

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# MISSION

The mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to develop and maintain plant collections for display, education, research, conservation and enjoyment.

# VISION

The vision of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to be an iconic destination and global leader, dynamically connecting people with plants in support of a thriving planet.





# In 2023, the Garden thrived.

Through new accessions and targeted propagation efforts, our permanent collections grew to include more than 121,000 plants. And under the expert care of our talented horticulturists, the plants themselves flourished. Mature shrubs and perennials steadily gained biomass, while wooded groves and specimen trees inched ever upward toward the sky. In our display gardens in Midtown and Gainesville, we continued to develop unique, immersive, plant-filled environments that were teeming with life, and in this annual report, we are excited to showcase the buzz and beauty of the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Art played a starring role in enlivening our gardens in 2023, starting with an exceptional late-winter Orchid Daze featuring the work of local muralists Niki Zarrabi, Janice Rago, and Lara Nguyen. At our Gainesville garden, large-scale La Calavera



Catrina sculptures celebrated life, change, and transformation with the colorful imagery of Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. In Midtown, guests marveled at how reclaimed materials were transformed and magically brought to life by the world-renowned recycled art activist Thomas Dambo in a blockbuster exhibition entitled Trolls: Save the Humans.

More than 730,000 people of all ages enjoyed spending time with friends and family at our two locations this year. In addition to high-quality guest experiences, the Garden offered impactful K-12 STEM education to Title I schools, hosted on-site family activities, and provided adult programming including cooking classes, horticultural workshops, and botanical drawing instruction. Beyond the Garden gates, our Community Engagement team led urban agriculture initiatives in community gardens across the metro area, and our Conservation & Research team worked in the southeastern United States and the Caribbean to protect imperiled plants from the threat of extinction.

We are, by nature, a forward-thinking institution, whether we are planning the next season's color palette for the Anne Cox Chambers Flower Walk, or mentoring young people to build a strong pipeline of up-and-coming plant scientists, or forging ahead with our visionary expansion initiative to create stunning new destination gardens directly on the 22-mile Atlanta Beltline loop. It is an exciting time as we move forward with the Garden's transformational expansion, and we invite you to learn more about it at the end of this report.

To plant a garden is to believe in the future—and we could not be more thrilled with all of the seeds we have sown this past year and all of the growth that is yet to come.

Many thanks to our incredible team of full- and part-time staff who support the Garden's success. And our sincere gratitude goes out to each and every one of you, our beloved friends and donors, for contributing to the life of the Garden. Together we will continue to bloom, grow, and inspire future generations.

John H. Crawford, IV 2022-2023 Chair Board of Trustees



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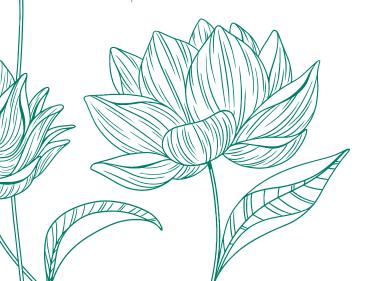
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\* Deceased in 2023



# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

730,643 Garden guests in both

Atlanta and Gainesville

65,424

children benefited from kids' tours, activities and education programs

towering trolls by Danish artist Thomas Dambo made from recycled materials

species of insects, birds, mammals, and amphibians identified in the Conservation Bog Garden

110,000+

seed accessions in the Conservation Seedbank





**202** participants in Plant. Eat. Repeat. workshops at metro Atlanta community gardens



# 8.711

feet of altitude on Mayodia Pass in India, where the Garden's International Plant Exploration team wild-collected begonias





