



## ***Mead Botanical Garden Inc. Status Report: April - June 2022***

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

---

- **Capital improvement projects: MBG staff and committee members finalized designs and coordinated** with contractors and City staff a number of capital improvement and grounds improvement projects including the Azalea Lodge addition, Little Amphitheatre stage expansion, redesign of walkways and horticultural/garden pathways connections, landscaping, light relocation, parking expansion and drainage improvements.
- **Mead's Young Naturalist Summer Camp Planning and Operations:** MBG launched its 6-week summer camp, that ran from early June through late July without a single incident of COVID. Capacity of camp was expanded to its largest per week enrollment ever with 489 total campers.
- **Garden Improvements and Maintenance:** Completed final phase of the Legacy Garden expansion concept design work with landscape architect and botanic garden designer, Tres Fromme. Began work to obtain estimate of probable costs for the project.
- **Programming/Special Events:**
  - Hosted the return of the **Great Duck Derby**, after a two-year hiatus; attracted over 2,000 people to the Garden for the event and activities.
  - Hosted annual "**Queen of the Night**" **Night-blooming Cereus Mother Nature** pop-up event.
  - Hosted **two annual flower shows: the Central Florida Hibiscus Show and the Daylily Society of Central Florida Show.**
  - **Conducted monthly enrichment, health and wellness and children's programs.**
  - Engaged Orange Audubon members to lead Saturday morning **migratory bird walks throughout month of April.**
  - Hosted the first five of ten total summer Orange County Public Schools teacher development training days in the Garden.
- **Custom Garden Benches:** Secured donation for two new custom memorial garden benches. One to honor of Joan Ochs, past president of the Winter Park Garden Club and Florida Federation of Garden Clubs.
- **Horticulture:**
  - Updated seasonal plantings.

- Volunteers and staff provided twice weekly care for Legacy Garden and Greenhouse, Butterfly Gardens, Camellia Garden, Cycad Garden, Wildflower meadow and Discovery Barn Native Plant Garden.
  - Continued caring for native habitat restoration area on northwest side of Alice’s Pond with volunteers dedicated to working this area.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteer hours topped 2,100 hours this quarter. Conducted twice monthly volunteer orientation programs. Throughout the quarter, volunteers were involved in summer camp, display garden improvements and maintenance, group work days, helping with program events and leading educational field trips. Provided oversight, supervision and/or coordination of all work.

**Volunteer efforts included:**

- The Great Duck Derby required 71 volunteers; they worked between 3 and 6 hour shifts during the event.
- Area high school students served as volunteer Counselors In Training for the Young Naturalist Summer Camp program, each logging 25-30 hours per week. This quarter, volunteer CIT hours total 735 hours.
- Horticulture Garden volunteers worked weekly throughout the quarter tending the Legacy Garden, Greenhouse, Camellia Garden, Butterfly Garden, Cycad Garden, Discovery Barn and habitat restoration areas. Volunteer hours range from 4 to 12 hours per volunteer per week for these workers.
- Edgewater High School National Honor Society members continued their every Wednesday afternoon “weed wrangles” in the Garden; MBG lead horticulture volunteers provided weekly project supervision for the group. Members also propagated cuttings to give to Nightblooming Cereus visitors.
- Three large group workdays were held: held a joint day for UCF and Rollins faculty & staff and held two corporate days – one in conjunction with Earth Day activities in the Garden.
- Native Plant Society conducted monthly workdays to remove exotic invasives, add new habitat plantings to further the preservation and restoration of this historic area of the Garden; ensured gopher tortoises had variety of edible plant habitat. Planning of the fall Backyard Biodiversity Day began.
- Day Lily Society members planted and tended the day lily demonstration garden.

**FINANCIALS:**

---

The financial reports for April – June 2022 are attached. Summer camp gross revenue projected to top \$121,000 and net \$60,000.

---

**FY 2021-22, April – June 2022: BENCHMARK PROGRESS ON SET GOALS**

---

**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:** Tres Fromme, a highly experienced master planner/botanic garden landscape architect, completed the conceptual design for the expansion of the Legacy Garden with the goal of creating a “garden within the Garden.” (See last quarter report for full details about the project.)

