



**Board of Park Commissioners
Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report
December 2021**

Fall is a beautiful time at Olbrich Botanical Gardens. Thankfully visitors returned to the gardens at levels that mirror pre-pandemic numbers. Olbrich's field trips, classes, and special programs were once again filled with attendees. Virtual programs continued providing visitors with the option to learn and engage with Olbrich from the comforts of their homes. The new Frautschi Learning Center was filled with learners of all ages and the greenhouses were filled with poinsettias being grown for the Holiday Show.

2021 Monthly Attendance

Total Attendance	2021	2020	2019	Prev 5-Year Average
Sept. 1-30	22491	14339	20553	25896
Oct. 1-31	18760	9976	16267	25845
Nov. 1-31	9706	6428	10697	10481

2021 Bolz Conservatory Admissions

Category	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
Free - Age 5 and under	154	190	152
Free - Member	385	431	735
Free - Scholarship (Donor Funded)	5	246	13
Free -- Wed & Sat Mornings	1228	1033	708
General Admission	2410	2056	2046
Total Admissions	4182	3956	3656

2021 Revenue Sharing Update

	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
Total Revenue	\$14,466.00	\$13,752.00	\$12,354.00
Total Expenses	\$3,120.90	\$2,871.80	\$3,050.41
Net Revenue	\$11,345.10	\$10,880.20	\$9,303.59
Revenue Formula	50% net rev	50% net rev	50% net rev
Paid to City of Madison	\$5,672.55	\$5,440.10	\$4,651.80

Membership

Membership	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
Households	6209	6215	6310
Cards	10382	10395	10,551

Education



On October 16, 2021 Olbrich Botanical Gardens celebrated the Grand Opening of the Frautschi Learning Center and Greenhouses. Special guest speakers for the event included Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp, and Olbrich Botanical Society Past President Julie Rupert. After the ribbon cutting, the public was invited to explore the new classrooms and greenhouses. Activities were offered for all ages in the greenhouses, classrooms, and gardens. A video documenting the day was produced and is available for viewing at this [link](#). The full celebration and ribbon cutting is available at this [link](#).

The Children's Kitchen Garden was put to rest in September with the help of Edgewood High School students. The garden welcomed over 350 people through 22 garden-based classes. Over the season more than 900 pounds of produce was donated to Goodman Community Center's Fritz Food Pantry and Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin.

Schools are slowly returning to the gardens for guided and self-guided field trips. A total of 200 program participants participated in the Ecology Explorer School Program (grades K-5) this fall. To provide school groups with a more enriching experience, a new I Spy activity was created for self-guided visits. Adult groups are slowly returning as well. Guided public tours returned this fall with volunteers serving as the garden guides. Adults also enjoyed the wide selection of both in-person and virtual classes that focused on gardening and wellness.

The Schumacher Library re-opened to the public on August 30, 2021. New to the library is the online catalog. Anyone is able to browse the catalog of books online and members can hold books for up to seven days. All members automatically become library patrons and receive a patron number. The Library also provides I Spy activities for families visiting the

gardens. Additional activities include pop-up story times, used book sale, and the information hotline for gardening questions.

Education	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021
Number of Programs	18	40	21
Program Participants	223	814	260

Outdoor Gardens

This fall's lovely weather provided warmer temperatures for longer than normal. The Horticulture team took advantage of the unseasonal temperatures and planted 15,000 spring blooming bulbs. The reward for all the hard work of course comes next spring when the new bulbs push forth among the emerging perennial foliage and thousands of other naturalized bulbs planted in the gardens in previous years. The horticulture staff and their groups of dedicated volunteers dismantled containers and removed tender tropicals from beds and borders in preparation for the first frost. The process sounds straightforward, but it's quite time-consuming, since there are hundreds of perennials, shrubs, trees and tropicals mixed in with the traditional summer annuals. They all were pulled from their summer homes and put into individual nursery containers for over-wintering in the nursery quonsets and greenhouses.

During November, staff was busy preparing for and setting up the Holiday Train Show. The theme of this year's show is "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles". They curated the theme by adding memorabilia from the automobile, train, and airplane industries. They enlisted the support of volunteers to help create decorations and loan decorations for the show including an antique car.

Bolz Conservatory and Greenhouses

In November the Bolz Conservatory celebrated its 30th Anniversary. Special programs, such as the Canopy Sessions and Tropical Plant Spotlight, invited visitors into the Conservancy to learn about plants and enjoy the tropical environment with music. A 30th Anniversary Bolz Conservancy campaign was held to raise funds to make needed accessibility improvements, wash the outside windows, and update the educational platform, interpretive signs, and musician's terrace. The initial campaign was very successful and a second goal of \$60,000 was set.

The new greenhouses were put to use this fall growing poinsettias for the Holiday Train Show. The greenhouse & conservatory staff worked hard this fall sticking cuttings of tender plants that can't be grown from seed, for use in the gardens next year. Plants like English ivies, colorful coleus, fancy-leafed begonias and scented geraniums. They also grew over 10 varieties and over 800 poinsettia plants for use in the December Holiday Train Show. Next up will be production for the Spring Show and spring plantings. The orchid house was filled with orchids that are being prepped to be shown off in the upcoming Orchid Escape show in February.