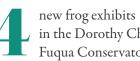
very large trophy for winning

ABC-TV's The Great

Christmas Light Fight



9.878 pre-K and K students explored the Garden on Fulton County Cultural Kaleidoscope field trips





pounds supported on one Victoria cruziana lily pad in the Skyline Garden Pond



# 117,700

video views on the social media post highlighting the Victoria cruziana lily pad

> years of the iconic Earth Goddess



Arts InCommunity visits to the Garden

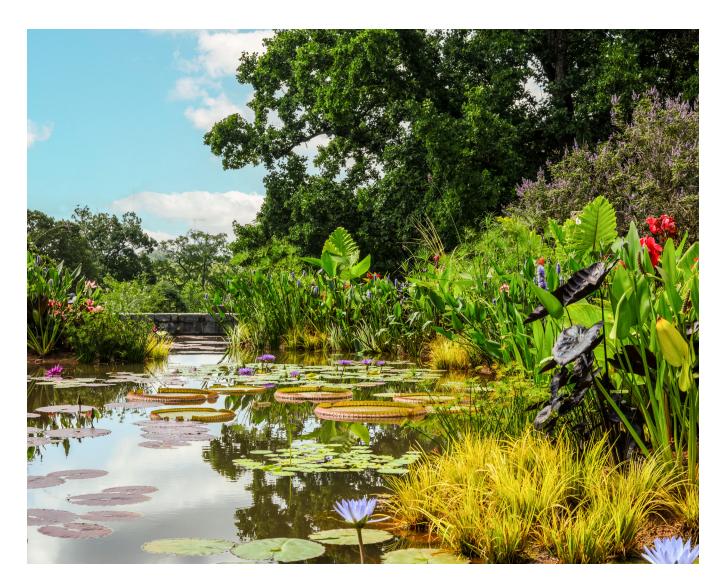
in the Dorothy Chapman Fuqua Conservatory lobby





# YEAR IN REVIEW





# FLORA & FAUNA

The Atlanta Botanical Garden serves as a peaceful oasis for people, plants, and an astonishing array of wildlife. Alongside the great diversity of flowers and foliage can be found a myriad of furry; feathery; and phenomenal creatures, animating garden pathways and delighting Garden visitors.

#### Splish Splash

Making waves in the Skyline Garden Pond, a chorus of green tree frogs (*Dryophytes cinereus*) and native bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) chirped in and around three "pop-up" islands that were created just for a special 2023 aquatic plant display. The islands featured a diverse assortment of more than 450 water-loving marginal plants, including cannas, ruellia, hibiscus, alocasia, and colocasia. Surrounding these lush island plantings were approximately 120 water lilies, lotus, and water-platters, mostly originating from tropical regions; the carefully curated selections included varieties with bigger, bolder blooms than are typically found on their winter-hardy counterparts. In the center of the pond, two Amazon lilies (*Victoria cruziana*) grew to especially epic proportions, as the Atlanta Botanical Garden, alongside the New York Botanical Garden and Denver Botanic Garden, worked to grow the largest, most robust lily pad possible in 2023.

#### Birds of a Feather

In every corner of our gardens in Midtown and Gainesville, serious birdwatchers and everyday Garden guests were able to catch glimpses of our avian friends in flight and repose. Some favorite sightings included red-shouldered hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) nesting in the tulip poplar trees along the Kendeda Canopy Walk; ruby-throated hummingbirds (*Archilochus colubris*) darting between the oakleaf hydrangeas and ornamental beds near Longleaf restaurant; eastern phoebes (*Sayornis phoebe*) bobbing their tails while perched on the Vine Arbor adjacent to the Great Lawn; American goldfinches (*Spinus tristis*) scavenging seeds off the fall-ripened coneflowers in the Perennial Garden; and a female mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) leading her baby ducklings to water in the Skyline Garden. More than a dozen species of eye-catching warblers were found passing through in fall and spring migration seasons last year—and on one gray February day, a flock of more than 250 sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) were spotted flying overhead, announcing their presence with their unmistakable calls.

