INSPIRED SERVICE

Committed and hardworking, our 2019 volunteer honorees lend hands, voices to cultivating features of the gardens they treasure.
Around the Gardens

Rhododendron Garden

Where to find it: just in time for Valentine’s Day. Their silvery buds burst forth with buttery yellow blossoms before you see them. You will often smell the blooms of (Edgeworthia chrysantha)

What we love about it: This evergreen groundcover sends winter, a favorite in the garden for both us and the bees.

What it is: Japanese Garden

Winter Highlights

Visit soon! Many of our Asian favorites are standouts this season.

By MOLLY HENDRY

1. What it is: Lenten Rose (Helleborus orientalis)

What we love about it: This evergreen groundcover sends up its blooms in the middle of winter, a favorite in the garden for both us and the bees. Where to find it: Southern Living Garden

2. What it is: Paperbush (Edgeworthia chrysantha)

What we love about it: You will often smell the blooms of paperbush before you see them. Their silvery buds burst forth with buttery yellow blossoms at the beginning of February, just in time for Valentine’s Day. Where to find it: Curry Rhododendron Garden

3. What it is: Flowering Quince (Chaenomeles speciosa)

What we love about it: The brittle zigzaggy stems contrast with delicate blooms in a variety of shades including white, pink, red, and peach at the beginning of February. Where to find it: Japanese Garden

4. What it is: Okame Cherry Tree (Prunus x incamp ‘Okame’)

What we love about it: This hybrid cherry is a herald of spring, one of the first blooms at the tail end of winter. Where to find it: Japanese Garden near teahouse

5. What it is: Camellia (Camellia japonica)

What we love about it: The large blooms of camellias against the deep glossy green of their leaves. As our official state flower, this camellia is one of the best ways to ring in the new year. Where to find it: Hess Camellia Garden

6. What it is: Weeping Deodar Cedar (Cedrus deodara)

What we love about it: This conifer is a graceful figure in the winter with its arching form, adding a structural backbone to the garden. Where to find it: Abroms Rhododendron Garden

Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens

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Our Mission

The Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens seeks to protect, nurture, and share the wonders of Birmingham Botanical Gardens. We are dedicated to serving the Gardens, serving the community, serving our visitors, and inspiring a passion for plants, gardens, and the environment.

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A facility of the Birmingham Park and Recreation Board, the Birmingham Botanical Gardens is the result of a successful public/private partnership between the City of Birmingham and the nonprofit Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens, a mission-driven membership organization that seeks to protect, nurture, and share the wonders of the Gardens. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Friends’ quarterly newsletter. Thank you for visiting and supporting the Gardens!

Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens practices a policy of equal opportunity and equal access to services for all persons regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, orientation, or sex identity.
Dear Friends,

This is a time of year when it is natural to stop and reflect on the things in life—both large and small—for which we are thankful. Something that all of us here at the Friends have a special appreciation for is the many forms of support we receive from volunteers. These are people who give generously of their time and talents to further our mission to protect, nurture, and share the wonders of Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

It’s an ambitious endeavor to cultivate and care for 67.5 acres and to deliver a myriad of educational programs, and we are fortunate to have a long history of involvement and support that propels the Gardens forward. Throughout this winter issue of The Garden Dirt, I think you’ll find that what truly keeps Birmingham Botanical Gardens special is the commitment of its Friends.

Friends like Virginia Amason and Leigh Haver, whose devotion to the Gardens led them to serve as co-chairs for our Antiques at the Gardens fundraiser for two consecutive years. Friends like Norm Geisinger, Bob Koons, and Linda Grissom, who give of their time, energies, and good spirit to volunteering in the Gardens week after week. Friends like Ritsuko Asano, who shares her passion for preserving and celebrating the Japanese Garden’s teahouse, To shinan. Friends like UABT each student Ashlee Uhlar and the more than 120 students in UAB Honors College who have made time to support our mission even while juggling full course loads. We recently honored these selfless individuals—the recipients of our 2019 volunteer awards—at our annual volunteer luncheon in November and are delighted to share their stories here.

We hope you will find their dedication and enthusiasm to be inspiring and uplifting. The work of the Friends is accomplished with the help of many different hands on many different levels—whether volunteers, members, donors, board members, or staff. It is only through the dedicated involvement and generosity of many people that organizations such as ours thrive.

At this special time of year, we are grateful for your Friendship and all the ways you help us keep Birmingham Botanical Gardens special.

Wishing you the happiest of holiday seasons,

Tom Underwood
Executive Director
Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens

SHOP AT THE GARDENS

Cool temps and falling leaves mean the holidays are drawing near! Stop by soon to enjoy the colors of the changing season and a scrumptious lunch at the Gardens Café by Kathy G. Then check off a few items on your gift (or wish) list—Leaf & Petal at the Gardens has stocking stuffers galore. Members of the Friends receive 10% off purchases at the café and 10% off regularly priced merchandise at the shop with membership card.

