



Garden names Scott McMahan its new Vice President, Horticulture & Collections

ATLANTA (February 26, 2026) – Scott McMahan, the Atlanta Botanical Garden’s longtime Manager of International Plant Exploration, has been promoted to Vice President, Horticulture & Collections.

In his new role, McMahan will be responsible for leading a team of 38 indoor and outdoor horticulturists who develop and maintain the Garden’s plant collections and displays throughout the 33-acre garden as well as in the Fuqua Conservatory and Orchid Center. McMahan, selected by his peers as the Garden’s 2026 Employee of the Year, also will oversee the design and installation of new gardens planned for the Garden’s nearly 8-acre expansion, set to open in 2028.

“Scott McMahan brings a wealth of knowledge to our horticulture team from decades of plant exploration and international partnerships,” said Mary Pat Matheson, the Garden’s President & CEO. “His leadership is thoughtful and collaborative, and he will continue to grow the talent on the horticulture team, creating future leaders for the Garden.”

A native of Decatur, Georgia, McMahan earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Wofford College and an associate’s degree in horticulture from Spartanburg Community College before working as a propagator for a large wholesale grower for five years. In 1999, he joined the Garden as Nursery Manager. He left in 2003 to open his own business, McMahan’s Nursery, in north Georgia and in 2009 a garden center, Garden*Hood, in downtown Atlanta.

Ten years ago, McMahan sold much of his interest in that business and closed McMahan’s Nursery to accept a full-time position as the Garden’s Manager of International Plant Exploration. In this new program, McMahan has overseen plant exploration, collection and evaluation efforts as well as a visiting scholars program to promote the exchange of plants and plant knowledge with other botanical institutions around the world. He has made more than 40 scouting and collecting trips to China, Vietnam, India, Japan, Thailand, Bhutan and Mexico.



Earlier this year, a species of *Arisaema* was named in McMahan's honor after he and a team of Vietnam scientific researchers discovered the unnamed species while conducting field research in that country in 2024. His colleagues named it *Arisaema mcmahanii* after it was recognized as a valid new species according to scientific peer review and DNA evidence.

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The mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to develop and maintain plant collections for display, education, research, conservation and enjoyment. The Garden is located at 1345 Piedmont Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30309. For information, visit atlantabg.org or phone 404-876-5859.

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