#### **Beautiful and Beneficial**

Georgia's state butterfly, the eastern tiger swallowtail (*Papilo glaucus*), is a beguiling charmer that can be reliably seen on sunny summer days at the Garden, as can many other lesser-known winged beauties, from the cloudless sulphur butterfly (*Phoebis sennae*) to the day-flying snowberry clearwing moth (*Hemmaris diffinis*). Insects represent the greatest number of different species at the Garden—and on Earth. While many insects might not be considered traditionally beautiful, we are gaining increasing insights on the beneficial roles that they play in overall ecosystem health. In the Garden's conservatories, for example, we deployed beneficial species to great effect in 2023, as biological controls in our Orchid Center greenhouses. As a result, the *Catasetum* in our permanent collection regained their vigor and started blooming again; after several years behind the scenes, these showy epiphytic orchids have returned to a place of honor, on view in the Orchid Display House.





# CULTIVATING CURIOSITY

The Garden's dynamic programs activate a lifelong love of learning, powered by plants. Education and community engagement are key to our mission, with the following examples demonstrating just a few of the many ways we share the wonders of the natural world.







#### **Outstanding Outreach**

In addition to leading on-site experiences at our Midtown and Gainesville campuses, Garden educators were excited to visit metro Atlanta classrooms in 2023, with a focus on serving K-12 students at Title I schools. Throughout the year, 6,189 students enjoyed interacting with our Education team members in their own classrooms, enjoying hands-on STEM education activities including building models of plants, dissecting flowers, testing soil samples, and scrutinizing seeds. These lessons were memorable and fun, grade-specific, directly aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellence, and designed to contribute to student success. Using everyday items like beans and corn kernels, as well as uncommon and undeniably fascinating rarities such as carnivorous plants, Garden educators shed new light on both the mundane and the magical, waking up young people's minds to the possibility and promise of a plant-filled future.



#### **Fluttering Family Fun**

The Lou Glenn Children's Garden at our Midtown location is The Garden was one of seven institutions nationwide to be tapped the perfect spot for the young and young-at-heart to immerse for the 2023 Urban Agriculture Resilience Program (UARP) themselves in nature year-round. It's also a wonderful venue for Capstone Program, an initiative supported by the United States family festivals including the Pollinator Party, an annual celebration Botanic Garden, the American Public Gardens Association, and honoring the bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinators essential the Chicago Botanic Garden. The program builds capacity and for fertilization, seed and fruit production, and plant survival. strengthens leadership in urban agriculture through targeted In June, the Pollinator Party featured musical performances, funding and one-on-one mentorship. Staff from the Garden's Plant. art activities, pollinator costume dress-up, local honey tastings, Eat. Repeat. (PER) team met quarterly with members of the cohort, discovery stations, and more. In August, our Gainesville location cross-pollinating ideas across organizations. Local UARP Capstone hosted another bee-utiful opportunity to identify and learn efforts culminated in a collaboration between PER and Growing about these beneficial insects-the Great Southeast Pollinator Leaders at the Clarkston-based nonprofit, Friends Of Refugees. The Census-where guests participated in educator-led and self-PER team worked with five high-school-age Growing Leaders to guided pollinator counts as part of a region-wide citizen science develop resources for New American growers, creating instructional project. And on any day of the year, with a careful eye, guests videos on edible gardening in five languages. In addition, we invested of all ages can catch a glimpse of pollination in action in our cohort project funds to enhance facilities at the Friends Of Refugees' outdoor display gardens and indoor conservatories, marveling Jolly Avenue Garden to create spaces for composting, tool storage, at the life cycle of plants throughout the changing seasons. community gathering, and ongoing leadership development.

#### **Growing Leaders**

# ENHANCING ECOSYSTEMS

Through conservation and research initiatives, the Garden is committed to protecting our planet's rich tapestry of life. From displaying spectacular pitcher plants (Sarracenia) in our sunny hillside bog in Midtown Atlanta to outplanting Puerto Rico manjack (Varronia rupicola) on the Caribbean island of Vieques, we work to raise awareness of the interconnectedness of all living things while helping to ensure their survival.