OPEN
9:30 A.M.–5:30 P.M. MONDAY–SATURDAY
AND 11 A.M.–4 P.M. SUNDAY
(Extended Holiday Hours)

Red Truck Ornament $39
The shop offers selections on everything from ornaments to tabletop decor to wreaths.

Mark Edge Earrings $98
Mark Edge is just one of the talented artists you’ll find at Leaf & Petal at the Gardens. Sensible, stylish, and one-of-a-few jewelry pieces will make the perfect gift for someone on your holiday list.

Hat $14 Gloves $23 Cape $75
Your tree shouldn’t be the only thing you dress up for the holidays! Warm yourself with cool gloves, hats, scarves, and wraps.
Room for Butterflies

_A journey back to the Birmingham style_  
By MOLLY HENDRY

One of those waves touched the work of Holly as she was just entering the world of floral design when her mother gave her the book _Elegance in Flowers_. That afternoon when I produced a copy of the book, Holly’s face lit up in recognition. She turned to a page featuring a foliage arrangement filled with coarse Southern magnolia, the yellow-dusted leaves of aucuba, and the lines of leucothoe stems mixed with finely textured hemlock and its cones. Holly murmured, “This rocked my world.” She had studied many of the arrangements in this book while finding her feet as a floral designer. Yet she hadn’t realized the original muse for these arrangements was Beth.

Perhaps that is how the name Beth seemed to roll off her tongue, as if they had been friends for decades. Holly and Beth, it seems, share the same ethos of design, which centers on demystifying the world of flowers, on seeing the beauty in what we have outside our own back doors here in Birmingham.

Outside the Ireland Room, on the second floor of the Garden Center, hangs an Arthur Stewart painting portraying Beth creating a spring arrangement. Her face is just a profile in the background, barely peeking through,

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IT WAS A CRISP MARCH AFTERNOON as floral artist Holly Carlisle and I were standing in the Beth McReynolds Memorial Garden next to the plaque that reads “Given by her friends and students 1981.” I was deep into a research project about Beth, who helped usher in a new age of Birmingham floral design in the 1960s, and the teaching garden created to honor her distinctive style. I was hoping that Holly could shed some light into the garden’s design from a flower arranger’s perspective.

“So, tell me more about Beth …” Holly prompted as she thumbed through a copy of _Elegance in Flowers_, a book of stunning arrangements created by many of Beth’s students.

Where to start? I thought …

I noticed how the name Beth floated off Holly’s tongue in a familiar way, the way I had also come to know Beth through studying her work. However, to many she is remembered more formally as Mrs. McReynolds, the beloved matriarch of Birmingham floral design.

At a time when floral foam was perpetuating rigid and densely packed flower arrangements, Beth’s open mechanics and incorporation of foliage left arrangements full of whimsy and wonder. What became known as the “Birmingham style” was marked by the line and structure of ikebana (the Japanese art of flower arrangement) in harmony with the abundance and exuberance found in English arrangements. This style was disseminated through her popular flower arranging classes held in area homes, which were a must among Birmingham’s young women. The genius of both Beth and her pupil-turned-floral partner, Lula Rose Blackwell, made waves that still impact flower design around town today.

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“Leave room for the butterflies to fly through,” you can almost hear Beth saying as she places another sprig of forsythia into the composition.
concentrating on her work.

“Leave room for the butterflies to fly through,” you can almost hear Beth saying as she places another sprig of forsythia into the composition.

As I have asked many of Beth’s former students about her, this phrase is reflexively quoted. It was her mantra, the heartbeat of her designs. Far from the formality of classic flower arrangements, her creations made room for nature—its innate beauty and life.

After our meeting, Holly and I began dreaming about hosting classes that recapture the “Birmingham style.” This was the beginning of the Friends’ Essentially Seasonal Design Series, which wrapped up in November. For the series, Holly gave freely of her time and talents in the hope that each class would raise as much money as possible for the Gardens while inspiring a community of flower lovers to bring the beauty of their own gardens indoors.

I look back in wonder, realizing that Holly and I were two strangers brought together serendipitously by Beth, a woman we never met. Yet, we have learned so much from her legacy: a reminder to leave room for the butterflies to fly through.

Molly (above, left, with Holly Carlisle) joined the Friends two years ago as Garden Assessment Project Leader. On any given day, you might find her researching in the Archives, developing design plans, helping install new plantings, and talking about her work as both a horticulturist and landscape designer.
VOLUNTEERS ARE AN INDISPENSABLE SOURCE OF VITALITY for the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens. They cultivate not only the beautiful flora that visitors love but also the joy guests feel when they walk the Gardens’ grounds. Whether through leading tours, cleaning out beds, propagating plants, or spearheading special events, their hard work enables us to fulfill our mission of protecting, nurturing, and sharing the wonders of the Gardens.

