

WINTER 2021 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS There is no doubt that 2020 will go down as one of the roughest, most turbulent years in our history. It is a relief then that we take stock at the end of December and warmly look forward to better days as we flip the calendar. Of course, nothing but human civilizations work on calendars. Seasons maybe, but not calendars. We are left alone to wonder what 2021 will bring.



Imagine my disappointment when I searched

around the internet to determine when exactly the Age of Aquarius would begin. There has been some social media buzz about it lately. I remember the song and it sounds pretty cool – peace will guide the planets and love will steer the stars – that type of thing. We could sure use some of that right now. But no one seems to agree on when this might ensue, nor, I suspect, how any of that works. The range of possible start dates spans about 800 years, with some special attention on the winter solstice just passed in 2020.

So instead, maybe we should focus on two critical human passions – the pursuit of scientific understanding and the messy job of holding society together.

If all goes well, by the time you are reading this, we will be well into the deployment of COVID-19 vaccinations. We are told the speed of creating this wave of vaccines was aided greatly by advancements in genomics and computers, many disciplines merging into a single focus.

The Gardens is taking a giant scientific leap this year when we will be able to fully utilize our new capacities thanks to the Freyer – Newman Center, including state of the art labs and herbaria. Our team is ready to hit the trails again this summer doing field research in the southern Rocky Mountain region. We are also upping our engagement in three critical areas: soil health, water conservation and carbon capturing, and sustainable agriculture.

Regarding the messy job... The thought occurred to me a couple of months ago that the world would be a great deal calmer if it were all a botanic garden. Every day, I see the diversity of humanity wander through our grounds. They seem genuinely moved, happier than when they arrived, and almost entirely kind-hearted. It could be the perspective gardens bring to us, or the wonder, perhaps a refreshing sense of grateful humility. Whatever the influences, let's take note of it. When we needed healing, some semblance of community and a little peace the most, public gardens were there for us.

Without a crystal ball, a defining astrological age or a soothsayer, let's decide that by our actions we will determine how to replace a no good, horrible year with one of promise and joy.

Onward.

Brian Vogt Denver Botanic Gardens CEO

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INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 1, 2021

Denver Botanic Gardens

passes only.

1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206 Through April 1, 2021, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., last admission 4 p.m. Pre-purchased tickets and advance member passes only.

Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms 8500 West Deer Creek Canyon Rd., Littleton, CO 80128 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., last admission 4 p.m. Pre-purchased tickets and advance member

Contact Us General Information: 720-865-3500 Class Registration: 720-865-3580 Donations: 720-865-3528 Gift Shop: 720-865-3595 Membership Services: 720-865-3525 Private Events: 720-865-3551 Volunteering: 720-865-3609 Helen Fowler Library: 720-865-3570

Gardening Help from Colorado Master Gardeners

Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium

Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi

Editor: Tiffany Coleman Graphic Designer: Nick Elias Photographer: Scott Dressel-Martin

The mission of Denver Botanic Gardens is to connect people with plants, especially plants from the Rocky Mountain region and similar regions around the world, providing delight and enlightenment to everyone.

GARDENS

The Gardens is grateful for funds from the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), which enable us to expand services and enhance the quality of our programs and exhibits.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND REAL SCIENCE

By Kirsten Bell, School & Camp Program Coor

A silent group of inquisitive second graders surrounds me. What's going on? It's a beautiful morning along the Wetlands Trail at Chatfield Farms and we're about to start a program on ecosystems. Our first stop is the Beaver Station, but before we begin, I've asked them to be quiet for one minute. So, for one minute, instead of chatting and laughing, excited about being on a field trip, the group stays hushed. The traffic on Wadsworth Boulevard is a distant hum, birds chirp and Deer Creek babbles along. We take it all in.

One minute is a long time for a 7-year-old, so everyone is ready to start talking again. But first, why did I ask them to stay silent? I ask, "What do you notice?" Everyone is eager to contribute. The water! Birds! I hear the wind in the trees.

Then I ask, "What do you wonder?" Now it gets interesting and this is where, so many times, we as adults move too quickly, talk and explain too much, and this thinking gets lost. When children can articulate their observations and engage in inquiry about the world, they can expand their science and environmental literacy by making connections to their surroundings and developing a deeper understanding about what they are learning. When I know what my students are thinking, I can address interests, misconceptions or an observation that I never noticed before.

