



ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

ANNUAL REPORT

2020





MISSION

The mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to develop and maintain plant collections for display, education, research, conservation and enjoyment.

VISION

The vision of the Atlanta Botanical Garden is to be an iconic destination and global leader, dynamically connecting people with plants in support of a thriving planet.



In 2020, nature gave us hope.

We faced challenges on a global scale—and our world changed in ways we never could have imagined—yet we were able to seek solace and find comfort in the restorative power of nature. Here at the Garden, thousands of hyacinths, daffodils, and tulips trumpeted spring’s arrival. In summer, the cooling shade of towering trees offered respite along woodland walkways. Autumn’s burst of color was glorious, and the coming of winter ushered in a time of quiet reflection and an opportunity for rejuvenation.

As we navigated through turbulent times, the beauty of the seasons reassured us... and so did the strength of our incredible community. Thanks to continued and increased contributions from Garden members and donors, our 2020 Annual Fund Campaign was the most successful to date. Education, conservation, and horticulture programs also received significant support, allowing our mission-driven activities to maintain momentum. Hundreds of our volunteers remained connected virtually during the height of the pandemic and patiently waited to return to their posts with smiles under their masks. And through it all, our extraordinarily talented and experienced team of professionals went the extra mile, ensuring our community’s safety and the Garden’s vitality.

One of the Atlanta Botanical Garden’s many points of distinction is the incomparable commitment of valued members, donors, volunteers, and staff who have been with us for decades. To our steadfast friends and supporters, your longevity and loyalty made all the difference in this otherwise uncertain year. We cannot thank you enough for nurturing the Garden’s growth and investing in our success.

2020 also presented new opportunities to connect with first-time visitors at our Midtown and Gainesville gardens. Prior to the pandemic, nearly 40% of guests came from outside of

Georgia or from other nations. When the Garden reopened to the public in May, after a two-month closure, local residents represented the lion’s share of daily visitors—and the Garden’s new extended hours, seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., proved very popular. Younger and more diverse audiences enjoyed Cocktails in the Garden every evening in Midtown, while record numbers of guests visited our Gainesville location to experience the new Ada Mae Pass Ivester Children’s Garden and explore the scenic trails. This year our gardens offered not only stunning horticultural displays, fan-favorite exhibitions such as *Alice’s Wonderland Reimagined*, and tons of family fun, but also plenty of fresh air, space for distancing, and additional benefits to well-being.

Several strategic adjustments to the Garden’s business model, such as timed ticketing, enhanced the guest experience while also benefiting the bottom line. For example, guests raved about the smaller crowds and more intimate experience of *Garden Lights*, *Holiday Nights* this year, and there was steady demand for tickets throughout the show’s nine-week run, helping us finish the year strong, with a total annual attendance of 572,550.

While we look forward to a brighter future, we also want to take time to look back and celebrate the many programmatic accomplishments of the past year on the following pages. From the expansion of digital learning opportunities targeting Title I schools, to the growth of outreach partnerships that address food insecurity, to the extraordinary efforts of our Conservation & Research team protecting imperiled ecosystems, our staff worked beyond the Garden gates on projects focused on promoting a healthier, greener planet.

We are tremendously grateful to you, our donors and friends, for making it possible for the Garden to achieve such meaningful outcomes in 2020. We remain dedicated to using resources wisely and leveraging your investments as we serve our community, share the beauty of today, and inspire hope for tomorrow.



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REMEMBERING

Anne Cox Chambers

DECEMBER 1, 1919 - JANUARY 31, 2020

It is with heartfelt appreciation that the Atlanta Botanical Garden honors the legacy of beloved Lifetime Trustee, Mrs. Anne Cox Chambers.

In addition to being an influential leader, gifted diplomat, and generous philanthropist, Mrs. Chambers was an avid gardener. Throughout her life, she created beautiful home gardens where she spent treasured time with family and friends.

More than 40 years ago, motivated by her own love of gardening, Mrs. Chambers became committed to the prospect of establishing a major botanical garden in her home city—and her early support was instrumental in bringing that vision to life. Thanks to her exceptionally meaningful investments over many decades, the Atlanta Botanical Garden is now one of the top gardens in the United States and the world.

As a very special tribute to Mrs. Chambers, Cox Enterprises sponsored a week of free admission, giving the public the chance to experience the beauty of the Garden's Midtown and Gainesville locations at no cost from Tuesday, February 11 through Sunday, February 16, 2020. More than 39,000 visitors representing the broad diversity of our community delighted in early spring blooms, witnessed the wonder of the *Orchid Daze* exhibition, and celebrated the life of one of Atlanta's most extraordinary citizens.

At the Atlanta Botanical Garden, the memory of Mrs. Chambers will always endure, in the gardens named for her and for her family, and in the dynamic programming that is sustained year after year through her commitment to endowment giving. Her love of flowers and gardens will continue to inspire generations to come—a living legacy to a remarkable woman.