Each year, the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens honors individuals who have gone above and beyond in their service to the Gardens. This year, we recognize volunteers for their help and leadership in everything from educational programming to fundraising. Get to know our 2019 honorees: how they serve, how they got involved, what they enjoy most about volunteering here, and why they encourage you to volunteer here too.

AWARD:
PLANT PERSON OF THE YEAR
BOB KOONS

Bob first embarked on his volunteer journey with the Friends in January 2017—about halfway through that year’s Alabama Cooperative Extension System Master Gardener class. Now a key member of the Trees & Shrubs volunteer growing group, Bob has also spent time in the Japanese Garden, in the Abroms Rhododendron Garden, and on other projects as needed.

Q: How did you get involved here?
A: I knew Kaul Wildflower Curator John Manion through other volunteers and asked him if I could work in that garden, which is one of my favorite spots at the BBG. I also volunteered for the Spring Plant Sale, ending up in Trees & Shrubs after meeting Alicia Hall and Jean Sherlock. This past spring, Jean asked me to take over her responsibilities in the Trees & Shrubs group. The rest is history—I have been at it ever since.

I have always had an interest in, and have walked quite a few, botanical gardens, parklands, private gardens, and nature preserves around the world, particularly observing the hardscape and overall landscape design that makes such spaces so beautiful and successful. Starting to understand the plants and horticultural aspects has been a post-retirement activity.

Q: What do you find most rewarding?
A: All of the above—from the south (Japanese Garden) to the north (Kaul Wildflower Garden), the BBG represents many aspects of outdoor spaces and environmental management. I particularly enjoy the company of volunteers who share a respect for nature and get excited about

A Note from Volunteer Coordinator
Alice Thompson Moore

“I felt like we really made an impact at this site!” The words of UAB student Dayla Raths reflect the feelings of many of our volunteers. In 2019, we launched new volunteer initiatives, increased weekend volunteer options, and strengthened friendships with area organizations to build a stronger, more diverse volunteer program. We continued our ongoing partnership with United Way Hands On (formerly Hands On Birmingham) for our annual MLK Day of Service with 35 volunteers working in the Kaul Wildflower Garden, Bog...
INSPIRED SERVICE

COMMITTED AND HARDWORKING, OUR 2019 VOLUNTEER HONOREES LEND HANDS, VOICES TO CULTIVATING FEATURES OF THE GARDENS THEY TREASURE

By JAMIE HAAS, MINDY KEYES BLACK, and ALICE THOMPSON MOORE

making and/or saving something of value in the Gardens.

Q: Who should volunteer here, and why?
A: Anyone at any age who wants to understand their environment better and share those interests with other (more knowledgeable) plant people. Nothing is ever completed here; it is an ongoing and evolving effort that changes from season to season. I enjoy working with everyone here but am particularly fascinated with the folks who have a long-learned knowledge of the Gardens.

Q: What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?
A: Any location where I can look around and see the results of some very well-thought-out designs, plantings, or vistas that someone imposed on or drew out of the garden landscape.

AWARD:
BOB WENDORF
YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

ASHLEE UHLAR

Ashlee spent time over the summer as a camp counselor at the BBG. Volunteering while also juggling commitments of a summer college course at UAB, she served close to 70 hours through the season. Among Ashlee’s favorite aspects of volunteering were working with the teachers, young people, Volunteer Coordinator Garden, and Fern Glade, a fitting way to kick off a year of increased corporate and community group involvement at the Gardens.

Throughout the year, we formed new friendships with volunteers from Circle K International, Top Golf, Whole Foods, the University of Wisconsin, and Target. We strengthened existing friendships with Protective Life, Verizon, Samford University, BBVA Compass, and UAB Honors College. Our volunteers and partner organizations made a tremendous impact at the Gardens this year. Volunteers completed beautification projects and upgrades in the Japanese Garden, Fern Glade, and Little Ones’ Memory Garden.

We restructured our Garden Guides program and held public tours highlighting the best features of our Gardens throughout National Public Gardens Week. Our friendships with Junior League of Birmingham and UABTeach helped grow our Education Docent program so that we can serve a greater number of students in the Birmingham area and beyond.

Both longtime and first-time volunteers turned out to help with our 50th Spring Plant Sale, Native Plant Conference, and multiple special events throughout the year. Our Antiques Committee co-chairs committed to a second year and created a fantastic fundraiser with strong volunteer support. For many volunteers, special events serve as a way they can impact the Gardens while maintaining busy work schedules. For college and teen volunteers, special events are their gateway into service to the Gardens and help us create lifelong friends and supporters who, like Dayla, see that they are making an impact here.

