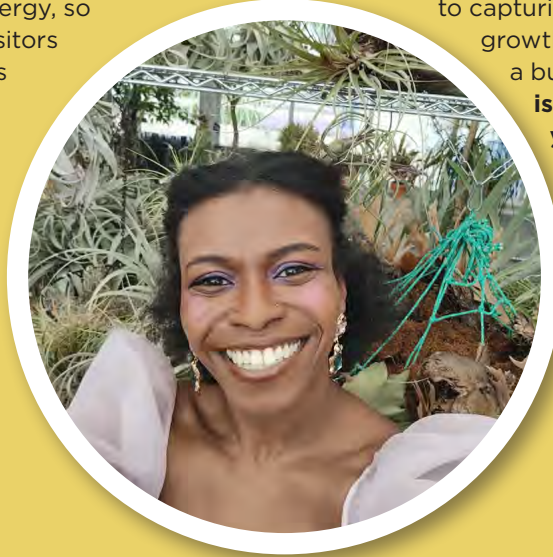


PICTURE PERFECT NATURE'S CANVAS AT THE GARDENS

Duncan Cherry
Marketing & Media
Manager

Spring is a time to renew and refresh, two things the Gardens are deeply familiar with. Built atop the former Ohio Street Dump, we have carefully curated five of our 23-acres into an urban oasis just a stone's throw from downtown Louisville. As nature comes forth this season with renewed life and energy, so do many colorful visitors gracing the Gardens plaza looking for an **Instagram-worthy setting** to make special memories.

The Gardens' ever-changing palette provides the perfect backdrop for capturing family photos, graduates in their caps and gowns, and perfectly posed social media shots. From showcasing your fresh look, to capturing your children's growth, or even documenting a budding relationship, **spring is a perfect time to play with your photography skills.**



Tajah McQueen
takes a selfie in
the Greenhouse



Become a Member

Waterfront Botanical Gardens offers a range of membership options designed to meet the needs of most members. Our community of Individual, Dual, Family, and Corporate members provide vital seeds of support to the Gardens, in exchange for unrivaled access to special events and exclusive perks. Gardens membership also makes a great gift! Scan the QR code or learn more at waterfrontgardens.org/membership.



Sixteen budding horticulturists ages four to six joined us for a sold-out week of Sprouts Spring Break Camp. These pint-sized plant enthusiasts enjoyed a **colorful and creative array of activities designed to educate and inspire.** Starting with a day of Eric Carle-inspired fun, campers brought the characters of this renowned author's books to life through dramatic play, art, and games.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

| INDIVIDUAL \$50 | DUAL \$60 | FAMILY \$75 | BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION \$100 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| Membership for one | Membership for two | Membership for family members living at same address | Membership for a business or organization with 2 or more employees/members |

BENEFITS

- Access to members-only events including Sunset Sips, the Annual Meeting and more
- Access to exclusive, members-only educational series
- Discounted rates on tickets to WBG special events including Music in the Garden and Gardens Aglitter
- Discounted rates on nearly 100 WBG educational programs
- Complimentary subscription to our newsletter
- Member Mornings early admission days
- Complimentary WBG swag

BENEFITS

- \$10 off personal employee memberships and corporate gift memberships
- Group volunteer opportunities
- Access to discounted ticket blocks for WBG special events
- Complimentary subscription to our newsletter





Steve Grider Photography -
Sunset skyline view from
the Gardens

The Gardens open most days at 10am (Sundays at noon!), which is the perfect time to catch the last bit of soft morning light before the sun is too high in the sky. The afternoon is a great time to snap images with a shorter depth of field, making the flora seem fuller and allowing you to be the star of the show!

On Thursdays in spring and summer, we are open until 7pm, allowing for perfect golden hour photos.

During this time, you can leverage the setting sun's warm glow to surround your subjects. **Our fantastic view of downtown Louisville offers a picturesque cityscape against the evening sky** for an iconic backdrop.

Connect with us!



@waterfrontgardens

Waterfront Botanical Gardens

We receive many requests for photoshoots in the Gardens outside of visiting hours. Although we are unable to fulfill these requests, we recommend the Heigold Façade as an alternate location just beyond the Gardens' entrance on Frankfort Avenue. WBG maintains the garden beds surrounding the Façade, and the historic structure serves as **a great place to capture prom, birthday, or group photos** without concern for closing times.

Whether you're an up-and-coming influencer, selfie enthusiast, or professional photographer, the Waterfront Botanical Gardens are a picture-perfect location for your next shoot. Don't forget to tag us on Instagram and Facebook!



Rob Metzger Photography -
Miss Kentucky Mallory Hudson
and Miss Kentucky's Teen Sophia
Todd on the Beargrass Creek Pathway



fun came next, when campers visited our budding cold crops and **planted a few seeds of their own** to take home. Reports are that the seeds began sprouting just a few days later!



CULTIVATING CURIOSITY WITH SPROUTS SPRING BREAK CAMP

Next on the week's lineup, our junior geologists discovered how different types of rocks are formed and used tools to sort and compare their features. Hands-on gardening

As the week wrapped up, science and art activities connected famous fairytale characters to campers' real world environments. It was a wonderfully whimsical day! On Friday, our young learners **experienced the Gardens by using all five of their senses**. From smelling fragrant flowers, to tasting delicious fruit, and making sound shakers out of seeds, there was a sensory experience for everyone to enjoy. **We are so thankful for the volunteers that joined us** in teaching, crafting, playing, and providing a tremendous learning experience for our youngest campers. Spring Break Camp will return in 2025, so stay uned for details!



Wanda Peck
Director of Education



Next up, we are looking forward to six exciting weeks of Sprouts Summer Camps. To learn more about youth and family programs at the Gardens, visit waterfrontgardens.org/youtheducation

WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS



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“The garden year has no
beginning and no end.”

Elizabeth Lawrence

Waterfront Botanical Gardens is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, Tax ID 61-1297238
We are located at 1435 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206