Left to right: *Rosa* 'Anne Cox Chambers', Cox Courtyard, Anne Cox Chambers Flower Walk





2020

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020

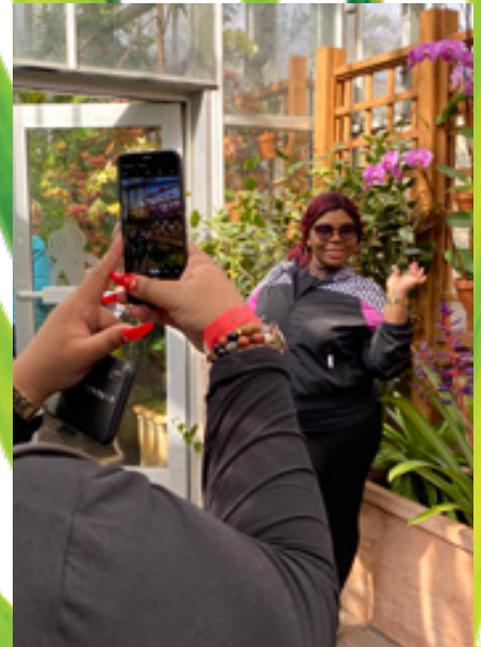


starting strong

As 2020 began, the Garden was bustling with activity, buoyed by the incredible success of the previous twelve months. Record-high 2019 visitation had surpassed even the years when *Chihuly in the Garden* exhibitions brought the Seattle-based artist's famed glass sculptures to Atlanta. And the Garden was looking forward to another exciting year, with a full calendar of stunning horticultural displays, seasonal exhibits, and stellar programming for guests of all ages.

Orchid Daze

Celebrating the vibrant orchids of Latin America, the Garden's annual indoor plant exhibition premiered on February 1. Drawing inspiration from the works of renowned Mexican artist Luis Barragán, the Conservatory Lobby and Fuqua Orchid Center were transformed into striking, contemporary gardens combining the clean lines of the Modernist movement with the vivid colors of rural Mexico. Against backdrops of brightly painted walls, dramatic water features, and elements juxtaposing sunlight and deep shadow, hundreds of brilliantly-hued *Cattleya*, *Laelia*, *Oncidium*, and other show-stopping orchids were a sight to behold.



The Atlanta Botanical Garden Flower Show: *Expressions*

Opening with a fabulous Preview Party on February 20, the Flower Show was in full bloom through February 23, attracting 340 exhibitors in the juried categories of Floral Design, Horticulture, Landscape Design, and Photography. More than 4,000 visitors enjoyed the displays, including two categories that debuted in 2020: Ikebana, a Japanese art form which is meant to convey emotions through flowers; and Conservation, with a focus on educating audiences about the importance of native plants supporting healthy pollinator populations. Proceeds benefited the Garden's International Plant Exploration Program, and the success of this year's show brought us one step closer to the longer-term goal of becoming a sanctioned flower show.

Southeastern Partners in Plant Conservation

The Garden was honored to host the 2020 Southeastern Partners in Plant Conservation (SePPCon) conference from March 2 to 6, bringing together more than 200 professionals representing government agencies, land managers, botanical gardens, university programs, and other interested parties. Attendees had valuable opportunities to share knowledge, facilitate regional and state-based conservation alliances, and advance science-based solutions for the recovery of imperiled plants while taking vital next steps toward strengthening a collaborative network to address shared challenges.



Atlanta Blooms

The Garden's fan-favorite festival of bulbs was more spectacular than ever in 2020, with thousands of crocuses, anemones, hyacinths, daffodils, and tulips emerging in waves, changing from week to week in a dazzling display of color throughout the late winter and the burgeoning spring.



sheltering in place

In response to the rising number of coronavirus cases in Georgia and across the nation, the Garden closed to the public on Saturday, March 14. The safety of guests, staff and volunteers was of paramount importance, and all employees who were able to work from home were instructed to do so. Essential horticulture and operations team members continued working on site, at a distance of six feet or more apart, to care for the Garden's irreplaceable plant collections.

During this uncertain time, Atlanta was experiencing what many called the most beautiful spring in recent memory. The Garden remained fully closed to visitors for 65 days, and as the weather warmed and the days lengthened, our team of dedicated professionals focused on initiatives to advance our mission and to share the Garden's splendor with all those who weren't able to witness it first-hand.



Educational outreach

When the pandemic brought in-person field trips and school visits to an abrupt halt in mid-March, Garden educators quickly pivoted to continue classroom support through online lessons and videos, collaborating virtually and recording from their own homes. Leveraging the Garden's broad network of school districts and educators, our Education Team delivered inspiring content each week to more than 700 teachers, generating more than a million views during the Spring 2020 semester.



Conservation teamwork

From identifying extant populations of small-whorled pogonia in the north Georgia mountains to restoring the biodiversity of more than 300 acres of wetlands in the Florida panhandle, the Garden's Conservation & Research scientists ensured that vital fieldwork continued in fragile ecosystems in remote areas. Observing strict safety protocols, the team carefully conducted research on key imperiled species and worked to expand collections for the Conservation Seed Bank and the DNA Biorepository located in the Garden's Southeastern Center for Conservation.