#### Native Blooms and Bees

Research Scientist Loy Xingwen and Horticulturist Maxwell Kotelnicki conducted a yearlong bee survey in our Conservation Display Garden, recording the activity of bees and the specific flowers they visited, to better understand how native plants support Atlanta's urban bee populations. Given the critical role bees play in pollination and ecosystem stability, the findings were illuminating. Bees constituted 83% of all pollinating flower visitors, with wasps, butterflies, and flies making up the remaining 17%. A remarkable number of smaller, solitary bees were identified as well as at least five different bumblebee species, including the rare Southern Plains bumblebee (*Bombus fraternus*) and the threatened American bumblebee (*Bombus pensylvanicus*). The Conservation Display Garden's 2023 MVP ("most visited plant") went to Stokes aster (*Stokesia laevis*), which attracted the widest variety of species, from tiny solitary bees to burly bumblebees. All in all, the survey highlighted the Garden's role in supporting bee diversity, offered insights into a complex pollination network, and provided critical data for future conservation strategies.





#### Predators and Prey

Reptiles and amphibians of a particular region or habitat are known as herpetofauna, and because they play dual roles as both predator and prey, they represent critical indicators of ecosystem health. At Deer Lake State Park in Walton County, Florida, the Garden's Southeastern Center for Conservation made great strides toward developing a Herpetological Species Index as part of an EPA-funded project focused on comprehensive wetland restoration. This multi-year initiative addresses the impact of fire suppression, which has transformed diverse wet prairies into dense forests dominated by shrubby trees, affecting understory plants, water quality, and amphibian habitats. While working to revive more than 300 acres of wet prairie ecosystems, Garden scientists have been monitoring populations of more than 25 amphibians, including the Pinewoods Treefrog (*Hyla femoralis*), Yellow-bellied Slider (*Trachemys scripta scripta*), and Eastern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*), to assess the presence and health of these species before and after restoration efforts. This data-driven approach aims to enhance conditions where herpetofauna can thrive, contributing to the sustainable restoration of wetlands in the Florida Panhandle.

#### **Prioritizing Plants**

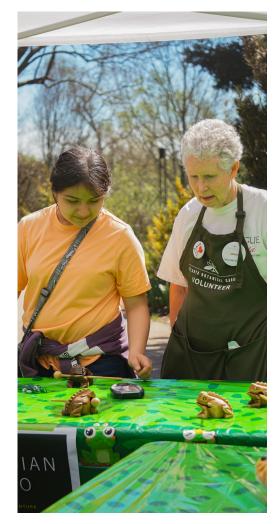
The southeastern United States is recognized as a biodiversity hotspot, home to more than 11,000 native plant species, 30% of which are found only in our region. Identifying which plants are at highest risk of extinction is a crucial step in protecting the entire web of life, and in May 2023, we accomplished a major milestone in this work. The Garden's Southeastern Center for Conservation and the Southeastern Plant Conservation Alliance collaborated with key partners to publish the nation's very first Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (RSGCN) list for plants. Although RSGCN lists for animals have existed since the 1990s, no official standards previously existed for defining which plants were in urgent need of conservation action, causing plants to often be excluded from Wildlife Action Plans and funding opportunities. The new RSGCN list for southeastern plants is a game-changer, detailing species distribution, status, threats, and conservation needs across a 15-state region while serving as a crucial tool for increasing public awareness about the essential roles that plants play as habitat, food sources, ecosystem stabilizers, and the lifeblood of our region's biodiversity.





## CELEBRATING SERVICE

Day in and day out, volunteers are vital to the Garden's success.





