

# FACT SHEET



**locations +** [Denver Botanic Gardens](#)

**hours +** 1007 York Street  
**admission** Denver, CO 80206  
720-865-3500

\$16.50 Adults  
\$12.50 Seniors & Military (w/ ID)  
\$12 Students & youth 3-15 (w/ ID)  
Free Members & children 2 and under

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2026, the Gardens is a 24-acre urban oasis in the heart of the city. Annual attendance is nearly 1.5 million across all locations. Opportunities to flourish with unique garden experiences are presented along with world-class exhibitions, special events, education and plant conservation research programs. There are more than 50 curated gardens that feature native and adapted plants that thrive in the Rocky Mountain region. The three-acre Mordecai Children's Garden is a green roof garden atop the parking structure. The Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory and Marnie's Pavilion feature an extensive tropical plant and tree collection. The Freyer – Nemwan Center (LEED Gold), completed in 2020, is the capstone project of York Street's 10-year master development plan under the leadership of former CEO Brian Vogt. The building is a center for art, science and education, featuring three art galleries, an auditorium, classrooms, a library, herbarium, genetic labs, collections storage and a coffee shop. The current CEO is Donna McGinnis.

[Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms](#)

8500 W. Deer Creek Canyon  
Littleton, CO 80128  
720-865-3500

\$14 Adults  
\$11 Seniors, Military  
\$7 Students & Youth 3-15 (w/ ID)  
Free Members & children 2 and under

Managed in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this 700-acre native plant refuge and working farm is located along the banks of Deer Creek in southern Jefferson County. Vast enhancements are underway as part of a master development plan that includes a new Welcome Center, outdoor classroom, education and conference center and improved accessibility throughout the campus. Facilities include the Earl J. Sinnamon Visitor Center, the historical Hildebrand Ranch, a restored 1918 dairy barn and silo, the 1874 Deer Creek Schoolhouse, 2.5 miles of nature trails, Lavender Garden, numerous curated gardens and a seasonal butterfly house. The area is known for exceptional bird watching. Chatfield Farms is designated as a birding hotspot on the Cornell University's worldwide eBird citizen science website.

## **M. Walter Pesman Trail at Mount Goliath**

Dos Chappell Nature Center  
Idaho Springs (Exit 240 from 1-70)  
720-865-3500  
U.S. Forest Service fee applies

A peak high on the shoulders of Mount Blue Sky located outside of Idaho Springs within the Arapaho National Forest. Here in this fragile alpine environment Denver Botanic Gardens oversees the highest cultivated garden in the U.S., managed in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. When the road is open, visitors can enjoy the garden, the Dos Chappell Nature Center and hike the M. Walter Pesman Trail. Amid grand mountain vistas, the 1.5 mile (one way) Pesman Trail winds through subalpine and alpine areas of bristlecone pines and wildflowers. Mount Goliath is designated as a birding hotspot on the Cornell University's worldwide eBird citizen science website.

## **Plains Conservation Center**

21901 E. Hampden Avenue  
Aurora, CO 80013  
303-326-8380

Free general admission; education programs are ticketed.

This Aurora-based center helps students and adults grow their knowledge and appreciation of the prairie ecosystem and the cultural history of Colorado through a variety of educational programs managed by Denver Botanic Gardens in cooperation with the City of Aurora.

### **mission**

Denver Botanic Gardens is a living museum with multiple locations that connects people to plants. Mission points of relevance, diversity, sustainability and transformation continue to grow the Gardens' programming, outreach and inclusion initiatives. Green inside and out, the Gardens is considered one of the top botanical gardens in the United States and a pioneer in water conservation. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and the American Public Gardens Association, the Gardens has a robust living plant collection, natural history collection and art collection along with temporary art exhibitions. The Gardens is also an Smithsonian Affiliate.

### **history**

Denver Botanic Gardens began through a grassroots effort in 1910 when Saco DeBoer, a municipal gardener in Denver's Parks & Recreation Department, began lobbying to establish a horticultural showcase and proving ground. The idea grew, gradually encompassing local gardening clubs, forestry enthusiasts and green-thumbed civic leaders. Members of the Colorado Forestry and Horticulture Association incorporated as the non-profit Botanical Gardens Foundation of Denver in 1951. The following year, the City of Denver designated 100 acres in City Park as the site for Denver Botanical Gardens (as it was called then) which were formally dedicated in 1954. However, the Gardens were unfenced and 'night diggers' stole and trampled plants. By 1958, the combined efforts of private citizens and the City and County of Denver set forth a plan that transformed an old cemetery located on York Street into a botanic garden. In 1959, Ruth Waring donated the mansion at 909 York Street to the Gardens. In 1966, the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory was dedicated and allowed the Gardens to become a year-round attraction.

Both Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory and the Waring House were declared Denver landmarks in 1973. Located in the middle of the Mile High City, the Gardens was one of the first gardens in the country to emphasize native plants and to champion environmentally responsible practices, such as water conservation and biological control of pests. Here it blossomed into one of America's most innovative horticultural facilities, helping to pioneer environmentally responsible practices such as water conservation and biological pest control.