This group wonders where all the animals are, which is a perfect segue into our Beaver Station activities. We walk along Deer Creek looking for beaver clues, and when the students find what they think might be a beaver den, we take time examining it and marveling at the beaver's adaptations for living in water. With an older group, we might have discussed the history of the beaver in North America, their role as ecosystem engineers in shaping the wetlands or the restoration work the Gardens is doing at Deer Creek.

Whatever the program focus, location or student base, the Gardens' school programs team applies research-backed pedagogy to our inquiry-based science instruction, ensuring we meet Colorado Academic Standards and schools' standards-even on a field trip.

Whether we are dissecting flowers, collecting phenology data or exploring a beaver dam, each student gets to do real science.

COLORADO'S NATIVE ORCHIDS By Nick Snakenberg, Associate Director of Horticulture & Curator of Tropical Collections

Mention the name "orchid" and most people imagine brightly colored exotic flowers growing in hot, humid rainforests of the tropics. Many Coloradans are surprised to learn that a number of these striking rarities grow within our state's own borders. In fact, depending on taxonomic classification, at least 25 different orchid species can be found growing in Colorado.

Most of our native orchids are more diminutive than their tropical relatives and can be hard to find, but they possess a unique beauty all their own. The reward in spotting these elusive flowers is in their intricacies and the joy of the hunt. Since our native orchids are dormant most of the year, you must know



their growth cycles and preferred habitats to spot them in the wild. Most occur in moist, shaded ravines between 8,000 and 11,000 feet in elevation, and peak bloom can be from late May through early September depending on the species.

THE REWARD IN **SPOTTING THESE ELUSIVE** FLOWERS IS IN THEIR **INTRICACIES AND THE** JOY OF THE HUNT.

Orchids require a very specific environment for healthy growth and will not be happy in most home gardens. Not only is it irresponsible to remove plants from the wild, it is often illegal. If you stumble

upon any of Colorado's native orchids on one of your hiking adventures, step lightly and do not pick any plants or flowers. Do take plenty of photos to share with friends as proof of your botanical expertise.

In order: Calypso bulbosa, Corallorhiza maculata, Parviflorum var. pubescens, Platanthera huronensis, Neottia cordata



CHATFIELD FARMS

Building on **SOIL SCIENCE**

By Royce Hale, Farm Education Coordinator Chatfield Farms

Science is a systematic study of the world using observations and experimentation. By carefully recording data and making observations over multiple seasons, farmers are scientists in every sense of the word.

Through such careful observation and data collection, scientists have revealed the imminent threat of climate change. This is a direct result of poor land use practice and excessive burning of fossil fuels that release CO₂ and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The effect climate change has on global temperature and precipitation patterns can affect our ability to grow crops. Current agricultural practices neglect soil in numerous ways, including too much tillage, reduced biodiversity by mono-cropping and relying on fertilizers and pesticides to maintain somewhat normal levels of production. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "agriculture accounts for 10-12% of total global anthropogenic emissions of GHGs [greenhouse gases]." In our vegetable and cut-flower fields at Chatfield Farms, we have recently adopted regenerative practices that emphasize the USDA's principles of soil health. These principles protect soil from erosion, decrease evaporation, suppress weed growth, provide habitat for beneficial insects and increase soil carbon. These practices can mitigate the effects of climate change.

A recent paper from Rodale Institute (Regenerative Agriculture and the Soil Carbon

Solution) suggests that a shift to regenerative agricultural practices could offset current \widetilde{CO}_2 emissions by more than 100 percent. Meaning, if enough farmers were to adopt such practices, they could reverse the upward trend of CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere. Carbon sequestration relies on photosynthesis to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere and to use it as a carbon building block for growing plants. Much of this carbon is sequestered in the roots of the plants. It is becoming more apparent that living roots use exudates (substances secreted from roots) to feed bacteria and fungi in the rhizosphere (soil surrounding roots that is affected by the plant's growth), and this forms the foundation of a healthy, nutrient-rich soil. In fact, as those bacteria and fungi grow, reproduce and die, they significantly contribute to the amount of carbon in the soil. Cover crops are essential to improving soil health because of the living roots maintained in the soil to capture carbon. By incorporating cover crops into the field rotation, we can begin to uphold the principles of soil health.

