Accessibility at the USBG

The U.S. Botanic Garden strives to make its collection, programming and facilities accessible to ensure a successful museum visit for all visitors. To ensure the highest quality experience when planning your visit, please see information below. For additional information, please contact Maura Nelson at mnelson@aoc.gov or (202) 226-1047.

Accessible Pathways
All parts of the Conservatory and outdoor gardens are accessible. The Tropics elevator is currently offline but the canopy remains accessible by stairs. For specific accessible routes through the Conservatory and outdoor gardens, please inquire at the visitor information desk upon arrival.

Assisted Listening Devices
Assisted Listening Devices (headsets and receivers) are available upon request from a member of a the visitor service team for all guided tours and public programs. The headsets are compatible with hearing aids.

Admission
Admission to the U.S. Botanic Garden is free. The Conservatory is open every day of the year from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The gated outdoor gardens are open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Bartholdi Fountain and Gardens is open every day of the year from dawn till dusk. Find additional information, including any extended hours, on our Hours and Location page.

Audio Tour
The Garden's audio tour is accessible on mobile phone.

Benches
Benches can be found throughout the indoor Conservatory and provide ample opportunity for rest. Seasonal tables, umbrellas, and chairs can also be found in the outdoor gardens and offer a place to stop and admire the surroundings.

Best Times to Visit
If you are looking for a quieter time to visit, the months of January to early March and mid-July to early September tend to be the least crowded. Early and late afternoon times also tend to be less busy. Please note that we do experience extreme heat conditions during the summer months.

Breast-feeding & Lactation
Breast-feeding is welcome in all areas of the Garden. There are no private breast-feeding lounges or lactation stations for electronic pumping. Refrigeration or the heating of expressed milk or formula is not available.

Color Blind Glasses
Color blind glasses are available to borrow from the visitor information desk with a valid driver's license or government-issued picture identification card. They are engineered to give those with color blindness the ability to see more of the broad spectrum of bright color. Outdoor and indoor lenses are available to optimize your experience. Youth sizes are also available. The ID will be returned upon return of the glasses.

Drinking Fountains and Bottle Refill
Drinking fountains and a water bottle refill station are located in the south of the indoor Conservatory near the restrooms.

Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices
The U.S. Botanic Garden accommodates the use of some Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs), which are vehicles that are not wheelchairs, but rather are electric devices designed primarily for use by individuals with mobility limitations. In the interest of maintaining a safe and pedestrian friendly environment while at the same time ensuring that everyone has a positive experience, operating a mobility device at a speed greater than the flow of the surrounding pedestrian traffic is prohibited. Per...
include electric OPDMDs and other single-seat electric scooters with three or more wheels that cannot exceed 6 miles per hour and Segways(r) with a steering handle operating only in "turtle" mode.

Restrooms and Changing Tables
Accessible restrooms and children's changing tables are found in both men's and women's restrooms.

Sensory Bags
Sensory bags are available to borrow from the visitor information desk with a valid driver's license or government-issued picture identification card. Many individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or sensory processing disorders (SPD) experience difficulty with everyday sensory stimulation; this can be related to noise, a variety of sensitivities. Items available to borrow include noise-reducing headphones, weighted lap blankets, and a selection of fidgets to help ease sensory resources are also available for all public programs. The ID will be returned upon return of the sensory bag.

Parking
Designated accessible parking on Maryland Avenue SW for vehicles bearing a valid Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) disability parking placards or license plates is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Sensory Tip Sheet
A general sensory tip sheet provides an overview of the different areas of the indoor Conservatory.

Service Animals
We welcome service dogs that are trained to work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability in all areas of the garden unless the dog poses a direct threat, is not housebroken or is not under the control. Leashed pets are allowed throughout the outdoor gardens. Pets are not allowed inside the Conservatory.

Sign Language Interpretation
In cooperation with the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services, the U.S. Botanic Garden offers sign language interpretation upon request. If possible, please allow at least 5 business days to schedule an interpreter.

Transcription (Online programs)
Real-time speech-to-text transcription is available for online programming. This service is ideal for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing communities as well as people with autism, auditory processing disorders, and other communication needs.

Visitor Guides
The Garden's Map and Visitor Guide is available in nine languages and may be picked up at the front desk or downloaded as a PDF here. Braille and large print guides are available at the front desk upon request and a PDF version of the large print guide may be downloaded here.

Visitor Information Services
Upon arrival, please feel free to stop at our front desk where trained staff and volunteers can provide information and updates on the daily schedule and calendar. The Garden is a living collection and changes in displays and navigation may occasionally occur. The Garden team is here to help you plan your on-site visit to ensure a successful museum experience.

Wheelchairs
The Garden loans wheelchairs to our visitors as a courtesy on a first-come, first-serve basis. A valid driver's license or government-issued picture identification card is needed to borrow a wheelchair and will be returned upon the return of the wheelchair. Wheelchairs are to remain on U.S. Botanic Garden property.
Programs for Special Audiences

For any questions or more information about public programs, contact Maura Nelson at mnelson@aoc.gov or (202) 226-1047.

Roots and Reflections (Memory Loss)
Join members of the USBG's team for this engaging program specifically designed for individuals living with dementia and their companions. Participants explore the living plant collections through facilitated conversation and hands-on activities. Pre-registration required. This program is designed to be a more intimate experience and limited to 6 participants.

Morning at the Garden and Evening at the Garden (Sensory-Friendly)
Early openings and extended hours provide museum access to individuals of all ages with cognitive and sensory processing disabilities and their families by offering early entrance for registered participants, pre-visit materials, and a take-a-break space. These programs are coordinated in conjunction with current exhibits. See information above under on-site resources.

Special Education Programs
A tailored onsite experience is available upon request. Experienced educators work with children and adults at all developmental and cognitive levels. If you are a classroom teacher looking to schedule a field trip, please visit our Planning Your Field Trip page. Programs for special education/inclusion classrooms, community, family, and adult day support groups include enhanced sensory opportunities and tactile experiences.

STOP! Smell and Touch Our Plants Tour (Blind and Low Vision)
This tour invites individuals who are blind or have low vision and their companions for a hands-on exploration of the plant collections with notable sensory and tactile elements. Offered the first Tuesday and Saturday of the month, these tours include verbal description as well as opportunities for smell and touch. Pre-registration required. This program is designed to be a more intimate experience and limited to 10 participants. We welcome service animals that are trained to work or perform tasks for an individual.

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