Welcome Pavilion Revealed
Work on the Garden’s Welcome Pavilion — which features a contemporary design created to inspire the public’s understanding and connection with the natural environment — began in late September.

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EDIBLE GARDEN
The Edible Garden will showcase edible and medicinal plants from all over the world.

Throughout history, edible plants have served as a basis for economic and cultural exchange across the world, bringing together diverse societies. In Houston, the vibrant restaurant scene best expresses this concept, as chefs create dishes showcasing the region’s vast cultural influences. Just as food unites by serving as the heart of social gatherings and celebrations, Houston Botanic Garden’s Edible Garden will play an important role in connecting visitors with each other and the natural world as they learn more about the diverse collection of historically important edible and medicinal plants.

Ancient civilization viewed agriculture not only as a form of nourishment, but also as a context through which it could make economic progress and express its cultural and religious heritage. Through its seven “rooms,” each of which will represent different regions across the world, the one-acre Edible Garden will highlight the origins of agriculture and use of plants by ancient civilizations; edible flowers; agricultural architecture; and indigenous farming practices and harvesting techniques.

Strategically positioned around an existing grove of oaks, the Respite Room (Asia/Europe) will exhibit shade-tolerant edible and medicinal plant species, including Curcuma longa (turmeric) and Zingiber officinale (ginger), which thrive in shady enclosures. Medicinal species, like Salix spp. (willow), that have been used in ancient Asian culture for their healing qualities will also be displayed in the Respite Room. The area will feature an unusual Salix matsudana ‘Tortuosa’ (corkscrew willow), as well as citrus, bananas, daylilies, and various types of rice to create the sense of a private enclosure.

Deriving from various cultures, the Children’s Kitchen (Asia/Europe/Africa) will be a melting pot of plant species. The area will have a Saccharum officinarum (sugar cane) wall to define the Kitchen Plaza—a flexible multi-purpose area for hosting educational workshops.

Inspired by Mediterranean culture, The Terrace will showcase “divine fruits” that have been culturally renowned as delicacies for their luxurious qualities. This feature adjacent to the Welcome Pavilion will allow visitors to relax underneath a grove of Olea europaea ‘Aberquina’ (olive). Other elements will include a vibrant red poppy field, pear orchards, aromatic Mediterranean herbs — such as Anethum graveolens (dill), Origanum vulgare hirtum (Greek oregano), and Rosmarinus officinalis ‘Prostratus’ (rosemary) — as well as Punica granatum (pomegranate).
DEAR FRIENDS,

Sometimes experiences we least expected turn out to be the memories we cherish most deeply. This certainly holds true for my service as board chair for the Houston Botanic Garden. As some of you may be aware, my aunt, Anita Stude, encouraged me to join the Garden’s board. I couldn’t have imagined at the time I agreed just how involved I would become.

When I think about all that has happened since, I realize how gratifying this time has been. I am privileged to work alongside truly dedicated individuals on the Garden’s board and its growing staff. I am also humbled by the many volunteers and supporters – like you – who have generously invested time and other resources into the vision for the Garden. And I am excited about the future, as we are less than one year away from the grand opening in fall 2020.

On that note, it gives me great joy to let you know that we achieved our $35 million goal for the Grow Houston’s Garden capital campaign!

I cannot thank you enough – family, friends, and those I have not met yet but hope to soon – for helping make this dream come true. Whenever the going got tough, it meant so much to know there were so many committed to doing what you could to ensure the Houston Botanic Garden would come to fruition.

I always have much to be grateful for each Thanksgiving, and this year, especially, I am giving thanks for the opportunity we have all been given to be part of this unique moment in time. The Garden is really happening, and my life will never be the same. I hope yours is enriched by your connection to the Garden as well, and that the lives of our future visitors will be too.

Happy Holidays!

Nancy O’Connor Abendshein
Board Chair

The MISSION of the Houston Botanic Garden is to enrich life through discovery, education, and the conservation of plants and the natural environment.

OUR GOALS

• Provide an oasis for contemplation, learning, inspiration, and research;
• Enrich people’s lives through outstanding displays and programs;
• Serve as a model for sustainability; and
• Inspire all children, adults, and families who visit to become environmental stewards as they learn more about plants and the natural world.

EDIBLE GARDEN, continued from page 1

Designed to host various programming and events, the Event Garden (Americas/Mediterranean) could hold a sizeable tent to host educational workshop classes. This section will also display an apple espalier, the ancient horticultural art of pruning and training a tree or shrub to grow flat against a support, creating a living sculpture.

The Gallery (Americas) will be a seasonal corner that will highlight crops of historical and economic significance. Cultivating together three main agricultural crops, also known as the “Three Sisters” (corn, squash, and beans), will help each thrive and grow. Other important plants in ancient and modern civilization, such as Solanum tuberosum (potato), will be on display seasonally.

