On the cover:
A honeybee laden with pollen hovers near a peony bloom. Bees and other pollinators are essential for sustaining healthy ecosystems.

This Chinese fringe tree (Chionanthus retusus), located in the Four Seasons Garden, dazzles guests with its lush white blooms.
Hello everyone!

The spring and summer months are always a joy to behold at the Garden, and this year, there is so much to experience and celebrate! In pursuit of our mission of connecting people to plants, the Garden provides a multitude of opportunities to learn, explore, and play in nature.

Nature-lovers of all ages can enjoy the Garden by discovering Stickwork or taking part in a Butterfly Release. The Golden Hour invites friends and families to experience the Garden in the glow of the setting sun, and the Spring Plant Sale allows home gardeners an exclusive opportunity to peruse the Garden greenhouses and purchase from a unique selection of plants.

Children and families can embrace their curiosity through Summer Science Camps, Nature Academy, Seeds to Sprouts, Family Campouts, and more! With a variety of STEM-based topics, these hands-on learning opportunities encourage young students and their families to connect with nature in new and inspiring ways.

Adult learners can expand their knowledge of plants through a variety of in-person and virtual classes taught by leading industry professionals. Learn how to create sustainable landscapes, attract birds to your home garden, and even create beautiful décor from leaves! Be sure to check out page 6 for more upcoming educational programs.

This issue is a celebration of spring and summer at the Garden, filled with colorful imagery and exciting information. From practical tips to a fun quiz, there is something for everyone to enjoy. We hope this issue inspires you to take time to enjoy nature this season, whether you take action in your own landscape, experience the beauty of a flower in bloom, or find respite under the canopy of the trees.

See you at the Garden!

Sue Wagner

Greetings from our CEO

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Curated Collections

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Your Spring & Summer Checklist for Home Garden Success

Page 17
Stickwork by Patrick Dougherty

and more!

Visit Us:
In Person: 4747 Bob Wallace Ave. Huntsville, AL 35805
Online: hsvbg.org

Contact Us:
Phone: 256-830-4447
Email: info@hsvbg.org

@HuntsvilleBotanicalGarden
@hsvgarden
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Who We Are

Open year-round, the Huntsville Botanical Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 112 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Garden is an ArbNet-accredited arboretum and a member of the American Public Gardens Association, the North American Plant Collections Consortium, the American Horticultural Society, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International.
OPEN SPRING 2022

SELECT EVENINGS
MAY – JULY

JUNE

MAY – SEPTEMBER

JUNE 10 – OCTOBER 31

SEPTEMBER 1 – OCTOBER 31

APRIL

14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23
Spring Plant Sale

30
Arbor Day 5k Race & 3k Sapling Run

MAY

May 2 - June 26
Art at the Garden | Lee Baker

5
Spring Hat Luncheon

6 - 15
Go Public Gardens Days

JUNE

19, 26
Creating and Caring for Sustainable Landscapes | Virtual Class Series

JULY

2, 9, 16, 23
Creating and Caring for Sustainable Landscapes | Virtual Class Series

AUGUST

28
Leaf Castings | In-Person Class

SEPTEMBER

September 5 - October 30
Art at the Garden | Mitzi Roess

8
Garden Soirée

9
Monarch Release

SWEETSHRUB (Calycanthus floridus)
Mathews Nature Trail
Blooms April – July

What’s Blooming at the Garden:

JUNE - JULY

SUMMER STEM CAMPS
Visit hsvbg.org/camps
for more information!

