



UNITED STATES  
BOTANIC GARDEN

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2023-2027





## Letter from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present the U.S. Botanic Garden's five-year strategic plan. This document outlines our vision and will guide our work as we continue to grow a more diverse and conservation-relevant living collection, empower our talented workforce, engage visitors, establish dynamic partnerships, maintain awe-inspiring facilities, and present stunning educational botanical exhibits to the public. U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) employees, volunteers, and the Friends of the USBG helped sculpt this strategic plan to build on our strengths and to better meet our mission as a team.

Specifically, this plan is designed to improve our practices in a variety of areas, including plant stewardship, organizational excellence, transformational engagement, and global impact. It is a guiding document that we will incorporate into our performance plans and practice in our daily work. In addition, we have created a supplemental living document of tasks and key performance indicators to ensure that we accomplish the transformative goals laid out in this strategic plan.

Every member of our USBG team should see themselves and their role in this plan. Our Operations team keeps our buildings and systems in top form and facilitates exhibits. Our Administrative Services team ensures we have the human, financial, and material resources we need to accomplish our work. Our Horticulture team selects, propagates, tends, and catalogs the plants we collect and display. Our Learning and Engagement team creates engaging experiences and shares the importance of plants and horticulture with the public. And finally, the team in the Office of the Executive Director communicates our priorities and accomplishments to the public and to our congressional stakeholders, develops partnerships, manages our safety and sustainability programs, and contributes to the overall function and beauty of the Garden. Meeting our mission and fulfilling this five-year strategic plan would be impossible without all of us working together as one team.

Thank you for your dedication to the Garden, our mission, and our visitors. Together we connect people to plants and foster an appreciation for the importance of plants. This plan will help us accomplish these goals more efficiently and effectively.

Susan K. Pell, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
United States Botanic Garden



# Who We Are

The United States Botanic Garden (USBG) is a living plant museum that informs visitors about the importance and irreplaceable value of plants to people and Earth’s ecosystems. The Garden is dedicated to promoting botanical knowledge through the cultivation of an ordered collection of plants; presentation of plant displays, exhibits, and educational programs; and by fostering sustainability and plant conservation. The Garden directly serves the U.S. Congress and more than one million visitors per year and advances the exchange of ideas and information with national and international partners.



Established by the U.S. Congress in 1820, the USBG is an independent agency in the legislative branch and is the oldest continuously operating public garden in the United States. The Garden has been administered through the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) since 1934 and is located on the National Mall at the base of Capitol Hill. The USBG has approximately 75 employees assigned to four divisions (Horticulture, Operations, Administrative Services, and Learning and Engagement) and the Office of the Executive Director. It is accredited as a museum by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in recognition of its commitment to excellence, accountability, and continued improvement, and as a botanic garden by Botanic Gardens Conservation International in recognition of its scientific approach to collections management and conservation initiatives.



# Our Capitol Connection: Architect of the Capitol

The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for the operation and care of more than 18.4 million square feet of facilities and 570 acres of grounds, including those of the USBG. As an independent agency, the USBG has its own strategic plan, mission, and vision, but also operates under the strategic plan of the AOC. The Garden shares the goals and values of the AOC.



## AOC STRATEGIC GOALS

### Maintain Awe-Inspiring Facilities

The AOC’s mission centers on our stewardship of the structures and grounds of the nation’s Capitol. We must ensure every visitor to Capitol Hill experiences the grandeur of these historic treasures at their very best.

### Provide Extraordinary Services

We support our prestigious occupants in their critical mission to govern our country. We fulfill the journey of visitors from across our nation and around the world to celebrate and discover the center and symbol of American democracy. Our internal and external services are equally essential in the successful fulfillment of our mission, values, and vision.

### Foster an Innovative and Empowered Workforce

An empowered workforce will exercise greater responsibility for its performance, and proactively apply well-informed judgement and innovation, to solve problems with solutions that focus on results.

