

**Board of Park Commissioners  
Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report  
June 2022**

**It Bloomed!**



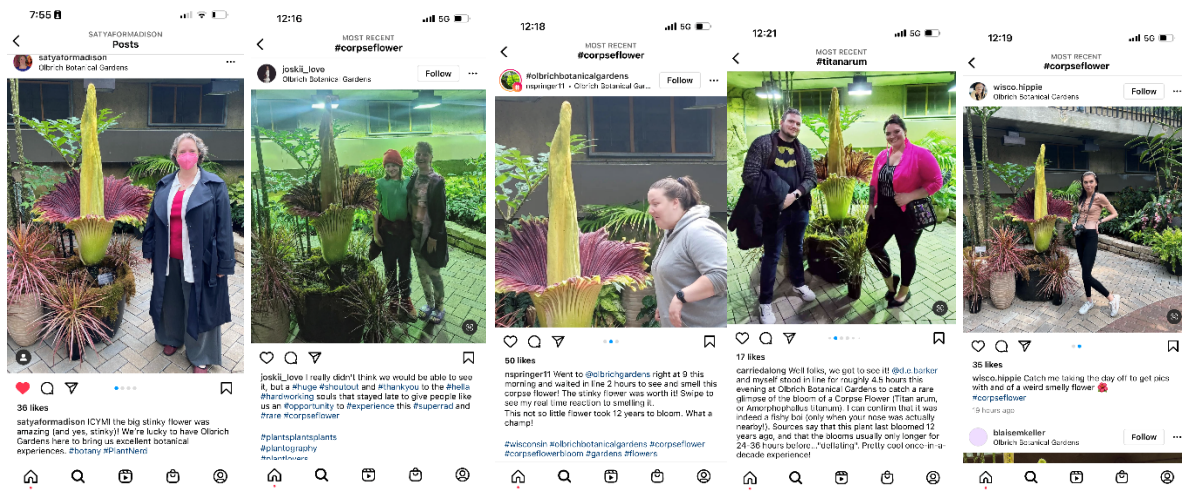
On Wednesday, May 4, 2022 one of Olbrich's four *Amorphophallus titanium* bloomed. The last time this specific corpse flower bloomed was 12 years ago and the last time Olbrich had a corpse flower bloom was 2018. The Bolz Conservatory was rented for the evening the first day it bloomed for a wedding. The happy couple was beyond excited for the bloom to occur on their special day. They were not the only ones excited as thousands of guests visited Olbrich over the four days it was blooming. In total over 5,500 guests visited the Bolz Conservatory to view the bloom and over \$21,100 in revenue was generated in Conservatory admissions. The plant was in full bloom on Thursday, May 5, 2022 and the Conservatory was scheduled to be open until 7pm. Guests waited for over 4 hours and 30 minutes to see the rare bloom and left the building after 10:30pm. Visitors to the flower came from as far away as La Crosse and Wausau! The news media enjoyed it as well featuring the corpse flower in print, television, and radio media.

Figure 1: *Amorphophallus titanium* in full bloom

- WORT: [Corpse Flower To Bloom Soon at Olbrich Botanical Garden](#)
- WKOW: [Olbrich Gardens Corpse Flower Nears Bloom](#)
- WISC: [Corpse Flower at Olbrich Gardens Now in Bloom](#)
- WISC: [Hundreds Line Up to Get a Whiff of the Corpse Flower](#)
- WMTV: [Corpse Flower Stench Crashes Madison Couple's Wedding](#)
- Isthmus.com: [Corpse Flower Blooming](#)
- The Cap Times: [PHOTOS: Rare Corpse Flower Blooms at Olbrich Botanical Gardens](#)
- WMTV: [Corpse Flower Blooms at Olbrich Botanical Gardens](#)
- Yahoo!News: [Corpse Flower Blooms for First Time in 12 Years](#)
- WBAY: [Corpse Flower Blooms at Olbrich Botanical Gardens](#)
- Wisconsin State Journal: [Watch Now: Hundreds Turn Out for Whiff of Rare 'Corpse Flower' at Olbrich Gardens](#)
- Madison.com: [Photos: Smelling a Rare Corpse Flower Bloom](#)