Social media success

Our talented Marketing team created a steady stream of content to connect with audiences near and far, sharing colorful tulips, flowering fruit trees, and other gorgeous spring growth with the inspirational message of "Life Blooms On." The Garden's social media platforms grew by leaps and bounds during this time, gaining more than 16,000 new followers. In addition to daily photo posts, targeted collaborations with Horticulture and Education staff resulted in 36 videos that earned nearly 120,000 impressions across Facebook and YouTube.





Horticultural renewal

Seizing the moment for garden renovations, our Horticulture Team set to work on both indoor and outdoor spaces. Inside the Dorothy Chapman Fuqua Conservatory, the Desert House was enhanced with new additions including a collection of rare Lithops (also known as “living stones”) and other unusual succulents that are notable for their unique forms and flowers. The Fragrance Garden next to the Fuqua Orchid Center received a long-awaited makeover, transforming this intimate space into a colorful Savannah-inspired sanctuary. And throughout the spring season, pruning, transplanting, and maintenance activities continued across the Garden grounds.

serving our community

Beloved as Atlanta's urban oasis, the Garden has always been a tranquil retreat in the midst of our bustling city. This role became increasingly important in 2020, and we were truly honored to serve our community as a place of peace, hope, and recovery during this moment in history.

After approximately two months of closure, the Garden began a phased reopening on May 18, starting with members-only opening week in the outdoor spaces at our Midtown location. We instituted new timed ticketing protocols, limiting the number of entrants every 15 minutes to promote social distancing and to spread visitation more evenly throughout the day. We also added Monday and evening hours, which meant the Garden could serve as a respite for our community seven days a week, twelve hours a day. Prioritizing public health and safety, we increased airflow in the conservatories, created one-way traffic patterns when necessary, and enhanced sanitation measures throughout our grounds. In addition to presenting the first-ever "summer encore" of Orchid Daze, the Garden offered a wide variety of fun, educational, relaxing, and therapeutic ways to connect with nature.

Gainesville growth

In the five years since the Garden's Gainesville location opened to the public, horticultural displays have flourished while family-friendly programming has become increasingly robust. As more local residents looked for getaways closer to home in 2020, the Gainesville garden set all-time monthly attendance records throughout the summer months and into the fall, including welcoming significant numbers of first-time visitors. Behind the scenes, the International Plant Exploration Program Nursery expanded to include hundreds of specimens grown from germplasm collected on trips to Southeast Asia, and the Conservation Safeguarding Nursery nurtured extensive *ex situ* collections of *Sarracenia*, *Torreya*, *Platanthera* and other recent accessions.

Rare surprise

Visitors to the Fuqua Conservatory in July experienced an extremely uncommon treat, the odiferous blooming of the *Pararistolochia goldieana*, or African Corpse Flower. The last known flowering of this tropical vine outside of its native central African rainforest habitat was in the 1920s, at the Berlin Botanical Garden. Emitting the distinctive stench of decaying flesh in an effort to attract flies as pollinators, the enormous 12-inch by 6-inch blossom lasted for almost five days in our Conservatory before withering away.



SlothBot

In June, Storza Woods became a test site for a slow-moving robot built by robotics engineers at the Georgia Institute of Technology and inspired by the low-energy lifestyle of real sloths. Powered by solar panels, the SlothBot moved along a cable strung between two trees while collecting data about temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide, interactions between plants and pollinators, and other phenomena that are otherwise difficult to observe, helping conservation scientists to better understand the complex web of factors affecting imperiled ecosystems.



Alice's Wonderland Reimagined

The Garden's 2020 summer exhibition premiered with a triumphant return of larger-than-life mosaiculture inspired by the inventive world of Lewis Carroll. Nearly 72,000 individual plants were artfully arranged on soil-filled steel armatures to create amazing vignettes, some back by popular demand from the previous year—such as the White Rabbit floating in an umbrella in Skyline Pond, the Cheshire Cat, and the Chessboard scene—as well as two installations making their debut in 2020. An all-new, intricately-planted, towering Red Queen could be seen playing croquet with her flamingo and hedgehog companions, and a captivating 14-foot Alice twirled down the rabbit hole in the center of Howell Fountain, framing the view of the iconic Conservatory from the Crape Myrtle Allee.

Diversifying audiences

In recent years, the Garden has been on a long-term trajectory of steadily increasing diversity within our visitation base, demonstrating a strong commitment to the Audience Engagement and Community Focus objectives that were articulated in our five-year Strategic Plan. In 2020, 47% of Garden guests were Black, Indigenous and People of Color—and extended evening hours were especially popular, with BIPOC visitors accounting for 51% of all guests after 5 p.m.

sharing our expertise

Throughout 2020, the Garden found innovative ways to advance our multifaceted mission, to reach as many people as possible, both near and far. From establishing new collaborations to reinventing programs in response to the pandemic, we focused on remaining nimble, adapting to the changing environment, and working hard to maximize our impact.

