An important note from Garden CEO Jean Franczyk

I know you’re all worried about both home and the Garden. This is a stressful time. We are all in different situations: some of us are caring for family members, some of us have family members who may be on the front lines in health care, while others have friends who have been affected. We’re all managing through uncertain times. It’s hard, and we’re all doing the best we can. The last time I spoke with you, I told you that I would share information as I have it about the Garden’s path forward. I know many of you want to know what happens next, and when you’ll be back to the great work you do at the Garden. I said that if we could safely re-open prior to July 1, we would. I’m happy to announce that the Chicago Botanic Garden will introduce a limited reopening, beginning June 9. With the safety of all as our priority, we will open a perimeter walk, allowing visitors to get out and walk a 2.3-mile loop of the Garden. The route is along paved roads and paths, with views of the North Lake, vistas of the Malott Japanese Garden, and close-ups of spring blooms in Dixon Prairie and the McDonald Woods. Only the perimeter walk will be open; the Visitor Center and all buildings will be closed. This information will be shared with the public on Friday, May 29. With visitor safety in mind, we’re doing things a little differently.

- Only the perimeter walk will be open; the Visitor Center and all buildings will be closed.
- All visitors—including Garden members—must preregister for a specific date and time. Visit our website for more information beginning Friday.

We plan to open the Garden more broadly June 24, subject to change. The health and safety of our community of visitors, staff, and volunteers—as well as our community at large—remains our top priority. We will continue to monitor guidelines from health authorities and public officials during the COVID-19 health crisis and will announce updates as soon as we can.

In the past weeks, the Garden’s leadership reviewed several scenarios including important factors such as keeping our Garden family safe, as well as our expected revenue and costs. We recently announced staffing changes to enable us to remain financially sound as we come out of this crisis. That included wage cuts for some employees, as well as in some cases reduced hours or layoffs. These became effective May 4th until further notice.

So what does this mean for you? While I’d like to invite you back to the Garden to do the very important work you do, I can’t at this point. In time, I’ll share more information with you. For those of you who are continuing to and able to volunteer remotely, thank you. The Garden audience’s appetite for information hasn’t evaporated. We continue to answer questions through Plant Information, and for those of you sharing your great knowledge, thank you. Plant Information Service is available via email to help you with your gardening questions. Please send your inquiries to plantinfo@chicagobotanic.org.

In closing, I’d like to honor all of you. You keep us running, and the Garden wouldn’t be what it is without your great efforts. I know many of you are volunteering in other ways in your community in this important time. Thank you for your generosity and graciousness. If any of you have questions about volunteer services please contact Judy Cashen at jcashen@chicagobotanic.org. While you’re away from the Garden, you can still contribute; look for our Wednesday #naturemoment on social media and share your own naturemoment. Sign up to be a citizen scientist at budburst.org. We are in this together. And together as a Garden family, we will get through this crisis and out the other side, stronger and more relevant than ever to the health and well-being of the communities we serve. I look forward to the day when we are all back at the Garden.

Jean
A Garden Update from Fred Spicer

Garden Update shares important information from Fred Spicer, Executive Vice President and Director of the Garden.

What happens at the Garden during a pandemic? As it turns out, A LOT because there are no visitors. In March, when Governor Pritzker announced the state shut down, the Garden was immediately closed and the number of employees was reduced to a bare minimum. It was soon realized that the essential work necessary in the Garden needed to be addressed. With no visitors in attendance, and then figuring out how to keep the staff safely distanced from each other, we slowly began bringing maintenance, construction, display gardens, grounds, and natural habitat staff back to work onsite.

The spring annual display of thousands of plants was scrapped because we could not maintain them in the greenhouses (and it was unlikely there would be visitors to see them). The remains of Brilliance: The Orchid Show went to the compost pile as well, as we could not imagine a safe, physically distanced sale. The Plant Production staff shifted their efforts to producing annuals for a modified summer and fall display. Now, we are up to 100 people on site daily with a reduced staff on weekends, with Construction and Maintenance staff, Display Garden staff, Horticultural Services staff, Plant Health Care, Plant Production, Security, and some Finance and Human Resources staff as well. They are following government guidelines as far as socially distancing and wearing masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Porta-johns are set up for Grounds and Garden staff so they do not need to enter buildings. Many of the staff (especially in other areas) are working from home if they are able to.

