

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

Olbrich Garden Receives Destination Madison Award

Destination Madison celebrated their 50th anniversary on November 29, 2023. As part of their celebration, they hosted a variety of awards for the hospitality and tourism industries. Olbrich Botanical Gardens received the [Herb and Sylvia Frank Visionary Award](#). This award recognizes a business or organization that has made exceptional achievements in providing valuable services or products to Madison's visitor economy while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life for residents.



Figure 1: Olbrich Gardens staff accepted the Destination Madison award.

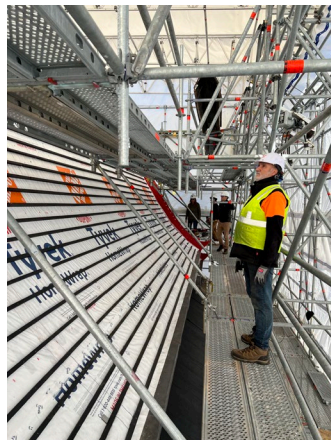
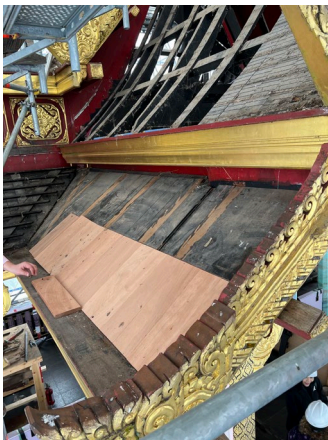
Royal Thai Pavilion & Bridge Update

In August, a large cottonwood tree branch fell onto the Thai Bridge, causing damage to the railing. This month, R. G. Huston is repairing that damage along with replacing the boards. Boards that are in decent enough condition will be repurposed for garden features. R. G. Huston was selected as the contractor due to their prior experience both installing the bridge and making repairs over the years. They even designed a carriage that moves along the underside of the bridge to make repairs.



Figure 2: Thai bridge in middle of repair work.

Work continues on the Royal Thai Pavilion. The roof repairs are complete with the exception of installing the tiles. The tiles are in transit to the United States, with an expected arrival date of January 12, 2024. Once here, they anticipate it will take approximately 2 weeks to install the roofing tiles. A public tile-signing day is tentatively planned for the end of January, where the public can sign the underside of a tile with words of peace and hope.



Wisconsin Homegrown Holiday



In this year’s Holiday Train Show, Olbrich Gardens celebrates Wisconsin and everything that makes it special. The show features a variety of poinsettias accompanied by an ice shanty, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, a barn complete with a dairy cow, cheese holiday trees, cranberry bogs, and vintage snowmobiles. Attendance for the show is on track to be even higher than 2022’s Holiday Train Show.

- WMTV 15:
<https://www.wmtv15news.com/video/2021/12/11/holiday-express-flower-model-train-show-open-olbrich-botanical-gardens/>
- Channel 3000:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQRq38Yb5qI>

Most Peaceful Place in Wisconsin



Casago analyzed the “Things to Do” sections of TripAdvisor pages for all 50 U.S. states and 20 major U.S. cities and ranked the attractions in each state according to the number of times “peaceful” is mentioned. Based on this analysis, Olbrich Botanical Gardens was named the most peaceful place in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Governor's Residence

Once again, Olbrich Botanical Garden horticulturists created holiday decorations for the front entry to the Governor's Residence. The decorations are part of the holiday display, which the public is invited to visit and see. This year's decorations also included elements from the Holiday Train Show.



Figure 3: Orchid Horticulturist Irene Padlin, Conservatory Curator Colten Blackburn, and Intern Julia Ammons

Voluntourism at Olbrich Gardens

[WOWT](#) featured voluntourism in a news feature this fall and included volunteering at Olbrich Gardens in the story. The social media influencers, [honeytrek](#), posted about their experience volunteering on their [social media](#) page.

What's coming up?

- January 27- March 3 – “The Rise of the Angiosperms” Orchid Escape Show
- February 14 – Annual volunteer appreciation
- January 24-26, March 4-5, & March 11-June 15 – Bolz Conservatory Closures