Chatfield Farms is participating in the Colorado Coalition for Healthy Soils, which is creating a statewide soil health program. We are also trying to improve the soil health of our Community Supporting Agriculture (CSA) fields at Chatfield Farms. Through the implementation of regenerative farm practices to increase soil biodiversity and sequester carbon we will potentially play a role in reversing the effects of climate change.

PERENNIA PROPAGATION

From fall through early winter, the Gardens' propagation team is busy starting perennial seeds to grow over the winter for next year's plantings. Propagation of perennials is necessary not only to grow our collections, but also to maintain what we already have-many perennials will not live longer than five to 10 years in a garden. The Rock Alpine Garden especially requires constant propagation efforts to maintain the huge quantity of species in its collection.

Many plants have specific needs for successful germination. For example, some seeds require a period of moist chilling in order to germinate. Seed dormancy is an adaptation that prevents germination in fall in the wild, when the plant would most likely die during winter. The precise length of cold or cycling of cold and warm periods to break



dormancy varies from species to species, and even between plants that are of the same species but adapted to different regions. Getting these requirements right determines the success or failure of a propagation attempt, since a treatment that will allow the seeds of one species to germinate may kill the seeds of another.

We rely on seed germination research to guide our efforts for successful propagation. This research comes from universities, the USDA, the US forest service, various published books and horticulture industry sources. The Gardens' propagation team also engages in our own germination trials and tests so that we can be successful in keeping and growing the beautiful diversity of plants that makes Denver Botanic Gardens so unique.



Getting to the Right **PLANT NAME**

By Cindy Newlander, Associate Director of Horticulture

At the core of a garden are the plants we grow. In a botanical garden we strive to accurately record and track the names of the plants in our collections. While one might think this a simple endeavor, the process is often arduous and occasionally sows more confusion than something as lovely as a plant should. I once spent hours trying to determine the correct spelling of Salvia forskaehlei, named in honor of Finnish botanist Peter Forsskål. I remain uncertain of the proper spelling to this day and we list five spelling variations in the database.

Much like how horticulturists have their favorite tools, the Gardens' plant records team has a few go-to references that help clear up the confusion with scientific names. Kew Science's (part of England's Kew Royal Botanical Gardens) Plants of the World Online currently contains over 1.1 million names and associated nativity data, including many with images and descriptions. For the United States' native and introduced species, we use a database version of The Biota of North America Program. This database allows us to search names at genus and family levels, it links synonyms to accepted names, and provides distribution maps to the county level. Another site, eFloras.org takes us to scientific descriptions of species from China, Chile or North America.

Once we have settled on the "right" name, it is entered into our database of record, BG-BASE, along with descriptive data and can be linked to synonyms (other associated names); images can also be linked. Finally, labels can be produced to help visitors learn more about the plants in the Gardens including Salvia forskaehlei (or however you want to spell it!).

HORTICULTURE



CENTER FOR GLOBAL INITIATIVES

AQUATIC PLANT COLLECTION Receive International Recognition

By Tamara Kilbane, Curator, Aquatic Collections

In October 2020, Denver Botanic Gardens was designated as a Nymphaea (waterlily) collection of excellence and a *Nelumbo* (lotus) collection of merit by the International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society (IWGS). To be certified as a collection of excellence, a minimum of 75 cultivars, varieties or species must be represented, while at least 25 are required to be certified as a collection of merit. A complete plant list along with an annual schedule of grooming, fertilization and dividing/replanting was reviewed by the certification committee along with photos showing that the collection is well-labeled and that additional interpretation is available to visitors via signage and/or docents during the growing season.

The Gardens' waterlily collection includes 129 cultivars and species displayed in seven water gardens throughout our 24-acre York Street property, alongside a variety of other aquatic plants. The waterlily collection includes hybrids of historical significance in our "Rocky Mountain Legacy Collection," such as 'Joey

Tomocik', 'Colorado', 'Denver' and 'Denver's Delight'. Past standout entries in the IWGS New Waterlily Competition such as 'Detective Erika', 'Tuonta', 'Manee Red' and many others are also grown annually along with more than two dozen Latour-Marliac hybrids which are displayed in Monet Pool. The Nelumbo collection includes 25 varieties displayed in various water gardens and lotus bowls each year.

