



INSIDE

THE GARDENS

SPRING 2026 A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR
MEMBERS OF DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

I am honored to be joining you as Denver Botanic Gardens' new CEO. I have long admired this very special place. Its beauty is exceptional, its heart is generous, and its dedication to nature is profound.

During my career I had many opportunities to visit and learn as the Gardens hosted the most important conferences and symposia in our field. Its leaders have shared their knowledge and expertise in countless ways across the globe, and its touring exhibits have touched the audiences of public gardens everywhere. I am excited to join this outstanding team.

Colorado is a very special place for my family, having spent many happy vacations in Denver and the Rocky Mountains. I grew up in western Washington, and my earliest childhood memories include walks in evergreen forests and exploring my grandmother's garden, especially her massive rhododendron. Having spent the past decade in the tropics, it has been a while since I've seen a garden emerge from its winter sleep. I can't wait to see the spring blooms in the York Street gardens, the lavender at Chatfield Farms and many other floral treasures.

As a child of the West raised at the foot of the Cascade Mountains, but who has been away for too long, I couldn't be happier to be returning to my roots. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Donna McGinnis
Denver Botanic Gardens CEO



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INSIDE THE GARDENS

ISSUE 2, 2026

Denver Botanic Gardens

1007 York St., Denver, CO 80206

Hours through May 9, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m., last admission 7 p.m.

May 10 – September 7, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., last admission 8 p.m.

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.

[Check the website for early closures](#)

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

Visit Our Website for More Information:

[Gardening Help from Colorado Master Gardeners](#)

[Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium](#)

[Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi](#)

Editor: Tiffany Coleman

Graphic Designer: Jessica Lammert

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.



botanicgardens.org



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.



BLOOMS WITHOUT BORDERS:

Connecting Steppes Through the Center for Global Initiatives

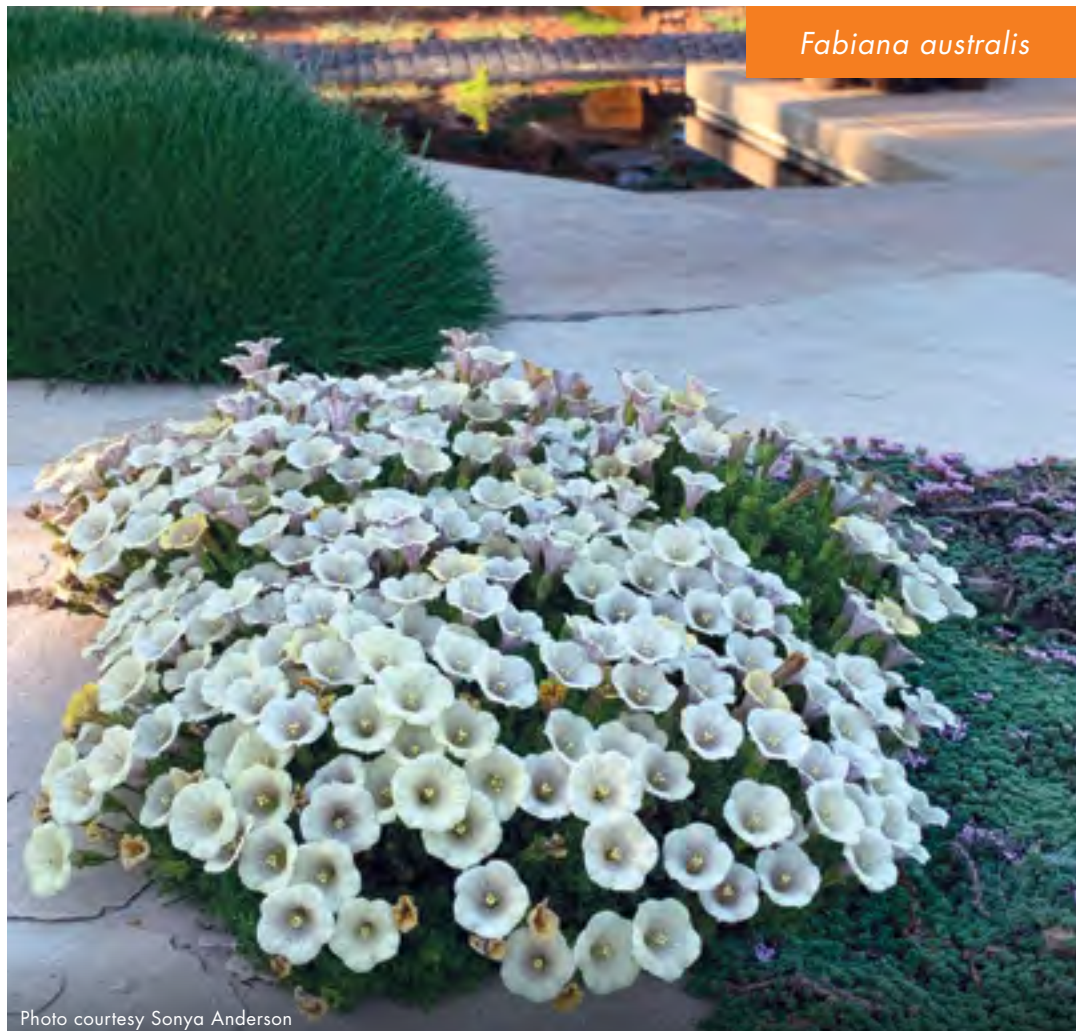
By Sonya Anderson, Manager of Horticulture, Michael Bone, Associate Director & Curator of Steppe Collection and Kevin Philip Williams, Manager of Horticulture

