



Mead Botanical Garden Inc. Status Report: October – December 2021

OVERVIEW of MBG’s board and staff’s accomplishments, activities and primary areas of focus this quarter:

- **MBG Board Committees and staff** focused on designing, planning and implementing capital improvement projects with the City staff, identifying experienced garden designer for the Legacy Garden expansion, planning/hosting of GROWvember Fallfest and Plant Sale, promotion of the new *Friends of Mead Garden* Membership program, community engagement and fundraising initiatives, volunteer recruitment and engagement, new programming, and marketing venue rentals.
- **Mead’s Young Naturalist Summer Camp Registration and Planning:** MBG initiated marketing and operational planning phase for the annual camp. Registration will open in mid-February with goal of 400 registrations.
- **Azalea Lodge Building Addition:** MBG is working with the City’s building contractor to plan and coordinate on-going Lodge operations during construction. Secured commitment for in-kind contribution of an ice machine from Dubsdread Catering.
- **Garden Improvements:** Researched potential landscape architects experienced in botanic garden design to work with MBG in developing a concept design for the Legacy Garden expansion. Selected Tres Fromme, principal with 3 Fromme Design, for the design project. Scheduled to begin process in January 2022.
- **Drainage, Parking and Little Amphitheatre Improvements:** MBG staff and board member Tom McMacken landscape architect, are working with Park & Recreation and Public Works teams to design and coordinate the drainage/parking improvement projects in front of Lodge. Explored potential improvements, including expansion of the stage and redesign of walkways, to the Little Amphitheatre.
- **Programming/Special Events:**
 - MBG Inc. co-hosted with the Native Plant Society the annual Backyard Biodiversity Day in October. Event included plant sale and exhibitors. Funds raised are used to purchase new native plants and enhance wildlife habitat.
 - Held “**Florida Mushrooming**” class with Fungi Jon and **Succulent & Macrame** classes.
 - **Health & Wellness Programming:** Conducted Yoga classes on Wednesday and Saturday mornings; held Tai Chi classes every Friday morning.

- Cohosted monthly “**Read at Mead Children’s Storytime**” programs with Winter Park Library staff.
- Co-hosted **Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra Holiday Concert in the Grove.**
- Co-hosted **Opera Orlando’s “Secret River”** presentation.
- Orange Audubon members led Saturday morning **migratory bird walks** throughout the month of October.
- Conducted field trips for two home school groups. The Geneva School 5th grade class held its annual SALT volunteer work day in the Garden; gathered air potatoes, removed vines, planted new perennials and picked up debris.
- **Custom Garden Benches:** Installed one new custom memorial garden benches for the Garden. Each bench donation covers the cost of the bench and provides added support for Garden operations.
- **Horticulture:**
 - Volunteers and staff provided on-going care for Mead’s Legacy Garden and Greenhouse, Butterfly Gardens, Camellia Garden, Cycad Garden, Wildflower meadow and Discovery Barn Native Plant Garden. Every Tuesday and Friday mornings are designated for volunteers to care for these garden areas.
 - MBG recruits and coordinates regular care for the habitat restoration area south of the Azalea Lodge. A senior garden volunteer consistently worked 3-4 hours per week in this area, ensuring invasive vines do not overtake the 225 new plantings in this area.

Volunteers: Volunteer hours this quarter, not including board committee work, was 1,024 hours. Volunteers and partners were involved in performing garden improvements and maintenance and helping with program events. MBG conducted monthly volunteer orientation programs.

Volunteer efforts include:

- Horticulture Garden volunteers (16 regulars) worked each week tending the Legacy Garden, Greenhouse, Camellia Garden, Butterfly Garden, Cycad Garden, Discovery Barn and habitat restoration areas.
- Edgewater High School National Honor Society members selected Mead Botanical Garden as their project for the year. They committed to helping in the Garden every Wednesday afternoon for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters; MBG provided weekly project supervision for the group.
- Native Plant Society conducted monthly workdays to remove exotic invasive plants. They added new split rail fencing to designate new planting areas. New habitat plantings were added to further the preservation and restoration of this historic area of the Garden.
- Day Lily Society members planted and tended the day lily demonstration garden.