JUN

5, 7, 16
Nature Academy | Plants & Water

8 - 9
Family Campout

9, 22
Seeds to Sprouts

MAY

13 - 14
Family Campout

14, 20
Seeds to Sprouts

JUNE

7, 14, 21, 26
Firefly Garden Hike

8
Seeds to Sprouts

10, 26
Seeds to Sprouts

AUGUST

19 - 20
Family Campout

20, 26
Seeds to Sprouts

SEPTEMBER

10, 23
Seeds to Sprouts

EVENTS & EXHIBITS AT THE GARDEN

Adult Programs

APRIL

7
Living Arrangements | Virtual Class

23
Growing Healthy, Stress-Free Trees | In-Person Class

28
Designing Bird-Friendly Landscapes | Virtual Class

MAY

11, 19
Butterfly Release

19
Father’s Day - Free daytime admission for fathers

June 27 - July 4
Armed Forces Week - Free admission for military personnel and immediate family

JUNE

1
Independence Day - Free admission for military personnel and immediate family

JULY

4
Independence Day - Free admission for military personnel and immediate family

July 4 - August 28
Art at the Garden | Lakshmi Nallamala

9, 23
Butterfly Release

AUGUST

13
Butterfly Release

AUGUST

20
Leaf Castings | In-Person Class

JUNE

8 Mother’s Day - Free daytime admission for mothers

8, 21
Butterfly Release

30
Memorial Day - Free daytime admission for military personnel and immediate family

SEPTEMBER

September 5 - October 30
Art at the Garden | Mitzi Roess

15
Garden Soirée

29
Monarch Release

Save the Date

Fall Plant Sale

OCTOBER 6, 7, 8, 14, 15

Youth & Family Programs

APRIL

5, 7, 16
Nature Academy | Plants & Water

8 - 9
Family Campout

9, 22
Seeds to Sprouts

MAY

13 - 14
Family Campout

14, 20
Seeds to Sprouts

JUNE

5, 12, 19
Firefly Garden Hike

8, 16
Seeds to Sprouts

15 - 16
Family Campout

JULY

7, 14, 21, 26
Firefly Garden Hike

8
Seeds to Sprouts

10, 18
Seeds to Sprouts

17 - 18
Family Campout

AUGUST

19 - 20
Family Campout

20, 26
Seeds to Sprouts

SEPTEMBER

10, 23
Seeds to Sprouts

We loved seeing your spring and summer photos at the Garden! Remember to share your photos on social media using hsvgarden and we may even include your photo in our next issue.

CELEBRATING SPRING & SUMMER AT THE GARDEN

Tweetsville explores the role that birds play in our ecosystem. The Lewis Bird Watch, “See Rocket City” birdhouse, and dynamic native plantings have inspired guests of all ages. Coming in April 2022, the newest expansion to Tweetsville will delight visitors with a giant bird nest, model tiny homes, and even more educational experiences!
Garden Tour

With over 112 acres of diverse ecosystems, there is something to discover at the Huntsville Botanical Garden! From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment.

Have you visited the hammocks in the Cedar Glade?

The hammocks are the perfect place to rest in the shade of the trees on a hot summer day. Have a seat and enjoy the sights, sounds, and smells of nature as you gently sway in the breeze.

Tweetsville is a new immersive experience in the Children's Garden that explores the role that birds play in our ecosystem. Tweetsville features the Lewis Bird Watch, a viewing area where guests can observe birds in their natural environment from behind one-way glass, and the "See Rocket City" birdhouse. Opening April 2022, a new expansion to Tweetsville includes a giant bird nest that teaches learners about bird behaviors and a model of tiny homes that demonstrate how to attract birds in a backyard setting.

The Purdy Butterfly House is the nation's largest open-air butterfly house. This immersive habitat is home to over 1,000 brightly-colored native butterflies, as well as turtles, fish, and frogs. May through September is Peak Butterfly Season and the best time to visit the fluttering butterflies. Come meet our winged friends while enjoying a stroll among the waterfalls, ponds, streams, and lush vegetation! The Purdy Butterfly House is open year-round during regular Garden hours and is included with Garden admission.

The Lewis Birding Trail is a must-see for bird enthusiasts. The trail winds through the Garden's diverse ecosystem of meadows, upland and bottomland forest, wetland, and native wildflower and azalea gardens and highlights a large variety of local and migrating birds. Look for the bird symbols on the map to follow the Lewis Birding Trail!