With the support of Denver Botanic Gardens' Center for Global Initiatives, the Steppe Garden team works to connect the landscape of the American West with our sister steppe regions around the world. Wild plant collection trips strengthen both conservation efforts and living collections. These expeditions take the Gardens' horticulturists and scientists thousands of miles from Denver to some of the world's most ecologically rich and climatically resonant regions, including Central Asia, Southern Africa and Patagonia.

During these expeditions, seeds and plant material are collected ethically and in close collaboration with local scientists, institutions and land managers. This approach supports long-term international partnerships while helping to preserve genetic diversity in wild populations. Once material returns to Denver, it enters a new phase of care and

stewardship. Seeds are propagated by the production team in the Gardens' greenhouses, where they are grown, evaluated and prepared for eventual planting.

In the past three years alone, members of this team have traveled to Uzbekistan, Lesotho, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia and Argentina, bringing hundreds of new species into the Gardens' collections, many of which can now be seen growing and blooming in the Steppe Garden. This spring, keep an eye out for several of our favorite wild-collected plants blooming throughout the Gardens. Look for *Fabiana australis* (Patagonian petunia) in the Patagonian beds, *Trollius altaicus* (Altai globeflower) in the Central Asian plantings and *Bulbine narcissifolia* (snake flower) brightening the Southern African beds. Together, these species offer a living snapshot of the global steppe regions that inspire and shape the Steppe Garden.



Fabiana australis

Photo courtesy Sonya Anderson



Trollius altaicus

Photo courtesy Sonya Anderson



Bulbine narcissifolia

Photo courtesy Kevin Philip Williams

THE GRANT FAMILY COTTONWOOD BORDER

By Laura Swain, Assistant Curator

Our beloved Cottonwood Border saw a transition over the winter as we planned for long-term succession in the garden. One of the reasons we love our plains cottonwood trees so much is their ability to grow fast and mature to a very large size in our riparian corridors across the state. Within the Gardens, that presents challenges to our staff and visitors. Because of their fast growth, the cottonwoods have dense canopies with soft wood that can splinter easily. This can lead to spontaneous breakages and premature limb drop. To mitigate that risk, we perform preventative pruning and implement tree care treatment plans to manage pests and disease.

However, wild cottonwood stands contain trees of all ages, due to the flood cycles and changing flow patterns. As large trees decay, young trees are

ready to fill the canopy. To mimic this ecological succession, we selectively removed several of the large cottonwood trees (originally planted in spring of 2000) and are replanting them with young saplings this spring. Succession planning in the urban canopy is important because many trees that are planted at the same time, of the same species, share a similar life span. This means that they could all experience canopy decline at the same time, leaving gardens and communities without shade and habitat. This selective removal also allows more light into our steppe collections, which thrive in open sunlight. Tree removal is always a bittersweet process but a vital step in long-term planning in our home gardens and public spaces.



