The next several months will be the start of something big; actually, several big somethings. The first comes in April when the beloved O’Fallon Perennial Walk is planted anew. Under the guidance of horticultural wizard Bridget Blomquist, a better story will be told about these perseverant plants that captivate visitors, revealed in waving tableaus that promise nine months of color.

Then, this summer we tackle two major sustainability projects at York Street. First, every flat roof on our buildings will sport solar panels. These, combined with all-renewable electricity, will create a campus that is net zero except for natural gas-fueled boilers to heat critical buildings, such as the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory. The second project is the next phase in saving water. The Japanese Garden stream will be relined, and in coming years, we will reseal waterways and ponds throughout the Gardens.

Thanks to the people of the City and County of Denver, three existing gardens will undergo a makeover to provide better accessibility and horticultural integrity. The south end of June’s PlantAsia will have improved pathways and transform into the Himalayan Garden, with dramatic black rock formations. Birds & Bees Walk will become accessible with Kathy’s Boardwalk, named for past Board Chair Kathy Hodgson. Finally, South African Plaza, now that its collections are better represented in the Steppe Garden, will become Willow Plaza. These amazing plants are prolific in Colorado, and this opportunity will allow us to showcase them and their habitat.

The first projects in the new Chatfield Farms Master Development Plan will break ground (fingers crossed). Our plan is to focus first on core infrastructure – improved electrical service and sewer as well as a geothermal array to service several new facilities. Next up is a Welcome Center and the transformation of the asphalt parking lot in the core of the site into a multi-functional and beautiful Market Square. There are numerous projects that will follow with additional funding – an education center, restaurant, stage, butterfly house, restrooms and a boardwalk along the riparian zone.

The evolution of public gardens is grounded in the eternal quest for relevance to diverse audiences. To realize our mission is to bring more people to revel in the wonder of nature and the magic of plants.

Onward.

Brian Vogt
Denver Botanic Gardens CEO
The Center for Global Initiatives Hosts Its First GLOBAL STEPPE SYMPOSIUM

By Sarada Krishnan, Ph.D., Director of Horticulture and Center for Global Initiatives

Situated in the North American shortgrass prairie, one of the major steppe regions of the world, Denver Botanic Gardens is uniquely poised to take a leadership role in steppe research and conservation. Over the years, the Gardens has conducted numerous plant exploration trips to other steppe regions to understand the flora and ecology of these amazing ecosystems. These explorations led to the 2015 publication of the book “Steppes: The Plants and Ecology of the World’s Semi-arid Regions” by the Gardens’ steppe experts.

In 2020, the Gardens’ Center for Global Initiatives planned to host the first Global Steppe Symposium to foster dialogue among scientists from different regions, exchange ideas and identify ways to collaborate. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic turned the world topsy-turvy and our plans were postponed.

We are thrilled to finally host the symposium on July 27 and 28. Scientists, horticulturists, land managers, plant lovers and gardeners will come together to provide a forum for discussion and reflection about the connection between humans and our land. Day one of the symposium will concentrate on research and conservation science from around the world while day two will focus on practicing the wisdom of the high plains with stories from regional gardeners, farmers, ecologists and artists.

The international delegation will consist of botanical experts from the global steppe regions of Argentina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Lesotho, in addition to our local experts. Technical proceedings from this symposium will be published. Please mark your calendars! We look forward to seeing you at the symposium.

RARE BOOK Gives View into Past and Present

By Nicole Kirby, Technical Services Librarian

Helen Fowler Library recently acquired a treasure that embodies the wonder at the heart of scientific inquiry and is a link in the academic inheritance of Denver Botanic Gardens’ researchers. From the outside, “Mushrooms in Their Natural Habitats” by Alexander H. Smith looks like a standard mid-20th century book—two handsome volumes bound in red leather. The second volume, however, is not a book at all.

It opens to reveal a surprise nestled in a bed of dark velvet: a View-Master and set of stereoscopic reels. William Gruber, the inventor of View-Master technology, took the photographs for the slides using the same technology as the red plastic toy of your childhood. The technology was new when the book was published in 1949, but even today, the scope and novelty of the work is impressive.

These volumes were generously donated by Roy E. Halling, curator emeritus of mycology at The New York Botanical Garden and volunteer at Denver Botanic Gardens. Halling received the set from Harry D. Thiers, who received it from none other than Alexander H. Smith himself. Dr. Smith was a respected mycologist who mentored many researchers. Our own assistant curator of mycology, Andrew Wilson, is part of this academic lineage.