BLOOM is a stunning structure tucked away on the Bush Azalea Trail. Designed by John Vonk and built by Turner Construction, BLOOM echoes the seasonal cycle of transformation in the natural world through a sequence of wood trusses. As you walk through BLOOM, take a moment to observe the natural world and reflect on the growth and metamorphosis all around you.

The Garden is listed as a birding hotspot in eBird, a global birding data project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

DID YOU KNOW? The Garden is home to an American sycamore tree grown from a seed that traveled to outer space! Look for this stellar sapling near the Fern Glade.

DID YOU KNOW? The columns found at the main entrance and throughout the Garden are from the third Madison County Courthouse, which was dismantled in 1964.

DID YOU KNOW? There is a secret "whisper wall" in the Loretta Purdy Spencer Volunteer Tribute Garden. Stand on the trillium symbol in the middle of the stone seating area and whisper a secret. A friend sitting on the wall will be able to hear your secret as clearly as if you whispered directly into their ear!
Public gardens are national treasures. Though the plants and displays may vary from one public garden to the next, they are all united by a similar goal: to provide the public with a showcase of various plant collections from all around the world. But what exactly is a plant collection? If you enjoy public gardens on any level, you are bound to come across this phrase at some point. The concept of a plant collection may seem simple at first; anyone who amasses more than a few plants can be said to have a plant collection. However, amassing plants is only the tip of the collection iceberg. In reality, a plant collection can represent many different ideas, none of which are mutually exclusive. Gardens, after all, can be as varied as the people who enjoy them.

At its most fundamental level, a plant collection consists of plants associated with an idea or theme.

The idea can be as simple as displaying beautiful plants in unique and interesting ways. More often, the purpose underlying a collection is a bit more nuanced, encompassing themes that may vary in how readily apparent they are to the layperson. The concept of a plant collection may seem simple at first; anyone who amasses more than a few plants can be said to have a plant collection. However, amassing plants is only the tip of the collection iceberg. In reality, a plant collection can represent many different ideas, none of which are mutually exclusive. Gardens, after all, can be as varied as the people who enjoy them.

For instance, a collection can be built around the environmental or cultural importance of a single species and therefore be composed of only one type of plant, such as the illustrious white oak (Quercus alba). All the white oaks here at the Huntsville Botanical Garden may have originated from different sources and can be found growing in various parts of the Garden, but they are all members of the same species. The ideas expressed by a species-specific collection like this can range from appealing to those who just want to enjoy a stroll under a canopy of beautiful trees, to teaching the public about the important cultural and environmental impacts white oaks can have. The juxtaposition between how different observers experience single-species collections opens the door to many avenues of discovery and appreciation.

Alternatively, a collection can focus on a group of related species with the goal of displaying the breadth in shapes, colors, and sizes of a single genus, such as azaleas (Rhododendron). The azaleas we grow here at the Garden are wonderful examples of this type of plant collection. Our paths and trails are lined with numerous shrubs collectively referred to as “azaleas,” but under that umbrella lies a bewildering diversity of unique species, hybrids, and varieties. One of the most exciting aspects of collections like these is that they can provide homeowners with a better understanding of which azaleas best fit their landscape desires while dazzling everyone who takes the time to experience them. Once again, a major goal in building plant collections should always be for them to be enjoyed in numerous ways by all manner of garden visitors.

Plant collections can also be more conceptual or thematic in their design. Across our 112 acres, the Garden showcases a myriad of specimens hailing from a variety of plant families that share the common theme of being native to the state of Alabama. Native plant collections like those that decorate our Mathews Nature Trail allow visitors to experience a concentrated sampling of Alabama’s amazingly diverse native flora over relatively short distances, alleviating the need to drive all over the state to find them.

Similarly, we grow many plants at the Huntsville Botanical Garden that are facing extinction in the wild. By providing them with a spot in the Garden, we are creating two types of collections at the same time – a collection that can teach visitors about the struggles facing many native plants in the wild and a collection that safeguards important genetic diversity for rare plant species.