More than 400 highly involved individuals regularly donate their time and talents at our Midtown and Gainesville locations. They support Garden staff in almost every aspect of operations, performing important tasks such as greeting guests, conducting tours, assisting with events and programs, and beautifying the grounds by helping to install and maintain horticultural displays. They bring enthusiasm, dedication, and a wealth of knowledge to their roles, adding enormous value and enhancing the experience for our members and guests. In 2023 alone, Garden volunteers contributed more than 30,000 hours of service, reflecting their unwavering commitment to our mission and fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among volunteers and staff alike.

#### **Centennial Club**

In 2023, 158 individuals each contributed more than 100 volunteer hours at the Atlanta Botanical Garden; of those individuals, 35 were new to the Centennial Club and 12 contributed more than 200 hours of service.

#### **Roots of the Garden**

The following Garden volunteers are distinguished for providing the most hours of service in 2023:

Charlotte Miller	547	Chris File	345
Janet Cantrelle	536	Diane Korzeniewski	335
Paul Cushing	347		

#### 2023 Volunteers of the Month

The following Atlanta-based volunteers were nominated by their staff supervisors for showing exceptional devotion and enthusiasm in their roles:

Beth Vaughan Karen Ahrens Paul Cushing Anne Kerner Sandra Jones Gale Thomas

Jeanne Mulberger Debbie Newsholme Alice Pugh Patricia Robinson Elaine Hentschel Stephanie Cooper

#### 2023 Volunteers of the Quarterr

The following Gainesville-based volunteers were nominated by their staff supervisors for showing exceptional devotion and enthusiasm in their roles:

Jana Flury Susan Hurley Stan Ray Amy Rothenberg

### 2023 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: MARGE SMITH

Marge began her journey as a volunteer in the Children's Garden nearly 25 years ago, in 1999. After spending time with the horticulture department as a Garden Maintenance volunteer and assisting at the reception and information desk during those formative years, she found her place in the Gift Shop. Marge has faithfully volunteered there every Tuesday since, delighting in the collective enthusiasm of visitors. She says, "I love being in the Gift Shop because people share their excitement about their visit and what a beautiful garden we have...and I couldn't agree more!" Marge has also dedicated time as an administrative volunteer in the volunteer office, where her background as a bookkeeper and accountant makes her an invaluable asset. A Centennial Club member since 2001 and a three-time Volunteer of the Month in 2003, 2018, and 2022, Marge has donated over 200 hours in multiple years and was recognized as a Root of the Garden in 2004. She loves traveling, visiting other gardens, and exploring gift shops along the way. The late Sig Guthman, former editor of the Volunteer Newsletter "Digging In," once wrote, "The Atlanta Botanical Garden attracts a very dedicated, LANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN special type of person. Marge typifies this devotion and willingness to pitch in to fill whatever assignment may be needed at the time."