We thank all of our volunteers for their commitment, their service, their knowledge, and, most of all, their Friendship.
take in the Gardens. Not every botanical garden is like that. It's a place where anyone from any walk of life is fully welcome to enjoy it.

**AWARD:**
**IDA C. BURNS VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR**

**VIRGINIA AMASON AND LEIGH HAVER**

Passionate about the mission of the Friends, this dynamic duo teamed up twice as Antiques at the Gardens co-chairs to lead a dedicated volunteer committee in raising a collective $1.2 million in 2018 and 2019 through sponsorships, partnerships, and ticket sales. Virginia began working on the show three years ago, first as a valuable member of the Patrons Committee. Leigh’s involvement with the Gardens has varied over the years. As a Junior League of Birmingham volunteer, she worked shifts at the plant sale and served on the Antiques at the Gardens committee on multiple occasions before co-chairing with Virginia.

**Q:** What drew you to the Gardens?

**Virginia:** My father-in-law is a very active supporter of the Gardens, so his enthusiasm was contagious! I also grew up working in the yard and enjoy being outside.

**Leigh:** As with many people, I’d bring my family for pictures and walk the Gardens on nice days, but I became more involved when my friends became involved with the show.

**Q:** What do you find most rewarding about your volunteer work here?

**Virginia:** I have found the friendships and meeting new people most rewarding as a volunteer. The Gardens is fortunate to have so many great people supporting its mission, especially the staff. Knowing that the support we raise with Antiques at the Gardens keeps the Gardens available for our community to enjoy at no charge is a big driver for me.

**Leigh:** I have established many friendships through my involvement with the Gardens. I find the passion of those involved with the Gardens to be inspiring, and I love seeing the busloads of children enjoying their field trips. Knowing that we helped raise funds to contribute to the sustainability of the Gardens is certainly rewarding.

**Q:** Who should volunteer with the Friends, and why?

**Virginia:** One of the great things about the Gardens is there is a place for botanists and antique enthusiasts alike all to share their talents here.

**Leigh:** Volunteers are appreciated, and the staff with the Friends create a welcoming atmosphere.

**Q:** What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?

**Virginia:** Over the years I have always enjoyed taking family photos throughout the Gardens.

**Leigh:** Joining my children on their field trips to the BBG has been a real treat. We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful space for our community and visitors to enjoy.
I ENJOY CHATTING WITH GUESTS ABOUT THE TREES, KOI, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN—THE MOON AND “ZIGZAG” BRIDGES, AS WELL AS THE SEVEN VIRTUES WATERFALL. THE EDUCATIONAL SIDE OF IT IS VERY REWARDING. —Norm Geisinger

AWARD: EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

RITSUKO ASANO

An active member of the Chado Urasenke Tankokai Birmingham Association (a group of people drawn together by diverse interests in Japanese culture), Ritsuko has been teaching Chado, “the way of tea,” for about 20 years. She draws on her talents as a retired interpreter for Honda Motor Company’s Japanese transferees and their families, as well as her heritage as a third-generation tea instructor, to educate the Gardens’ visitors about Japanese tea ceremonies and the cultural significance of the Toshinan, the Gardens’ traditional Japanese teahouse. Many Tuesdays, you’ll also find her hard at work alongside other dedicated Japanese Garden volunteers.

Q: What drew you to the Gardens and its teahouse?

A: The day I visited Birmingham for the first time in 1996 to learn about the city where my family was to move, a friend of mine took me around the city, which included the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Mr. Yamada, then Director of the New York Urasenke Center, happened to be visiting to give a lecture and invited Japanese residents. He was encouraging the audience to come to clean the Toshinan often and to drink tea afterwards. In other words: Take care of this exceptional teahouse, and use it as it was meant to be. Since I retired in June, teaching Chado has turned from a side to the main engagement.

Q: How did you become involved in gardening here as well?

A: [Longtime Friends member] Dr. Bob Wendorf was having a Japanese Garden Society meeting the second Saturday of each month. I joined; however, the membership dwindled but for the two of us. We quit meeting in the [Garden Center] and instead went down to Toshinan to open the teahouse and let it breathe while doing light cleaning. Bob was also a dedicated volunteer, forming a Tuesday volunteer group [originally] called “The Three Docs.” I joined them after retiring in June. I was looking forward to working with him, but he passed away last year. He was a great inspiration.

Q: What do you find most rewarding?

A: Working in the serene Japanese Garden provides a clean break from miscellaneous self-imposed, everyday tasks. It is very meditative.

Q: What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?