Coming Soon

Jaume PLENSA

A New Humanism

APRIL 18 – SEPTEMBER 7

“I always relate gardens with the idea of growth. All of us have a beautiful interior garden that is hidden to others.”

– Jaume Plensa

Coming to both garden spaces and the galleries this spring are artworks by Barcelona-born artist Jaume Plensa. His work draws on dreams and desires, expressed across a wide range of media—including bronze, steel, marble, pastel, graphite, collage and ink. Plensa’s sculptures celebrate both individual perspectives and shared human experiences.

Twenty-eight works will be featured, ranging from large-scale installations to smaller sculptures and mixed media drawings. Among them is *Talking Continents*, a large, multi-piece installation in the Ladd Family Gallery. Steel letters drawn from eight alphabets from around the world are welded together to create human figures floating atop cloud-like forms. Also included are several of Plensa’s iconic monumental sculptures of elongated heads in bronze, marble and steel mesh, modeled after real individuals.

Explore this retrospective spanning decades of Plensa’s career and experience our shared humanity.

Garden to Gallery Tour

Various dates and times
\$40, \$30 member, \$10 student

Enjoy a selection of Jaume Plensa’s sculptures in garden landscapes before exploring works in the galleries on this 90-minute stroll with an expert guide.



Jaume Plensa, *Talking Continents* (detail), steel, 2013. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid. Photo by Jason Whalen, Fauna Creative, courtesy of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.



Jaume Plensa, *Juana Silence*, marble, 2023. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid. Photo by Jason Whalen, Fauna Creative, courtesy of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.



Jaume Plensa, *Awilda and Irma*, steel, 2014. © 2025 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VEGAP, Madrid. Photo courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens.



SPRING PLANT SALE

Friday & Saturday, May 8 & 9, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Free admission, reservations required

Shop 15 divisions of plants spread across the Gardens, including a wide variety of unique native, steppe and adapted plants curated to thrive in Colorado's climate. Veggies, herbs, bulbs, pollinator favorites, grasses, house plants and more mean there's something to fill your wagon, wheelbarrow or cart with – whether you're updating your front lawn or enhancing a windowsill. Plus, horticulturists will be onsite to answer your questions and offer expert advice.

Members save 10% on all purchases.
Member reservations open April 15-17, depending upon membership level. Public reservations open April 20.



SPRING PLANT SALE PREVIEW PARTY

Thursday, May 7, 4-7:30 p.m.
\$60 in advance, \$65 at door (if available)

Your chance to beat the crowds and get first pick of plants! Get early access to the sale while enjoying tasty treats and beverages.



POLLINATOR DAY

Friday, June 26, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Included with admission

Celebrate the small but mighty creatures that make plants possible. Join activities for all ages to learn more about Colorado's pollinators, and what you can do to support their habitats.



EVENINGS AL FRESCO

June 29 & 30, July 13, 15 & 27, 5-8 p.m.
\$22-\$32

Produced in partnership with Swallow Hill Music, Evenings al Fresco features a vibrant mix of talented local musicians performing unamplified against a stunning backdrop of peak summer blooms at our York Street location. Pack a picnic, gather your friends and wander the Gardens during the golden hour on these relaxing musical evenings.

Member presale is May 27-29, depending upon membership level. Public ticket sales start June 1.



SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

PRESENTED BY UMB

PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SWALLOW HILL MUSIC

FEATURING

- John Craigie and Blind Pilot
- Allen Stone
- Soccer Mommy with Jawdropped
- Chris Botti
- The Beths and Beach Bunny
- Gregory Porter
- Steel Pulse
- And more!

Experience performances by top recording artists in an unparalleled venue: the UMB Amphitheater in the heart of the Gardens at York Street. Bring a picnic to enjoy on the lawn or purchase food onsite or in advance online. Leisurely stroll through the gardens before the show. Alcohol not available for purchase onsite; BYOB allowed.