The main reason plant collections can express so many unique and interesting ideas simultaneously is that they are composed of plants. Indeed, plants have so many amazing stories to tell, they just need someone to tell them. It is hard to express in words the excitement that comes with uncovering novel information about plants. Armed with knowledge, even the most unassuming aspects of a plant can send you down a path of discovery you never knew existed.

The key is to ask questions. “Why is there so much variation in leaf shapes and textures?” or “Why are some flowers big and showy while others are small and delicate?” Pursuing answers to such questions and relating them in understandable ways is one of the many jobs of a garden curator. A curator must always try to weave as many narratives through a garden as possible so as to give the public multiple paths to follow on their journey towards inspiration and discovery. The more stories that can be told, the more public gardens like ours can connect the public to the plants that surround them, and the better off our community will be for it.

What's Blooming at the Garden: Bush Azalea Trail Blooms mid to late spring

Bush Azalea Trail

Fun Facts

Plants like Jack-in-the-Pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum) use chemical trickery to pollinate. By mimicking the smell of fungi, they lure in fungus gnats that then spread their pollen from plant to plant.

Motiling on the leaves of some forest plants can act as a form of camouflage. Herbivores like deer do not possess the ability to see as many colors as humans, so a mottled leaf easily blends into the forest floor, making it less likely to be eaten.

Most insect pollinators are too small to effectively pollinate the flowers of the flame azalea (Rhododendron calendulaceum). Only butterflies with a large wingspan, such as the eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly (Papilio glaucus), are large enough to contact both the anthers and stigma of a flame azalea flower and are, therefore, the preferred pollinator of this species.

The flowers of the mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia) are ringed in tiny pockets, each housing a pollen-producing anther. As the flower opens, the pockets hold on to the anthers, drawing them tight. When an insect like a bee lands on the flower, its movements cause the anthers to spring out of the pockets and bash the insect with pollen. Each visit is like stumbling into an army of tiny pollen-laden trebuchets. This can easily be simulated using a small stick.

Virginia Bluebells (Mertensia virginica) from a variety of plant families that share the common theme of being native to the state of Alabama. Native plant collections like those that decorate our Mathews Nature Trail allow visitors to experience a concentrated sampling of Alabama’s amazingly diverse native flora over relatively short distances, alleviating the need to drive all over the state to find them.

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A Garden Full of Life

In the past two years, people around the world have begun spending a lot more time at home. Many have taken up new hobbies to pass the time: painting landscapes, making artisanal bread, putting together jigsaw puzzles, and even gardening. Homeowners and apartment-dwellers alike have begun to see their home gardens with fresh eyes, and the desire to create a visually appealing landscape to enjoy during days spent at home has grown. For one Huntsville resident, the idea of a garden full of flowers was enticing, but even more so was the dream of a garden alive with fluttering butterflies, buzzing bees, and chirping birds.

A retired engineer with a blank canvas of a landscape, Sally Parsons’ home garden journey began in October 2020 when she was struck with the idea to create a haven for pollinators in her own yard. Sally knew attracting pollinators requires more than just pretty flowers, so she decided to create a beautiful blooming garden of plants native to North Alabama. From wedding phlox to blanket flowers, native plants provide bees, butterflies, and birds with the nectar, seeds, and habitats they need to survive. Sally was able to transform her home garden into an oasis of beauty, color, and life just by incorporating native plantings into her design.

Sally’s first step was to look at the direction her garden beds faced. With beds facing the west and little to no shade, she knew she would need plants that could tolerate high heat and harsh afternoon sun. Next, Sally drew up her design plans… then redrew them and redrew them until she was satisfied with the finished product. With minimal gardening experience outside of house plants, she says “the hardest part was trusting (herself) in the design.” Then, it was time to head outside and get her hands dirty. Sally reshaped her garden beds by removing sod and amended the soil to accommodate new plants. She adds that this bit was particularly difficult, as the hard clay required persistence and a broadfork to be broken up for preparation.