A: The BBG’s bamboo grove is relatively small but is great enough to transport me back to Japan when I stand there. The composition of the grove is a moving sculpture with a breeze, snow, and moonlight.

Q: What is special about the Gardens’ Toshinan?

A: Toshinan is a cultural treasure hard to find elsewhere. The building is made of the finest materials from Japan, designed and constructed by a master carpenter, Mr. [Kazunori] Tago. Toshinan offers a tangible experience for those interested in Japanese spirit and aesthetics by sitting for a while with all your senses. Or it will envelop you with its clean simplicity and architectural sophistication. This small hut is meant to develop heart-to-heart communication among those who gather over a bowl of tea, carefully prepared by the host. Its given name, Toshinan, literally means “to light each other’s wick of the heart.”

Q: What is your hope for this symbol of friendship?

A: According to the original master carpenter, Mr. Tago, the teahouse could last a century or more with good maintenance work every 20 years. It has been 26 years since it was built, and it is showing serious deterioration. My hope is to raise awareness about this rare cultural asset in Birmingham and to help assist fundraising efforts by the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens toward its restoration.

AWARD: A. BRAND WALTON, JR., UNSUNG HERO

LINDA GRISSOM

Linda is a longtime volunteer in the Gardens’ Perennials growing group, having spent time in our potting sheds since 2007. However, she began turning soil long before then, having tended her own flowerbeds and gardened seriously for more than 40 years. Although she lends her time and talents to many local gardening groups, Linda admits that she has a special spot in her heart for the Gardens.
Q: How did you get involved here?
A: I’ve been into gardening a long time, and then when I retired in 2007, a friend of mine—Judy Thomason—took me to the potting sheds. I had mentioned to her that I was interested, and she told me: “I know exactly where you need to be.” That next Thursday I went to work at the Gardens, and I was hooked! I love working with the flowers, every aspect of them. It’s such a pleasure to me to see how these things grow and even sometimes how they die, because that’s a part of it too.

Q: What do you find most rewarding?
A: It’s so interesting to plant a seed and see what it produces, or to do the cuttings and see if they propagate, and just witness how a plant matures. The learning process is amazing. I also enjoy the butterflies and hummingbirds, which are all part of it.

Q: Who should volunteer here, and why?
A: Anybody who has an interest in plants! There’s a place for everybody: perennials, shrubs, herbs, it’s all nice. It just depends on where your interests lie.

Q: What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?
A: I really like that we are trying to reach the children with our programs and get them interested in the Gardens. A love of nature is something that will bring them pleasure wherever they are in life.

**AWARD:**
**NEW FRIEND**

**NORM GEISINGER**

Norm began volunteering for the Friends last spring, focusing his work primarily in the Japanese Garden. Visitors wandering through are likely to find him cleaning up large juniper trees and Japanese black pine. However, he’s always glad to chat and, as a frequent tour guide, is a fount of valuable knowledge. Norm especially enjoys speaking with children who pass through, happily answering questions and teaching them about the koi and turtles in Long Life Lake. In September alone, Norm spoke to approximately 800 guests.

Q: How did you get involved here?
A: I’ve studied and practiced the art of bonsai for about 25 years now, and I currently have 20 trees in my collection in my daughter’s backyard. My daughter and I also maintained a vegetable garden when she was growing up. So it was a natural next step for me to approach the Gardens and see what I could do here.

Q: What do you find most rewarding?
A: Speaking to the different people that pass through the Gardens, visiting from all over. I’ve talked to people from Oregon, New York, all across the United States. On one occasion I even spoke to a visitor from Bangladesh. I enjoy chatting with guests about the trees, koi, and other aspects of the Japanese Garden—the Moon and “Zigzag” Bridges, as well as the Seven Virtues Waterfall. The educational side of it is very rewarding.

Q: Who should volunteer here, and why?
A: Anybody with an interest in plants! Even if you don’t know anything about flowers, as long as there’s an interest, you can learn. It’s also fantastic for people who are retired and looking for a new hobby to keep themselves active. It helps me get my morning walks in, for sure.

Q: What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?
A: Long Life Lake in the Japanese Garden is bursting with life. Between the koi, turtles, and a blue heron that fishes there from time to time, there’s always some kind of activity going on, and it’s very nice to see.

**AWARD:**
**VOLUNTEER PARTNER**

**UAB HONORS COLLEGE**

The Honors College at the University of Alabama at Birmingham has had a volunteer
presence at the BBG for five years. We spoke with student Emily Deng about the college’s—and her own—commitment to being a Friend of the Gardens.

Q: How did you get involved here?
Emily: I’ve been with the Honors College for four years now, and every year we’ve always come to the Gardens to volunteer as part of the Honors College retreat. A lot of students really enjoy getting involved through that. From landscape work to weeding, the projects are different every time, which is very exciting.

