



The Alliance Theatre presents *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Garden this fall

By Josh Todd

The Alliance Theatre is presenting Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Garden from September 5 through October 21, and volunteers are needed. This is Shakespeare's most popular comedy and we are excited to host the play in the Skyline Garden on a circular platform stage above the Aquatic Plant Pond. Some of the Alliance volunteers will be assisting, but the Theatre has invited ABG volunteers to help with programs and wayfinding. If you volunteer for a shift, you'll be able to see the performance, either sitting or standing depending on ticket sales for each performance.

Shifts begin two hours before showtime, running up until the play begins. There are both daytime and evening performances. To volunteer, stop by the volunteer office to see the sign-up page on the table. You may bring a guest to volunteer and see the show with you, but you will need to give me their name in advance.

I hope you can take advantage of this volunteer opportunity!

Congratulations
to these
Volunteers Of the Month

May
Charlotte Miller

June
Mel Berss

July
Margaret Turk

August
Christine Cotter

And to Gainesville's
Volunteer of the Quarter
Dave Rusk

Read their profiles on
pages that follow.

Volunteers Needed for Chocolate Covered Weekend September 8 and 9

Chocolate Covered Weekend is a family festival with all kinds of activities celebrating the Cacao Tree. It's one of the Garden's most popular events! Volunteers are needed as greeters and to help with a variety of crafts and Discovery Stations.

Saturday, September 8
9:30 am until 12:30 pm
12:15 until 3:15 pm

Sunday, September 9
9:30 am until 12:30 pm
12:15 until 3:15 pm

Sign up in the Volunteer Office or by contacting Josh.

Meet the Volunteers of the Month

May: Charlotte Miller

Regular Thursday night Garden visits with her daughter led Charlotte Miller to start volunteering here in 2013, first in Discovery Stations, then as a GEM in the Edible Garden. The next year she trained as a children's and adult docent and still signs up weekly for one or the other, or both! Charlotte especially loves children's tours where she "helps the children think about the ways plants and animals adapt and try to live in balance." Always eager to help with the Garden's special events, she counts the Connoisseurs Tour (a mother-daughter tradition) as her favorite. Sharing the Garden with visitors lets her be a resource for them, she says, and expands their enjoyment of the Garden. Last year this Master Gardener couldn't resist the chance to volunteer in the Greenhouse and in Amphibian Conservation too, adding frog feedings and other hands-on projects to her duties. In a word, Charlotte volunteers *everywhere*, it seems, so little wonder that she has been a Centennial since she started and has earned Roots of the Garden honors three times. The Garden thanks Charlotte for her many hours by saluting her as May's Volunteer of the Month.



June: Mel Berss

After 41 years spent indoors in the retail world, Mel Berss needed to "get out and play" when he retired and found himself the perfect way: "giving back a little at the ABG." Always a gardener, Mel knew what he was getting into but laughs now as he says, "In my 13 years as a GEM volunteer, I have become proficient at deadheading pansies, pulling weeds, digging holes and grooming plants." The work is year-round, of course, and he will admit that "it's not as enjoyable when the weather's not good, but I don't mind." Mindful that as a GEM he is an ambassador for the Garden, Mel enjoys talking with visitors, especially the youngest ones. This 11 year Centennial Volunteer tips his hat to the horticulture staff at every opportunity for their guidance, help and friendship through the years. When not at his Tuesday morning Garden shift, Mel enjoys puttering in his own garden, photography and traveling with Ann, his wife of 55 years. Mel will celebrate his 80th birthday this year, probably pulling weeds at the Botanical Garden! For his 13 years of commitment, through rain or shine, and his willingness to take on any task with a smile, the Garden honors Mel Berss as June Volunteer of the Month.



