



THE GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK





OUR VISION

To be a world-class botanic garden that is community oriented, educational, experiential and sustainable.

OUR MISSION

To enrich the lives of people and foster environmental stewardship through horticulture.

FROM THE DIRECTOR MICHELLE PROVAZNIK

What an unbelievable year 2021 turned out to be! For The Gardens, it started with continued capacity restrictions and many unknowns of how to plan for the upcoming year. By December, the year ended with a feeling of almost (dare I say) “normal”. Throughout the continually changing guidelines, our beautiful gardens served as a safe haven for our community, a place of education and exploration.

With outdoor capacity restrictions lifted and travel resuming, on-site visitation doubled in 2021. In fact, everything grew – member numbers, education programs, event participation, and our plant collection. You will see that growth reflected throughout this year’s Annual Report.

What you may not directly see reflected is the countless hours of work undertaken by Gardens staff, Friends board members, our beloved Gardens volunteers and community partners for which I am profoundly grateful.

- Because of additional member and donor support to The Friends of the Gardens, we were able to increase seasonal staff support which proved crucial in a year of dramatic growth.
- Volunteers contributed almost 10,000 hours of time – the equivalent of five full-time staff. Our gardens and events wouldn’t be the same without them.
- Community partners made Butterfly House and concert operations possible. These programs simply wouldn’t happen without their help.

**With the help of many,
I can truly say 2021 was the year we blossomed.**



FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK

The Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek is the non-profit (501c3) partner of the Gardens on Spring Creek, a City of Fort Collins Cultural Services facility. The Friends is a member-based organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its mission is to cultivate a world-class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy.

Early in the year, the Friends Board developed goals for 2021, while simultaneously looking out over the next three years. Goals included a strategy to build the current endowment fund, a plan to grow the board of directors, development of a planned giving program, streamlining the membership purchase and renewal process, and increasing memberships.

The Board made much progress towards these ambitious goals: created endowment policies and a case statement for support, launched the Evergreen Legacy Society for donors who have planned gifts to support The Gardens, researched new technologies to streamline the renewal process and saw a significant increase in memberships and membership retention. These efforts lay the foundation for the coming years.

DEVELOPMENT & MEMBERSHIP

2021 was a remarkable year of fundraising for The Gardens, with overall gifts increasing more than 50% year-over-year. Increased sponsorships, a highly successful Annual Campaign, the Bricks and Benches memorial tribute program, two sold-out Date Night events, and other donations contributed to this record year.

The Friends membership program reached two significant milestones: hitting the financial goal of \$200,000 in memberships to support Gardens operations; and a 64%-member renewal rate, an excellent percentage for member programs. In addition, a new corporate membership program was launched due to interest expressed by local businesses.



EDUCATION

Due to years of construction followed by the pandemic, The Gardens welcomed back the first full semester of school field trips since 2018. It was wonderful to see groups of students engaging with our gardens and local wildlife. The Gardens also launched its first Spanish language youth program, Spanish Read & Seed. As a result, youth program participation increased by 15% from 2020.

In-person adult education programs returned this year, with program attendance increasing 56%. Wellness programs, including yoga and tai chi, continued to be popular. The Education Team co-developed and piloted Deeply Rooted, a therapeutic horticulture program for residents of assisted living facilities.

In total, The Gardens education programs taught 7,844 students of all ages.

“After camp my daughter told me that she wants to make the world a better place by planting trees. That really warmed my heart.”



GARDENS FOR ALL

Gardens for All is a multi-faceted equity and access program to ensure everyone in our community has access to the benefits and experiences available at The Gardens on Spring Creek. Gardens for All is primarily grant and donor funded with some additional support provided by the City of Fort Collins.

The Gardens formed an IDEA (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility) team to strategically look at The Gardens facility and programs to see how we can improve in all areas.

In 2021, 3,139 guests accessed our gardens through the Gardens for All program. This included 495 guests who attended El Día de Muertos, The Gardens first time hosting this community event.

We are proud to have partnered with the following organizations in the implementation of this program:

- CARE Housing
- CASA of Larimer County
- ChildSafe
- CSU Native American Cultural Center
- Dementia Together
- Foothills Gateway
- Foster & Adoptive Families of Larimer County
- Glenn A Jones MD Memorial Library
- Housing Catalyst
- La Familia
- Larimer County Department of Human Services
- Matthews House
- Partners
- Poudre River Public Library District
- Poudre School District
- Respite Care
- SummitStone
- The Arc of Larimer Co
- The Center for Family Outreach
- Thompson School District
- VA Peer Support
- Wellington Public Library

“Just being surrounded by bountiful nature, rejuvenates and inspires us.”