Q: What do you find most rewarding?
Emily: Being able to see the fruits of our labors! I distinctly remember working in the Kaul Wildflower Garden clearing paths, and it was crazy to see how much progress we’d made by the end of our shift. Then seeing other visitors’ happy faces when they used the paths felt extra special knowing we helped make it happen.

Q: Who should volunteer here, and why?
Emily: Anyone and everyone who has the time! I think it’s good to give back to a place that’s open and free for everyone. Birmingham is an urban place and being able to escape to somewhere peaceful, quiet, and full of nature—it almost feels like another world. So it’s really relaxing to volunteer here, and it’s a good way to recharge and play in the dirt again.

Q: What is your favorite spot in—or aspect of—the Gardens?
Emily: The students as a whole are pretty obsessed with the Japanese Garden, but I think my personal favorite is the Rose Gardens. Nothing beats looking at pretty flowers.

CALL IT A VOLUNTEER DAY

Looking for opportunities to serve at the Gardens? Considering volunteering with the Friends for the first time? Start off 2020 by joining us for any or all of these upcoming volunteer work days. They’re great opportunities to learn something new about plants, get to know other Friends who love the Gardens, and help us grow this beloved community resource.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11 | 9 A.M.–NOON
Volunteer Day in Kaul Wildflower Garden
Learn about this unique garden featuring a number of plants native to Alabama.

MONDAY, JANUARY 20 | 1–4 P.M.
MLK Day of Service
Spend your holiday helping the Gardens thrive!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 | 9 A.M.–NOON
Volunteer Day in Kaul Wildflower Garden

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29 | 8 A.M.–NOON
Let’s Prune Roses with the Birmingham Rose Society
Learn how to care for your roses and help prepare the Dunn Formal and Ireland Old-Fashioned Rose Gardens for the coming spring.

Sign up for these and other volunteer work days at http://specialevents.bbgardens.volunteerhub.com/
DECEMBER
2 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
3, 5 YOGA WITH LINDSEY
3 THYME TO READ: Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World
3 WHISKEYS OF THE WORLD (Members-only)
7 RED RIDGE PARK: Transforming Landscapes with Native Plants
8 HOLIDAY PORTRAITS AT THE GARDENS’ POINSETTIA TREE
9 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
10, 12 YOGA WITH LINDSEY
15 Little Seeds: Winter Garden Magic (ages 3+)
16 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
17, 19 YOGA WITH LINDSEY
21 SATURDAYS IN THE GARDENS: Care for Tools
23, 30 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga

JANUARY
3 ART AT THE GARDENS: Art of Truth by Jordan Truth (through February)
6 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
7 THYME TO READ: Save Me the Plums
13 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
18 SATURDAYS IN THE GARDENS: Grow Tropical Houseplants (Learn more on page 17.)
20 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
25 ECOLOGY OF ALABAMA
27 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga

FEBRUARY
3 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
4 THYME TO READ: Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country
10 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga
15 SATURDAYS IN THE GARDENS: Care for Camellias (Learn more on page 17.)
17, 24 YOGA AT THE GARDENS: Ashtanga

SAVE THESE 2020 DATES!
SPENCER LECTURE | March 5
SAKURA (CHERRY BLOSSOM) FESTIVAL | March 21
ANNUAL MEMBER CELEBRATION | April 2
SPRING PLANT SALE | April 16–19
EARTH DAY AT THE GARDENS | April 25
FLICKS AMONG THE FLOWERS | June 10
FALL PLANT SALE | September 12–13
ANTIQUES AT THE GARDENS | October 1–4

For more information about these classes and events and to register, visit bbgardens.org. We look forward to seeing you soon at the Gardens!

NEW THIS YEAR!
HOLIDAY PORTRAITS AT THE GARDENS’ POINSETTIA TREE

Treat your family to an outing at the Gardens, and don’t forget to smile for the camera! Have two professional holiday portraits taken in front of the beautiful seasonal backdrop of our vibrant red poinsettia tree—perfect for your winter mantel or holiday card. First come, first served. No reservations needed. Digital photos will be emailed to you following the shoot. Hosted by the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Leaf & Petal at the Gardens.

Sunday, December 8 | 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens Conservatory
Friends: $20 | Non-members: $25 (Pay at the door by cash, check, or credit card.)

LITTLE SEEDS: WINTER GARDEN MAGIC
Give your child an opportunity to celebrate the coming of winter by joining us for Winter Garden Magic, part of the Friends’ Little Seeds series for children ages 4+. (Three-year-olds may attend with an adult present.) Participants will craft a collection of natural holiday treasures using winter garden favorites such as evergreens, pine cones, and cinnamon while making snow and learning how Birmingham Botanical Gardens prepares for winter.