Meet the Volunteers of the Month

July: Margaret Turk

Four years ago, Margaret Turk discovered that volunteering at the Botanical Garden was her kind of thing. “I’d never really had a garden and didn’t know anything about horticulture,” she laughs. But that didn’t stop her from signing on, first in education then as a GEM where she discovered she really was a gardener at heart! “My time in Storza Woods, gardening and weeding and doing plant inventory just feeds my soul.” One thing led to another, and soon Margaret was also logging hours helping Abby Gale with demonstrations and dinners as an OKRA, which she describes is like “being on a food adventure holiday!” Abby appreciates Margaret’s “can do” attitude in the Outdoor Kitchen. “Rain or shine, weeknight or weekend, dirty dishes or none, she is ready to do anything to help our chefs and guests.” Margaret also lends a hand with summer concerts and Garden Lights, so it’s no surprise that this Centennial Volunteer has totaled more than 200 hours in each of the past two years. This one-time clinical research nurse moved to Atlanta from Jacksonville to be closer to her daughters and grandchildren, and she is glad she did. So is the Botanical Garden, which salutes Margaret as July’s Volunteer of the Month.



August: Christine Cotter

Christine Cotter gets a twinkle in her eye as she describes the fun she has as a Garden volunteer. “I started volunteering the second year of Garden Lights because I was too cheap to buy a ticket,” she laughs, but she quickly discovered she loved being at the Garden and became a regular. At the first opportunity, she signed up for Discovery training. In 2014, she added the Docent hat and volunteers with adult tours often, especially when Aurrie Jones is in a pinch, because she delights in sharing her “home away from home” with friends and strangers. Her enthusiasm, energy and sense of fun make her tours delightful. She’s always ready to jump in to help with prep work for the Garden’s exhibits, too, especially Garden Lights. Most recently you’ll find her busy with the Amphibian Program, keeping a date with them weekly. A Centennial since 2015, Christine logged 200-plus last year and, with over 100 hours already this year, is well on her way to repeat that in 2018. For her enthusiastic willingness to give tours, make frog salad or prep miles of lights, the Garden recognizes Christine Cotter as August Volunteer of the Month.



Saluting Gainesville's Volunteer of the Quarter

Dave Rusk

By Wanda Cannon, Gainesville Education and Volunteer Coordinator

In the winter of 2003, Mildred Fockele, Director of the Gainesville Garden, visited the Master Gardener class where Dave Rusk was a student and she shared the vision of creating a botanical garden in Gainesville on property owned and donated by the Smithgall family. Mildred was asking for potential volunteers to help with this concept, and Dave was one of the first volunteers at the future Garden. Beginning in 2004, Dave and several other volunteers helped with creating trails, removing invasive plants and volunteering in the new greenhouse. From the opening of the Garden in 2015 until the present, Dave has been an active volunteer who serves in Visitor Service, docent tours, festivals, concerts and even serves as an "Ambassador Speaker" that travels to different locations to talk about the Garden. He enjoys greeting and interacting with the many visitors to the Garden and believes "smile and the world smiles with you."



Dave retired to his farm in Flowery Branch in 2000 after a professional career in the restaurant industry. For many years, Dave was an active Hall County Master Gardener. He now resides with his wife Cheryl at the Cresswind retirement community in Gainesville where he continues his gardening hobby as well as participates in community theater and the storytelling club. Dave and Cheryl are very proud of their two daughters and four grandchildren. The Garden congratulates Dave for his commitment, time and yes, the great stories that you tell!

Garden Service Days

Schedule your group's service project at the Garden!

The Horticulture Staff takes on several corporate volunteer groups each year for full-day or half-day service projects. Contact Josh Todd if you'd like to bring in your office group and enjoy a day outdoors.

Projects include planting, weeding, debris removal, mulching and much more. It's like training to be a GEM! Your group will receive a room booking if you'd like to turn this into a team building event, and groups are also provided with water, snacks, sunscreen and bug spray.

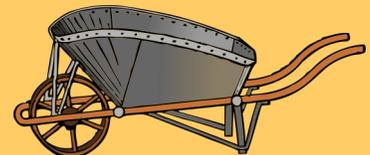
Plus, we cover the parking expense!



Answers from the Hotline

"What should I do this fall to prepare my garden for next spring?"