According to the IWGS, "The purpose of the Certified Collections is to provide international recognition to collections of Nymphaea and Nelumbo around the world. In return, the collections offer an opportunity to IWGS members and the general public to experience and reference the diversity of the genera of Nymphaea and Nelumbo."

Denver Botanic Gardens' collection is currently the only collection certified by the IWGS for both these genera. A dedicated team of volunteers, including members of the Colorado Water Garden Society, help to maintain the collection.



PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Denver Botanic Gardens offers a range of programming for all ages, as well as certificate programs and online learning. Click the links below to learn more.

School of Botanical Art and Illustration

Learn the skills to render plants in remarkable scientific detail and the artistic techniques needed to create beautiful and lasting plant portraits.

Café Botanique

Contraction of the second

Part of the Botanical Art and Illustration Certificate Program, this lecture series is also open to the public.

Children and Family Programs

Family programs engage children and their grownups to learn about the natural world, discover the importance of plants and spark creativity.

Rocky Mountain Gardening

This certificate program is a comprehensive study of specific Front Range gardening practices. Classes can be taken as part of the certificate program or individually.

Classes & Workshops

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Choose from workshops, lectures, fitness and wellness, photography, gardening and more. Scroll or search by category or date.

New Programs at the Helen Fowler Library

Despite not being able to open its doors in the new Freyer – Newman Center in 2020, the Helen Fowler Library has still been actively working to engage the community. We have some new programming for book lovers to look forward to this year. If you like cozy mysteries, The Rose & Thorn: Story Time for Adults will have you on the edge of your seat. If you would rather pen some words of your own, our **Nature** Writing with Lighthouse Writers Workshop or Plein Air Poetry Writing Series might be appealing.

Find more **programs** and explore the library online. We hope to see you soon!

Trips & Travel

Garden of the Gods: A Springtime Journey to the Greek Islands

April 22 – May 3, 2021

Greece in spring is a magical experience. It's the time of the year when the entire country becomes a vast natural garden. Greece is home to a stunning number of plant species, comprising the richest flora in Europe. More than 6,000 species thrive in the country, of which about 10 percent are endemic and can be found nowhere else in the world. On this springtime journey we will witness the beautiful display of wildflowers that cover the land among ancient sites, old villages and notable islands. Tour leader is Dr. Sarada Krishnan, director of horticulture and center for global initiatives at the Gardens.

Camp Registration Changes

This year registration is separate for Spring Break Camp and Summer Camp. To attend both, be sure to register for both.

• SPRING BREAK CAMP: Registration begins January 20 at noon. Camp runs March 29 – April 2.

Private Tours

at York Street, **Chatfield Farms and Plains Conservation Center** (Virtual Options Available Too!)

Looking for a special experience for your group? Schedule a private guided in-person or virtual tour at York Street, Chatfield Farms or Plains Conservation Center with at least three weeks' notice. For more information, contact info@botanicgardens.org or 720-865-3500.

Docent-led: \$14, \$6 student (includes admission)

Staff-led: \$17, \$6 student (includes admission)

Plains Conservation Center: \$10 public

Virtual tours: Prices vary

• **SUMMER CAMPS:** Registration begins March 3 at noon. Check the Gardens' website for dates.

Register for 2021 camps. Note: A camp registration account is separate from other Gardens ticketing accounts.



Dedicated Endowment Fund Fuels PLANT GENETICS RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDENT INTERNS

By Johanna Kelly, Director of Development

DEVELOPMENT



Gladys Cheesman Evans was a founding trustee of Denver Botanic Gardens. Along with her husband, John Evans, Gladys financed the master plan for the Gardens in 1951 and held the first meeting of the Botanic Gardens Foundation of Denver in their home. From 1951-1956, Gladys served as board chair, setting the stage for the Gardens as it is known today.

In 1984, members of Gladys's family established a dedicated endowment in her name to support research, publication and national presentations in the fields of horticulture and conservation. By the end of 2019, the corpus of the Gladys Cheesman Evans endowment had grown to \$647,852.

