

LIVING COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose

It is our intent to guide, limit and manage the Springfield Botanical Gardens' plant collections through the implementation of procedures described within this document. It is intended to be a working document and is subject to periodic review and revision by the garden review committee.

The Springfield Botanical Gardens plant collections will be used for public display, education and demonstration in support of the Garden's mission.

Ethics

We will make every effort to:

- Screen accessions for invasive potential.
- Work to remove existing invasive plant material.
- Avoid acquiring plants obtained in contravention to any laws or regulations.

Acquisition

Plants may be acquired by gift, purchase, exchange or collection. All acquisitions shall be approved by the Botanical Center Coordinator and must meet the following criteria:

1. Hardy to USDA Zone 6A and Heat Hardy in Zone 7.
2. Eastern to Central US native or adaptable to mid-west climatic conditions
3. Must not be invasive, host to disease which may threaten other collections, nor require unreasonable maintenance procedures.
4. Must have logical and justifiable place in the garden, consistent with current Garden development.
5. Priority given to, but not limited to, plants of exceptional garden merit for our region: Missouri Botanical Garden Plants of Merit; Perennial Plant of the Year.

Plant Donations

In order to coordinate systematic development of the Garden, only plant donations that coincide with the current Garden development are accepted, as determined by the Botanical Center Coordinator.

Plant material occasionally requires relocation, as well as pruning or thinning, as the landscape develops. Conditions may also lead to the demise of some plants. Therefore, the donors of plants must realize that a particular plant or group of plants may not remain as originally developed. Some changes may become necessary to insure the continuity of the entire Garden.

Design

- Planting plans should demonstrate effective plant combinations and companions; inspire plantings that would be suitable for the scale of residential lots.
- Care must be taken to ensure that a collection adheres to the design that engages and moves visitors effectively through the gardens, and is accessible for on-going mowing and maintenance.
- Size at maturity will be considered when siting collections and plants may be removed if they have too many duplications, limit the ability to curate other plants, or become a hazard.

Accessioning

The Botanical Center Coordinator assigns an accession number to all woody plants that have met the above criteria. The accession number of each plant is unique and shall consist of six digits. The first two digits indicate the year in which the plant becomes part of the collection. The third through sixth digits indicate the sequence in that year's accessions. In the case of ground covers and other mass plantings, the group of plants is considered one entity and given only one accession number. When an accession includes multiple individuals not intended for mass planting, each individual is given an additional numeric ID within the accession, and its bed location is noted.

Exceptions to accessioning:

- Annual bedding plants for color
- Temporary displays

Maintenance

The Gardener shall coordinate all grounds maintenance activities to provide a safe environment and to maintain the plants at optimum levels of health and appearance. Maintenance activities may be carried out by City personnel, volunteers, and contractors.

Documentation

Comprehensive records shall be kept on all permanent and semi-permanent plantings. An accession number is assigned to each plant, indicating the accession date and sequence. All plants shall have an accession label indicating the accession number and scientific name. Educational labels may include a variety of information categories and are considered on a case by case basis. The Garden Manager is responsible for the maintenance of plant records, which are kept in a computerized database (Tree Finder and ArcGIS).

Plant records shall include the following information:

- Accession number
- Scientific name
- Family name
- Common name
- Date received
- How received and containerized (seed, plant, existing on site)
- Source name and address
- Tribute information, if applicable
- Location in Garden – bed specific
- Date planted
- Date, duration, color and sex of bloom
- Outstanding ornamental features and other attributes
- Photograph or digital image
- Date of de-accession

Evaluation

The Garden Manager shall conduct periodic plant inventories and evaluations, including mapping and label checks. These will provide the basis for collections development recommendations to the SBG coordinating committee.

Evaluation criteria may include:

- Horticultural merit
- Quality of experience (does it match visitor expectation?)
- Cost
- Educational/Interpretive context
- Design excellence
- Maintenance considerations
- Horticultural display value
- Potential for generating revenue
- Safety

De-accessioning

Accessions that are dead, no longer relevant to the purpose of the SBG, or replaced by a more desirable accession are recorded in the database. Date of de-accession is noted along with method of disposal.

Disposal

De-accessioned plants may be disposed of in the following manner:

- Sold to raise revenue for the Garden (funds generated must support the SBG)
- Destroyed (diseased or weedy material)
- Exchanged with other institutions or organizations.

Supplement to the SBG Collections Standards:

What the Collections Should Be:

- Well documented, horticultural collections,
 - priority given to plants of exceptional garden merit demonstrate “right plant, right place” concepts, rather than taxonomic collections,
 - display plants that are suitable for a wide range of situations typically encountered in gardens in the region,
 - less common plants that would be good additions to the region's gardens (broaden the range of plants commonly used in region's residential gardens),
 - include species, hybrids and cultivars (hybrids or cultivars may be superior to species in residential gardens),
 - hardy to USDA Zone 6A
 - native or adaptable to mid-west climatic conditions,
 - must have logical and justifiable place in the garden, consistent with current Garden development.
-
- What The Collections Should **Not** Be:
 - Must not be invasive, host to disease which may threaten other collections, nor require unreasonable maintenance procedures,
 - SBG should not become a superficial display garden with beds full of common and widely grown plants, just as it should not become the exclusive domain of a few types or genera of plants,
 - SBG should avoid focusing exclusively on human-developed cultivar forms and this should be particularly so in the native plant collections, - seed grown plants will be preferred.