

# 2024 Plant Collections Policy



OLBRICH BOTANICAL GARDENS



## What is a Collections Policy?

- Botanical gardens and arboreta are museums of living plant collections. Just as other types of museums have policies and procedures to oversee the purpose and care of their collections, so do gardens like Olbrich.
- This collections policy guides acquisition and maintenance of living plant and seed collections for future generations by maintaining precise records, by managing the collections ethically and mindfully based on accepted standards outlined by the American Public Gardens Association, and by effectively utilizing garden resources to provide spaces to learn about the botanical world and to inspire and delight Olbrich guests and the greater Madison community.
- The collections policy will be administered by the Director of Horticulture and Conservatory Curator in conjunction with the Plant Recorder, and reviewed in tandem with Olbrich's strategic plan, or not less than every five years.

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## How was the Collections Policy Created?

- The Collections Policy is based on a survey of policies from other similar institutions along with policy requirements as defined by APGA (American Public Gardens Association), AAM (American Alliance of Museums).
- Last revision to Olbrich's policy was 1995. Many staff at Olbrich (including horticulture staff) had never seen the policy, or knew we had one. The creation of this revised version was a collaborative effort between garden and conservatory staff.

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## Why is the Collections Policy Important?

- The Collections Policy guides acquisition and maintenance of living plant and seed collections for future generations by maintaining precise records, by managing the collections ethically and mindfully based on accepted standards outlined by the American Public Gardens Association
  - Improved historical context and land acknowledgment. Includes recently revised mission/vision/goals (as defined by Olbrich's Strategic Plan) and how they relate to the collection.
  - Relates to the Parks Land Management Plan for the City of Madison
  - Sets a timeline for review – in line with next strategic plan, or every five years.
  - Links to Olbrich's Statement of Authority, which outlines the legal relationship between Olbrich Botanical Society (OBS) and City of Madison Parks.
  - Institutional Code of Ethics: outlines governance, stewardship, and personal conduct responsibilities.
  - Scope of Collections: guidelines and goals for the collection.
  - Appendix outlining procedures for recordkeeping in the gardens and conservatory (mapping, accession records, etc...)

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## Future Plans?

- Olbrich was recently chosen to be a part of the 2024 Museum Assessment Program through the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)
  - Since its inception in 1981, the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) has helped more than 5,000 small and mid-sized museums of all types strengthen operations, plan for the future, and meet standards.
  - The Collections Policy will be an integral part of our eventual application for accreditation from the AAM
- Already working on a more defined Scope of Collections
  - Will detail why Olbrich contains certain plants and plant collections and can be used to clarify future collection goals
- Provide guidance for future Plant Information resources for visitors and staff
  - Online plant information maps
    - Searchable map and plant data available to visitors, staff and other institutions
    - Could be expanded to City tree survey data
    - Tool to help further tell our story and guide future expansion
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