“Mushrooms in Their Natural Habitats” will be on display in the Edward P. Connors Reading Room in the library this summer. Stop by to see the magic yourself.

HELEN FOWLER LIBRARY
**THE BENEFITS OF GREEN ROOFS**

*By Michael Guidi, Horticulture Coordinator*

Green roofs are increasingly recognized for the benefits they deliver to both people and the planet. Green roofs detain, slow and purify stormwater runoff, easing pressure on storm sewer infrastructure after heavy rains. They can improve air quality and save energy by more effectively insulating buildings, all while providing habitat for people, wildlife and pollinators in urban areas. Green roofs also help to mitigate urban heat island effects by cooling the tops of buildings and the air above, a major local concern since Denver has recently ranked as one of the worst urban heat island cities in the country.

At our York Street location, we have two accessible green roof installations: one built over the main parking structure and integrated into the design of Mordecai Children’s Garden and a second directly above Offshoots Café. Beyond additional garden space, both of these green roofs function as living laboratories, giving staff and scientists the opportunity to conduct research.

I used our green roofs to conduct a scientific study as part of my graduate school research, to evaluate if the phenology – the timing of flowering and other life cycle events – of plants growing on green roofs differs from the same species growing under otherwise similar conditions at ground level. Additionally, if plant phenology differs between locations, do green roofs offer unique flower foraging opportunities for pollinators earlier or later in the growing season?

The results show that plants on green roofs bloom significantly earlier than at ground level – about one week on average, but up to a month for some plant species! We also documented stark differences in surface and substrate temperatures between locations, which suggests that extreme environmental conditions on roofs may contribute to the observed differences in phenology. Two seasons of careful pollinator observations also gave us a clear picture of which species use our green roofs and support the idea that earlier flowering, especially in early spring, may provide critical early season resources for pollinators – one more benefit of green roofs to add to the list!
SPECIAL EVENTS

SPRING PLANT SALE
May 6 & 7, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
8-9 a.m. Member-Only Shopping Hour

Admission to the sale is free, but you must register in advance (reservations available: April 7 for members, April 11 for public)

Ready your gardening gloves and your walking shoes! Spring Plant Sale is back in person at the Gardens and bigger than ever. Browse a large selection of beautiful plants across 15 different divisions. Talk to knowledgeable horticulturists and enjoy spring blooms as you plan your summer garden!

Whether you are shopping for a single plant or an entire garden, we’ll have something for every gardener. Members save 10% on all purchases. Get details and reservations online.

PREVIEW PARTY
May 5, 4-7:30 p.m. $45 in advance, $55 at the door (if available)

Want first picks of the plants and some tasty treats? Join us for the Plant Sale Preview Party. Tickets are limited, so get yours today!

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES
See artists, dates and ticket prices online.

This summer, there are two distinct ways to enjoy Music at the Gardens! Traditional concerts are back after a two-year hiatus, and Evenings al Fresco returns for a more socially distanced offering. The botanical surroundings are the same, but the experiences for each series are quite different.

EVENINGS AL FRESCO
Select Mondays & Wednesdays in June & Aug., 4:30-8:30 p.m.
$30, $20 member

Returning after a successful debut, talented local musicians perform throughout the Gardens, allowing visitors to stroll and explore at their own pace. Get details and tickets online.

DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS CHATFIELD FARMS
LAVENDER FESTIVAL
July 16 & 17, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
$7 – $13

Chatfield Farms’ Lavender Garden, planted in 2015 and boasting more than 2,000 lavender plants of different varieties and colors, sets the backdrop for the popular Lavender Festival. This year we are excited to expand the festival to two days. During the family-friendly celebration guests can enjoy products made by local growers and artisans, free demonstrations, live music, kids’ activities, farm and garden tours, food and drink vendors and more. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Get details and tickets online.

VOLUNTEER with the Gardens!

Spring is here and we need volunteers to support Denver Botanic Gardens during this beautiful time of year. Volunteers support special events, horticulture, education programming, the visitor experience and so much more. For more information on the Gardens’ volunteer program and specific details on both ongoing and special event volunteer opportunities please visit the website or email us at vol@botanicgardens.org.
URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD
The Contour of Feeling
April 30 – Sept. 11
Experience Ursula von Rydingsvard: The Contour of Feeling, an ambitious exhibition featuring one of the most influential sculptors working today. von Rydingsvard is renowned for her towering cedar and public outdoor sculptures; this exhibition provides a unique, indoor opportunity to experience a large collection of cedar sculptures and works on paper.