The positive aspect to the shutdown is that numerous construction projects have been completed and are taking place without onsite visitors. Construction continues on the Shida Evaluation Garden and it is progressing well. The crushed stone path on the west side of the Thomas English Walled Garden has been converted to a brick path, new striping has been completed in the parking lots, and repairs have been completed at loading dock B at the Visitor Center. Many interior painting projects have been finished too. The asphalt resurfacing project has been completed behind the Maintenance and Construction buildings, as well as on a part of the road behind the Grainger Center, and also on the annex road where the trams park. The Regenstein Center north stairs replacement and West Portico brick repairs will soon begin. In addition, the bottom of the pools in the Heritage Garden and English Walled Garden will be resealed and painted black.

A number of older crab apples were replaced with forty new magnolias on the hillside just west of the west causeway, as grounds and collections crews are making a huge planting push. Shrub masses are being added in this area and throughout the West Collections. We are moving many plants out of our nursery, which eases the watering duty of our reduced production staff.

The Main Island has a new name: Robert H. Malott Island, the result of a gift from the Malott Family Foundation. If the name sounds familiar, there is also the Elizabeth Hubert Malott Japanese Garden. This generous gift is greatly appreciated by all. A new monument sign has been built just south of the Greene Bridge near the Crescent Garden, and two nearby brick wing walls have been rebuilt to match.

The Garden is planning a soft opening in June in alignment with government guidelines. Everyone is anxious for the reopening but the need to keep staff and visitors safe is a primary concern, and volunteers also need to feel safe coming back when the Garden is able to do that. Things are very different now, and the Garden looks different, a little “shaggy” in certain areas and a little weedy, but still very beautiful and serene. The opening of the Garden to the public will probably be utilizing timed entry and controlling numbers similar to Lightscape, last winter. The recovery must be done sensibly until everything is safe for everyone. Above all, please stay safe!

Ken Krebs
Miss Laura Weinberg reading a story via Zoom to the class

Garden Volunteers
Staying Involved Virtually

On March 13, COVID-19 cancelled all of the classes at the Chicago Botanic Garden and that included the Nature Preschool classes that are held in the Learning Center daily. That did not mean the end of volunteering for our dedicated Nature Preschool volunteers. Just like the teachers who turned to remote e-Learning for the preschoolers, so did our wonderful volunteers. They read stories to the children and recorded the stories for children, so they could hear their voices and see their faces whenever they might be in need of a familiar friendly face. They joined in on the Zoom class meetings to continue those connections that are so very important to each of our little ones. The volunteer’s support was demonstrated so many times, and in so many ways, since the day preschool closed its doors.

I have always felt that the Nature Preschool would not be such a special place for children if we did not have our group of volunteers supporting each child by their comforting presence. This current situation shows how they have gone above and beyond to continue that presence at a time when so much is unknown. The teachers have commented over the years on how important having the volunteers in the class is for a child that might just need a special grown up to sit and read them a story, or to talk with one on one. This group has gone outside the Chicago Botanic Garden walls, from their homes via video and the virtual world to continue that support.

I am so grateful for their dedication to our children and teachers. I want to express a huge shout out “Thank You!” to each one of them, and look forward to the day we can meet in person at the Garden.

Ann Halley, Nature Preschool Director

Volunteer from Home with Budburst

Budburst brings together researchers, horticulturists, and citizen scientists on a shared journey to uncover the stories of plants affected by human impacts on the environment. Budburst tells these stories through data collection, data sharing, education, and personal connections. Budburst citizen scientists work together with research scientists, educators, and horticulturists to answer specific, timely, and critical ecological research questions by making careful observations of the timing of plant life cycle events, also called phenophases. These life events differ depending upon the type of plant, but usually include leafing, flowering, and fruiting phases of plants as well as leaf color and senescence.

Spring, summer, fall, and winter phases are all valuable. These observations are used to better understand how plant species and ecosystems respond to changes in climate locally, regionally, and nationally. Our projects and campaigns reflect the many ecological questions and issues raised by the ways humans impact the environment and how plants respond to those changes. As a Budburst citizen scientist, you may invest as much or as little time as you like. You may observe and report on one or more plants over one season or over many years, or report on one plant observed for one day. All data contributions are valuable.

Though the Chicago Botanic Garden is currently closed, your help is still needed. The Garden’s Budburst team has a remote volunteering opportunity, collecting important plant phenology data for Garden researchers! Plants may be observed in your backyard or on walks that maintain appropriate social distancing measures. Reporting is required and may be completed with an internet connection or with a paper data sheet printed at home and then mailed to the Garden. To get started follow this link, http://budburst.org/get-started-budburst, and begin contributing to Budburst! Training will be provided virtually via Zoom by the program supervisor. By keeping track of your time spent each week collecting data for Budburst, it may be counted as volunteer service hours and may be applied to University of Illinois Master Gardener certification requirements. Please contact Judy Cashen, jcashen@chicagobotanic.org for information and to request a volunteer service hour timesheet.