Sunday, December 15 | 2:30–4 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Friends: $16 | Non-members: $20
bbgardens.org/classes

SATURDAYS IN THE GARDENS: CARE FOR TOOLS
Join John Nabors, Executive Director of the Alabama Green Industry Training Center and Green Industry Training Coordinator for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, as he explains the proper way to care for your garden tools and ensure they work their best, season after season. Participants will prepare tools for winter storage. Bring some of your own, or practice your skills with the Gardens’ tools. This is part of the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens’ monthly Saturdays in the Gardens series.

Saturday, December 21 | 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Cost: $10
bbgardens.org/classes
THYME TO READ BOOK CLUB
Join us for Thyme To Read, a monthly gathering hosted by the Library at the Gardens. No registration required.

Tuesday, December 3 | 6 p.m.
READING SELECTION: Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World

Tuesday, January 7 | 6 p.m.
READING SELECTION: Save Me the Plums

Tuesday, February 4 | 6 p.m.
READING SELECTION: Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country

Library at the Gardens
bbgardens.org/library

SPENCER LECTURE SERIES PRESENTS
BETTY MONTGOMERY, AUTHOR OF HYDRANGEAS: HOW TO GROW, CULTIVATE, AND ENJOY
Join us in welcoming our 2020 Spencer Lecturer, Master Gardener Betty Montgomery. No stranger to the hydrangea, Betty has been collecting the flowers for more than twenty years, discovering the most successful methods of growing them through trial and error along the way. Her latest book, Hydrangeas: How to Grow, Cultivate, and Enjoy, was written for the beginner gardener and walks readers through different kinds of hydrangeas and how to take care of them, as well as suggestions on how to use them in arrangements. After the presentation, Betty will be available to sign copies of her book, available for purchase at Leaf & Petal at the Gardens.

Thursday, March 5
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Free Admission | Limited Seating | Registration required at bbgardens.org/spencerlecture

Priority registration for members through January 5. Registration opens to the public January 6.

Visit our new blog, Around the Gardens, to learn more about Betty’s passion for hydrangeas: bbgardens.org/blog

ECOLOGY OF ALABAMA
With 64 types of terrestrial ecosystems shaped by an unusual climate and rich geological history, Alabama is home to nearly 3,000 species of native plants. They are an important part of our state’s biodiversity, which ranks fifth in the nation overall. Join the Friends for this special program led by ecologist Scot Duncan and take a deep dive into how ecosystems work, review how they are classified and mapped, and receive an overview of the state’s ecological diversity. In addition, attendees will study how Alabama’s climate is changing and affecting ecosystems throughout the state. A short, easy hike through the Gardens—with a focus on plants found only in Alabama—will illustrate some of the in-class concepts.

Saturday, January 25
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Friends: $80 | Non-members: $100
bbgardens.org/classes

NOW AVAILABLE TO OUR MEMBERS:
To take advantage of your member benefits online, create an online account at bbgardens.org! Simply visit the web page for the class or event you wish to attend, click the green “Register” button, and either select “Register” at top right of your screen or select the “Register for site” checkbox before checking out. Your email will be your username; watch for a prompt to choose your password. Questions? Simply call us at 205.414.3950. We are here (and happy) to help!
Thank You

WHAT A TERRIFIC YEAR for the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens! We are so grateful for the many ways you have chosen to show your support of the Friends this year. Because of your commitment and generosity, we continue to partner with Gardens staff to make Birmingham Botanical Gardens an even more beautiful and enjoyable place to visit.

There are a variety of ways you can support the Friends. We have a robust membership program that enables you to choose your level of support. Watch for new membership materials celebrating our new look and messaging in 2020. Your membership provides essential funds for garden enhancements, educational programming, and outreach.

We thank our individual and corporate funders and grantors for making 2019 a successful year! Antiques at the Gardens 2019 enjoyed a record attendance. On behalf of Co-Chairs Leigh Haver and Virginia Amason and the entire committee, we thank each and every donor who helped make this a wonderful weekend.

Each of the individuals, corporations, garden clubs, foundations, and municipalities listed here are the real heroes of the Gardens. Your support of Friends programs, projects, and our mission help to keep the Gardens—your gardens—a beautiful space that is open daily for everyone to enjoy!

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AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE PERENNIAL SOCIETY

INCLUDE THE FRIENDS IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS

PERENNIALS ARE OFTEN CALLED THE backbone of gardens, a promise that beauty, color, and new life will return, year after year. This holiday season, as you support the organizations and causes that are meaningful to you, we ask you to help ensure that the Gardens will be here for future generations by joining our Perennial Society, a group of dedicated and passionate people who have made planned gifts to the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens to help keep our Gardens growing.