Finally, Sally could place her native plants according to her design. She had to be flexible with her selections based on availability, but she was able to find many of her plants at the Garden’s Plant Sale, local nurseries, and through friends and neighbors. When asked which of her plants is her favorite, Sally laughed: “Whatever is blooming and has bees on it!”

Sally’s advice to other home gardeners is to take classes that interest you. (Looking for learning opportunities? The Garden offers Adult Education Programs on a variety of topics each month!) She also recommends volunteering at the Garden to learn from Garden staff and other volunteers, many of whom have extensive experience with native plants.

“Don’t be afraid to get your hands dirty even if you’re a ‘newbie,’” says Sally. “Gardening is a lot of fun, and the process is never over.”

Before you dig... call 811 to have your utilities marked to avoid digging into any underground utility lines.

Top Tip: Feeling green with plant envy?
Trade plants or clippings with friends and neighbors to build and diversify your collection!

Top Tip: Can’t decide what color palette to use in your home garden?
Sally recommends turning to art. Look at paintings, clothing, and photography for colors that you find attractive, and select flowers, bushes, and trees that match.

Top Tip: Before you dig...
...call 811 to have your utilities marked to avoid digging into any underground utility lines.

What’s Blooming at the Garden:

Stokes’ Aster
(Stokesia laevis)
Mathews Nature Trail
Blooms May - September

Spotted Bee Balm
(Monarda punctata)
Tweetsville
Blooms May - September

Top Tip:
Sally Parsons’ home garden
journey began in October 2020 when she
was struck with the idea to create a haven
for pollinators in her own yard. Sally
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Your Spring & Summer Checklist for Home Garden Success

Follow these easy tips to help keep your garden healthy and your plants happy!

April
- Prune early spring-flowering shrubs, such as forsythia, rhododendron, and azaleas, after they bloom.
- Do not plant tender annuals until after the last frost date, which is April 15 for our zone.
- Visit the Spring Plant Sale to peruse a variety of unique plants to add to your home garden!
- Learn more at hsvbg.org

May
- Allow spring bulb foliage to die back completely before removal.
- Plant an edible garden with herbs, tomatoes, basil, peppers, and other veggies.
- Plant all summer veggies and annuals by the end of the month.

June
- Fertilize all of your trees and shrubs before July 4.
- Set your houseplants outdoors in a shaded area, and pay close attention to the need for water.
- Add more plants to your garden by taking cuttings of new growth.

July
- Monitor flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawns closely for insects and diseases.
- Water early in the morning and in the evening, and don’t forget to provide water for birds.
- Start planning for a fall vegetable garden by placing seed orders and choosing what you would like to grow.

August
- Harvest herbs and vegetables from your garden to enjoy the fruits of your labor!
- Keep a close eye out for armyworms in your lawn.
- Set up a rain gauge to monitor rainfall and utilize your irrigation system to ensure your plants stay hydrated.

September
- Divide your perennials to establish a good root system going into winter and create more plants to enjoy.
- Feed hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees with a pollinator-friendly garden.
- Plant cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts for a fall garden.

Quiz Time!
What native Alabama butterfly are you?

1. Which type of animals are your favorites?
   - A. Woodland animals (fox, deer, etc.)
   - B. Birds
   - C. Reptiles
   - D. Exotic animals (tigers, lions, & zebras, oh my!)

2. Which of the following statements best describes you?
   - A. I dream of traveling to far-off locations.
   - B. I like to take road trips to nearby cities and states.
   - C. I prefer a staycation.
   - D. I love to travel wherever life takes me.

3. What kind of food do you prefer?
   - A. I’m a meatatarian. Give me steak!
   - B. I’m more of a vegetarian. I love my veggies!
   - C. I love spicy foods!
   - D. I like a balanced diet of meat, veggies, and fruits.