Ursula von Rydingsvard: The Contour of Feeling is organized by The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, and guest curator Mark Rosenthal, former curator at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

RELATED PROGRAMS
FILM SCREENING AND ARTIST Q&A
Ursula von Rydingsvard: Into Her Own
April 29, 6 p.m.
Join us for a screening of Daniel Traub’s 2019 biographical film, “Ursula von Rydingsvard: Into Her Own,” followed by a Q&A with the artist; galleries will be open prior to the screening. See page 19 for related tours.

OPENING SOON
Seeing the INVISIBLE
Through August
Experience an innovative exhibition of contemporary artworks existing only in augmented reality (AR). Co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring, Seeing the Invisible presents virtual works that engage with existing features of the natural landscape. Beyond the boundaries of what is possible with physical artworks, many of the works created for the exhibition address themes of nature, environment, sustainability and the intersection of the physical world with the digital one.

Seeing the Invisible is organized by the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund.
FAMILY CORNER

EARTH DAY RESOLUTIONS
By Melissa Gula, Manager of Family and Children’s Programs

We’ve all made New Year’s resolutions, but have you ever made an Earth Day resolution? In celebration of Earth Day, try making earth-friendly resolutions as a family that focus on conservation, sustainability and green practices. Your small everyday actions can add up to big change over time!

Gather your family together and explore your home. In each room think about ways that you can reduce waste, energy and water usage. Generate as many ideas as you can and then choose one or two that your family can work on together. Need some ideas to get started? Check out our list below:

**EARTH DAY RESOLUTION IDEAS FOR THE FAMILY:**

- **Start a donation pile in your house.** Instead of throwing away toys that aren’t played with anymore or clothing that doesn’t fit, add it to your donation pile to be used by someone else.

- **Turn the water off while you are washing your hands.** After wetting your hands and applying soap, turn off the water for the 20-30 seconds it takes you to lather the soap on your hands.

- **Take a reusable water bottle with you whenever you leave the house.** This will help you to avoid purchasing beverages in single-use containers.

- **Start an under-the-sink compost bin.** Turn your food scraps into nutrient-rich compost!

Keep track of your progress and give your family a resolution goal. Set up an easy way for family members to document their success. Every time you observe your child or other member of your household contributing to your family’s Earth Day resolutions, make note of it.

Once your resolutions become everyday habits, reward yourself by doing something special together!

MEMBER APPRECIATION MORNINGS
Member Appreciation Mornings return to Denver Botanic Gardens’ York Street location! Members are granted early access to the Gardens at 8 a.m. every Saturday and Sunday from April 2 – September 5, to enjoy time without the crowds.

Reservations are required and must be done online or by calling us at 720-865-3500. Tickets will be available one month at a time and will be released on the 15th of the current month for the following month.

See you soon!

THE STURM FAMILY AUDITORIUM
Enhancing Visitors’ Experience
By Claire Shepherd Lanier, Associate Director of Development

The Gardens has enjoyed a long partnership with the Sturm Family Foundation, beginning in 2014 with a program serving the needs of metro area K-12 students, particularly those from underserved schools. This shared interest in education and culture led to a highlight of the Freyer – Newman Center, the Sturm Family Auditorium. In memory of Donald Sturm’s parents, Mark and Sophie Sturm, the spacious auditorium seats 272 people and features a Dual PTZ Camera System and surround sound. This technology expands audience capacity for Zoom presentations, a bonus in recent years with the necessity of serving remote and hybrid audiences during the pandemic.

Located on the Center’s second floor, the Sturm Family Auditorium is near all three art galleries. Thus, the auditorium becomes part of a total visitor experience, integrating viewing art and watching films in the Center. Some films are nature-oriented, while others inform and interpret the neighboring art exhibitions. An example is the film screening “Ursula von Rydingsvard: Into Her Own,” on April 29 at 6 p.m. A Q&A with the artist will follow the film. (For more information, see page 8.)