Plant. Eat. Repeat.

Within the Atlanta community, the Garden is committed to sharing knowledge about growing fresh produce to support community gardens and enhance local food systems. Our flagship Community Outreach program, known as Plant. Eat. Repeat. (PER), partners with Food Well Alliance, Atlanta Community Food Bank, and the City's urban ag network to increase access to healthy foods. In 2020, PER received instrumental support from the U.S. Botanic Garden and the American Public Gardens Association's Urban Agriculture Resilience Program, allowing PER to grow from serving 6 to 21 community gardens in neighborhoods that have historically been food deserts. Complementing PER's efforts, the Garden worked very closely with Atlanta's largest urban farm, the Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture in Ashview Heights, to ensure crops were planted and harvested this year, helping to address heightened food insecurity during the pandemic.



Virtual Field Trips

In Fall 2020, the Garden's Education team debuted a series of highly interactive, STEM-based, live-streamed virtual tours and classes. Using the same online broadcasting software that news teams and gamers use for streaming content and "making magic happen," Garden educators interacted in real-time with more than 5,500 K-12 students and teachers during the Fall semester, 96% of whom participated at no cost through the Garden's commitment to waive fees for all Title I schools. Capturing the spirit and rigor of pre-coronavirus school visits and field trips, live sessions covered a range of topics such as Carnivorous Plants, Rainforest Ramble, Desert Discovery, Frog Talk, and Plant Careers. One of our most popular offerings was based on the 2020 *Alice's Wonderland Reimagined* exhibition, with an exciting behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the Garden's sky-high mosaiculture plant sculptures. While most virtual field trips were booked by teachers in the greater Atlanta area, classrooms as far away as Texas and California, and likely much further afield, enjoyed pre-recorded, on-demand content that Garden educators made to complement the live-streaming sessions.





Global Conservation Consortium for Magnolia

The Atlanta Botanical Garden leads the Global Conservation Consortium for Magnolia, launched in September 2020 in partnership with Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to prevent extinction of the world's Magnolia species. Of the 335 known species of Magnolia, 51% are threatened with extinction in the wild. Because some Magnolia species have been found to be 'exceptional' or unable to

be conserved via traditional seedbanking practices, living collections are a critical conservation tool that must be prioritized by botanical gardens and land managers worldwide. In addition to leading a team of global experts to define priority activities for Magnolia species of greatest conservation concern, the Atlanta Botanical Garden's Conservation & Research team has begun working with partners in Mexico to expand populations of three critically endangered species, *Magnolia faustinomirandae*, *M. montebelloensis*, and *M. quetzal*.

shining our light

At the end of a year when life was undeniably upended, the Garden was able to offer something special for all those craving a sense of normalcy during an otherwise unusual holiday season — the tenth-anniversary celebration of *Garden Lights, Holiday Nights*.

Atlanta's favorite chilly-weather tradition turned out to be the perfect open-air adventure for families and friends. With careful planning, strategic adjustments, and new safety protocols in place, the Garden ensured that the lights could twinkle brightly from November 14, 2020 through January 16, 2021. The Red Queen, White Rabbit, and other mosaiculture installations were held over from the summer's *Alice's Wonderland Reimagined* exhibition and were memorably lit up in glowing, brilliant hues. In Storza Woods, a reinvented Nature's Wonders experience featured all-new lights, choreography and musical selections, culminating in a stirring rendition of "Georgia on My Mind." Throughout the Garden's 30 acres, from the Skylights Lounge to the Holiday Model Trains on Alston Overlook, this year's winter wonderland delighted guests of all ages.

Nightly visitation was capped at 3,500 guests—reduced from the previous cap of 6,500—and this more intimate holiday experience garnered rave reviews from both devoted fans and newcomers. Although fewer tickets were sold this year, we instituted a dynamic ticket pricing model, helping the Garden to meet earned income goals that sustain operations year-round. First-time visitors made up almost half of total *Garden Lights, Holiday Nights* visitation in 2020, the biggest increase in new visitors since 2014. We are grateful that people continue to discover the Garden, now more than ever.

As always, in every season, the Garden is committed to welcoming new audiences and exceeding expectations, shining as a beacon of hope and inspiration as the world emerges from the pandemic—and in all the years to come.





sincerest thanks

The Atlanta Botanical Garden extends endless gratitude to the thousands of healthcare professionals, teachers, public transit drivers, sanitation workers, and other essential employees who toiled around the clock and put others first in 2020.