Jennifer Schwarz Ballard
Vice President, Learning & Engagement
Who’s Who in the Garden?  
A profile of someone you should know

Heather Sherwood  
Senior Horticulturist

Heather Sherwood is a Senior Horticulturist at the Chicago Botanic Garden. The Garden, however, is more than Heather’s employer. It has been an integral part of her life as the place where she accepted a marriage proposal, exchanged her wedding vows 14 years ago, and has worked almost all of her adult life, marking 20 years in June.

Heather began her career with the Plant Production Greenhouse team and was promoted to the special area grounds crew before moving up to Senior Horticulturist. She is now responsible for the Helen and Richard Thomas English Walled Garden, the McGinley Pavilion and the Shaw Flower Walk. She manages the design and upkeep of these areas, and while she is not responsible for the actual events, she says that she makes sure they are beautiful for weddings, and for families and businesses wanting to use the areas for special activities.

Tim Johnson, Senior Director of Horticulture who supervises Heather, describes her this way: “Heather has unbridled enthusiasm for her work as a Senior Horticulturist. The bigger the volume of work to be done or the larger a new project is, the happier Heather seems to be. She gets things done with a big smile and is always willing to help others out. For sure, Heather is an exuberant Garden staff member.”

Heather and her husband, Tom Starcevic, make their home in Chicago with their 11-year-old son, Ante, 8-year-old twins, Lex and Lily, and gray cat, Lightning.

She enjoys the nearby nature center as well as her home garden. She admits that not only the shade but also the wildlife, including deer, coyote, rabbits and hawks, present some gardening challenges. Unlike many urban gardeners, Heather is a beekeeper. With the help of her bees, Heather makes honey, hand cream, and lip balm, which she often distributes as gifts.

When she was 12-year-old, Heather’s family visited the Grand Ole Opry Hotel in Nashville Tennessee, and the beauty of the conservatory captured her heart and interest. She looked up the word “horticulture” when she returned home, and decided this was her future. That same summer, she walked across the street from her Maryland home and asked for a job at Plant Masters. “I was hired, and working for the cut flower grower kept me out of trouble,” she says. When she returns home to Maryland, she enjoys visits back to this family business. Heather continues to be involved with their greenhouse and its 6,000 peonies, ever since her first introduction to horticulture.

She selected Iowa State University in Ames Iowa, because of its agriculture and horticulture focus, and obtained a BS degree, majoring in horticulture with a minor in entrepreneurship. Upon graduating and with no concrete job prospects, Heather planned to find employment in California. She took a detour to see her parents who were visiting Chicago, and fondly recalls seeing B.B. King at the House of Blues. She also visited the Chicago Botanic Garden and dropped off her resume. She was interviewed and hired, and has worked at the Garden since that fateful day.

One of the favorite aspects of Heather’s work is teaching and sharing her knowledge and passion with people who visit the Garden as well as viewers of various television shows. She teaches classes in the fall, and one of them features peonies, which Heather describes as Queen of the Garden.

No doubt, she is a people person. “The volunteers who I work with are like a second family to me, and a joy to know,” according to Heather.

Ginger Burns
Volunteer Ann Stevens leading her talented beekeeping team in 2019, including volunteers Jeanette Thorton Schwab and Tom Considine. Together they provide expert care for the Regenstein Fruit & Vegetable Garden hives.

**Looking Forward to a Sweet Summer Season**

Lisa Hilgenberg, horticulturist, provides a bee update from the Fruit & Vegetable Garden: In November 2019, we had seven viable hives going into the winter season, and today we have four strong hives to begin spring. A 57% overwintering rate, one hive better than last year and one less to buy this spring. All good news! Our volunteer beekeeping team has fed, cleaned and cared for our hives for a decade and are to be truly commended for their good work!

**Volunteer Awards Reception**

Please note that due to COVID-19 precautions, the Garden remains closed at this time. The annual Volunteer Awards Reception, typically scheduled in mid-June, has been cancelled, as safety for all is our number one priority. We thank you for your understanding during this especially challenging time.

Please know that we value and honor your volunteer service and loyal support of the Chicago Botanic Garden. The gift membership packets have been prepared and will be mailed soon to those volunteers who served 150 hours or more in 2019.