Staff grew by one this fall with an additional staff member funded by Olbrich Botanical Society. This fall staff spent time washing the lower interior windows and power washing the walkways to ensure paths are not slippery for walking.

Exhibit and Special Programs



Photo: Spectrum Swing



Photo: Reflections, Best in Show

Olbrich's 2021 GLEAM exhibit wrapped up on October 30 and it set a record with over 33,000 visitors attending. A new timed ticket system was used to ensure visitors did not exceed set limits and to provide a safe experience for all. A visitor survey was conducted and over 3,800 surveys were completed. Of these visitors 14.5% were new visitors to the gardens. Many visitors enjoyed their experience and shared their comments with Olbrich. Here are just a few:

"I really enjoyed Gleam this year. I am an individual that has a vision loss, I could not see all the shapes of the different animals and art. However, I enjoyed Gleam more this year with the different animal sounds and music. I really felt like it was a much more enjoyable experience with using a variety of senses."

"We just moved into Madison from New Jersey. I was looking for things to do before we moved, and discovered the gardens. My husband has Alzheimer's and we are limited in what we can do. Gleam was perfect! We had the best time last night. I can't thank you enough for a perfect evening!"

"As a longtime Olbrich member who lives just down the block, I like to have new opportunities to explore and enjoy the gardens. I imagine it brings many more people to the gardens to support it, too!"

“Great! I have been meaning to go to this for years and finally made it there. Loved it and will go again. It was fun for adults and kids (and is covid friendly...yaa!).”

GLEAM selections for 2022 have been made and the exhibition will include a piece in the Bolz Conservatory.

GLEAM wasn't the only special program to enjoy this past fall. Canopy Sessions returned this fall with live musicians performing in the Bolz Conservatory. Tropical Plant Spotlights provided visitors with drop-in opportunities to learn more about the plants in the Bolz Conservatory.

Rentals

Stakeholder groups returned this fall for both meetings and events. The Herb Society hosted their Herb Fair in November and the Weaver's Guild hosted their Fine Arts and Craft Show in October.

Weddings are returning as well but are smaller in size. This fall seven weddings were held at Olbrich. Businesses and non-profits are slowly returning as rental clients selecting Olbrich as their meeting site.

Volunteers

As operations at Olbrich return to pre-pandemic levels the need for volunteers grows. Gardener volunteers came back in force helping out in the gardens this fall, including a few corporate groups. For 2021, they contributed a record 6,500 hours this past year! Volunteers responded a little slower to open positions inside the building and the Bolz Conservatory. However, volunteers are returning which is positive news. The greeter desk volunteer position is nearly fully staffed.

Olbrich is currently verifying the vaccination status of all volunteers. As of January 1, 2022 proof of vaccination is required to volunteer. Over 250 volunteers have provided proof of vaccination so far.

Olbrich staff and volunteers are actively engaged in the [Homegrown National Park Project](#). Staff and volunteers collected white oak acorns with the goal of handing out tree seedlings to the public in the fall of 2022. The group meets on a regular basis to move this project forward.

Public Relations and Marketing

The public continues to love the gardens, events, and features of Olbrich. Here are a few highlights of Olbrich in the media for this quarter:

- [Promotional video](#), produced by Dylan Jordee, for GLEAM helped promote the event to the public.
- GLEAM was one of the [Isthmus' Picks](#) for the week of September 9.
- The Grand Opening event was covered by two media outlets, [WISC](#) and [WKOW](#).

- A press release announcing the new Garden Director Tanya Zastrow was shared to nearly 100 media. Articles that were produced as a result include:
 - [Wisconsin State Journal \(Oct. 6\)](#)
 - [City of Madison](#): Many thanks to Parks Dept. PIO Ann Shea for sending the press release out through City channels.
 - [American Public Garden Association](#)
- Destination Madison selected Olbrich as a location for a summer marketing campaign aimed at bringing in tourists to Madison. Their video and photo shoot for this campaign took place in October.
- Olbrich was featured in the 2021 Madison Area Music Awards. The Thai Pavilion was featured prominently in the upcoming Madison Area Music Awards Show, held virtually on Sunday, November 7th. The popular Reggae/Fusion band Natty Nation recorded their performance at Olbrich on the evening of October 5th in front of the illuminated Thai Pavilion, resulting in some truly stunning visuals to complement the performance. [Click here](#) to see a Facebook post from the MAMA's promoting Natty's performance at Olbrich.

Additional updates related to services provided to the visitors of Olbrich include:

- Olbrich Botanical Society received a matching grant for \$50,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to fund the redesign of the [Olbrich Botanical Gardens website](#). The new website will be complete by October 2022.
- The new map is almost finished with the final tweaks and review stage in progress.