Distributions from the Gladys Cheesman Evans fund supported the creation of both a plant tissue culture program and a plant genetics laboratory. And, for more than a decade, the distributions from the endowment have been supporting the work of the Gardens' research and conservation team in various activities related to plant conservation genetics. The distributions also supported several graduate students from University of Colorado Denver in 2018 and 2019. These individuals pursuing masters and doctoral degrees worked alongside the Gardens' research leaders Dr. Jennifer Neale, Dr. Andrew Wilson and Dr. Rebecca Hufft, who served as their advisors. The endowment provides the primary line of support for graduate students. Without it, the Gardens would not be able to support multiple students, thus limiting the capacity to train the next generation of botanists and mycologists. The endowment also supports programmatic supplies needed to support work in the field and in the labs in the Freyer – Newman Center.

Learn more about the Gardens' opportunities for graduate students and other internships with the research team.

If you have questions about the Denver Botanic Gardens Endowment or about how to create a specific endowment, please <u>contact Johanna Kelly</u>.



Connecting People with Plants Through the **DENVER ECOFLORA PROJECT**

By Jennifer Ackerfield, Ph.D., Head Curator of Natural History Collections, Associate Director of Biodiversity

When we think of nature, we usually picture mountain paths or open spaces, not metropolitan areas. Yet nature is all around us, even in the Denver metro area! Understanding what species are in the metro area and where they are helps us not only study them, but also protect them for future generations. One way that Denver Botanic Gardens connects people with nature, as well as establishes a baseline of biodiversity for the greater metro area, is through the Denver EcoFlora Project.

The Denver EcoFlora Project records your observations of plants and fungi through the citizen science app, iNaturalist. Once downloaded onto your smartphone, you can begin documenting the plants and fungi in your community – and learn more about the biodiversity in your neighborhood! Each observation is identified by experts and other users to become "research grade," meaning its identification has been verified as the same species by two or more users. All research grade observations ultimately become part of more than one billion worldwide observationbased and natural history collections-based points of data, distributed through the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, or **<u>GBIF</u>**. Researchers can then use these data points

to shed light on many issues: the past and potential spread of invasive species; the influence of climate change on biodiversity; the role of rare species in protecting critical ecosystem functions; and the identification of priority areas for plant conservation.

Participation in the Denver EcoFlora Project is fun, too. Each month, we send citizens on a unique "quest" to discover and document biodiversity. The connections with the local flora that are made with each quest in turn help build appreciation of the plant and fungal biodiversity all around us. And once biodiversity is appreciated, our hope is that a greater effort will be made to preserve these species for future generations.

We also encourage you to participate in the **City Nature Challenge** at the end of April. This challenge takes place over a 36-hour period, during which metro areas from around the world compete against each other to see who can make the most observations of nature. And of course, all observations made during this challenge also become part of the Denver EcoFlora project. Connecting with and documenting nature has never been easier or more fun! We can't wait to see what biodiversity you find in your community.



EXHIBITIONS, ART AND LEARNING ENGAGEMENT



PRIMA LINGUA First Words of the Earth

Artist Jody Guralnick collects, interprets and creates with natural materials. Her work highlights the microscopic structures within lichens, mushrooms and molds, making visible the links between the human world and the realm of microbes to encourage stewardship of our shared environment.

RAÍCES Y RAMAS | Roots and Branches

Tony Ortega's work explores the Chicano experience in the United States, highlighting the role of landscape in community and culture. Featuring families, friends and neighbors, Ortega's artworks celebrate human connections across both rural and urban environments.

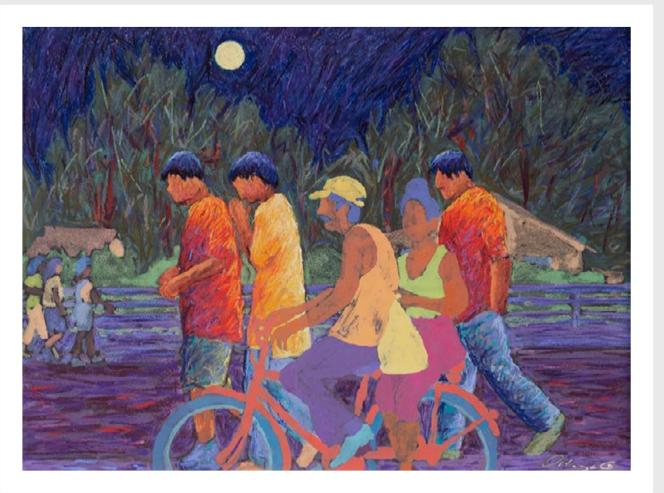
This exhibition is organized in collaboration with William Havu Gallery, Denver.