By Gale Thomas
Hotline Volunteer



Fall is the best time to split up your perennials, especially daisies, coneflowers, and black-eyed Susans. Late fall is also a good time to sow seeds, especially wildflower seeds, for the next spring and summer. The seeds will send out roots that will strengthen during the winter months and the cold of the winter will actually facilitate the spring sprouting of the seeds.

Hygiene is also important in the fall. Make sure to deadhead all spent blooms, clean up any dead plants, and prune back your perennials. It is important to weed your garden before you bed it down for the fall and winter months. Eliminating weeds now will keep them from being so plentiful in the spring.





What's Growing in Gainesville



By Wanda Cannon,
Gainesville Education and Volunteer Coordinator

Summer is heating up and the flowers are blooming gloriously here at the Gainesville Garden!

Our volunteers at the Gainesville Garden are very important to us. They not only help keep the Garden maintained and beautiful but also help with Visitor Service/Greeting, Discovery Stations and volunteering at concerts and festivals throughout the year. The volunteers' presence is vital to the Garden's success, and we appreciate their time and commitment.

The Gainesville Garden would like to recognize individually our 2017 200-Hour Club Members and our Centennial Club Members. The Garden applauds their commitment and time! All combined, the Gainesville Garden volunteers gave close to 4300 total service hours in 2017! Those honored at our Volunteer Luncheon this past February were:

200 Hour Members

Diane Korzeniewski (3rd year), Chris Michael (4th year) and Tom Reins (1st year)

100 hour Centennial Club Members

Bev Adkins, Patricia Baillie, Marie Cypher, Bill Dickey, Mikiko Lockwood, Sharon Marler, Bill McMahan, Vicki Remaley, Dave Rusk, Brian Schuster, Cheryl Schuster and Marion Todd.

Also, be sure to read about our Volunteer of the Quarter for the Gainesville Garden in this issue!

Visitors are enjoying the Mosaiculture Exhibit "Ogre & Friends" while exploring our beautiful flowering Garden with its many pathways and hiking trails. The exhibit will run through the end of October. Having the Mosaiculture exhibit together at both the Gainesville and Atlanta Gardens has been a combined success and is continually delighting visitors. Our Children's Back Pack programs and Docent tours have been very popular all summer.

This summer will wrap up with one late summer concert, Mellissa Etheridge on September 22. Then we head into fall activities! September through December, the Garden will host Tai Chi, adult and children's painting classes and a Honey Bee Demo. The month of October will bring scarecrows, a Woodland Ramble and a Goblin Festival. Finishing out the year, Santa will visit and share stories with cookies and milk for our young visitors on December 8th.

Plans for our new Children's Garden are still underway, and we are excited for the new opportunities this will bring for us in 2019.

Come visit us soon!

News from the Volunteers at

Atlanta Botanical Garden, Gainesville



By Diane Korzeniewski

Summer is flying by! We have been busy here in the greenhouse and the Garden. Visitors are loving the Mosaiculture exhibit, especially walking through the ogre's brain! *Storytime* and *Budding Artists* have been busy with the addition of some backpack preschool/ daycare groups coming in for a few hours.

Now that the Children's Garden groundbreaking is upon us, the greenhouse is in full swing getting plants ready. We are potting up cuttings, growing out smaller purchased plants, and bumping up larger trees into big pots or the huge baskets. One day we needed to get pretty aggressive in pruning roots and started stabbing the rootballs to loosen them up. We hummed the music from the shower scene of *Psycho* to get in the mood. We know how to have fun!

In the Garden we have really kept on top of the weeds and the deadheading along with the Garden staff. We started digging out some big grasses for replacement. Tough job, but somebody's got to do it. Isn't that how the saying goes? We still have another batch to do, but I think Beth is waiting until we recover from the first batch. We tease her that we are all busy on whatever day she picks. She is keeping her cards close to her vest and not telling us which day we will be digging. So much for planning ahead.

Wanda has planned a **Lunch and Learn** with someone who has hiked the Appalachian Trail. What an inspiration. We are really looking forward to that!