Event Garden
I’ve been raising monarch butterflies for the past four years, and, in that time, I’ve learned so much. I’m also having a lot of fun and finding it gratifying to create an environment where these beauties can breed, survive, and thrive.

As you are probably already aware, monarchs use one of the many varieties of milkweed found in every planting zone of northern Mexico, the U.S., and southern Canada as their host plant to create and sustain their summer generations. Unfortunately for those of us who love monarchs and want to do what we can to assist them in their annual migration, most milkweed varieties are hard to grow. In fact, I have failed at every attempt I have made to grow any variety other than the controversial Asclepias curassivca (tropical milkweed). Why is it controversial? In our growing zone, it blooms practically year-round, which confuses the monarchs. Some of the late-born monarchs from the final summer breeding generation won’t leave and continue to lay eggs as long as tropical milkweed is blooming. These monarchs that do not migrate can be infected by the OE protozoan, which causes the butterflies to suffer from wing deformities, smaller body size, and reduced flight performance.

In the summer of 2017, I tried desperately to grow “responsible” milkweed in my yard with only a little tropical milkweed to supplement. I was disappointed to only hatch approximately 10 butterflies all summer. A butterfly expert from the National Wildlife Federation to whom I shared my frustration advised me that some milkweed is better than no milkweed, so use tropical milkweed if that’s all you have. For the sake of the monarchs, though, be sure to always cut back its blooms and leaves in late September or early October.

This past summer I planted milkweed in large pots to attract the monarchs, as well as “food source” milkweed in small pots that I can easily move around. When I find eggs on the milkweed in the large pots, I break off just the leaf the egg is on and transfer it to the smaller, potted milkweed. Because wasps and lizards will literally eat every single egg and caterpillar, I then put that small pot in a protected container. Using this approach I successfully hatched approximately 200 butterflies!

Every summer I learn more and more about monarchs and their incredible abilities. While creating an environment in which the butterflies can thrive and increase in number is sometimes tiring work, I get a thrill every time I open my butterfly nursery and newly hatched butterflies fly out into the world. It’s hard to beat the feeling of knowing I have done something really important for these pollinators that serve as one of the backbones of plant life on earth.
Generosity was in full bloom as friends and supporters of the Houston Botanic Garden filled the River Oaks Country Club ballroom on Wednesday, November 6, for the annual Botanical Beginnings Luncheon. The sold-out event — chaired by the Stude sisters, Isabel Lummis and Elisa Pye, in honor of their mother, Anita Stude — raised a record-breaking $630,000.

Graciously introduced by HBG president Claudia Gee Vassar and board chair and campaign co-chair Nancy Abendshein, campaign chairs Susie and Mel Glasscock brought the audience to its feet by announcing that we met our $35 million goal for the Grow Houston’s Garden capital campaign. They highlighted the significance of a $750,000 challenge grant issued by The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, with a nod of appreciation to trustee, Ed Jones. Nancy also thanked fellow campaign co-chair Jim Reeder, the campaign committee, and fundraising staff.

Guest speaker Lauren Simpson, a local attorney who has transformed her yard into a pollinator-friendly certified wildlife habitat, discussed environmental challenges facing the pollinator population. Lauren and Claudia talked about techniques that home gardeners can adopt and native flowers in the Global Collection Garden that will form stepping stones to survival for pollinators migrating through Houston.

The event was supported with décor by Swift + Company, centerpieces by Central Market, and pens by Amegy Bank.

A luncheon benefiting the Houston Botanic Garden and celebrating the Global Collection Garden

Luncheon Co-Chairs | The Stude Sisters
Isabel Stude Lummis & Elisa Stude Pye
GROWING OUR TEAM

Please welcome our new team members!

AYANNA JOLIVET MCCLOUD joined HBG in early September as director of education and public programs. Ayanna’s expertise in cultural program development will enhance the Garden’s programming, including educational and mission-driven events. She most recently served as the program director for the Friends of Women’s Studies at the University of Houston. In her role, she successfully designed and executed several Friends of Women’s Studies programs, including membership events, lectures, workshops, and panels. Prior to that, Ayanna held the position of program coordinator for the Core Residency Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and was previously the director and founder of labotanica, an interdisciplinary studio in the Incubation Program at Project Row Houses. She hopes the Garden will serve as a center for community dialogue about the role of the natural world in our fast-paced urban environment.

JUSTIN LACEY joined HBG at the beginning of August as director of marketing and communications. Justin brings more than a decade of experience in nonprofit communications, most recently serving as director of communication for Westbury Christian School for six years. In that role, he led the overall communications direction for the school and was responsible for creating print and online communication on behalf of the head of school. Prior to that Justin was the advancement writer for Houston Baptist University, where he served as the primary writer and chief editor for the school’s development and university communications departments. As a native Houstonian and father of two, he is excited about helping grow this new amenity for our city.