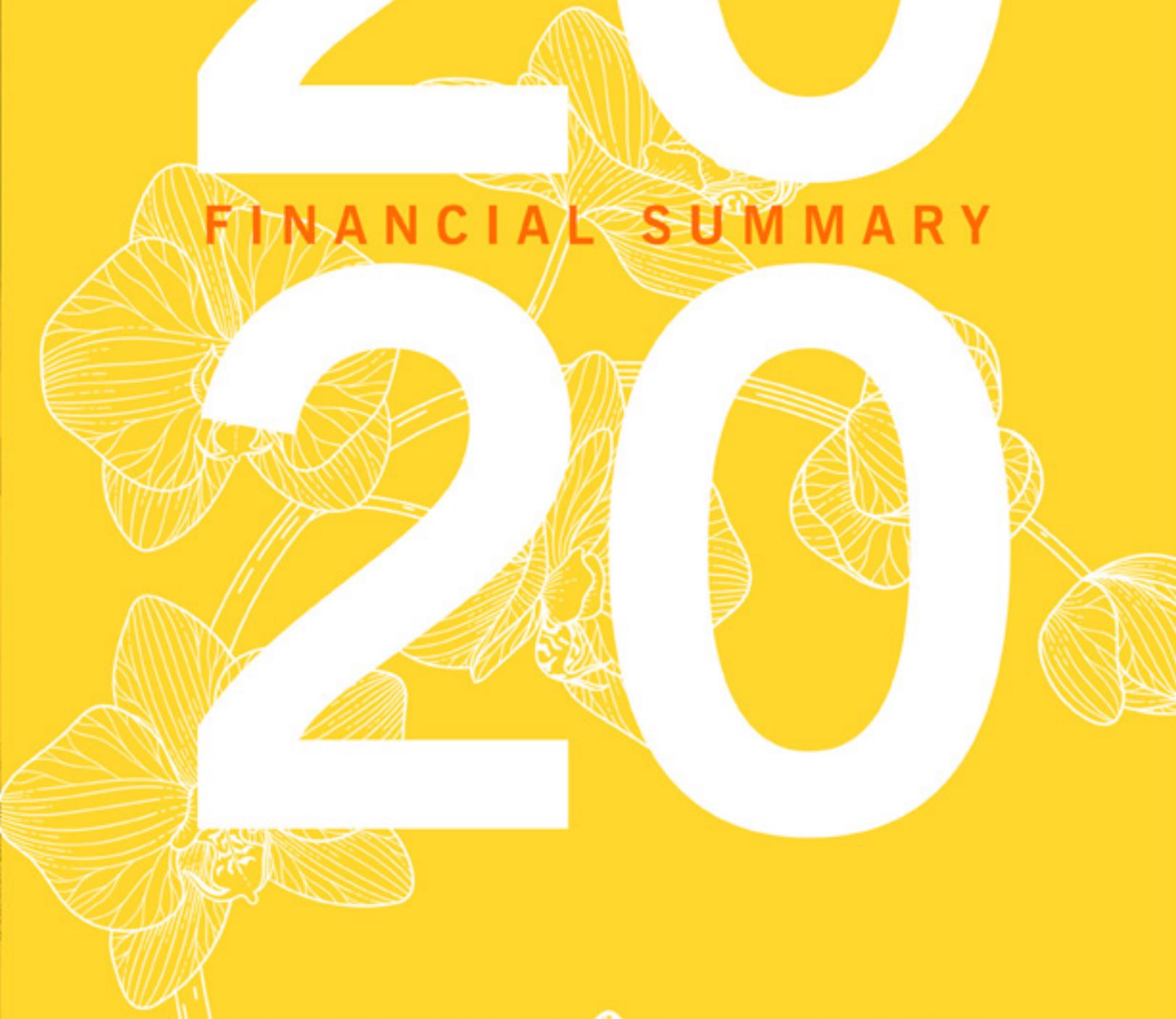
Through the Explore Family Membership Program, the Garden offered membership benefits and moments of peace and rejuvenation to frontline workers at four partner organizations: Atlanta Public Schools, the City of Atlanta, Grady Health System, and MARTA. When we partnered with the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation to launch this program in 2017, we never imagined that a pandemic would be in our future—and we had no idea that this program would mean so much to so many. We deeply appreciate having the opportunity to share Atlanta's urban oasis with Explore families, and all essential workers, during this critical time.