Hope you're enjoying your summer too.

Docent Doings

By Cyndy Franklin
2018 Docent Chair

Community Gardens

The idea for community gardens may be traced back to the victory gardens that became so popular and necessary during World War II. During that time in history, America was changing from an agrarian society to an urban and industrial one. People who moved to the big cities for wartime employment had a need to augment their food needs by planting gardens in their small yards and on city lots. Many of them were garden "rookies." There were lots of them: Chicago had the most victory gardens in the nation during the war, with 1,500 community gardens, 250,000 home gardens, and the largest victory garden in the USA. The city taught its citizens to garden using newspapers and radio to spread information and support. The community gardens thrived.

Fast forward to recent time, and community gardens are once again thriving. There are several types of these gardens. Community food gardens, often located in parks or vacant lots, are created to serve people who live nearby. There may be a small fee for a plot and water access. Generally the food is grown for the gardeners' use and/or to be distributed to neighborhood agencies. Workplace gardens are similar. Businesses, hospitals, and even museums designate part of their corporate campuses for employee gardens. School gardens are community gardens that are created as part of the curriculum for the students. Students and teachers, often with the help of volunteers, plant and maintain the garden during the school year. Community gardens come in many forms and definitions. Most grow crops that are not sold for profit, some make a little income, but all produce fresh fruits and vegetables that might not otherwise be available in the area.

There are many benefits to having a community garden in addition to the obvious health benefits that come from the physical work in the garden and eating the fresh produce. Cities, counties, churches, schools, garden clubs and many other organizations help to organize community gardens. Information is available in libraries and on the internet. Locally, AgLanta Grows-A-Lot was started in 2016 to reach a goal of ensuring that "75% of Atlanta residents are within a half-mile of healthy food by 2020." The program works to convert vacant properties in the city of Atlanta to productive agricultural uses through agreements with local farmers and gardeners.

Atlanta Botanical Garden donates the fresh produce that is not used in cooking demonstrations, classes, or Longleaf restaurant to the Atlanta Food Bank which distributes the produce to people who do not have access to fresh food. Thus we all can be proud that ABG is a "community garden!"



GROWING THE GARDEN:

INSIDE THE
GARDEN
ASSOCIATES



BY DEBBIE SWANN
PRESIDENT, GARDEN ASSOCIATES

THE GARDENS FOR CONNOISSEURS TOUR CELEBRATES ITS 35TH YEAR!

As we approach a landmark year for the Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour, I am overjoyed to report that our 2018 Tour reached record numbers! The Garden Associates are incredibly grateful to all of the volunteers who supported the tour, and we hope to have you all back next Mother's Day weekend.

We will launch the 2019 Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour by paying tribute to the life and legacy of the illustrious Atlanta designer and Tour founder, Ryan Gainey. To honor Ryan, we have planned a special Garden screening of the documentary highlighting his life, *The Well-Placed Weed: The Bountiful Life of Ryan Gainey* on **Wednesday, October 10**. Look for emails in the coming weeks regarding volunteer needs. We look forward to seeing you there!



Meet the Staff:

Dr. Emily Coffey

Vice-President of Conservation and Research

By Josh Todd

Dr. Emily Coffey joined the Garden staff in August of 2017 as the Vice President of Conservation and Research, coinciding with the start of construction on the new Southeastern Center for Conservation, due to be completed in the Spring of 2018. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of conservation, and volunteers will be excited to hear about her current projects and scope of the new Center.



Dr. Coffey came to Atlanta via St. Louis MO, Oxford UK, San Jose CA and then Asheville NC. She obtained her undergrad degree in Biology and Chemistry at the University of St. Louis, where she also worked with rare plants at Missouri Botanical Garden as a conservation biologist. Her work included germination trials and restoration monitoring, along with projects in the molecular and genetic labs. She then moved on to the Shaw Nature Reserve, a 2,400 acre private reserve operated by MoBot, to teach and research large scale restoration.