STORMWATER WETLANDS GARDEN

The Stormwater Wetlands Garden will elevate the role of wetlands vegetation in flood mitigation and clean water management

Sims Bayou has weathered well two of the Houston area’s most recent tropical systems — Harvey and Imelda — but it seems inevitable that there will be more deluges to come. By transforming detention basins running alongside the Sims Bayou meander on approximately five acres of the site into a functioning Stormwater Wetlands Garden, HBG will integrate a wetland ecosystem into this common feature of new developments to enhance its purpose and further mitigate flooding.

In collaboration with the Texas Community Watershed Partners, a program of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and thanks to a grant from the Texas General Land Office Coastal Management Program, the Stormwater Wetlands Garden — including a portion located within the 11-acre pre-ticketed area — will educate visitors on the significance of wetlands and how they play an important role in flood mitigation and water purification. The area will feature native plants and trees shown to thrive when inundated with water, and the plant list has been carefully curated so that different plant species will be blooming and thriving in all seasons.

Wetlands have proven to be an essential part of ecosystems around the world as they are a natural defense against flooding, provide needed habitat for wildlife, and improve water quality. Like a natural wetland, the Stormwater Wetlands Garden will see water levels rise and fall with rain events. As the water filters through the plants and soil, the pollutants, bacteria, and metals will be pulled from the water before cycling back out. The plants will then absorb nitrogen and release oxygen — an important component of the process, as Houston’s bayous are often considered impaired due to low oxygen levels.

WELCOME PAVILION

Overland Partners, a San Antonio-based architecture firm, completed the design for the new Welcome Pavilion at the Houston Botanic Garden

The 2,334-square foot Welcome Pavilion will feature indoor and outdoor patio seating, a gift shop, and ticketing center, in addition to storage and restrooms. The building’s façade will be made of coral limestone in differing patterns that feature a botanic motif.

Creating a strong first impression for our guests is very important. The Pavilion’s stunning Welcome Wall will draw visitors into our urban oasis. In addition, its central location, climate-controlled interior, and generous overhead canopy outside will make it a natural meeting place for visitors to gather and share their garden experiences.
Have you ever noticed neat, oval or circular holes like these cut into the leaves of some of your garden plants — especially roses, crepe myrtles, and redbud trees? Don’t get out the pesticide! These holes are cut by the very interesting little leafcutter bee.

Unlike honey bees, which form huge, cooperative colonies, leafcutter bees are solitary. The females nest in hollow twigs in which they form individual nursery cells. Leafcutter bees overlap the oval leaf fragments to form the sides of a cell and use the round pieces to stop up the ends. Inside each cell the female bee leaves a ball of pollen on which she deposits an egg. Once the entire tube is filled with cells, the female leaves her young to their fate and flies off to find another nesting tube. Meanwhile her eggs hatch, eat the pollen their mother has left them, pupate, and push their way out of the tube when they emerge as adults.

Leafcutter bees are a little smaller than honey bees, but once you learn to recognize them, they are quite distinctive. The top of their abdomen is often striped in black and white. Instead of storing the pollen they collect in balls on their legs, as many other bees do, leafcutters carry their pollen loads on the underside of their abdomen. Because they often hold their abdomen up at an angle, the pollen on their tummies is easy to see. They seem especially to visit members of the Asteraceae family, such as sunflowers, that have bright yellow pollen and are blooming profusely around Houston — including at HBG — as fall sets in. Houston has about 15 species of leafcutter bee, so keep your eyes peeled around such flowers for these charming creatures, which are not at all aggressive and only sting if they are handled roughly.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

1 The Entrance Bridge over the Sims Bayou meander will connect the new public entrance off Park Place Boulevard to the Island’s oak tree-lined Botanic Boulevard, which directs visitors toward the Welcome Pavilion.

2 These Taxodium distichum (bald cypress) trees surrounding the boardwalk maze over the lagoon in the Susan Garver Family Discovery Garden are just a few of the approximately 1,400 new trees coming to the property in advance of the public opening in fall 2020.

3 Plants of all kinds — including Sarracenia alata ‘areolata’ (Areolata pitcher plant), in the foreground, and Thalia geniculata (arrowroot), along the bank of the lagoon — are already in the ground as work continues on the Susan Garver Family Discovery Garden, which should be complete for soft opening activities early in 2020.
HOUSTON BOTANIC GARDEN

SCHOOL FIELD TRIP WORKSHOPS

**NATURE 101 & ECOSYSTEM ADVENTURES**

90-minute guided programs, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
TEKS-based, age-appropriate for K-5
Partners: Harris County Department of Education & Project WILD

**FLOWER & POLLINATOR LAB**

**WETLAND OBSERVATIONS: HABITATS & PLANTS**

Questions or to schedule a field trip:
ayanna@hbg.org or 713-715-9675