FINANCIALS:

The financial reports for October through December are attached.

I. Advance the Approved Master Plan / Legacy Garden Expansion Design

- *Engage an expert master planner/landscape architect to develop a conceptual design for expansion of the Legacy Garden (in the area between the existing greenhouse and public restrooms), with the goal of creating a contiguous “garden within the Garden.” The concept design will include location for circulation pathways, an orchid/fern/greenhouse facility, event/gathering space and designated planting areas. The iterative planning and design process will ensure the expansion plan elevates the visitor experience, is inspirational and aligns with MBG’s mission and program goals.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Selected and contracted with Tres Fromme, a highly experienced master planner/botanic garden landscape architect, to develop a conceptual design for the expansion of the Legacy Garden with the goal of creating a “garden within the Garden.” Work to begin in January 2022.

II. Steward & Maintain the Display & Demonstration Gardens at Mead; coordinate care of natural areas with City staff.

- *Provide on-going care and upkeep for existing display garden areas through MBG managed volunteer gardener program; achieve at least 3,000 hours of volunteer help during the fiscal year.*
- *Expand and maintain the Mead Botanical Garden horticulture collections in the Legacy Garden, Butterfly Garden, Native Plant Gardens, Camellia Garden, upland pines area and Cycad Garden.*
- *Provide on-going care and upkeep for Azalea Lodge landscape and container gardens.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Horticulture volunteers provided twice weekly maintenance of Mead’s demonstration and display Gardens each Tuesday and Friday morning. Edgewater High National Honor Society members worked in the Garden every Wednesday afternoon, weeding, mulching, removing invasives, and making cuttings of the night blooming cereus cactus. The Day Lily Society members provided ongoing care for the day lily demonstration garden.

- *Steward the habitat conditions in the upland pines natural areas of the Garden through removal of exotic invasive plants and quarterly volunteer workdays.*

- **PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Members of the Native Plant Society Tarflower chapter coordinated with MBG to monitor, maintain and enhance the native plantings in the upland pines natural areas of the Garden. NPS ensured that the areas around the gopher tortoise burrows were well protected and cared for. NPS chapter workdays are held monthly. New signs were installed to describe the improvements underway.

- *Continue to cultivate relationships with horticulture societies, garden clubs and Leu Garden staff for volunteers, plant donations and garden design/maintenance support.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: The Native Plant Society signed year-long rental agreement to hold its monthly meetings at Mead’s Azalea Lodge. Obtained commitment from the Central Florida Camellia Society to prune and fertilize the Garden’s camellia collection in early Spring. Members of the Day Lily Society regularly tend the Day Lily demonstration garden. Received plant donations including several ferns for the greenhouse.

- *Manage volunteer recruitment program; update volunteer orientation program.*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG continued its recruitment of volunteers through social media and community engagement initiatives. Special initiative to recruit of help for GROWvember Fallfest and Plant Sale. MBG held its monthly new volunteer orientation program in October and November. MBG oversaw the work of volunteers engaged in the Orange County Community Service program.
- *Host volunteer appreciation initiatives.*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG hosted its monthly volunteer appreciation gatherings and special holiday party to recognize and encourage the on-going efforts of the MBG horticulture volunteers.
- *Coordinate care of natural areas and communicate issues/need with City's Park and Recreation horticulture, irrigation and urban forestry staff.*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG staff was in regular contact with the the City's Park and Recreation horticulture, urban forestry and irrigation staff to communicate MBG initiatives and ensure City staff were aware of issues needing attention.