### Operate as One Team, Dedicated to One Mission

We must recognize and value that what may appear to be competing priorities for different AOC functions are ultimately in service to our united mission, values, and vision.

## AOC CORE VALUES

### Respect

We treat one another with civility and kindness, so that we honor the value and dignity of all people.

### Integrity

We demonstrate honesty, ethics and reliability, so that we earn trust and do what is right.

### Safety

We are governed by the foundation of safety always, so that we can feel safe, make safe, and be safe.

### Empowerment

We are one team seeking better ways to do our work, so that we all contribute to the success of the AOC.





## Organizational Transformation

The USBG, along with the AOC, is undertaking an extensive organizational and cultural transformation process. This included redefining the USBG's mission and vision and creating a multi-year strategic plan spanning October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2027. USBG's strategic planning process demonstrates our commitment to inclusion. All employees were invited to attend listening sessions where they shared ideas about USBG's purpose and impact, and brainstormed ideas and priorities for the future. Volunteers and Friends of the USBG also participated in listening sessions. We sent a questionnaire to the whole Garden team to find out what employees think USBG's top priorities for the future should be, and to help us articulate what makes us special. The result: a five-year plan that outlines the USBG's ambitions through organizational excellence, global impact, plant stewardship, and learning and engagement.

## USBG CORE VALUES

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access**

We strive to be accessible to all, a place where everyone feels welcome.

### **Civility**

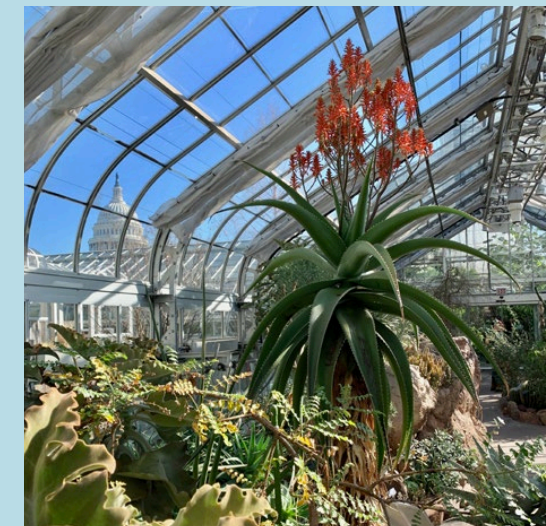
Our interactions are rooted in mutual respect and compassion.

### **Sustainability**

Our work supports a healthy environment for current and future generations.

### **Safety**

Our policies, practices, and procedures promote the safety and well-being of our employees, volunteers, and visitors.





## USBG VISION

A global leader in  
botanic garden  
excellence

## USBG MISSION

Inspiring people to  
appreciate, study,  
and conserve plants  
to enrich society  
locally and globally





# Strategic Advantage

The U.S. Botanic Garden is America’s national botanic garden. We stand out among public gardens because of our iconic location and Conservatory on Capitol Hill, our long illustrious history, and our million plus visitors from across the country and around the globe each year. Federal funding for operations and capital improvements supports exceptional facilities, collections, programs, and operations, and provides the means to magnify USBG’s reach through external partnerships.

**Our strengths:**

- Dedicated, Knowledgeable Employees
- Exceptional Plant Collection
- Federal Funding
- Iconic Location on Capitol Hill
- Outstanding Interpretation and Programs
- Dynamic Partnerships
- Unparalleled Facilities



# Audiences

Our primary audience is our million plus annual on-site visitors hailing from our backyard and around the world. We also welcome and engage online program participants, members of Congress, plant scientists, public garden colleagues, and our collaborators.





# Foundational Pillars

PILLAR:  
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**Aspiration: We are a global leader in botanic garden organizational excellence.**

- Goal 1: Leverage our resources (people, budget, and facilities) to maximize impact.
- Goal 2: Plan and execute effectively to maximize scientific and educational value, minimize environmental impact, and create beauty.
- Goal 3: Establish USBG as a partner in the local community, based on our shared interests and priorities.
- Goal 4: Enhance strategic resilience to address risks and improve performance.