– EO Wilson

VOLUNTEERS

Like the education program, the volunteer program is back on track to pre-construction and pre-pandemic numbers with 411 volunteers contributing 9,637 hours, the equivalent of nearly five full-time staff members. The latest value of a volunteer hour is \$28.54 meaning the total value of volunteer time at The Gardens for 2021 was \$275,028.56.

The Gardens hosted eight interns in the Education, Special Events, and Horticulture Departments. **They included high school students, college students, and adults looking to diversify or improve job skills from the following programs:**

- CSU Human Development and Family Studies
- CSU Horticulture
- Front Range Community College
- PSD Cooper Home
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” – Sherry Anderson



HORTICULTURE

Much work was done in the Undaunted Garden this year with 1,000 new plants added to the stunning xeric showcase. In addition, 5,900 bulbs were planted in 2021 with a total of 10,500 bulbs planted over the past two years. Rock mulch has been added as bulb plantings were completed.

The Prairie Garden and Rock Garden received a combined 500+ potted plants, over 600 Camassia bulbs, and lots of broadcast seed (as in pounds, not packets). Species count increases were relatively small compared to prior years, with most plants added to increase stands of existing plants.

As our gardens continue to grow and mature, there were several interesting plants of note throughout 2021:

- Planted almost 2 years ago, this is the first time our White Bird of Paradise *Strelitzia nicotiana* bloomed in the butterfly house.
- Several orchid cultivars were added to our collection including the *Trichoceros antennifer*, a very rare insect mimic orchid. It mimics an insect, tricking it to land on it thus pollinating the flower. There have been 10-15 orchids donated to the Butterfly House.
- The Voodoo Lily, *Amorphophallus konjac*, bloomed this year and was an absolute hit. It smelled for about a week in the butterfly house but was worth it. Now we have successfully propagated it and expect more to bloom this coming spring.
- The Gardens is working with Plant Select on two plants: *Salvia farinacea* is being tested for winter hardiness and *Liatis* hybrid is going into propagation trials for the program. If it can be propagated vegetatively this spring, the *Liatis* will be accepted for in-ground trials this summer.



PUBLIC EVENTS

In 2021, The Gardens hosted a wide variety of special events including several multi-day event series, for a total of 48 event days, engaging a total of 41,983 individuals bringing in a total of \$590,462 in revenue.

LIVE AT THE GARDENS CONCERT SERIES

The Gardens hosted the first Live at The Gardens Concert Series with six concerts throughout the summer. The first four shows of the year were hosted in partnership with The Bohemian Foundation and were sold with restricted capacities to accommodate the uncertain conditions of the pandemic. The final two shows were held at full capacity with The Lincoln Center as our partner. The Gardens was thrilled to have Herbie Hancock close out the first concert series.

GARDEN OF LIGHTS

This year's Garden of Lights broke records, bringing record attendance of nearly 30,000 guests and more revenue than ever before, spreading holiday cheer to our community and beyond. It was wonderful to see the return of Santa and other live entertainment. In addition, a new sound system allowed music to be played throughout the grounds.

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

The Gardens on Spring Creek and the Friends of the Gardens Board are grateful to the many local businesses and foundations that provide in-kind services and cash donations to our organization. Their support is critical to the success of our horticulture and education programs and community events.

Ace Hardware of Fort Collins

American Public Gardens Association

Associates in Family Medicine

Audubon Rockies

Blue Spruce Horticulture

Bohemian Foundation

Cline Williams

Colorado Allergy & Asthma

Cornerstone Home Lending

Dellenbach Motors

Downtown Ace Hardware

Ed Carroll Motor Company

Ent Credit Union

Fort Collins Nursery

Fort Fund

Harrell's

IMLS

Kermit & Judy Allard

KUNC / KJAC

Lindgren Landscape

Louis & Anne Abrons

Foundation/ Judith Aranow

Loveland Garden Center

Madwire

Mantooth Marketing

Mountain Kids Pediatric Dentistry

Multiple

Nature in the City

North Forty News

Northern Water

Nutrien

Odell Brewing Company

OtterCares Foundation

Outpost Sunsport

Peopl and Pollinators

Plant Select

Poudre Pet & Feed

Rainbird

Rocky Mountain Ace Stores

Rocky Mountain Publishing

Rotary Club of Fort Collins Breakfast

Russell + Mills Studio

Sage Holistic Health

Savory Spice Shop

Soukup, Bush & Associates

SummitStone Health Partners

The Women's Clinic

Valpak

Waterwise

Wilkins Trust

Woodward



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The strength of The Gardens stands solidly with our active partners in the community. Thank you to the following for their continued dedication to a shared vision and mission in 2021.