III. **Develop and Deliver Environmental Education, Horticulture and Enrichment Programming:**

- *Conduct the 6-week Young Naturalist Summer Camp program; achieve at least 420 registrations*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Began preparation for Mead's 2022 6-week Young Naturalist Summer Camp program.
- *Deliver field trips for children and scout troops.*
- *Host the monthly "Read at Mead" story time program with the Winter Park Library.*
- *Conduct weekly wellness programs including Yoga in the Garden and Tai Chi classes.*
- *Host monthly environmental and horticultural education programs.*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Twice weekly Tai Chi classes and weekly Yoga in the Garden sessions were held. Held three Succulent and Macrame and Florida Mushrooming workshops. MBG co-hosted a monthly "Read at Mead" story time program with the Winter Park Library, with a total of 107 children participating during the quarter. Eagle Scout completed tee-pee project.
- *Recruit and train environmental education facilitators and/or docent volunteers to deliver nature programming. Conduct Project Learning Tree curriculum training.*
PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Held planning discussions with OCPS curriculum director to explore using the Garden for STEM teacher training, based on "Project Learning Tree" curriculum.
- *Reach out to local premier arts and culture groups to hold cultural events in the Garden, including FSYO.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Cohosted the Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra Holiday Concert in the Garden. Opera Orlando presented “Secret River.” Exploratory discussions with Orlando Museum of Art for a collaborative event in fall 2022.

- *Host annual night-blooming cereus nighttime event in June (typical bloom time).*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Event to be held in June 2022.

- *Host workshops and speaker series for Backyard Biodiversity Day in October and GROWvember Fall Fest and Plant Sale in November.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Completed both.

IV. Facility Improvements and Guest Experience Amenities:

- *Coordinate the design of and participate in planning of the construction of the Azalea Lodge new addition that includes, ADA restroom, multi-purpose bride’s room and storage. Purchase the interior décor items for the bride’s room.*

- *Develop landscape design for pathways and gardens that connect the Lodge and Little Amphitheatre.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG worked with the City’s architect and construction company to finalize plans for the Lodge addition. Maintained ongoing contact with the contractor to coordinate work, respond to questions and coordinate continued use of the Lodge. Selection of interior materials underway.

- *Upgrade the A/V and sound system in the Azalea Lodge.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: New speakers, ceiling mounted projector and screen were installed.

- *Coordinate final phase of construction of new parking area adjacent to the picnic pavilion.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Project completed.

- *Coordinate with City’s park and rec and public works departments projects to solve drainage issues and parking improvements in front of and adjacent to the Azalea Lodge*

- *Design/develop plan for new pathway around the northside storm water ponds, connecting the Grove and Camellia Garden areas.*

- *Develop design to expand the Little Amphitheatre stage and create accessible walkway to the stage. Coordinate project with City’s park and recreation department.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG Inc. board member provided design work for the parking lot expansion and improvement project. Held number of meetings with City staff to work through details of the project. Identified design goals for improvements to the Little Amphitheatre.

- *Obtain estimate to the gut the existing Bride and Groom room and convert to usable space.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Showed facility to one prospective contractor. Project delayed til Summer 2022.

- *Promote customized bench donation program; install at least four new customized benches in the Garden*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Promoted the customized bench program through social media and website; obtained one new bench donation. Evaluating future pricing.

- *Develop concept design to repurpose the Alum Building for a multi-purpose educational facility.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: No activity this quarter.

V. Develop a phased interpretative and information signage plan for key areas of the Garden and raise funds for implementation of phase one of plan.

- *Develop a directional and interpretive sign plan*
- *Identify key informational, directional and wayfinding needs;*
- *Engage Garden partners in the development of interpretative sign text*
- *Develop graphic design and text standards*
- *Obtain bids for signage plan*
- *Conduct fundraising and grant initiatives to fund implementation*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: MBG Inc. communications and marketing committee drafted list of directional and wayfinding needs. No further action this quarter.

VI. Community and Partner Engagement:

- *Implement and promote the new “Friends of Mead Garden” membership program with the goal of attracting at least 80 members in first year.*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Membership program components were finalized. Promotional campaign and materials were created. Program was soft-launched at GROWvember in Nov. 2021 with goal of attracting \$4,500 in new earned revenue in 2022.