LAVENDER FESTIVAL AT CHATFIELD FARMS

Saturday & Sunday, July 18 & 19, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
\$7-\$17, must purchase tickets in advance

Experience more than 2,000 lavender plants in peak bloom! Lavender-themed products will be available for purchase, from lotions and soaps to edible delights and wearable goods. Enjoy live music and food and drink vendors throughout the two-day event, plus demonstrations, classes and kids' activities. Chat with our gardeners and farmers to learn all about this versatile crop.

Member pre-sale is May 27-29, depending upon membership level. Public ticket sales start June 1.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Secret Lives of Moss

Saturday, April 4, 10-11:30 a.m.
\$30, \$26 member

In this talk, we explore the surprising roles mosses play in forests, cities and beyond—and uncover how paying attention to these tiny plants transforms the way we see the natural world.

A Singing Bowl Workshop for Self-care and Wellness

Wednesday, April 8, May 13 or June 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$50, \$45 member

In these hands-on classes, experiment with many types of singing bowls. Experience ways to use them for self-care and sharing wellness with others.

Advanced Bonsai Design – A Performance

Saturday, May 30, 1-4 p.m.
\$60, \$51 member

In this live bonsai design demonstration, wild, naturally collected material from Colorado's Front Range transforms into stunning bonsai specimens. Learn about the techniques, tools and artistic decisions involved in shaping these miniature trees.

Mindfulness for Everyday Life

Thursday, June 18, 6-7:15 p.m.
\$31, \$26 member

The class consists of a teaching component and an experiential meditation with time for Q&A. Each session focuses on a particular subject of mindfulness with the intention of training attention, focus and awareness.

Root & Reset: A Day in Nature

Saturday & Sunday, July 25 & 26,
9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
\$195, Members \$165

Connect with nature beyond the Gardens! Join us for mountain air, art and yoga at the Genessee Outdoor Experiential Learning Center. Bring an open mind and a sense of adventure.

Check our website for more details.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

ROOTED IN READING

Rooted in Reading

Sunday, April 19, noon – 3 p.m.
Free, no Gardens admission required

Join us for a celebration of books and plants at our second "Rooted in Reading" event on Sunday, April 19. Learn first-hand how books are created, participate in activities provided by Museo de las Americas and Art Garage, and meet local authors and illustrators Jolene Gutierrez, Brittany Cicchese, Carmela LaVigna Coyle and Cathy Morrison. Ideal for kids ages 6-12, the event takes place in the Schlessman Family Atrium in the Freyer – Newman Center. Admission to the galleries and Gardens is separate.

Find these books by participating authors and illustrators in the Helen Fowler Library.

"Unbreakable: A Japanese American Family in an American Incarceration Camp" by Jolene Gutierrez

"Tiny Worlds: A Story About Appreciating the Small Things" by Brittany Cicchese

"Anyone Else Awake?: A Dawn Chorus" by Carmela LaVigna Coyle

"Meet the Pollinators: A Night and Day Adventure" illustrated by Cathy Morrison

TOURS

Expert Explorations: Chatfield Farms

Wednesdays May 6 & June 3, 10-11 a.m.
\$18, \$12 member, \$10 student

Discover the latest happenings on the farm with expert staff.

Expert Explorations: York Street

Various dates and times
\$22, \$15 member, \$10 student

Take a deeper dive with Denver Botanic Gardens staff.

- **Signs of Spring**
Tuesday, April 14, 11 a.m. – noon
- **Sensational Scents**
Friday, May 1, 10-11 a.m.
- **The Gardens' Art Collections & Galleries**
Thursday, May 14, 3-4 p.m.
- **Looking Closely at Plants**
Tuesday, June 30, 10-11 a.m.



SCHOOL OF BOTANICAL ART & ILLUSTRATION

Explore Classes with the School of Botanical Art & Illustration

Choose from adult art classes in a variety of media and for every skill level. Mark your calendar for the summer/fall course catalog, which drops Tuesday, May 12 at 10 a.m.

Use code SBA110 to save 10% off your class registration.



HAIKU NATURE WALK



By Helena Nitz, Family and Children’s Program Coordinator

Haiku is a style of Japanese poetry that traditionally focuses on a moment in nature, or the human connection and experience with nature. Haiku poems don’t rhyme; instead, they follow a pattern of syllables. Each line has a set number of syllables:

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

A syllable is a single unbroken sound in a word.