In 2004, Dr. Coffey began her Master's Program at Oxford, with a focus on Biodiversity Conservation and Management and, in particular, human trampling on rare plants in sandstone ecosystems. She was then offered a Distinction for her PhD, studying long-term ecology in the Galapagos. Spending a period of nine months over the following three years, Dr. Coffey concentrated on vegetation changes and the driver of climate change over the last 10,000 years. Her findings focused on how the removal of tortoises by early visitors impacted the system, and she also proved eleven species, previously thought to be doubtful natives, to be true natives to the islands.

Other previous work includes the Executive Director of a Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic in 2011 and 2012 and an Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of North Carolina Asheville, where she taught biology and had a research lab. It was there she cultivated a fondness for bogs and Sarracenia pitcher plants, which, as you know, are a highlight of the Atlanta Botanical Garden's collection.

Now, at the Garden, she manages the conservation team of seven staff to accomplish these major components:

1. Research: Run a molecular lab to conduct evolutionary studies on relationship of species, conduct research on our living collections, expand pollinator research, and biodiversity studies.

2. Restoration and Monitoring of Rare Species both *in situ* (in the wild) and *ex situ* (outside of the natural habitat – safeguarding): This includes growing plants for reintroduction as well as restoration of natural habitats from less than an acre to over 300 acres.

(Continued on next page)

The Garden's Focus on Conservation and Research

Mission:

To lead innovative strategies and partnerships to conserve imperiled plants and natural communities.

Vision:

To become a local, regional, and international hub for the conservation of rare plants and ecosystems. This is achieved through collections management; interdisciplinary research; restoration of priority habitats; educational outreach; and the vigorous pursuit of collaborative opportunities.

3. Outreach and Training: Communicate with the public on the importance of conservation as well as train the next generation through undergraduate research students and interns from Spellman, Georgia Tech, and UNC Asheville.

As you can imagine, Dr. Coffey enthusiastically awaits the opening of The Southeastern Center for Conservation. In addition to keeping the current molecular lab, the Garden will add another molecular lab and a tissue culture lab. Dr. Coffey's plans include growing the conservation department, and adding more undergraduate and postgraduate students for training and research, especially through the university systems of Georgia Tech and Emory. Dr. Coffey recently gained Adjunct Professor status at Georgia Tech and will use the new facility and labs to teach courses. With the expanded space, there are also plans for cryogenic storage, seed banking and germination trials, and a new gallery space to have interpretive signage detailing the Garden's Conservation story.



Dr. Coffey and the Conservation and Research team



Field Work

Dr. Coffey's message to volunteers: "We do conservation across the Southeast and nation, along with projects in the Caribbean and South America. With more than 21% of all plants at risk of extinction, the Conservation and Research Team at ABG are working hard to make positive impacts toward conserving our imperiled plant and natural communities. We have made significant progress for some of our key species such as Sarracenia Pitcher Plants and many important orchid species. We would welcome volunteers to join us in spreading the word of this meaningful work so if anyone is interested in working with our Department please reach out to me and our team."



Behind the Garden Gate:

News and Information from the Garden Staff

The Storza Glade

By Travis Fisher, Senior Horticulturist

Although Storza Woods is primarily thought of as a shade garden, one of our most beautiful areas focuses on plants that love the sun. The Glade Garden in Storza encompasses the area around the water mirror and stairs and is the only portion of the Storza Woods that gets a significant amount of sun. This year in particular the Glade has looked especially good, and late summer to early autumn is one of the best times to enjoy the plants that grow there.

One of the most colorful and noticeable plants in the Glade this summer are the Coral Drift roses (*Rosa* 'Meidrifora'), which are currently blooming profusely.

Just beginning their flowering are the two species of Joe Pye Weed that grow in the Glade, *Eutrochium dubium* 'Little Joe' and *Eutrochium purpureum* 'Gateway'. These plants are native to the Eastern United States, and can grow to 7 feet tall, producing large plumes of purple to pink flowers in the late summer. They are a particular favorite of butterflies and bees. Another plant found in the Glade and much loved by insects is summer-sweet, *Clethra alnifolia*, of which we have two cultivars 'Ruby Spice' (pink blooms) and 'Sixteen Candles' (white blooms). These small to medium sized shrubs produce clusters of sweet smelling flowers and are particularly loved by bees.