Many thanks to the hardworking Membership Operations team, including Carolyn Kotlarski and Gloria Watson, for their efforts to mail the gift memberships in June.

**Master Gardener Update**

A Message from Candice Hart

State Master Gardener Coordinator

We know there are limited volunteer opportunities available this year and due to that limitation, we are waiving the required 30 volunteer hours to maintain your active Master Gardener status for 2020. This will still count as a year of service for you as a Master Gardener, and we encourage you to do your best to attain the hours through at-home volunteering opportunities, and any activities that may become approved later this year. We encourage you to continue to pursue at-home volunteer opportunities and continue to record your volunteer hours.

We encourage you to continue to participate in the numerous educational webinars being held weekly and to enter those continuing education hours. This is the perfect time to learn something new or better your knowledge on a particular subject. Many of the links for upcoming webinars and recordings can be found on the Illinois Extension web page at https://extension.illinois.edu/global/digital-webinars-and-training.

**2020 Master Gardener Conference**

The State Master Gardener Conference, originally scheduled for September 10-11, 2020, has been postponed to September 9-10, 2021.

Thank you again for your patience and understanding as we navigate these unprecedented and unusual times. Your work as Master Gardeners is invaluable to University of Illinois Extension and we look forward to you continuing to help others learn to grow when we are able to!

**Preparedness for Garden Volunteers**

Onsite and Offsite

Safety first! If you are feeling sick, or displaying any symptoms of illness, please stay home.

We know that volunteers are terrific and can get the job done, but we need for you to be healthy and operating at 100% to make that happen. Volunteers are not currently assisting onsite. When the time comes to safely return to service, please do not put yourself or anyone else at risk by volunteering for projects when you are sick. If you are displaying signs of illness while you volunteer onsite, you will be asked by the Garden staff supervisor to return home. A medical release from your care provider will be required. If you are volunteering for Garden projects at home, it is important to follow the government guidelines for safety too. Please contact Judy Cashen, Director, Volunteer Administration and Engagement, with any questions at jcashen@chicagobotanic.org.
The Roadside Flower Sale volunteer team photo taken in 2019 at their workshop Briller Hall, named for the first co-chairs Ginny Brown and Fran Hiller.

2020 Roadside Flower Sale Cancelled
40th Anniversary Event to be held in 2021
A note from co-chairs Nancy Giardina and Kathi Scheck

After careful consideration, and in consultation with several Garden staff members, we have sadly determined that it will not be feasible to host the 2020 Roadside Flower Sale. The team’s cutting garden could not be planted with only essential Garden staff working onsite. It would not be possible for the Roadside Flower Sale volunteer team to work together on Wednesdays, or in groups on any day to grow, collect and dry material.

Thank you for all that you do to support the Roadside Flower Sale, and for understanding the reason for the cancellation. Please do visit the Garden when it does reopen to enjoy its beauty. We wish you well during these most uncertain times.

DID YOU KNOW...

During the Garden’s closure due to the COVID-19 virus, Garden President and CEO Jean Franczyk has created several video updates for volunteers. Judy Cashen has sent these video updates via email to all currently active volunteers. Please continue to watch your email for future updates.

Please be cautious when driving at the Garden, obey the speed limit of 15 mph and stop at all stop signs. This is especially important during the summer months. If you are permitted to drive a vehicle on one of our service roads, kindly do not drive on any of the turf and stay on the paved road only.

The Chicago Botanic Garden is committed to using the most environmentally safe and efficient methods of pest control to keep the plants in its care healthy, to maintain the beauty of the Garden, to safeguard staff and visitors, and to promote practices that sustain biodiversity. To learn more about the Garden’s Plant Health Care program, the Integrated Pest Management program and the use of Neonicotinoids, please visit the Garden’s website: https://www.chicagobotanic.org/node/72166

Where is the “Can You Help?” page in this newsletter issue? At this time, all volunteer services remain on hold for the foreseeable future. We will send periodic email updates as needed when essential volunteer services are approved.

Stay connected! Please visit the Garden’s website often to see beautiful images of the display gardens, natural areas, and lakes. Event and program updates are available, with registration and ticketing information. Learn more at www.chicagobotanic.org.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth
## Calendar of Garden Events and Volunteer Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June 2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Garden limited reopening for 2.3 mile perimeter walk, please note an admission ticket is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Garden limited reopening, subject to change, please note an admission ticket is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you for your continued friendship and generous support!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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☞ The Grounds Cover Committee ☞
Ginger Burns, Judy Cashen, Marnee Kenny
Ken Krebs, Donna Lebovitz

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