Practice Counting Syllables

One fun way to learn syllables is with a clapping game. Take a walk with your child and point out things you see! Clap once for each syllable in a word.

Here are some examples:

Tree	Leaf	Side-walk	El-e-phant

Write Your Own Haiku

After practicing syllables, try writing a haiku about something you noticed on your walk. Remember to clap out the syllables in each line as you go.

Here is an example:

The frost is thaw-ing

The world be-low a-wa-kens

Spring is real-ly here



Philodendron imbe 'VARIEGATUM'

By Nicholas Giaquinto, Assistant Curator

I am drawn to plants with unique foliage, as flowers are often only briefly present. *Philodendron imbe* 'Variegatum' is one of my favorites due to its striking leaf coloration. This coloring, called variegation, occurs when portions of the leaf lack chlorophyll, the pigment responsible for photosynthesis. The variegation in this plant is unstable, meaning each leaf displays random patterns. While this creates remarkable designs, the plant may also produce entirely green leaves. Remove those, as plants favor non-variegated growth and can revert to producing only green leaves.

Philodendron belongs to the diverse aroid family, found in environments ranging from temperate to tropical regions. Many tropical aroids are popular houseplants because they tolerate low light, though

more unusual species require higher humidity, such as those grown in our greenhouses. *Philodendron imbe* 'Variegatum' has a vining growth habit and produces numerous side roots along its stem. These roots allow the plant to climb walls or trees and extend into ground soil to access additional water and nutrients. When growing this in a container, I support the vine upward with stakes. When watering, I spray the exposed stem roots to meet the plant’s high humidity needs.

The unpredictable variegation and climbing growth habit of *Philodendron imbe* 'Variegatum' highlight some distinct features of our tropical collection. Tropical plants such as this offer year-round visual interest through their foliage. Visit our collection the next time you’re at the Gardens.

INTRODUCING BORGEN FAMILY MARKET SQUARE

By Colleen Salant, Manager of Private Events, Chatfield Farms



Last June marked a significant milestone at Chatfield Farms with the opening of the Robert & Judi Newman Welcome Center and the debut of Borgen Family Market Square. Together, these spaces introduced a new path for visitors to explore. This spring, we're shining a light on Borgen Family Market Square.

The question we most often hear is, "What is this beautiful new space?" Born from a vision of community and flexibility, this event space nestles modern infrastructure within the natural beauty of our landscape. As a one-of-a-kind private event venue designed specifically to host food truck catering, Market Square offers an elevated backyard atmosphere that is effortlessly cool, airy and entirely unique to the region.

The layout is thoughtfully engineered to create a seamless flow for guests:

- **The Plaza:** A spacious paved expanse featuring dedicated cutouts designed specifically for food truck parking or artisan exhibitor pop-ups.
- **The Green:** A lush, manicured lawn at the heart of the square, perfect for lawn games, cocktail mingling or ceremony seating.
- **The Tent:** An elegant space adorned with twinkling white lights and seating to accommodate a formal dinner or cocktail reception.
- **Doreen & Ray Near Pavilion:** An ideal spot for a VIP lounge, bar area or live music alcove.

The setting is cinematic, bordered by the butterfly house to the north, winding Deer Creek to the west and the serene Prairie Garden to the south, offering endless opportunities for photography with nature as a backdrop. For even more space, Market Square can be combined with Deer Creek Schoolhouse, Mandelbaum Family Stables and the amphitheater lawn, creating a sprawling, multi-tonal event space for groups of 500 or more.

We look forward to seeing what events grace this new space. To learn about pricing, packages and availability, contact Chatfield Farms' private events team at 720-865-4339.

WAKE UP, BUTTERCUP...SEED!

