

## Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report May 2019

### Visitor comment:

*"Gardens were great! We had beautiful weather so really made for a fantastic day. Gift shop was nice. Everything was well maintained."* 4/16/2019

2019 Olbrich Botanical Gardens Attendance	2019	2018
YTD Attendance as of 3.31.19	40,200	53,108

Attendance is down for 2019. It may be because of the terrible weather in January and February in combination with not so great weather in March. Construction may also have an impact. Staff are monitoring and expect that regular marketing and advertising as well as a goal of attracting publicity to the project under construction will minimize future loss of attendance and keep the losses for 2019 under 15,000.

### Construction Update:

Learning Center: By the time the Board of Park Commissioners reads this, the Frautschi Family Learning Center structural floors will have been poured (scheduled April 23) and the footprint of the building will be more exposed. The fire protection in the existing buildings is nearly complete and activity continues piping utilities for the new building through the ceiling of the existing building – water, heat, electricity, and, of course, the fire sprinkler system. The temporary wall in the lobby is in place with a couple of plexi-glass panels for visitor viewing of construction activity.

Production Greenhouse: The outline of the new greenhouse is also visible; but the foundation and the kneewall on which the aluminum frame will sit is in place. It's more easily viewed from the back side of the building complex. Many of the utility connections are in place for the greenhouse.

### Bolz Conservatory:

Staff are updating plant labels in the Bolz Conservatory. Staff will distinguish the plants' nativity by biogeographical realms and sub-regions/kingdoms, which pre-date current country borders by thousands of years. These provide more comprehensive plant distribution information and will provide additional education to visitors. Curator Colten Blackburn's goal is to include signage that defines the different realms and kingdoms within our biosphere. This will help visitors understand how plants can be native to both the east coast of Africa and the west coast of South America. For example, Oceania is a realm containing three sub-regions, Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. Plants with significance to specific human cultures in the world will have a common name that pertains to that people's language. Common names, which are often made-up to appeal to English speakers – and some could be viewed as demeaning to a people or culture, will not be used if they are not in common use in the plants' native biogeographical region. These actions fit in well with Olbrich's staff inclusion purpose of ensuring that all visitors feel that they belong at Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

### Outdoor Gardens:

The entire staff participated in Vol-A-Pa-Looza – a program organized by Volunteer Services Manager Marty Petillo in order to educate volunteers about 'what is happening in the outdoor gardens this growing season'. City Channel recorded the live presentation – and did a great job! It is available at this link:

<https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Play/1ae84fdd8b2c4bb3acd6a291ed6e86ac1d>

**Volunteers:**

Olbrich Botanical Gardens was certified as a Dementia Friendly Organization in 2018. In order to further this work, three regular Olbrich volunteers attended the training of trainers provided by the *Aging & Disability Resource Center* on April 11. This small group working with Marty Petillo and Amy O'Shea in the Schumacher Library will provide additional training, conduct outreach on behalf of the Garden, and discover ways to improve the visitor experience for those with brain disorders.

**Education:**

Botany Explorer School Program (grades K-3) which runs through May 30, has reached full enrollment -- 26 schools, 42 sessions. Waitlist requests are being accepted from schools still hoping to participate.

The average group size attending the program is 45 students, plus teachers and chaperones. However, groups as large as 64 students are participating in morning or afternoon sessions.

**Schumacher Horticulture Library:**

Amy O'Shea began her role as Horticulture Librarian in the Schumacher Horticultural Library. Amy has a Master's Degree in Library and Information Studies (MLIS) and extensive experience in special library management and customer services. She is an avid gardener who has been a community gardener for 20 years.

**Programs and Exhibitions:**

*LOOK: Tropical Tessellations* had good LOOKing numbers! 10,821 visitors to Olbrich Gardens, February 16 – March 24, also visited LOOK. This was 4,921 more than the goal of 5,900 and higher than the attendance at the Spring Show for the previous 5 years (which typically runs 2 fewer weeks). OBS paid the City of Madison \$12,189 reimbursement for the Conservatory admission, which is \$6,802 more than the goal of \$5,000. *Plant Sale With the Pros* is just around the corner on May 10 & 11. Staff are preparing for a new program -- *Summer Breeze* -- a late afternoon/evening opportunity to stroll the Gardens, purchase food and beverage from Underground Catering, MIJO, Kona Ice and more to be confirmed. Lawn games, entertainment and a few surprises are in store for attendees. It will be a unique way to enjoy Olbrich Botanical Gardens' beautiful setting in June.