

Olbrich Botanical Gardens Quarterly Report November 2019

2019 Olbrich Botanical Gardens Attendance	2019	2018
YTD Attendance as of September 30	256,853	272,578

Construction Update:

The project contract was extended as indicated below:

- **Production Greenhouse:** The interior shades, fans, mechanical equipment is underway. Occupancy the 2nd week in November. The tropical plants and orchids are scheduled be moved back the 3rd week in November
- **Frautschi Family Learning Center:** The roofing is nearly complete and the exterior walkways and plaza areas are in progress. The improved permeable walkways is replacing the damaged paving. The soil for the new garden beds (that was removed before construction) is in process of being returned. Occupancy is expected the 4th week in November. A full slate of Explorer School Programs, plus adult, and youth and family classes, is scheduled to begin in January. The Class Catalog will be available in early December.
- **Grand Opening:** Olbrich Staff are planning a soft opening of the new facilities. They will be in use as soon as they are occupied, but details such as recognition signage, directional signage, outdoor garden development, and so forth won't be completed until Spring. An open house that introduces the 2020 programmatic theme -- 'the elements' will feature activities in the new facilities. A celebration for donors and city officials as well as a public grand opening will take place in June.

Bolz Conservatory:

Amanda Dix, Assistant Conservatory Curator for Plant Production, attended the Plug and Cutting Conference, a grower education opportunity provided by AmericanHort. Amanda reported that she learned a lot and is already preparing the schedules for crops that will occupy the new Production Greenhouse. Terry Hodge, Conservatory & Orchid Horticulturist, is getting the orchids and tropicals ready for their journey back to Madison – after more than a year in Fitchburg!

Outdoor Gardens:

Starkweather Creek is high, but the flooding is much less extensive than in 2018. The Discovery Dock remains underwater and the path between the pond and the creek is flooded. Damage to plantings from last year's flooding is evident. Rethinking the planting of the banks of Starkweather Creek is ongoing. Jeff Epping is planning to utilize flood plain species in the overstory. The *Cornus mas* hedge has been completely replanted. The hedge is located around the Sunken Garden and forms an arbor walk when first entering the Gardens from the Visitor Center. Preparing the Gardens for winter is underway – irrigation will be blown out late October/early November. Tropical plants displayed in the outdoor gardens have been removed and either composted or prepared for winter in one of the hoop houses. Spring bulbs are being planted throughout.

Volunteers: OBG couldn't host the GLEAM exhibition without the assistance of volunteers. One hundred two individual volunteers gave 1010 hours to GLEAM. Exact Science staff groups (who have been volunteering as teams) gave 115 volunteer hours and fully staffed GLEAM on four evenings during the two-month program! Rain, cold, and dark of night did not keep Olbrich volunteers from their GLEAM duties.

Education:

Ecology Explorer school program is underway for K – 5 classrooms and runs through the 1st week in November. Classrooms from around the Madison region filled the 36 available bookings.

A visitor wrote (regarding the **Schumacher Library** and its librarian, Amy O'Shea) *"I very much appreciate all the effort and time you put into the identification of all the plant photos I sent. ... You have been a persistent detective in tracking down this information and as a retired librarian (public library) I truly understand what it takes to find answers. Thank you again."*

Public Relations & Marketing/Programs & Exhibitions:

GLEAM: Art in a New Light 2019 closed on October 26. Thousands of visitors enjoyed the exhibition with record attendance. Some of that attendance is due to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism grant received by Olbrich Botanical Society to promote GLEAM in the Milwaukee market. Some of the attendees were expected to dine in Madison restaurants and stay in local hotels! A 'best in show' survey will help collect zip codes and other data from GLEAM attendees.