

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

With beautiful spring weather and an increasing number of Dane County residents vaccinated, visitorship at Olbrich gained from March to May, with total attendance in May exceeding the previous 5-year average. Staff began contingency planning for the return of some exhibits and events, in-person adult and youth classes, and rentals. Full crews of Outdoor Gardener Volunteers started in April as well as a limited number of in-door visitor services volunteers.

**2021 Monthly Attendance**

<b>Total Attendance</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Prev 5 year average</b>
March 1-31	13,248	8,322	16,909
April 1-30	20,263	618	19,196
May 1-31	34,252	0	30,393

**2021 Bolz Conservatory Admissions**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Mar 2021</b>	<b>April 2021</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
Free - Age 5 and under	353	378	417
Free - Member	879	965	788
Free - Scholarship (Donor Funded)	15	1	2
Free -- Wed & Sat Mornings	1,028	1,195	1,661
General Admission	2,453	3,061	4,183
<b>Total Admissions</b>	<b>4,728</b>	<b>5,600</b>	<b>7,081</b>

**2021 Revenue Sharing Update**

	<b>March 2021</b>	<b>April 2021</b>	<b>May 2021</b>
Total Revenue	\$14,80.00	\$18,264.00	\$24,930.00
Total Expenses	\$1,730.00	\$2,447.00	\$2,785.50
Net Revenue	\$13,078.00	\$15,817.00	\$22,144.50
Revenue Formula	50% net rev	50% net rev	50% net rev
Paid to City of Madison	\$6,539.00	\$7,908.50	\$11,072.25

**Education**

- Over the past 3 months (March-May), 93 classes were offered with 1,717 people attending these classes via either zoom or in-person.
- In April, in-person classes resumed.
- More than 900 people participated in the 5-part virtual lecture series, *A Gardener's Call*.
- With the January-May class roster concluding, the registrations for the June-December classes went live in May, with both in-person and virtual classes offered.
- While Schumacher Library remains closed for walk-in visitors, virtual plant information services were offered with over 100 questions answered March-May.
- Education staff developed and delivered two virtual field trips for school groups with about 90 students engaged.

## Outdoor Gardens

- Staff completed spring clean up, brought out plants over-wintering in the hoop houses for use in containers and garden beds, planted tropicals from the greenhouse outdoors, and mulched beds.
- The current Rose Garden no longer features stands of roses due to intensive pesticide usage needed to grow them in our zone, and many visitors do not recognize it as the Rose Garden. After social media outreach to OBS members and the public, inviting them to submit a new name for the garden, the overwhelming winner for the new name for the Rose Garden is the Tower Garden. This will be announced in the summer Olbrich Garden News.
- Olbrich staff collaborated with Chef Elena Terry (Ho-Chunk) to curate a plant list showcasing Indigenous crops suited to Wisconsin. With day-to-day help from Olbrich staff member Rita Peters (Ho-Chunk), Olbrich's Herb Garden will feature an Indigenous Garden this season; it is off to a great start. Sunflowers and corn sprouts are already poking up along the edges of the Three Sisters living tunnel created with red maple saplings.
- This spring, horticulture staff began planting the herbaceous layer of the gardens surrounding new Frautschi Family Learning Center. Trees, shrubs, and vines were planted in 2020; this spring, a combination of flowering perennials, grasses and sedges are being added in a naturalistic manner. The majority of the design utilizes native perennials that will support a plethora of native insects, including native bees, wasps, butterflies and moths. We're excited to create beautiful new gardens and at the same time habitat for these insects!

## Bolz Conservatory and Greenhouses

- The conservatory closed for two weeks in the early part of March, so that the annual spring pruning could get underway. This provides conservatory staff with much needed time to prune large specimen trees that cannot access without the use of the lift rental, and well as time to revamp bedding designs.
- Within the conservatory, the Orchid Aerie and Musician's Terrace received much-needed revamps. The concrete and fiberglass structure were removed from the Orchid Aerie so that more space could be provided for visitor seating, and trellis was installed to feature mounted orchids and Olbrich's Tillandsia collection.
- By the end of May, summer annual production was moved outside to be hardened off so that the outdoor garden staff could plant their summer annual displays. Amanda, the production horticulturist, and her volunteer crew produced over 5,000 sq. ft. of material.

## Exhibits and Special Events

Staff have made multiple contingency plans for all public exhibits and special events for 2021, not knowing when COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted. Outdoor events for June, July, August that could be safely hosted with physical distancing were announced to the public:

- Summer Concerts, Tuesdays, June 8-August 17
- Summer Breeze, June 24 & June 25
- Home Garden Tour, July 9-10

Olbrich's *Blooming Butterflies* was cancelled. Alternate outdoor programming to engage families in understanding the importance of pollinators was developed and will take place June-August.

**Rentals**

OBG rental spaces are available for 2022 bookings. 2021 wedding slots are also filling up. Most summer Sundays are booking with memorials, anniversary parties, baby showers, etc., with families catching up on events missed during the past year because of COVID-19. The new wedding and reception package rentals started June 5.

**Volunteers**

Full crews of Outdoor Gardener Volunteers returned in April for their weekly shifts. In April, Greeters, Gift Shop Volunteers, and Conservatory Docents were invited back on a limited schedule. In May, Outdoor Greeters and Docents were oriented and started scheduling shifts in June. Spring has been a critical transition period, with many volunteers happy to return to their volunteer jobs, while others are less ready to return.