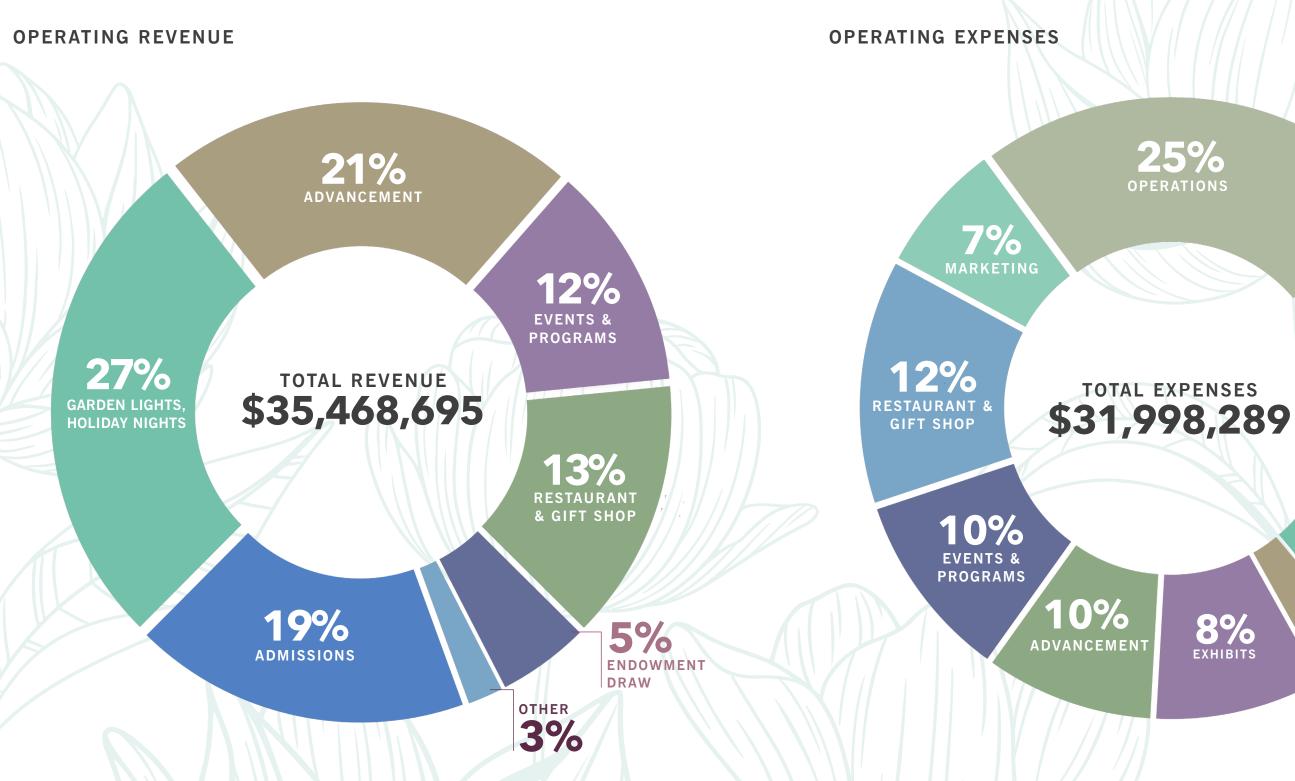
VOLUNTEER



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



# statement of activities<sup>\*</sup> for the 12-month period ending Dec. 31, 2023



Operating surplus of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is reinvested back into the Garden to support renovations, annual maintenance, and capital improvement projects. In 2023, specific projects included repaying, grading, and pathway repairs; food service equipment replacement; office renovations; improvements to nurseries and headhouses in both Atlanta and Gainesville; security upgrades; and other strategic investments.

# 22% GARDENS & FACILITIES





\*Operating revenue and expenses do not include restricted funding for Conservation, Education, or Capital Investments.



#### **INSTITUTIONS**

The Atlanta Botanical Garden gratefully acknowledges the following corporations, foundations, public sector entities, and organizational donors for their annual contributions between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

#### \$500,000 and above Realan Foundation

#### \$200,000 - \$499,999

Anonymous Isdell Family Foundation Invesco QQQ

#### \$50,000 - \$199,999

Audi Atlanta Cox Enterprises Delta Air Lines The Home Depot Foundation Primrose Schools

#### \$25,000 - \$49,999

Georgia Power Company PNC Financial Services Group Katherine John Murphy Foundation The Imlay Foundation Fulton County Arts and Culture AT&T The Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation American Honda Motor Co. Amazon The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company Oxos Medical

#### \$10,000 - \$24,999

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#### \$500 - \$2,499

Loren Petersen Family Foundation Long Family Charitable Gift Fund Planters Garden Club The Garden Club of Georgia Hillside Joseph G. & Inez Crawford Burtchaell Foundation The Graves Foundation American Hydrangea Society Atlanta Chapter Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund Catholic Foundation of North Georgia The Williams Family Foundation of Georgia Ralph & Mary Cleveland Foundation Open Air

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restricted and unrestricted grants, sponsorships, and/or other operating support.