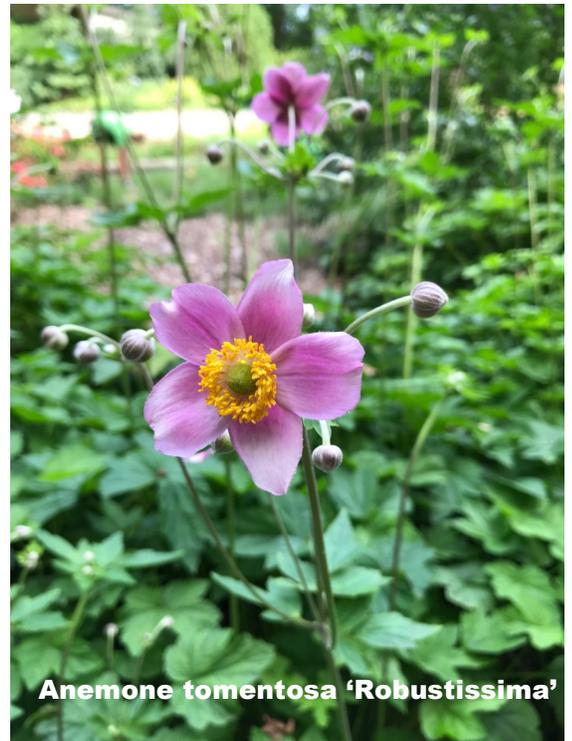
Rosa 'Meidrifora'

Perhaps one of the most interesting plants in the Glade is the obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*). There are two cultivars in the Glade, 'Pink Manners', which, you can guess, blooms pink, and 'Crystalline White', which, you probably guessed it, blooms white. These plants are native to much of North America and are found in woodlands and wet meadows. One of their most interesting traits is that the flowers can be pushed from side to side and will remain where they are pushed too. They are beginning to flower now; feel free to move the flowers

around. Another plant beginning to flower in the Glade is prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), a North American native grass that produces clusters of tiny yellow flowers in late summer and early autumn. The most notable feature of these grass flowers is the lemony scent that they produce which, when the mass of grasses in the Glade are fully flowering, will permeate the entire area with their delightful fragrance. Last but not least, two Asian grassland plants the Japanese windflower (*Anemone tomentosa* 'Robustissima') and the Tartarian Aster (*Aster tartaricus* 'Jindai') are beginning to bloom. The Japanese windflower produces tall, wispy flower stalks with large, pinkish tinged flowers that sway easily in the breeze, while the Tartarian Aster produces flower stalks up to 6 feet with beautiful purple flowers with bright yellow centers that last long into the autumn.



Physostegia virginiana



Anemone tomentosa 'Robustissima'

Behind the Garden Gate:

News and Information from the Garden Staff

Scouting for Plants in Cao Bang, Vietnam

By Scott McMahon
Manager of International Plant Exploration

In April, I had the opportunity to visit one of the northernmost places in Vietnam: Cao Bang province. Cao Bang is not only one of the oldest provinces in the country, but it also has the smallest population of any province in Vietnam. Given its proximity to the limestone mountains which make up the border between China and Vietnam, it is home to some of the rarest temperate plants in Asia. On this two week trip, I was joined by two of my colleagues from the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology; we needed to keep the group small because of the long distance we would have to drive. Did I mention Cerebral Malaria? That was there, too, and turned out to be as much of a contributing factor to why no one wanted to go with me. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

In keeping up with the work being done in Cao Bang by the Vietnamese botanists, I already knew that the area was a hotspot for new species of begonias with four being described in 2017 alone. However, I had no idea that there was such a diverse representation of maples, rhododendrons, oaks, and magnolias, as well as a slew of herbaceous plants with which I was unfamiliar. The weather was beautiful and the plants were amazing, but being in such a remote place has its tradeoffs...such as food, or lack thereof. We were using a very small village as home base for several days and while there, everyone wanted to play host to the strange westerner who had come from so far away. Their hearts were certainly in the right place and, while I have eaten a multitude of unusual food in my nearly two decades of Asian travel, sticky rice cakes stuffed with stinging ants and wine made from fern fronds were new to me.

