

Beauty, Conservation and Sustainability

A New Century for Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum



 University of Michigan
Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum

What are our current strengths?

- We provide cherished places of beauty and respite for people in the community
- We attract an estimated 200,000 visitors yearly
- We provide a meeting place for dozens of community environmental and garden organizations
- We serve as a classroom and research laboratory for the University and broader community
- We are a living museum with plant collections dating back to 1906
- We steward irreplaceable natural areas with remnant flora and fauna that was once common throughout SE Michigan



The 100th anniversary of Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum will be in February 2007

In preparation for our celebrations, we've been evaluating

- Where we've been...
- What should be our goals for the future...
- How can we get there...



Our world is changing...

- How can we make a difference?
- What are we uniquely poised to do, given our resources at the University and in the community?
- How can we get started?



Our past

- From early gardens on UM Central Campus
- Geddes site founded in 1907
- Botanical garden and arboretum separated ~1917
- Move to Dixboro site in late 1950s and early 1960s
- Re-joined 2004



At a global level, problems include

- Loss of biodiversity
- Global climate change
- Unsustainable energy/resource use
- Overpopulation
- Environmental justice





In Michigan and the Great Lakes region, problems include:

- Loss of habitats and biodiversity
- Sprawl and conversion of land to urbanized uses
- Loss of water quality
- Environmental justice

Our Goals:

- Create and maintain places and offer programs that encourage people to be more sensitive, aware, and engaged in practices of environmentally-sound horticulture and sustainability
- Become the leading university-affiliated garden with an interdisciplinary focus on sustainability and environmental stewardship
- Continue to provide places of beauty and respite in our urbanizing region



In Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan and Southwest Ontario, problems include:

- Loss of habitats and biodiversity
- Sprawl and conversion of land
- Continued introduction and spread of invasive species
- Degradation of water quality/hydrological integrity of landscape
- Rising lack of ecoliteracy

So, how can we get started?

We have identified a number of actions that we think will help move us towards these goals:

1. Expand our University partnerships for teaching and research
2. Grow our Friends organization
3. Build our relationships with community partners
4. Improve our attractions for visitors and provide rich learning experiences for them

So, how can we make a difference?

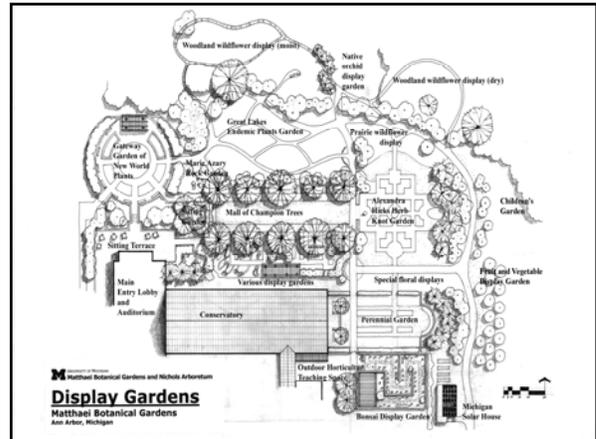
- We can provide connections between the University and the broader public, sharing research and providing learning opportunities
- We can use our use our gardens and natural lands to demonstrate how to protect and manage biological integrity
- We can demonstrate principles of sustainability in our facilities and lands—helping people re-define their own relationship to nature and learn what they can do in their own lives or on their land

Expanding University partnerships:

- Partner with a variety of units
- Promote our properties as places for demonstrating new technologies and research in sustainability
- Develop innovative projects such as “Cultivating Community” that appeal to a cross section of students, faculty and staff
- Explore the possibility of spring and summer field courses
- Expand volunteer and internship opportunities for students
- Complete thorough inventory and mapping of our resources to be available to classes
- Capitalize on the close proximity of Nichols Arboretum to campus for field teaching and improve access for students to Matthaei Botanical Gardens

Growing the Friends organization:

- Current membership is ~1800 members
- By 2011, we'd like to triple that membership to nearly 6000 members
- We need to further define our new combined organization and provide incentives for people to join
- A much larger Friends organization will provide a stronger base for our other programs and activities



Build our relationships with community partners:

- We already serve as a meeting place for most environmental or plant-related organizations in Washtenaw County.
- Can we make ourselves more widely known as a “center” for environmental learning?
- Can we collectively co-partner lectures and programs?
- Can we expand current programs where these groups help expand our capacity?

New Display Gardens (within deer enclosure):

- Erich Steiner Fountain with display of aquatic plants
- “Mall” of Champion Trees
- Great Lakes endemic plants garden



Improve our attractions for visitors and provide rich learning experiences

We are continuing a number of projects that demonstrate principles of sustainability and are also proposing new ones that will provide new learning opportunities for our visitors. These are grouped around four themes:

1. Conserving biodiversity
2. Demonstrating sustainability and conserving resources
3. Sharing knowledge and promoting learning
4. Improving accessibility

- Children's Garden
- Fruit and vegetable demonstration garden
- “Enabling” garden
- Michigan Solar House



- Bonsai display garden
- Outdoor teaching and demonstration area
- “Lawn” alternative displays
- “Green roof” test and demonstration plantings



Sue Reichert Discovery Trail



- Woodland wildflower garden
- Prairie wildflower garden
- Displays of native ferns, orchids, etc.
- Demonstration of low water use plants



Sam Graham Trees and Trail



Conservatory renovations:

- Reglazing with safety glass
- Installation of retractable energy blanket
- Installation of mist fogger
- Automation of vent openers
- South entrance renovations for improved accessibility



River Landing Improvements





Wetland Interpretive Trail



Natural Areas Restoration and Management



Centennial Shrub Collection

- Collection of old fashioned garden shrubs and shrubs of North America near the Geddes entrance



Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage



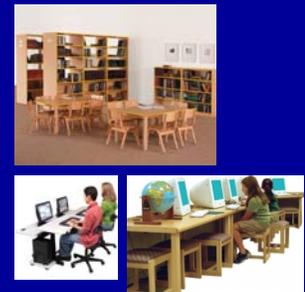
Sapindaceae Collection

(Maples and Buckeye Trees)



Library/Resource Center

New location of library off the main lobby. We hope to transform this space into a public-oriented resource center



Renovation of Drives and Parking



Thank-you for your continued help and support!

What will it cost us to do these things?

Estimated cost of priority projects:	\$3,100,000
Funds already committed:	\$2,000,000
<i>Needed to raise:</i>	<i>\$1,100,000</i>

Endowment goals—these would provide annual supplemental funding for maintenance of various gardens, natural areas work, interpretation and exhibits, library/resource center materials, and road and trail maintenance.

Estimated annual cost:	\$750,000
<i>Amount of endowment needed:</i>	<i>\$15,000,000</i>

As we look to the next century...

We're clearly excited about

- Demonstrating sound practices of environmentally-sound horticulture and sustainability
- Making environmental stewardship central to all we do, and
- Continuing to provide places of beauty and respite in our urbanizing region