#### \$50,000 and above

Anonymous

#### \$25,000-\$49,999

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The Garden would like to thank the following organizations for their meaningful involvement and support in conservation and research initiatives between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

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The Atlanta Botanical Garden would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all members of the Perennial Society who have thoughtfully included the Garden in their estate planning. As a result of the legacy commitments of these philanthropic individuals and families, the Garden will continue to flourish for generations to come.

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Gifts of \$15,000 were made by friends and family to name Garden benches honoring the following individuals:

In honor of Judy Lyon and Ron Bloom In honor of Nancy Chambers In memory of Clara Luthio In memory of Brenda Yike

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document. If we have omitted anyone or made any errors, please accept our sincere apologies and contact us at 404-585-2015 so that we may correct our records.



# ATLANTA'S GARDEN GARDEN GATEWAY A Bold Entrance to our Sustainable Future

After several years of planning and negotiations, 2023 was a milestone year for the Atlanta Botanical Garden's expansion initiative. In October 2023, the Garden closed on the purchase of the final piece of property for our nearly eight-acre expansion, securing the parcel where the Garden's new Beltline-facing Visitor Center will be constructed. Momentum continued to build as we

#### \$10 million and greater

James M. Cox Foundation Lettie Pate Evans Foundation Carol and Ramon Tomé

#### \$1 million and greater

Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Cary, Jr. Mr. and Mrs. John Dyer Jennifer and Marty Flanagan The Fraser-Parker Foundation Wilbur & Hilda Glenn Family Foundation The Home Depot Foundation Robin and Marc Pollack The UPS Foundation The L & C Wood Family Foundation

#### Under \$1 million

Sylvia Attkisson Jade and Michael Auzenne Ms. Melissa Babb and Mr. Philip H. Babb Mrs. Molly Battin and Mr. Ramsay Battin Joe Boland Mr. and Mrs. Russell E. Butner Amanda and Michael Chanin Chick-fil-A Mr. and Mrs. John H. Crawford, IV Mr. and Mrs. John Cromartie Erica DeChicchis Debbie and John Edwards worked with architects at Hoerr Schaudt and Smith Dalia to refine the plans for new gardens and facilities, in anticipation of a 2025 groundbreaking on the site.

Fundraising toward our \$150 million campaign goal progressed steadily, buoyed by the landmark \$25 million commitment from the James M. Cox Foundation and the historic \$40 million commitment from the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation. The Garden received a second \$5 million gift from Carol and Ramon Tomé in 2023, bringing their extraordinary personal campaign commitment to a total of \$10 million. In Fall 2023, the Garden's Board of Trustees resoundingly supported the campaign with 100% participation. As of December 31, 2023, a total of \$99,223,665 was secured from 50 different donors.

Campaign donors from the inception of the campaign through December 31, 2023 are listed below. We will continue to recognize the generosity of campaign donors in future annual reports.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Alan Elsas Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Furniss Georgia Natural Gas Foundation Al Goodgame Laura and Philip Green Estate of Telside Howard Mr. and Mrs. Bahman Irvani DeAnna and Gene J. Kansas Mrs. Cara Anne Isdell Lee and Mr. Zak Lee Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Levy Mary Pat and Bri Matheson Estate of Pete J. Mounts Norfolk Southern Mr. and Mrs. Howard Palefsky Sara and Cody Partin Mr. and Mrs. David Poroch The Rich's Foundation Ms. Sylvia E. Russell The Same House The SKK Foundation Roger J. Smith Stephanie Soltau and Dan Noyd Stephanie and Austin Stephens Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Parker Mr. and Mrs. Mason W. Stephenson Mr. Allen W. Yee

For expansion updates, design details and more, visit atlantasgardengateway.org.





### CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

Acquisition Campaign Chair Carol Tomé

**Capital Campaign Co-Chair** John Dyer

**Capital Campaign Co-Chair** Jennifer Flanagan



### ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

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