View the Sturm Family Auditorium film schedule on our website.
The Relevance of BIODIVERSITY DATA

By Richard Levy, Scientific Data Manager

As we navigate this decade, the bearing that nature holds on our everyday lives has reestablished itself as inescapably relevant. Atmospheric pollution is altering every landscape, bringing fires, floods and mass displacement. A virus leap-frogged animal hosts into our global population, upending society faster than anyone could have considered possible. However, biodiversity in nature is a source of healing and solace to so many: I hung a feeder outside my window to attract the company of chickadees and sparrows; friends have adopted more house plants than they have room for; and a forest hike near a creek or digging a garden has never felt so revitalizing. No matter how much we thought the digital realm had come to dominate our routines, community and economy, nature prevails as the ultimate force. Nevertheless, over the last half-century ecologists and biologists have been uniting these domains, creating digital tools to garner understanding of life on Earth, delivering us to this moment when the fundamental unit of discovery, data, has become undeniably relevant to each of us.

Gaining a better hold on how ecosystems function is crucial to solving some of the most important problems ahead of us. To do this, scientists worldwide are working to standardize, share and congregate data. The data comes from specimens that have been sitting in a museum for more than a hundred years, and from the volunteer surveying ponds in a local open space just this morning. It has been steadily making its way onto the internet, typically landing in a database like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). Here the data is free for anyone to use in their studies, contributing to statistical models that tease out patterns and processes. As of this publication’s date there are 1,195 peer-reviewed studies on climate change that utilize data made available on GBIF. These studies are impacting, right now, how we manage forests and grasslands to mitigate wildfire, how to restore agricultural land to improve food security and how we slow the irreversible tragedy of extinction. This research is based upon data originating in museums, universities and botanic gardens. For this reason, Denver Botanic Gardens’ Department of Research & Conservation continually works to collect plant and fungal specimens, bank and study seeds from rare species and survey ecosystems throughout Colorado. And of course, all data is made freely available so that its impact can stretch far beyond the Gardens’ own research, becoming relevant in decisions and actions that will determine how we face the present.

GAINING A BETTER HOLD ON HOW ECOSYSTEMS FUNCTION IS CRUCIAL TO SOLVING SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS AHEAD OF US.

Denver Botanic Gardens collect data from a population of rare cacti in western Colorado.
MEADOWS at Chatfield Farms

By Erik Geyer, Assistant Manager Natural Areas & Arboriculture

Chatfield Farms showcases native plants through naturalistic garden design, habitat restoration and seeded prairie meadows. The Gardens has made a powerful commitment to continue this work at a greater scale. We embarked on a multi-year restoration of the area surrounding the Open Air Chapel and along Deer Creek. This 1.5-acre site is uniquely defined by a deep, sandy loam soil, unforgiving wind gusts and extremely cold air that gets trapped along the creek. A tough site calls for resilient plant communities. Our goal is to create an oak savanna with a diverse understory of native wildflowers and grasses.

The Chatfield Farms staff re-establish plant communities using techniques developed in agriculture, horticulture and ecological restoration. We are developing a site-specific method for removing existing plant material, preparing the soil for seeding, seed establishment and realistic maintenance strategies. By restoring small areas at a time, we have been able to reduce our herbicide use, minimize our soil disturbance and create a more functional habitat. This garden presents a unique opportunity to see this process in all different phases and watch the areas develop over time. They do change quickly!

What can you expect when you visit? This spring you will see four different phases side by side: a robust two-year-old planting; a developing one-year-old meadow; a newly seeded section; and the fourth will be the ground-preparation phase. The pathways will wind through wildflower meadows and a unique blend of wild-collected and hybridized oak species. Some exciting trees you may encounter are Quercus × undulata ‘Tinnie’ and Quercus havardii ‘Erick the Red’. Over time, this garden will develop into a stable, diverse community of plants. The enhancement of the meadow will increase ecological function, support pollinators all over the farm and create a colorful and stunning backdrop for weddings in the Open Air Chapel.
PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

The Gardens offers a range of programming for all ages, as well as certificate programs and online learning. Explore all programs at botanicgardens.org/calendar

Classes & Workshops
Choose from workshops, lectures, health & wellness, photography, gardening, cooking and more. Scroll or search our online Calendar by category and date.

Children & Family Programs
From toddlers to scouts, homeschoolers and families, the Gardens offers a wide variety of kid-friendly opportunities to explore the natural world.