While it was my first visit to Cao Bang, it will definitely not be my last. The plant communities I witnessed there were some of the most diverse I have ever seen. This part of Vietnam is closing in quickly with population pressures from China to the immediate north and the increasing family size from each of the nine minority groups who call Cao Bang home. Hopefully, by teaming up with our friends from the Vietnam Academy of Science, we will be able to help identify, conserve and preserve at least some of the unique genetics that still exist in this stunningly beautiful place.

Read more about the Garden's International Plant Exploration Program on the Garden's website.



Cao Bang province



The International Plant Exploration Program

The Garden established the International Plant Exploration Program in 2016 with the intention of constructing a plant evaluation nursery, undertaking seed collecting trips to Southeast Asia, and launching a visiting scholar program.

The program is managed by Scott McMahon, a Georgia native, former owner of GardenHood, and long-time collaborator of the Garden who has made more than twenty seed-collecting trips to Southeast Asia with support from the Garden. Check the Garden's website for more photos and fascinating details of Scott's trips.

NOTES FROM MARY PAT

INSIGHTS FROM MARY PAT MATHESON
THE ANN AND HAYS MERSHON PRESIDENT & CEO

Southeastern Center for Conservation: A New Facility to Support Success

A new facility for the Garden's conservation program is underway, funded with the generous support of our donors through the Nourish & Flourish Campaign. The Garden has accelerated its conservation work over the last decade and formally established the Southeastern Center for Conservation in the last two years. The Center supports a robust, multi-faceted conservation program that includes on the ground conservation work throughout the southeastern United States, linked with research and training in partnership with numerous universities. The Center is more than a physical facility, but a conservation think-tank that brings together partners who support the conservation mission and work in harmony to save plants and data and to train future leaders.



The new building for our Center will be completed by late spring of 2019 and will house our conservation, horticulture and Orchid Center staff. There will be a new tissue culture lab and a training lab for our college and high school internship program. The lab will support our growing training program and provide hands-on learning with a focus on conservation research and botany. In addition to work stations for staff and the two new labs, we will have open work stations to accommodate future staff and the expanding training program. This much-needed space will contribute to the Garden's work in saving plants throughout the region and will enable us to expand partnership with several universities, including Emory, Georgia Tech and Spelman. I am excited about this new facility because it represents progress in the field of conservation and establishes the Atlanta Botanical Garden as one of the region's leading organizations impacting plant conservation. But success only happens through collaboration and partnership, so we fully expect this facility to be used by our partners and their students in the pursuit of shared goals.

The building will complement the Orchid Center with its glass exterior, dark mulleins, and a welcoming small plaza facing the Edible Garden. Visitors will enter a new gallery hall on the diagonal which connects the plaza to the public spaces including a new classroom, catering kitchen, orchid library and entry to the Dorothy Chapman Fuqua Orchid Center.

As with most construction, we do have some discomfort, as our horticulture, conservation and conservatory teams have lost their offices for the next year. They are now housed in the GardenHouse workshop, open studio and in the headhouse. Our staff has risen to the occasion and settled in with little complaint. I know that it will be worth the momentary discomfort when we open the new building and each department has new open office space to accommodate their current and future teams.

The Nourish & Flourish Campaign has had a tremendous impact on how we serve our community, visitors and members. Each element contributes to the garden experience and enhances our brand as the city's urban oasis. This new facility, that will house the staff of the Southeastern Center for Conservation, is the foundation for the future. It may not be as "sexy" as some of our other projects, but it is essential to the work that we do today and tomorrow. From that perspective, it's really going to be a shining star!

"Digging In" is published for the volunteers of the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

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