Online Café Botanique: Fungi, Art & Inspiration Wednesday, Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m.

Join the artist and Dr. Andrew Wilson, assistant curator of mycology at the Gardens, to explore the intersection of art and science -- and how the world of fungi and the microscope have large-scale impacts for art and ecosystems both.

Free Online Artist Demonstration with Q & A Saturday, January 23, 10 a.m.

to making art.



See how Ortega creates his work and hear from him about his working methods and approach



FAMILY CORNER

BACKYARD SCIENCE Q

Long, short, big or small, pinecones have an important job. They carry and protect the seeds for new generations of trees! Collect a variety of pinecones you find on the ground and take a closer look at these amazing structures.

How do they compare to one another?

Do you think they came from the same or different trees?

Now look closer.

Are your pinecones open or closed?

Do you see any seeds, or spaces where the seeds might have been, in the open cones?

What do you notice about the cones that are closed?

Are you able to use your fingers to pull back the scales and bracts?

Pinecones help protect their seeds from harsh, cold weather conditions such as wind, precipitation and ice by closing their scales and bracts. Watch this adaptation in action by experimenting with pinecones, temperature and moisture.

Can you make your closed cones open? Can you close the open cones?

THE EXPERIMENT

Gather three bowls that will hold at least one pinecone and enough water to cover it. Choose three pinecones from your collection and three bowls to put them in. Before placing each cone in its own bowl, make and record some observations about the pinecone.

How tall is it?

What is the circumference of the narrowest part of the pinecone? What is the circumference of the widest part of the pinecone?



Put a pinecone in each bowl and add water and ice.

Let the pinecones sit in the water for two hours.

After two hours take each pinecone out of the water and observe and record the measurements of the pinecones again.



How do the measurements compare to the original measurements?

Place the pinecones back in their bowls.

Check them again after another two hours.

Repeat this process as many times as you would like. What happens to the pinecone each time you make observations? Does the pinecone close or open more?

The cold and moisture of the ice water causes the pinecones to begin to close.

Do you think they will stay closed forever?

What do you think will cause them to open back up?

Design your own experiment to see what will cause the pinecones to open again.

불SHOPLAT THE GARDENS

Have you visited the Shop at the Gardens' online store yet?

Here, you'll find all the products you love from our onsite shop—like Michael Aram's botanically inspired accent pieces, luxurious lotions and soaps, an ever-changing selection of seasonal items and whimsical children's toys—but with the benefit of leisurely (and safely) browsing from the comfort of your couch. Your member discount of 10 percent off still applies. The Shop offers free shipping on purchases over \$100 and curbside pickup for added convenience. Unique, quality items are just a click away.

Visit us today!

VIDEO STORIES AT THE GARDENS

by Erin Bird, Communications Manager

Did you know the Gardens produces short films that celebrate our important plant, sustainability and community outreach initiatives? Visit our YouTube or Vimeo channels to be inspired, edutained and maybe brought to tears by moving stories about our Veterans Farm Program, School of Botanical Art and Illustration, Mordecai Children's Garden, farming as a Black woman and more. We look forward to sharing more video stories this year with the theme of healing: for both humans and the environment!

Featured Video



Honor/Memorial Contributors Gifts Received 08/01/2020-10/31/2020

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In Honor of Marcia Lavochkin Leslie Cenci

In Honor of Mary Lynne Lidstone Mr. James Lidstone and Ms. Alaina Reilly

In Honor of Our 20th Anniversary Karey Lontz and Tom Van Ness

In Honor of Allyson Mendenhall

Mary Mendenhall In Honor of Christine Perreault Her grateful team and

colleagues In Honor of Becky and Brian Schaub Lauren and Christopher Davis

Carleigh and Reid Elkus In Honor of Our Anniversary

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