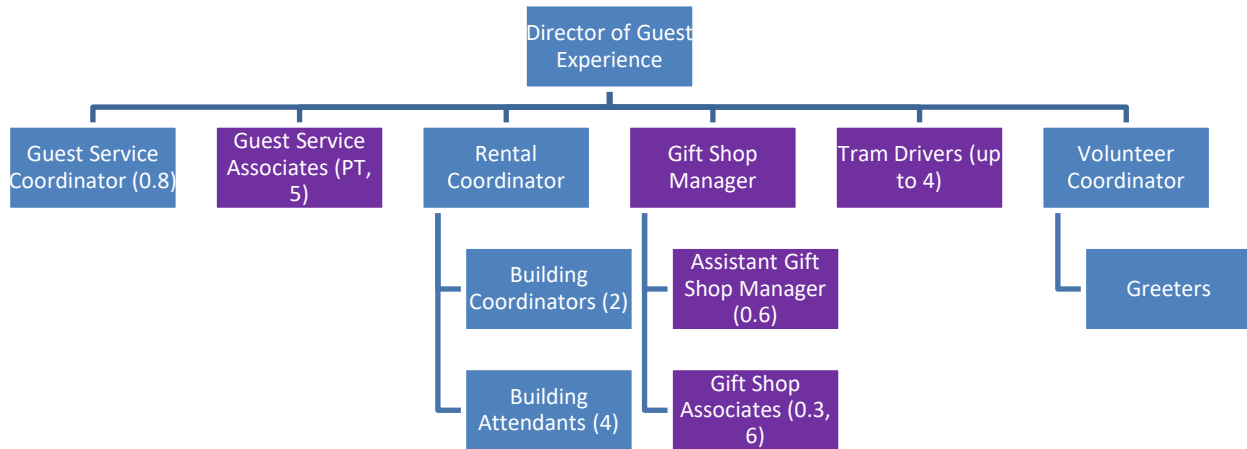
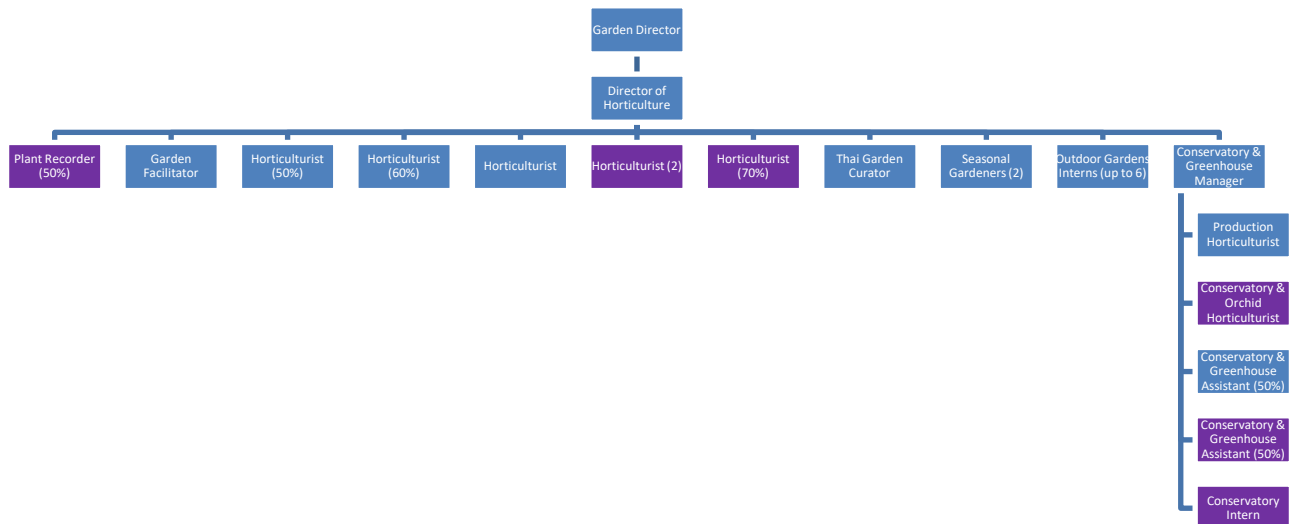


**Board of Park Commissioners  
Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report  
May 2023**

**Staff Structure Changes**



In Olbrich Gardens’ strategic plan, Goal III focuses on the need to improve and enhance the guest experience at and with Olbrich Gardens. The first step to accomplishing this is to create a guest experience department and hire a Director of Guest Experience. This vision became reality with the recent reclassification of the previous volunteer services manager position (18-01) to the Director of Guest Experience (18-08). The Finance Committee approved this position on March 27, 2023. The new department will include the gift shop, facility rentals, guest services, tram operations, and volunteer services. Since the reclassification eliminated the previous volunteer services manager, that role will transition to an Olbrich Botanical Society-funded position. The bigger picture of the volunteer program will be managed by the Director of Guest Experience, with the daily operations of the program managed by the Volunteer Coordinator. This will enable the growth and efficiency of the program by focusing on volunteer software, volunteer recruitment of more diverse volunteers, and enhanced volunteer training.