2020

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

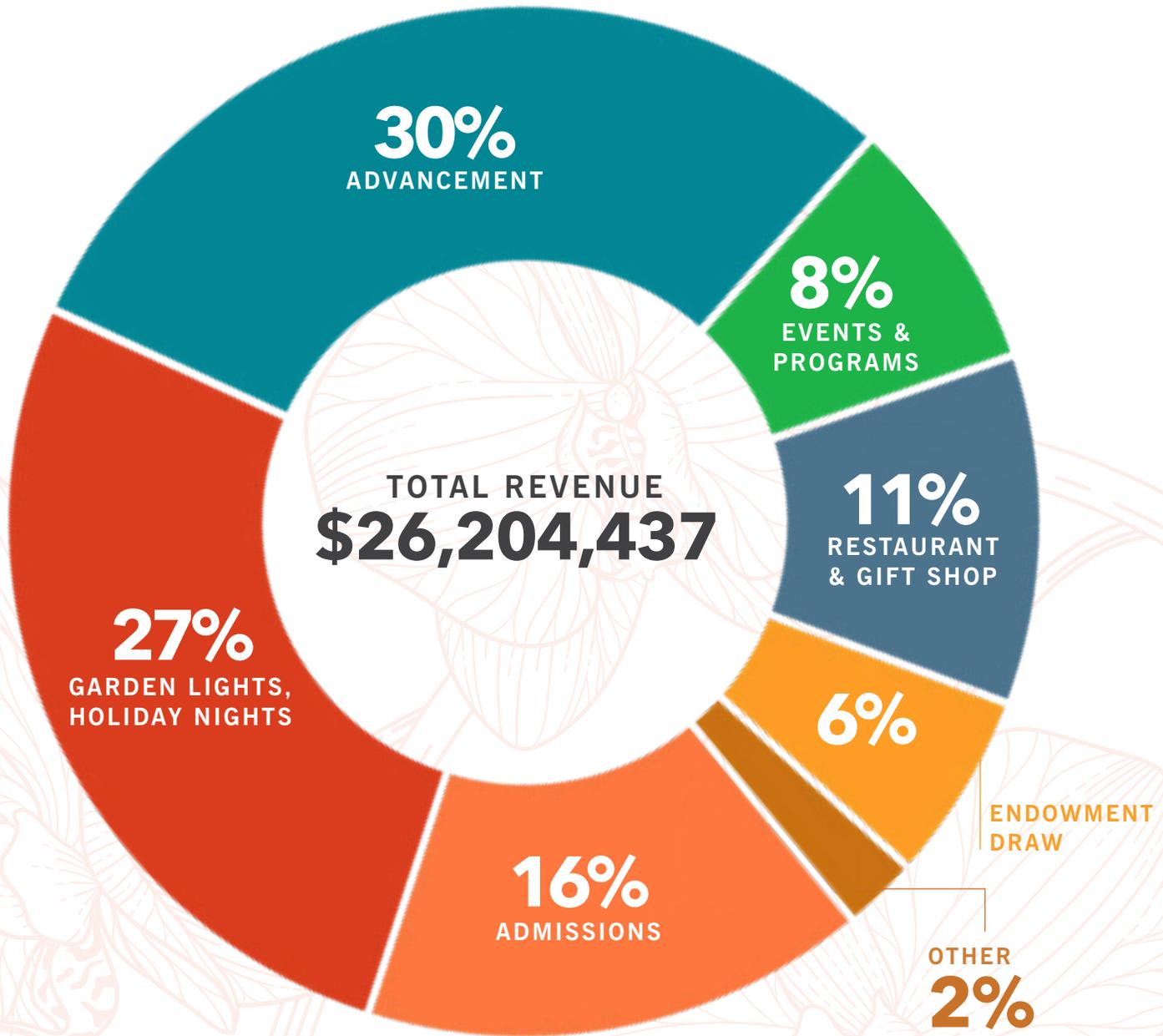
2020



statement of activities*

for the 12-month period
ending Dec. 31, 2020

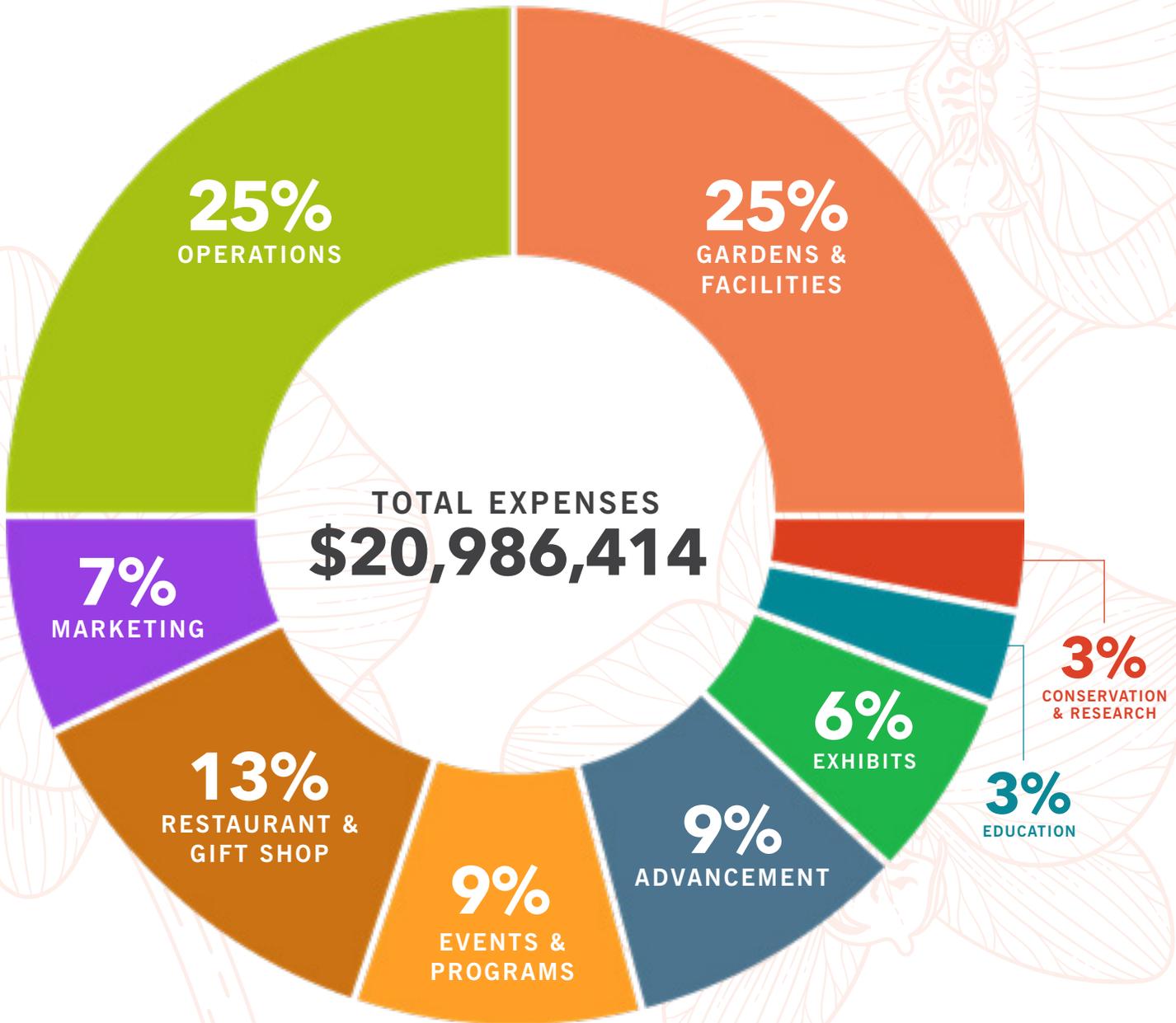
OPERATING REVENUE



Operating profits of the Atlanta Botanical Garden are reinvested back into the Garden through capital projects. Capital projects can range from building renovations to replacement and repairs of existing equipment and general improvements to the Garden.

In April 2020, the Atlanta Botanical Garden received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan which provided COVID-19 relief under the federal CARES Act and which was fully forgiven.

OPERATING EXPENSES



*Operating revenue and expenses do not include restricted funding for Conservation, Education, or Capital Investments.



2020

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

2020



INSTITUTIONS

The Atlanta Botanical Garden gratefully acknowledges the following corporations, foundations, public sector entities, and organizational donors for their contributions between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