By Alex Seglias, Seed Conservation Research Associate



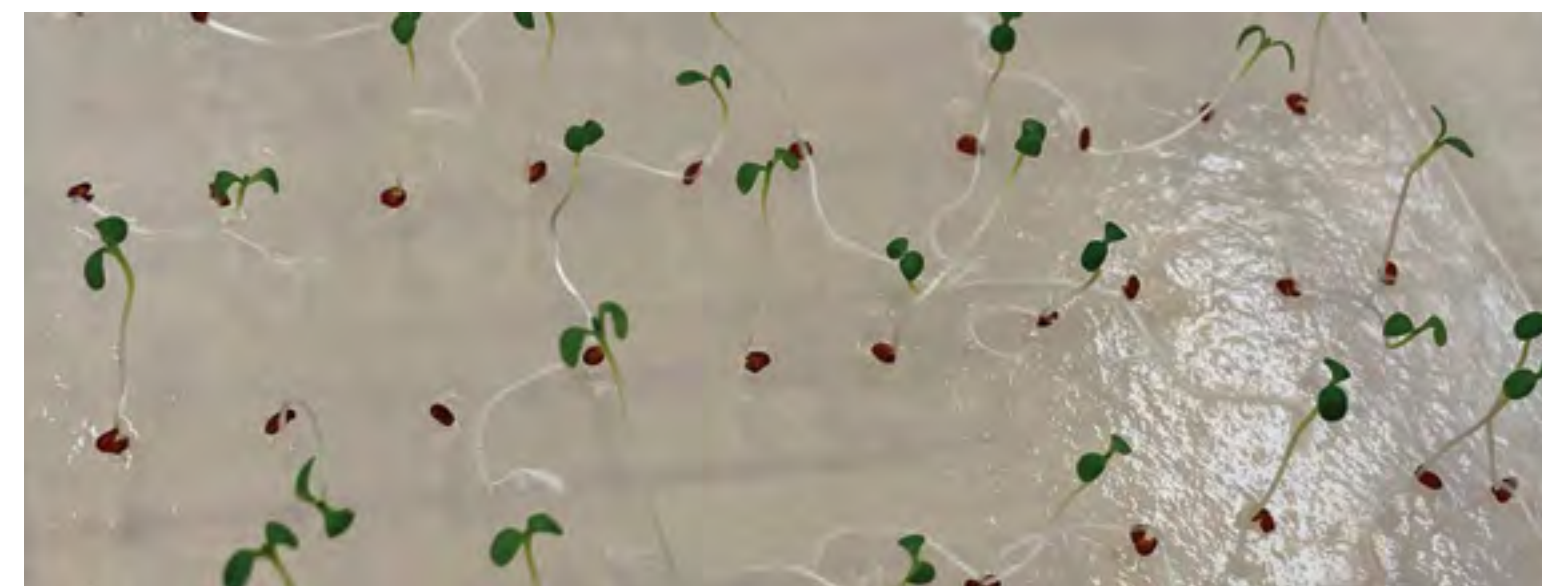
With the spring equinox behind us, the days are growing longer, and plants are coming back to life. The perennials you planted in your garden years ago, as well as those you see year after year along hiking trails, are beginning to turn green as their winter dormancy ends. You may also be seeing small seedlings sprouting in areas that once lay bare, seeds having lain in wait in the soil until the conditions were just right for awakening. For many, spring symbolizes rebirth and new beginnings – an idea that resonates with the season when seed germination most often begins.

Seed germination is essential to a plant's life. The process must be precisely timed so that as a seedling sends down its roots and its leaves emerge from the soil, conditions in the outside world are suitable for survival. For some seeds, moisture and warm temperatures are enough to cue germination. For others, it's a "Goldilocks" scenario: a specific set and pattern of environmental conditions must align before the seed is ready to send its roots and shoots into the world.

Sometimes, we don't know the exact conditions that are required for germination – the seed may hold

those secrets within itself, eluding researchers for years. Often, we can use information from the habitat where the plant species occurs or from closely related species. For example, many of our native Colorado plants are adapted to cold periods, with seeds overwintering in the soil before germinating in the spring. In the lab, we replicate these conditions by sowing seeds on a moist substrate and refrigerating them for several weeks or months. Certain plant families need additional treatments; for instance, species in the pea family need their seed coats abraded so water can reach the embryo.

Since the late 1980s, the Research and Conservation Department has been collecting seeds of rare plant species around Colorado. These seeds are kept in frozen, long-term storage as a safeguard against population destruction or species extinction in the wild. However, if we want to use these seeds for restoration or reintroduction, we must understand the conditions that awaken the seeds and lead to germination. Without this knowledge, effective conservation of rare plant species is impossible.