The retirement of Director of Horticulture Jeff Epping, after 28 years of service, offered up an

opportunity to unify all horticulture positions at Olbrich Gardens. As a result, outdoor gardens, production, greenhouses, and conservatory staff will all report to the Director of Horticulture. Historically outdoor gardens were separate from the Bolz Conservatory and greenhouses. By bringing these programs into one department, it will ensure that policies and procedures are the same across the board, along with elevating the state of horticulture at the gardens. There is a priority to make the plant recorder position full-time so that position has more time to assist the Bolz Conservatory staff with plant records and labels, which they currently do not do.

Key: Blue (City of Madison), Purple (OBS)

### Active Shooter Training

The City of Madison Police Department hosted their Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events for both staff and volunteers on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Staff and volunteers felt the training was informative and helpful. The training will be repeated this fall as not all staff and volunteers were able to attend.

### We're Open! - Atwood Construction



Atwood Avenue construction is in full swing! During construction, programs and operating hours will remain the same. However, getting to and from the gardens may change depending upon the construction work. Atwood Ave is currently one lane only and is likely to remain that way during the entire project. Traffic flow is from Cottage Grove Rd. to Fair Oaks Ave. Cars leaving the gardens must turn right. A detour directs traffic to use Hwy 51 instead of Atwood Ave. Currently Walter St. is closed at Atwood Ave and there is a detour. The road will reopen in mid-June.

### Olbrich Goes to Texas!



Olbrich Gardens collaborates with Country Travel Discoveries to offer affinity travel tours. On average, two tours are offered a year in collaboration with Olbrich Gardens. Staff assist Country Travel with the itinerary trip development with the focus on gardens. One staff also joins the tour as a guest to help highlight the gardens and plants on the tours. Most recently, Olbrich Garden Director, Tanya Zastrow was part of a tour of Texas Wildflowers. This trip included visiting the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center along with other gardens, private home gardens, and Waterloo Park, which features many native plants. In total, there were 45 guests on the trip from 10 different states with the majority coming from Wisconsin. In the fall, Horticulturist Erin Presley is leading a tour of gardens in New York City. For

more information, visit this [website](#). A portion of the trip proceeds benefits Olbrich Botanical Society. San Antonio Botanical Garden featured in photo.

### Royal Thai Pavilion Updates



The request for proposals to complete the roofing work on the Royal Thai Pavilion is now open. Interested applicants can find more details on the project page [here](#). The roofing project will begin in mid-August. The project will only repair the roof. We are working with UW-Madison and the Thai Consulate in Chicago to bring the Thai Artisans to Madison to complete the rest of the project involving the detailed artwork.

Olbrich Gardens will host, in collaboration with the Thai Consulate, an event on **June 25<sup>th</sup> from 11am-4pm** to celebrate 190 years of diplomatic relationship between the United States of American and Thailand. The event will include musical and dance performances by Thai performers from Chicago. It will also include a variety of activities taught by Thai instructors. The Great Lawn will feature both Thai and American foods from local food trucks.

## Olbrich Botanical Gardens May 2023 Quarterly Report



President of Siam University, Pornchai Mongkhonvanit, visited the Royal Thai Pavilion in April with his wife and daughter. Mr. Mongkhonvanit attended the University of Wisconsin in the early 1980's. He's a member of the UW Thai Alumni Chapter. He made time in his visit to see the Royal Thai Pavilion and to hear the project update on the renovations.

New Website – [www.olbrich.org](http://www.olbrich.org)



Olbrich Botanical Society received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to redo the website for Olbrich Botanical Gardens. The new website launches on May 11<sup>th</sup>. It is a fully mobile friendly website include a mobile friendly map. It include a header for alerts such as Atwood Construction, a easy to use calendar of events, and beautiful garden photography. Check it out! Features that will come in a few months include multiple language translation, What's in Bloom feature, and transition to new software for membership, donations, ticketing, and registrations.

**Rusty Patch Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*) Queen Sighted!**

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Garden Scout Volunteer Laura Vierthaler captured a photograph of a Rusty Patch Bumble Bee Queen in the Sunken Garden at Olbrich Gardens. This observation was posted on iNaturalist where it was confirmed to be a queen Rusty Patch Bumble Bee. This species is listed as Federally Endangered and State Special Concern. The WI-DNR states it is extremely rare in Wisconsin and is considered both state and globally imperiled. The sighting in iNaturalist is found [here](#).