4. When it comes to heights, which of the following describes you best?
   - A. I love heights. Bring on the skydiving!
   - B. Heights aren’t my favorite. Being in a tall building is high enough for me.
   - C. Heights aren’t for me. I prefer my feet planted on the ground.
   - D. I’m okay with heights. I wouldn’t mind a helicopter tour of the city.

5. What is your favorite way to spend your weekends?
   - A. Traveling the world
   - B. Spending time with friends
   - C. Exploring nature
   - D. Dancing to my favorite song

Answers on page 16!
Monarch butterflies are one of the most iconic species of butterflies. Their orange and black markings remind predators of their toxicity, which is acquired when their caterpillars eat their only host plant: the milkweed. Monarchs can travel over 3,000 miles during their migration, from as far north as Canada to as far south as Mexico’s Central Highlands. This fearless flutterer flies high in the sky for its long migration. Monarchs are also migratory. They can be seen traveling low to the ground and “jumping” over obstacles in their path instead of flying high like monarchs. These butterflies migrate from as far north as Canada and travel to warmer climates in Florida to overwinter.

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From the tallest tree to the smallest seed, inspiration is all around us; we need only to look for it. Art is often inspired by nature: an ocean scene on canvas, a vase of flowers sketched in charcoal, or an animal sculpted from clay. It is not uncommon for artists to look to the natural world for their subjects, but some turn to nature for their materials, as well. Inspired by his love of nature and empowered by his skills in carpentry and sculpture, Patrick Dougherty has created over 300 such pieces. Dougherty’s work not only reflects and appreciates the natural world, it takes on a life of its own, as if sprung forth from the earth unaided by man.

Dougherty’s medium for his sculptures is the humble stick. A single stick on its own may seem unassuming, but when woven together with tens of thousands of other sticks, the resulting structure can be awe-inspiring. Dougherty’s sculptures feature whimsical and immersive art form here at the Huntsville Botanical Garden.

Stickwork at the Huntsville Botanical Garden is a massive sculpture built by Patrick Dougherty with the support of over 100 community volunteers. Tucked away in the Garden and built from locally sourced sapling branches, the giant sculpture, entitled “Roly-Poly,” twists and turns to create an interactive installation for visitors to explore freely. Like a portal to another world, Stickwork offers guests of all ages a chance to play, imagine, and find inspiration in nature.

Learn more about Stickwork at hsvbg.org/stickwork.

Photo by Joel & Amber Photography
Thank you to our Corporate Partners!

The Corporate Partner program is designed to strengthen the relationship between the Huntsville Botanical Garden and the corporate community in the Greater Huntsville Area. Through the annual support of these Corporate Partners, we can provide first-class programs that allow children, families, and Garden guests to connect to plants and gain a deeper understanding of the role they play in their own environment.

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BAE Systems Shared Services, Inc.
BancorpSouth, Inc.
MTSI
Northwestern Mutual
PeopleEs
Van Valkenburgh & Wilkinson Properties
Viva Medicare

Butterfly Tributes at the Garden

Each year, thousands of butterflies are released in the Purdy Butterfly House from May through September. The symbolic gesture of releasing hundreds of tiny insects, surrounded by the delicate fluttering of gossamer wings, can be a beautiful way to recognize a loved one. Through a Butterfly Tribute, donors can help populate the Purdy Butterfly House with native butterflies throughout the season. The tribute also includes a beautiful watercolor print by local artist, the late Susan Redmon, dedicated in honor or memory of a loved one.

If you are interested in purchasing a Butterfly Tribute, please contact development@hsvbg.org or visit hsvbg.org/donate.

Learn more about the Corporate Partner program at:
hsvb.org/corporate-partners
development@hsvbg.org
256-830-4447 ext. 257

Great Blue Lobelia (Lobelia siphilitica)
Bush Azalea Trail & Tweetsville Blooms July - October
“There is no time like Spring,
When life’s alive in everything...”

Christina Rosetti

See inside for details.