Alliance for Suicide Prevention	Dementia Together	Northern Colorado Daylily Club
Bohemian Foundation	Denver Botanic Garden	Partners
Boys and Girls Club	Food Bank for Larimer County	Poudre River Library District
Butterfly Pavilion	Foster and Adoptive Program	Poudre School District
CARE Housing	Foothills Gateway	Respite Care
Cargill	Foster & Adoptive Families of Larimer County	Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE)
CASA of Larimer County	Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek	Senior Center
ChildSafe	High Plains Environmental Center	Summitstone
<i>City of Fort Collins:</i>	Housing Catalyst	Sunshine House
Adaptive Recreation, Lincoln Center, Museum of Discover, Natural Areas, Utilities, Wellness	La Familia	The Arc of Larimer Co
Club Outdoors	<i>Larimer County:</i>	The Center for Family Outreach
<i>Colorado State University:</i>	Human Services, Natural Resources, Extension	The Cooking Studio Fort Collins
Native American Cultural Center, Horticulture Department, Human Development and Family Studies, Youth Agriculture Group	Loveland Youth Gardeners	Thompson School District
Crossroads Safehouse	Matthew's House	UC Health
	Natural Resources Research Center	VA Peer Support
	Neighbor to Neighbor	Vegetable Connection
		Wellington Public Library

REVENUE

City of Fort Collins:
\$866,275

Earned Revenue:
\$805,236

Contributed Revenue:
\$380,188



In-Kind Donations:
\$98,261

BY THE NUMBERS

HORTICULTURE

- 200+ species planted in the Welcome Garden
- 39 new daylilies added to the Daylily Garden
- 120+ pounds of fresh hops harvested at The Gardens & Twin Silo Park
- 500+ plants added to the Prairie and Rock Gardens
- 5,900 bulbs added to Undaunted Garden
- 12 tons of pea gravel used to mulch Undaunted Garden
- 1 Bureau of Land Management seed collection permit obtained
- 3 species collected using BLM permit
- 2 plants in Plant Select® trials

COMMUNITY GARDEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

- 5,643 pounds of produce grown in the Garden of Eatin'
- 81,743 pounds of produce donated to the Plant it Forward program
- 646 vegetable and herb seedlings donated to organizations serving low-income populations
- 160 Community Garden plots rented to community members
- 630 volunteer hours donated by community gardeners to maintain the gardens
- 84 people on the garden waitlist

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

- 41 different species
- 7,486 individual lepidopterans

PUBLIC EVENTS

- 48 event days
- 41,983 participants
- \$590,462 in revenue
- 28,787 plants sold at Spring Plant Sale
- 402 tickets sold to Urban Homestead Tour
- 6 sold-out concerts held with 4,750 tickets sold
- 5,165 tickets sold to Pumpkins on Parade
- 29,141 tickets sold to Garden of Lights

PRIVATE EVENTS

- 49 private events held
- 2,854 guests at private events

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 1,539 students in-person school tours
- 189 high school students onsite for botany labs
- 1,992 participants in Read and Seed
- 57 families served through Summer Camp programs
- 2,235 adult students learning onsite and virtual
- 16 Read y Seed en Español storytimes

MEMBERSHIP

- 8 member mornings held
- 2,865 memberships sold
- \$206,647 membership revenue
- 64% renewal rate
- \$125 average member impact in addition to their membership

DEVELOPMENT

- \$96,350 Official and Event Sponsors
- \$129,393 grants awarded
- \$33,063 Annual Campaign gifts

VOLUNTEERS

- 411 volunteers
- 9,637 hours contributed

GIFT SHOP

- \$97,329 in sales
- 15 state/local vendors featured

COMMUNICATIONS

- 337,997 total website visitors
- 31,023 e-newsletter subscribers
- 6,309 Facebook Likes
- 3,550 Instagram followers
- 76 articles written about The Gardens or by Gardens staff in regional media
- 12 blog posts written
- 3 issues of NoCo Bloom published with more than 50,000 issues each
- \$49,991 in donated media

VISITATION

- 210 Colorado zip codes of guests
- 50 states represented by guests plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico
- 80,784 visitors

GARDENS FOR ALL

- 3,139 community participants
- 495 guests for Día de Muertos
- 168 free PSD and TSD Early Childhood Education family memberships

MISCELLANEOUS

- 3 juniper tree sculptures in the Mountain Wildwoods Exhibit
- 2 new ticket kiosks added
- 15 outdoor speakers installed