TRAVEL THE WORLD

with Denver Botanic Gardens as Your Guide

Get [full details and register](#) on our website.

South Africa: Botanical Safari

August 30 – September 9, with optional pre and post extensions

Discover the breathtaking floral kingdom of South Africa, where ancient cycads meet vibrant proteas and the world's most diverse botanical treasures await. Explore world-class art and science institutions like the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art, the Dylan Lewis Sculpture Garden, the Norval Foundation and the Grootbos Florilegium, all while enjoying luxurious accommodations and expertly curated experiences. An optional extension takes you to Sanbona Wildlife Reserve, a stunning landscape rich with lions, leopards, elephants, Cape buffalo and rhino. Your trip leader is Hannah Craft, the associate director of learning engagement & interpretation at Denver Botanic Gardens, where she designs experiences that spark curiosity and foster deeper connections to art, nature and one another.

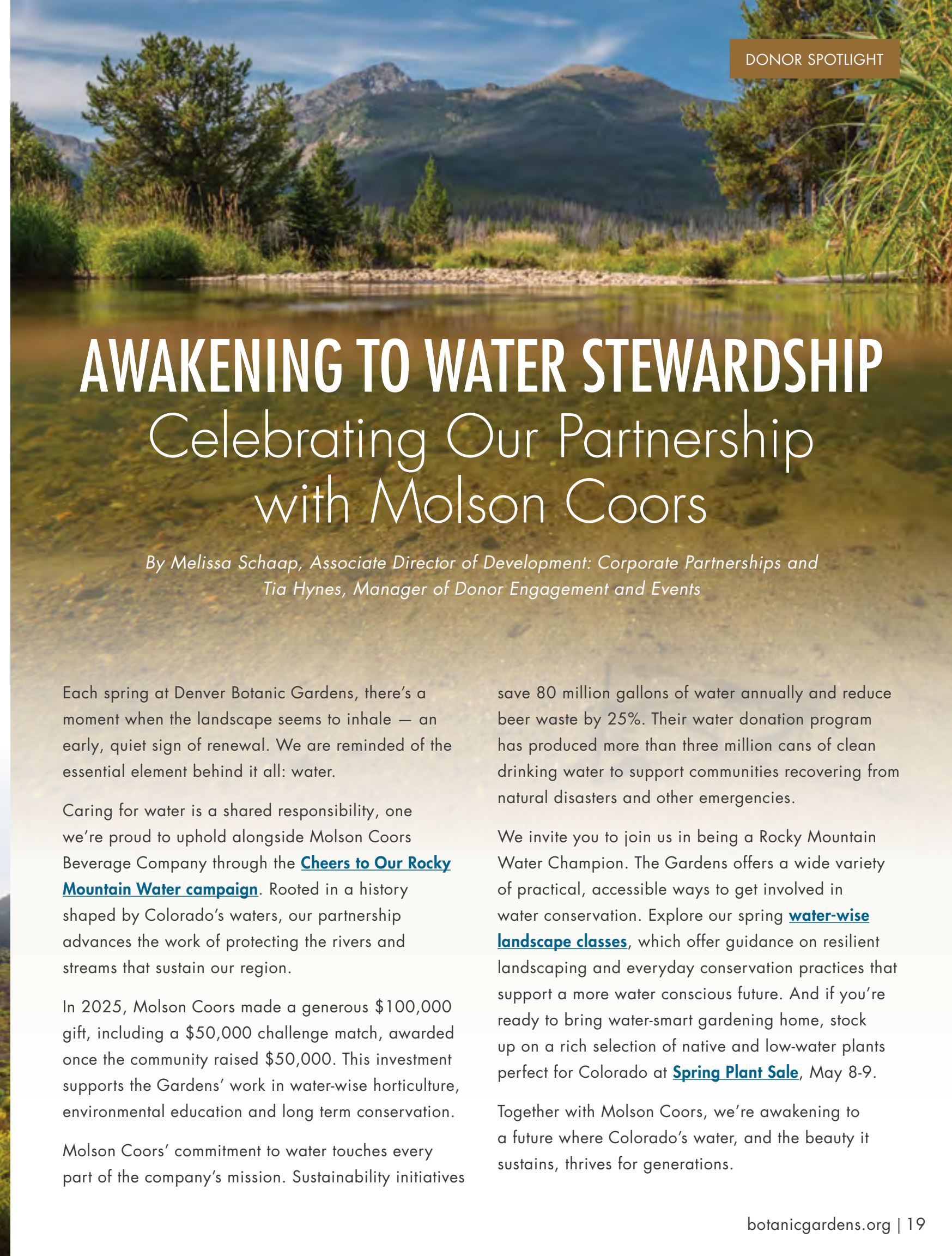
Japan Garden Tour

November 1-10

Experience the essence of Japan. This thoughtfully designed tour will take travelers through Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka—three of Japan's most iconic and culturally rich cities. Explore historical sites such as the Meiji Shrine, Fushimi Inari Shrine, Nijo Castle, Kinkaku-ji Temple and Osaka Castle, many of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Immersive experiences include a traditional rickshaw ride through a bamboo forest, a hands-on sushi-making class and a visit to the amazing digital art museum. Savor local cuisine and enjoy time set aside for personal exploration and shopping. With expert guidance and immersive cultural experiences woven throughout, this tour offers a perfect balance of discovery and inspiration. Your host is Denver Botanic Gardens' Panayoti Kelaidis, senior curator and director of outreach.



Photo courtesy of Ujuzi African Travel



AWAKENING TO WATER STEWARDSHIP

Celebrating Our Partnership with Molson Coors

By Melissa Schaap, Associate Director of Development: Corporate Partnerships and Tia Hynes, Manager of Donor Engagement and Events

Each spring at Denver Botanic Gardens, there's a moment when the landscape seems to inhale — an early, quiet sign of renewal. We are reminded of the essential element behind it all: water.