- Kenosha News: [Watch Now: Hundreds Turn Out for Whiff of Rare 'Corpse Flower' at Olbrich Gardens](#)
- MSN.com: [Corpse Flower Blooms for First Time in 12 Years](#)
- WMTV: [Corpse Flower Bloom Still Partially Open at Olbrich Botanical Gardens](#)
- Spectrum News 1: [Thousands Wait Hours to See Madison Corpse Flower in Bloom](#)
- WMSN: [Corpse Flower at Olbrich Gardens Starting to Close](#)
- WDJT: [Corpse Flowers Bloom in Madison](#)

A few of the favorite Instagram posts from the bloom include:



## Upcoming Strategic Plan

Olbrich Botanical Society has selected [EMD Consulting Group](#) in collaboration with Findorff and [The People Company](#) to lead the Gardens through a strategic plan process. Rick Daley, from EMD Consulting, will lead the process. He is an experienced executive director of public gardens and is one of the founding partners of EMD Consulting Group. As a consultant his work includes planning (strategic plans, business plans, operational plans, and economic sustainability plans), organizational structures, benchmarking, governance, and fundraising. He has consulted with dozens of public gardens, many of which have a public and private partnership similar to Olbrich Botanical Gardens. To bring in a local perspective Mr. Daley is collaborating with Tim Prince, Strategic Alignment, from Findorff and Deborah Biddle, Founder and Chief Consultant, from The People Company. Together Mr. Prince and Mrs. Biddle will connect with the local community and stakeholders to ensure they have an opportunity to participate in the planning process. Together this team will lead Olbrich Botanical Gardens through the strategic plan process. The process is anticipated to begin this summer and conclude in 6 months.

## Royal Thai Pavilion

Olbrich Botanical Garden staff are working with City of Madison Engineering, University of Wisconsin Planning and Development, and InSite Consulting Architects on the renovation of The Royal Thai Pavilion. On June 1<sup>st</sup> a public information meeting was held and information was shared about the assessment being conducted to determine what needs to be done to restore the structure. Currently access to enter The Royal Thai Pavilion is restricted and will be until the restoration is complete (anticipated for 2023).

## Music & Art in the Gardens

Olbrich Botanical Society announced on June 1, 2022 that it received an historic \$1.3 million pledge to create the “Bridging Nature and Art: Performance and Visual Art in the Gardens Endowment.” The generous gift is from two anonymous donors – a married couple who both volunteer at Olbrich.

The donors will contribute annual gifts to the Bridging Nature and Art Endowment over the next decade. Once fully funded, it will provide \$50,000 in annual support to the Olbrich Botanical Society for music and arts programming.

While the Endowment grows over the next ten years, the donors will provide additional annual gifts to the Society to support music and arts programming, beginning with the [2022 Summer Concert Series](#). Olbrich’s summer concerts are on Tuesdays, June 14 - August 16, from 7-8 p.m. The concerts are free to the public; a \$5 suggested donation is appreciated.

This added financial support will enable the Gardens to offer more frequent and a wider variety of arts and music events. It also ensures that musicians and artists will be compensated fairly for their services.

One example of this generous gift being put into action already is Olbrich’s participation in [Make Music Madison](#) day on Tuesday, June 22, 2022. On this special day the gardens were filled with musical performances every hour in a different part of the garden.



Figure 2: Eric De Los Santos



Figure 3: Melvis performing on the roof

## Hop on the Olbrich Tram



*Figure 2: Education staff conducts a tram trial run*

For the first time since the pandemic started, the Olbrich tram is up and running again. Guests to the gardens may enjoy a narrated tour of the gardens. The recorded tour was updated this spring and now features the Horticulture staff talking about the specific gardens they manage. There is no cost to ride the tram, but donations are welcomed. The tram runs daily from 10am-4:30pm for the summer season.

## Olbrich Beautifies State Street



*Figure 3: Olbrich interns and horticulture staff plant containers on State St.*

Once again, Olbrich horticulture staff and interns beautified State Street. They created colorful planters and baskets all along State Street.

## Summer Interns



Figure 4: Horticulture Interns 2022

This summer Olbrich welcomed 7 interns to the Horticulture Department and 1 intern to the Education Department. New this year is a partnership with Madison College who provided two students to Olbrich for summer internships. Horticulture interns work alongside staff and volunteers in the gardens. The education intern is supporting summer programming and is engaging guests in various activities at the new Discovery Cart. The cart was beautifully crafted by [Reflo](#), [Arts @ Large](#), and Milwaukee high school interns. It came equipped with tons of materials and resources for nature-based, outdoor programs for youth. OBS purchased the cart with funds from a donor who wanted to support educational programming.



Figure 5: Education intern, Tatum, at the new Discovery Cart