JOINING IS EASY: Simply designate the Friends as a beneficiary of your estate in your will, charitable trust, or the retirement vehicle of your choice. We are grateful to those listed in these pages who have made this special commitment. Please join them in supporting and protecting this beloved community resource. Call Director of Development Penney Hartline at 205.414.3950, ext. 103, to learn more.

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Give the Gift of the Gardens!

A gift membership in the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens is a wonderful way to celebrate friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues.

Membership includes discounts on adult and children’s programs, reciprocal privileges at 300+ botanical gardens across North America, 10% off at Leaf & Petal at the Gardens and the Gardens Café by Kathy G, exclusive member gifts and invitations, and more!

Member support also helps protect, nurture, and share the wonders of Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Become a member or give the gift of membership today and receive a free tote bag! Thank you for being a Friend of the Gardens!

bbgardens.org/membership | 205.414.3950

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Betty Shipman
Louise Slingluff
Juanita F. Smith
Charlotte O. Smith
Elizabeth Spain
Cynthia S. Sproull
Mary Cynthia St. John
Thelma N. Stichweh
Katie White
Vail Williams
Lynn O. Wilmoth
Pamela Windfield
Gail K. Wood
Suzanne H. Woodall
Carolyn Wynn
Janis T. Zeana
Dorothy Ziff

*Deceased

Your Friendship Keeps the Gardens Growing
PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

We ask you to renew your commitment to the Gardens by making a special year-end gift to the Friends.
Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission: to protect, nurture, and share the wonders of this Birmingham landmark and botanical treasure.

1. IMPACTFUL INTERNSHIPS
Seeking to expand our capacity for great student interns like Jessica Williams

2. NEW LIFE
Cultivating resources for much-needed projects such as the recent dredging of Long Life Lake

3. FEAST FOR THE EYES (AND BEES)
Ensuring that our 24+ gardens shine through the seasons, for all our guests

4. GROWING GREEN THUMBS
Inspiring a passion for plants through hands-on educational programs

bbgardens.org/donate
NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION:  
Spend Saturdays in the Gardens With Us in 2020

As you consider ways to improve your life and health and enjoy the benefits of nature in the new year, join the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens for Saturdays in the Gardens, a series of programs designed to help novice and seasoned gardeners alike hone gardening skills in a hands-on setting! Local experts discuss gardening topics and trends, lead garden walks, and conduct demonstrations and activities. Programs are held monthly January–May and September–December on third Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Mark your calendar for these special Saturdays. —Brooke McMinn, Director of Education and Visitor Experience

JANUARY 18  
Grow Tropical Houseplants with Caitlin Hastings, owner of Botanica

Caitlin Hastings, owner of Botanica, a houseplant shop in Birmingham’s Central City neighborhood, has made low-maintenance houseplants with a modern style her mission. Join her for a discussion on how to dress up your interior spaces with Florida tropical foliage plants and pick up some detailed care tips guaranteed to turn any thumb green!

FEBRUARY 15  
Care for Camellias with the Birmingham Camellia Society

Learn the basics of camellia care and propagation, as well as the history of the famed Birmingham camellias that originated in the Birmingham area in the mid-20th century. See examples of Birmingham camellias and more on our walk through the Hess Camellia Garden. The program will conclude with an invitation to visit the Birmingham Camellia Society’s Camellia Show at the Gardens at 1 p.m.

MARCH 21  
Grow Amazing Azaleas with the Alabama Azalea Society

Experts from the Alabama Azalea Society will cover general information on growing azaleas in the home garden, including an introduction to some underutilized azaleas such as Satsukis and Alabama’s beautiful and fragrant native, deciduous azaleas. Participants will get a hands-on lesson in azalea planting and care by assisting the experts in planting specimens donated to the Gardens by the Alabama Azalea Society.

APRIL 18  
Plant a Vegetable Garden with Harvest for the Hungry

Participants will learn how to plan and plant a sustainable vegetable garden from expert volunteers with the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens’ Harvest for the Hungry program. Participants will work side by side with volunteers to plant spring crops in the Bruno Vegetable Garden, where plants harvested will feed members of the Birmingham community who suffer from food insecurity.

MAY 16  
Arrange Flowers Easily with Dorothy McDaniel, owner of Dorothy McDaniel’s Flower Market

Pick up tips and tricks for do-it-yourself, easy and elegant flower arranging from Dorothy McDaniel, a leading florist in the Greater Birmingham Area for more than 40 years! The program will include a walk around the Gardens’ Dunn Formal and Ireland Old-Fashioned Rose Gardens to discuss which plants you can easily grow at home for cut arrangements.
INTO THE WOODS
From cultivated gardens to tree-lined walks, Birmingham Botanical Gardens provides 67.5 acres for visitors to explore and enjoy throughout the year. The Gardens are open sunrise to sunset daily.