Caring for water is a shared responsibility, one we're proud to uphold alongside Molson Coors Beverage Company through the [Cheers to Our Rocky Mountain Water campaign](#). Rooted in a history shaped by Colorado's waters, our partnership advances the work of protecting the rivers and streams that sustain our region.

In 2025, Molson Coors made a generous \$100,000 gift, including a \$50,000 challenge match, awarded once the community raised \$50,000. This investment supports the Gardens' work in water-wise horticulture, environmental education and long term conservation.

Molson Coors' commitment to water touches every part of the company's mission. Sustainability initiatives

save 80 million gallons of water annually and reduce beer waste by 25%. Their water donation program has produced more than three million cans of clean drinking water to support communities recovering from natural disasters and other emergencies.

We invite you to join us in being a Rocky Mountain Water Champion. The Gardens offers a wide variety of practical, accessible ways to get involved in water conservation. Explore our spring [water-wise landscape classes](#), which offer guidance on resilient landscaping and everyday conservation practices that support a more water conscious future. And if you're ready to bring water-smart gardening home, stock up on a rich selection of native and low-water plants perfect for Colorado at [Spring Plant Sale](#), May 8-9.

Together with Molson Coors, we're awakening to a future where Colorado's water, and the beauty it sustains, thrives for generations.

Donors of Distinction

Gifts received November 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026

Citizens of the Scientific & Cultural Facilities District Anonymous Raydean Acevedo Ms. Lorraine Adams and Ms. Deborah Horner Sarah and Todd Alijani Dr. Jandel Allen-Davis and Mr. Anthony Davis Alpenglow Foundation American Endowment Foundation Greg P. Anderson Darryl and Cheryl Annett Applewood Seed Company Lili Armstrong Liz Armstrong James Arnone and Jon Purpura Axis Integrated Mental Health Bank of America Mrs. Laura P Barton and Mr. William C Matthews John and Mary Bayard Mr. and Mrs. Nevin BeBee Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Bertoli Alison and Thomas Betts Jack Betts Ms. Gwendolyn T. Black John Blue Julie and Michael Bock Debbie Boesche and Natalie Jossendal Mrs. Brooke and Mr. Jon-Erik Borgen Kaia Borgen Katherine and Bjorn Borgen Borgen Family Foundation Ingrid H. Boyd Brad Clark Fund Charles C. Brown Trevor and Margaret Brown Dr. Leo P. 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