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\$250,000 - \$999,999

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The Home Depot Foundation

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The Atlanta Botanical Garden would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all members of the Perennial Society who have thoughtfully included the Garden in their estate planning. As a result of the legacy commitments of these philanthropic individuals and families, the Garden will continue to flourish for generations to come.

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Gifts of \$10,000 were made by friends and family to name Garden benches honoring the following individuals:

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In honor of the Jill and John Holder Family

In memory of Cathy "Mimi" Popiel
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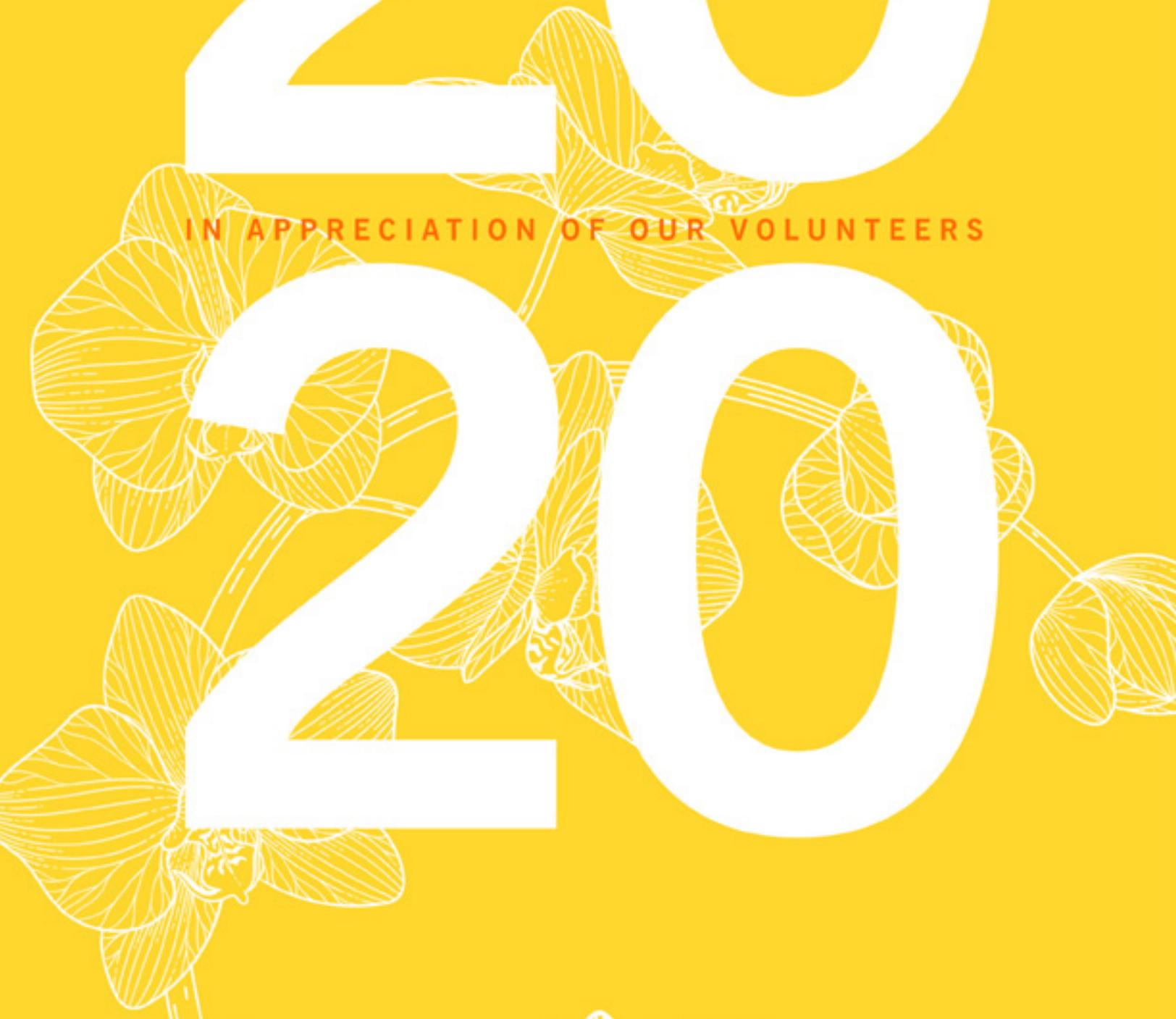
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2020