**What is success in Organizational Excellence?**

At the end of five years, USBG’s human, financial, and physical resources will be aligned to best support our long-term purpose. We will have accomplished this through:

- Longer-term, more integrated planning for our collections, programs and operations;
- Aligning our budget, organizational structure, and employee cadre to reflect strategic priorities;
- Expanding employee and programmatic diversity, equity, inclusion, and access; and
- Ensuring that employees and key stakeholders understand our priorities, timelines, and plans, through multi-faceted communications.

PILLAR:  
PLANT STEWARDSHIP

**Aspiration: Our plant collection supports global conservation, scientific research, horticultural excellence, and education.**

- Goal 1: Model excellence through horticultural practices, diverse collections, and partnerships.
- Goal 2: Actively engage in ex situ plant conservation.
- Goal 3: Foster the expansion of human knowledge through research that uses our living plant collections and exceptional facilities.



**What is success in Plant Stewardship?**

At the end of five years, USBG will be a recognized leader in horticultural excellence, protection of biodiversity, and expansion of human knowledge. In collaboration with scientists and practitioners, and the organizations they represent, we will have accomplished this through:

- Expanding our plant collections of known wild provenance;
- Expanding the palette of plants available to the horticulture trade;
- Making substantial progress in transforming our production greenhouses into a widely used, state-of-the-art facility for research and conservation; and
- Authoring, supporting, and being cited in published horticulture, conservation, and biodiversity research.



PILLAR:  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
ENGAGEMENT

**Aspiration: We change hearts and minds with relevant, audience-centric, and science-focused experiences.**

- Goal 1: Create equitable and inclusive educational experiences at the intersection of audience interest, collections, and science.
- Goal 2: Offer a visitor experience that unifies the Garden and personally connects people to the importance of plants.
- Goal 3: Increase our understanding of visitor engagement and learning by evaluating visitor services, exhibits, interpretation, and programs.
- Goal 4: Develop experiential programs and products that increase scientific and horticultural literacy.

**What is success in Transformational Engagement?**

At the end of five years, USBG will be recognized locally and across the world as an outstanding resource for enjoying and learning about plants, horticulture, and plant science. People will deepen their knowledge and connection to plants when they come to the garden, attend programs, or use our extensive educational resources. We will have accomplished this by:

- Creating a visitor operations department to focus on excellent visitor experiences;
- Refining our volunteer program to be more adaptive to the Garden’s needs and more fulfilling for volunteers; and
- Continually monitoring, analyzing, and improving visitor experiences and outcomes.

PILLAR:  
GLOBAL IMPACT

**Aspiration: We leverage global partnerships to advance plant conservation and magnify the impact of public gardens.**

- Goal 1: Enhance partnerships focused on plant science, conservation, climate change, science education, and educational research.
- Goal 2: Build capacity among organizations that uplift historically underrepresented communities.

**What is success in Global Impact?**

- Collaborating with international organizations with shared goals and values;
- Sharing and deepening our expertise at international conventions and expositions;
- Developing partnerships with organizations that serve diverse audiences; and
- Expanding and deepening our plant research collaborations.





# Implementation

To accomplish the goals set forth in this plan, the USBG has developed a detailed road map including:

- A series of action steps, each of which contributes to multiple goals
- One or more key performance indicator for each action step
- A person responsible, along with a team, for each action step
- A comprehensive timeline by task
- A system for consistent monitoring of the plan to ensure timeline adherence

We are committed, not only to our mission and vision, but also to the successful implementation of this transformative plan. To learn more, please connect with us:

United States Botanic Garden  
245 First St SW  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-8333



[www.USBG.gov](http://www.USBG.gov)







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