- *Host mission-focused events including the Great Duck Derby, Backyard Biodiversity Day and GROWvember Fall Fest and Plant Sale*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Backyard Biodiversity and GROWvember events were held in October and November, respectively. Over 2,000 people attended GROWvember; a total of 26 vendors and exhibitors participated. Event raised \$5,300 in sponsorship and \$1,800 in in-kind contributions. Engaged in planning, promotion and sponsor recruitment for The Great Duck Derby, scheduled for Spring 2022.

- *Increase community-wide awareness and support for the Garden with planned outreach initiatives; identify and reach out to potential partners (organizations, businesses, educational institutions) to develop programming initiatives focused on core themes including horticulture, the environment, conservation & sustainability, wildlife, health and wellness, and the cultural arts.*
- *Promote “Experience the Joy” marketing tagline in the Garden and in social media campaign*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Newly established community engagement committee began the process of identifying key groups and strategies for engagement.

- Nurture relationships with existing partners and collaborators including Native Plant Society, Orange Audubon, Daylily Society, and Camellia Society
- Support Winter Park Garden Club members and programs in their use of the Garden and Azalea Lodge

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Engaged in on-going cultivation of relationships with leaders of Native Plant Society, Orange Audubon, Daylily and Camelia Societies, as well as the Winter Park Garden Club and their planning of the club's 100 year anniversary in April.

VII. **Fundraising Initiatives:**

- Conduct quarterly "appeal" emails including the year-end annual appeal letter campaign

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Implemented year-end annual appeal campaign.

- Solicit and sponsorships for Great Duck Derby and GROWvember Fall Fest and Plant Sale.

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Secured \$5,300 in sponsorships for GROWvember. Began soliciting for Great Duck Derby.

- Host a public fundraising evening event to raise operating and project support for the garden and MBG Inc.

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Event to be held in fall/winter 2022.

- Promote the customized Garden Bench and Memorial Tree programs. Achieve at least four new garden benches and two memorial tree plantings.

- Identify and solicit potential donors for in-kind materials, plants and services.

- Promote "Friends of Mead Garden" membership program to achieve new and recurring earned revenue.

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Donation for one customized bench and one memorial planting was secured. Introduced new "Friends of Mead Garden" membership program. Obtained in-kind beverage donation and entertainment for GROWvember and the Great Duck Derby.

VIII. **Engage partners in MBG programming and visitor amenities**

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:

- Orange Audubon hosts Spring and Fall migratory bird walks: **Fall walks held every Saturday in October; drew over 100 participants.**

- Camellia Society of Central Florida conducts annual Camellia Show: **Planned show; scheduled for January 2022.**

- Daylily Society hosts annual Daylily Show: **Show planned for May 2022.**

- Hibiscus Society hosts annual Hibiscus Show: **Planned for April 2022.**

- Native Plant Society co-hosts the annual Backyard Biodiveristy Day: **Held in October.**

- Winter Park Public Library to co-host Read at Mead: **Monthly program attracted between 28 and 42 children.**

- OC Environmental Protection staff provide guest educational leaders for field trips and summer camp: **No action this quarter.**

- *At least three outside community (civic or student service) groups participate in a volunteer service activity in the garden; **Edgewater High School members participated in weed wrangles and other Garden projects every Wednesday afternoon.***
- *Solicit Eagle Scout candidates for garden projects; **fielded inquiry for new project; likely to build a section of Boardwalk in Fall 2022.***

IX. **Community Garden:** Continue management/coordination of Mead's thriving community garden program.

- *Achieve 100% membership all Garden plots and maintain active waiting list*
- *Ensure garden practices are 100% organic*
- *Ensure common areas of the Garden are well maintained*
- *Participate in quarterly community garden membership gatherings to foster learning and community amongst the member gardeners*

PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Annual renewal of Community Garden beds completed. All goals accomplished.