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2020



above and beyond

In a typical year, more than 450 volunteers donate their time and talents in countless ways at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, contributing 40,000+ hours of volunteer service in support of our mission—making our volunteer program one of the most successful in the nation. Of course, 2020 was anything but “typical,” yet our volunteers continued to surpass expectations, staying highly involved during what was a challenging time.

During the Garden’s closure, from mid-March through mid-May, there were no volunteer opportunities available on-site, and many opportunities remained closed for the duration of 2020. Despite these limitations, 365 individuals volunteered in 2020, donating a total of 16,400 service hours to ensure that the Garden’s horticultural displays were always beautiful and that socially-distanced guest experiences were carefully accommodated. Our volunteer base kept connected with each other, and with our Volunteer Manager Josh Todd, through Zoom meetings, online education sessions, and virtual social activities, with many counting the days until they could return to their posts. The Garden is incredibly indebted to all of our volunteers for their service.

Centennial Club

In light of the pandemic, the number of service hours for the Centennial Club was adjusted from 100 to 60 hours in 2020. A total of 112 individuals each contributed more than 60 hours over the course of the year.

Roots of the Garden

The following exceptional volunteers provided more than 200 hours of service in 2020:

Janet Cantrelle
Charlotte Miller
Roy Pinkston
Bhavani Saravanan
Paula White

2020 Volunteers of the Month

The following Atlanta-based volunteers were nominated by their staff supervisors for showing devotion and enthusiasm in their roles:

Carol Phillips	Lin Inlow
Alice Soder	Bhavani Saravanan
Steve Kilgo	Paige DeMuth
Bobbie Kilgo	Barbara McRoberts
Carrie Mayhan	Kay Roane
Lauren Melde	Patty Miseje

2020 Volunteers of the Quarter

The following Gainesville-based volunteers were nominated by their staff supervisors for showing devotion and enthusiasm in their roles:

Bev Adkins	Marie Cypher
Glen Cypher	Tricia Terrell

2020 Volunteer of the Year: Sally Crowe



Twelve years ago, Sally started volunteering at the Garden as a Children’s Tour Docent, and since then, this retired teacher has spent more than 2,500 hours sharing her knowledge with young visitors and supporting special events such as Vanilla Sunday, Goblins in the Garden, and the Reindog Parade. Whether she is greeting guests in the Hardin Visitor Center or delighting families with her stories of the natural world, she is always smiling.

Sally is the perfect person to be recognized as the 2020 Volunteer of the Year, for bringing her positivity and cheer to a difficult time.

Garden Associates

In 2020, the Garden Associates helped to advance the mission of the Atlanta Botanical Garden with special support for the Gardens for Connoisseurs Tour. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Tour was moved from the traditional Mother’s Day weekend to a September timeframe, and the four gardens on the Tour offered the opportunity to showcase exceptional late-summer beauty. Many thanks to the Garden Associates’ leadership team for their key contributions, ensuring that the Tour occurred in 2020:

Susan Brooks	Forrest Leef
Jessica Dark	Liza O’Hare
Mary Wayne Dixon	Beth Rummel
Sandy Kellam	Debbie Swann



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