



## U.S. Botanic Garden Announces 200th Anniversary Events for 2020



Washington, D.C. - The United States Botanic Garden (USBG)

celebration of its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the launch of a new exhibit. The Garden will continue the theme throughout the year with a program of exhibits, collaborations, plant collecting trips, and activities. The Garden invites visitors to be a part of the celebration and come engage with its distinctive plant collection, American history, and exploration of the Garden today and into the future.

Rooted in history, the Garden was a vision of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. These Founding Fathers wished for the new botanic garden to demonstrate and promote the importance of plants to the young nation. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1820 and open to the public, the U.S. Botanic Garden is the oldest continuously operating botanic garden in the United States.

"As we celebrate 200 years of history at the U.S. Botanic Garden, I am excited to explore new ways of helping people make meaningful connections to plants," said Robert E. Chase, Executive Director. "Whether it's to spend a quiet moment in our beautiful conservatory and gardens, to discover the tastes and textures of new plants, or to learn about how plants contribute to a more sustainable planet, I want every visitor to the Garden to feel welcome here and to come away with a greater appreciation for the natural world."

"We want to continue the Garden's legacy of showcasing the wide variety of useful plants and to expand our work in keeping the planet healthy for the next generation," said Chase. "We look forward to welcoming visitors from diverse communities across the United States and around the world to join us in another 200 years of plant exploration and discovery."

### Bicentennial Exhibit

The major exhibition of the bicentennial is "**The U.S. Botanic Garden at 200: Deeply Rooted, Branching Outward**," on display Feb. 20 - Oct. 15, 2020, in the East and West Galleries. Visitors can explore historic images of the Garden, learn about plant exploration through the years, and discover how the Garden works today. The exhibit features the *original* 3D images through historic 1800s stereoscope photos of the Garden, test your detective skills with botanical challenges in a set evoking a 19th-century exploration ship, and see what notes you can identify in a recreation of the infamous corpse flower smell. Visitors will also see a life-size bronze sculpture of a woman, especially for the Garden.



**Other 2020 Exhibits**

The celebration of plant exploration continues with this year's orchid show "**Discover the World of Orchids**" on display in the Conservatory Feb. 28 - March 1 with Smithsonian Gardens. Orchids have been in the Garden's collection since the 1800s and now form the Garden's largest specialty plant collection. A new exhibit by artist Susan Beallor-Snyder will debut in the Garden Court during the orchid show.

The Garden will present additional exhibits this year continuing the historic celebration theme. This summer, a special outdoor display on the Terrace will showcase garden design that has changed over the course of the USBG's 200 years. The Garden's annual holiday show will also celebrate the Garden's bicentennial.

The outdoor **stickwork art installation "O Say Can You See"** by Patrick Dougherty, created to kick off the bicentennial celebration last fall, will stand through the summer, inviting visitors to see, touch, and explore this unique creation made from locally harvested invasive plants and willow.

### **Featured Plants**

The Garden celebrates its historic ties to Founding Fathers George Washington and Thomas Jefferson in a **collaboration in the Kitchen Garden with Monticello**. In spring through fall, the Kitchen Garden will showcase the plants these historic figures were growing on their estates when they wrote letters that led to the garden to be created. Representatives from the two estates will also present special programs here this summer.

The Garden returns to its roots of wild plant collecting, after more than 150 years since previous collection trips. Visitors are invited to come see recently collected plants on display this year for the first time, alongside plants dating back to historical 1840s expeditions. Planned collection trips this year include **native cacti in Mexico, native orchids and mycorrhizae in Palau**. Today, the Garden collaborates with and supports local researchers through collecting trips. Recently, local botanists discovered a new species of corpse flower (*Amorphophallus yaoi*) collected during a 2017 collaborative trip.

### **Special Educational Programs**

The Garden will present hundreds of **special educational programs throughout the year**. The Garden has commissioned a site-specific dance by local dance company Project ChArma for this spring.

**Presentations by notable authors** of books related to the Garden and gardening history will include Nathaniel Philbrick ("Sea of Glory"), Daniel Stone ("The Fairchild"), Victoria Johnson ("American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic"), and Marta McDowell ("All the Way to the Garden").

Special workshops, programs, and demonstrations throughout the year will connect to the Garden's bicentennial and plant exploration theme, including a lecture using a camera lucida, a summer concert series, and cooking with historic recipes.

### **Celebratory Events**

Garden employees and volunteers will lead a large **Festival event in the fall**, plus special tours throughout the year to spotlight important plant collection. More celebratory programs will be announced throughout the year.

In the fall, the Friends of the U.S. Botanic Garden will host a **celebratory event October 13** with food, live music, and a special guest speaker to be named later. The nonprofit Friends organization raises money to support education programs at the Garden.

To learn more about these exhibits and events, see historic images, find and register for programs, and plan a visit to the Garden, visit [www.USBG.gov](http://www.USBG.gov).

Editor resources: \* Photos of the U.S. Botanic Garden (historic and modern)

\* Brief History of the U.S. Botanic Garden

Contact: Devin Dotson, [ddotson@aoac.gov](mailto:ddotson@aoac.gov) or (202) 306-6743

### About the United States Botanic Garden

Steeped in history, the United States Botanic Garden informs visitors about the importance and fundamental value and diversity of plants, as well as their economic, therapeutic and ecological significance. The USBG welcomes over a million visitors annually and strives to demonstrate and promote sustainable living. The United States Botanic Garden is a living plant museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and Botanic Gardens Conservation International. [www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov)





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