Unboxed: Your CSA Processed, Prepared & Plated
Join Chef Edwin Sandoval to get the most out of your CSA experience this year! Learn how to utilize the ingredients from your share to create new recipes along with how to process your produce to ensure quality and freshness. Each week receive a new video to inspire your culinary creativity and minimize food waste from ingredients with which you may be less familiar. The virtual format allows for viewing flexibility as shareholders will have access to the videos throughout the entire season. The CSA season runs May 26 – Oct. 20 and you will receive a new cooking video weekly, for a total of 20 weeks. Each video is approximately 15-20 minutes in length. If you are a part of the Chatfield Farms CSA program, we recommend registering on the CSA website to get special shareholder pricing.

$75 Public

Advanced Bonsai Design
May 18, 6-9 p.m.
Join us for a beautiful evening of bonsai design in the Sturm Family Auditorium with Bonsai Specialist Larry Jackel and three artists from the Rocky Mountain Bonsai Society. See a live demonstration and learn about the techniques used to develop wild material collected from the Front Range into bonsai.

$45, $40 member
MEDICINAL PLANT FIELD GUIDE

By Blake Burger, Assistant Curator, Horticulture

The rugged and stunning landscape of the Rocky Mountain Region of North America contains an abundance of diverse and unique plants, many of which hold medicinal properties. Falcon Guides’ newest guidebook, “Medicinal Herbs of the Rocky Mountains,” showcases more than 60 medicinal plants found from the Dakotas to Utah and Montana to New Mexico. As a traditional field guide, readers can properly identify the flora of this region with detailed descriptions of each medicinal plant, color photos and habitat information. A unique feature is the inclusion of the ethnobotanical and historical context of the featured plants. Readers will learn how Indigenous peoples of the Rockies utilize the healing properties of these magnificent plants, as well as historical uses throughout North America and Europe.

What sets this field guide apart from others, however, is its focus on this region’s healing herbs and how to incorporate them into daily life. In addition to information showcasing the active constituents of these herbs, readers will learn modern uses of these plants and how to grow them in home gardens. Each plant chapter includes recipes with step-by-step instructions to transform harvested plant material into medicinal remedies such as salve, tinctures, tonics and syrups.

This guide is a collaborative effort by Plant Records Coordinator Jen Toews, Associate Director of Horticulture Cindy Newlander and me. It will be available this summer and is sure to be a great addition to any plant lover’s bookshelf.

COMING THIS SUMMER

TOURS

GUIDED STAFF-LED TOURS AT YORK STREET
$19, $15 member (includes admission)

Curator Conversations:
The Contour of Feeling
Select Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.
Explore The Contour of Feeling with a curator to discover Ursula von Rydingsvard, one of the most influential sculptors working today.

DOCENT-LED TOURS AT YORK STREET
$16, $12 member (includes admission)

Midsummer Nights
June 18, 19, 21 & 23 at 6 p.m.
Enjoy a Shakespeare-inspired summer stroll infused with poetry and plants.

Seasonal Discoveries: Spring
April 2, 10 & 24, May 15 & 29 at 2 p.m.
Delight your senses on this tour of gardens that are awakening from their winter slumber.

Ursula von Rydingsvard:
The Contour of Feeling
Select dates at 9:30 a.m.
Enjoy large-scale cedar sculptures and other works by Ursula von Rydingsvard with a docent as your guide.

PRIVATE TOURS AT YORK STREET OR CHATFIELD FARMS (Online Options Available Too!)
Docent-led: $15, $6 student (includes admission)
Staff-led: $17, $6 student (includes admission)
Online tours: Prices vary.

Looking for a special experience for your group of eight or more? Schedule a private guided tour at York Street or at Chatfield Farms or an online tour of the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory. For more information, contact tours@botanicgardens.org.

TOURS AT PLAINS CONSERVATION CENTER
$10 public

For more information or to register for a tour, visit the Tours page on our website.

TRIPS & TRAVEL

Have you missed exploring other countries? Have you always wanted to take a trip with Denver Botanic Gardens? Whether you’re new to the Gardens’ travel options or you’re a seasoned traveler, you won’t want to miss these upcoming opportunities to venture off the beaten path in beautiful Mexico.

Mexico’s Art, Culture and Cuisine
July 20-28
This nine-day journey takes you through Mexico City, Puebla and Oaxaca. Join us for this unforgettable experience that delves into Mexican culture, art and food and reveals what makes Mexico such a unique destination.

Día de los Muertos in Oaxaca
October 28 – November 3
Together we explore one of the most culturally rich places in Mexico: Oaxaca City. Partake in the long-standing tradition of Día de los Muertos and discover what makes this region so magical.

Learn more about these trips and others on the Trips & Travel page on our website.