- collections** Denver Botanic Gardens displays nearly 40,000 plants in 2,200 genera and 242 families, from more than 90 countries. The orchid collection contains nearly 800 species; the bromeliad collection contains 879 species. There are more than 100,000 preserved plant and fungal specimens in the herbaria. The M. Walter Pesman Trail at Mount Goliath contains thousands of wildflowers and animals of the fragile subalpine and alpine tundra, and a forest of 1,500-year-old bristlecone pines. The art collection includes nearly 1,500 art objects. The Helen Fowler Library holds collections of rare books, stamps, vintage seed catalogs, gardening ephemera, fiction, nonfiction and children's books.
- research** The Research and Conservation Department works with Colorado's most rare and imperiled plants through surveys, monitoring, genetic analysis and seed collection. Through collaborations with universities, Bureau of Land Management and other partners, the Gardens is helping to restore thousands of acres of habitat throughout Colorado. Research is being done to understand what management practices promote native vegetation to come back. The Gardens also conducts research to address climate change, through seed collection and documentation. The Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi's collection is the most diverse, extensive and well-documented collection of fleshy fungi in the Rocky Mountain region. The Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium houses plant specimens from the region. The **Center for Global Initiatives** formally established in 2012 to bring international horticultural research and relevance to Denver Botanic Gardens through implementation of diverse and sustainable programs achieving global transformation by connecting people with plants. The Gardens works with communities in Argentina, Haiti, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia and South Sudan to help research and conserve their plant populations and create public gardens.
- education** Denver Botanic Gardens has a strong commitment to its role as an educator for all ages. The Gardens' commitment to engaging a broad and diverse audience is evident in the variety of exciting programs offered: adult classes and workshops; lectures; symposia; garden tours; as well as imaginative children's classes, day camps and family workshops. Low-sensory programs and school programs are also offered. The Gardens' School of Botanical Art & Illustration offers a certificate program and one-off courses in botanical illustration. With beautiful state-of-the-art classrooms and a wide variety of online art and botanical illustration courses taught by world-class artists, the school meets students where they are at and not only teaches art techniques but basics of botany to better understand their subjects.
- events** A wide range of public special events occur throughout the year at our York St. and Chatfield Farms locations as another opportunity to connect people to plants in unique and entertaining ways. The biggest event of the year, Blossoms of Light®, is a holiday light extravaganza at York Street is recognized as one of the best holiday light events in the world by Travel & Leisure, USA Today, Forbes and others. A holiday light event, Trail of

Lights, occurs at Chatfield Farms, along with the popular seasonal events Lavender Festival, Corn Maze and Pumpkin Festival. Private events provide beautiful settings for weddings, personal parties, conferences and other meetings.

**exhibitions** Art, natural history and science-based exhibitions are presented in the Freyer – Newman Center galleries, the Science Pyramid and outside throughout the Gardens. Local, national and international artists are presented, many of whose subject matter connects to plants and the environment. Critically acclaimed exhibitions include *Chihuly*, *Ursula von Rydingsvard: The Contour of Feeling*; *Salvador Dalí: Gardens of the Mind* and *Calder: Monumental*.

**DEI** The Community Outreach team, that lives within the Marketing & Social Responsibility department, creates on- and off-site programs and events to make the Gardens welcoming and accessible to all. A cornerstone initiative is partnering with more than 250 community partners and organizations through the Clinton Family Fund Go2Gardens Free Shuttle program. In 2024, more than 1,510 diverse community members visited the Gardens through free transportation and admission.

Denver Botanic Gardens has operated a **community garden** since 1981, and the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that launched in 2010 was the first offered by a botanic garden. More than 60,000 pounds of produce are grown annually at Chatfield Farms and more than 900 pounds of produce are grown in Community Gardens. The food is distributed to CSA subscribers and donated to community partners.

Through the **Urban Food Initiatives**, the Gardens grow more than 30 varieties of produce using organic and regenerative practices on urban land in Denver Housing Authority's Sun Valley and Mariposa neighborhoods. Produce is distributed through free farm stands during the season. Additional food is distributed through a partnership with Denver Human Services and Food Bank of the Rockies.

The Gardens has many **Horticulture Therapy Programs** that feature sensory plant-based outreach and on-site program for senior adults and those with special needs. Horticultural therapy staff provides consulting services to eligible for-profit and non-profit facilities.

The **One World One Water Center (OWOW)** is a collaboration between Metropolitan State University of Denver and Denver Botanic Gardens. The OWOW Center strives to prepare an educated, empowered, solution-oriented Colorado citizenry to protect and preserve our precious water resources.

**sustainability** Water and energy conservation is a core principle of the Gardens' management of curated gardens, agriculture and water features. The Gardens co-founded [Plant Select®](#) with Colorado State University to seek out, identify and distribute the most sustainable plants for our region. Solar power is generated at both York Street and Chatfield Farms. A 4.5-acre agrivoltaics (solar panels over agricultural crops) system was completed in 2024. The clean energy produced will fully operate Chatfield Farms and also supply subsidized energy for 150 Denver households as well as offset some of the York Street location's energy use. The solar panels provide shade for agriculture crops, greatly reducing the amount of irrigation.