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:** Through MBG managed volunteer gardener program, every Tuesday and Friday morning, 10-12 regular horticulture volunteers maintain Mead’s demonstration and display Gardens. Additional hours are also logged by individuals unable to attend on Tuesdays and Fridays. In addition, the Edgewater High National Honor Society worked two hours every Wednesday afternoon through the end of April. Their work in the Garden was guided by an MBG staff member or lead horticulture volunteer. The Camellia Society and Day Lily Society members provide care, feeding and pruning of the respective gardens.

- *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:** On a weekly basis, 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 chapter workdays are held monthly, during which time they removed exotic invasive plants, weeded and added new plantings to ensure the gopher tortoise population is well supported.

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

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Engaged the Central Florida Daylily Society to tend the daylily demonstration garden. Hosted the Native Plant Society’s monthly meetings at the Azalea Lodge. Day Lily Society and Hibiscus Society held their annual shows at the Azalea Lodge.

- *Manage volunteer recruitment program; update volunteer orientation program.*

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Volunteer recruitment is an on-going effort for MBG. Special effort was made to recruit volunteers for The Great Duck Derby and for the Young Naturalist Summer Camp took place this quarter. The volunteer orientation schedule was increased to twice a month due to the increased number of new volunteers responding to the outreach.

- *Host volunteer appreciation initiatives.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** MBG hosts a monthly volunteer appreciation gathering 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 (at least weekly) contact with the the City's Park and Recreation horticulture, urban forestry and irrigation staff and Natural Resources director 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:** MBG's 6-week Young Naturalist Summer Camp program opened on June 6. Registration, including 10 scholarship children, topped 500, with 248 on the waitlist. No incident of COVID reported during camp.
- *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: Enrichment Programming:** Conducted Fungi Jon Mushrooming Classes, Edible Flowers Workshops, Forest Bathing Hikes and Botanical Mocktails class.
- **Health & Wellness Programming:** Conducted weekly Yoga and Tai Chi classes. Held special Mother's Day "Mommy and Me" yoga classes.
- Cohosted monthly "**Read at Mead Children's Storytime**" programs with Winter Park Library staff.
- Began project planning for a new "Life Explorers" speaker series to launch in the fall.
- *Recruit and train environmental education facilitators and/or docent volunteers to deliver nature programming. Conduct Project Learning Tree curriculum training.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Completed in prior quarters. This quarter planned a series of 10 OCPs teacher training sessions to be held at the Azalea Lodge. MBG to provide informational garden tours for each session. Engaged a new program facilitator to conduct at least two new nature programs starting next quarter.
- *Reach out to local premier arts and culture groups to hold cultural events in the Garden, including FSYO.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** On-going. Planned FSYO holiday concerts for late 2022. Evaluated and declined inquiry from Mad Cow Theatre.

- *Host annual night-blooming cereus nighttime event in June (typical bloom time).*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Hosted four nights in late May. Each night drew between 140 and 400 people. Provided complimentary cactus cuttings to guest.
- *Host workshops and speaker series for Backyard Biodiversity Day in October and GROWvember Fall Fest and Plant Sale in November.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Began planning and recruiting vendors for November 2022 GROWvember event. NPS continued planning for Backyard Biodiversity Day.

#### **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:** Construction on the Lodge addition continued throughout the quarter. MBG staff had almost daily interface with contractor and trades people to coordinate work, respond to questions and orchestrate continued use of the Lodge.
- *Upgrade the A/V and sound system in the Lodge.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Completed.
- *Coordinate final phase of construction of new parking area adjacent to the picnic pavilion*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Completed during the last quarter in late 2021.
- *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:** Finalized plans and schedule for these projects which were to begin in late June. Continued to evaluate solutions to the water run-off issue impeding the planned northside pathway connecting the Grove and Camellia Garden area.
- *Obtain estimate the gut the existing Bride and Groom room and convert to usable space.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Obtained two estimates; both came in 50-60% above anticipated cost. Evaluated the proposals; working to find ways to reduce the project costs or scale back the scope of work.
- *Develop concept design to repurpose the Alum Building for a multi-purpose educational facility.*  
**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** No further action 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:** No additional action this quarter. Recruited members for signage task team to forward the project.

**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:** Added 30 new members this quarter.

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

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:** Hosted the Great Duck Derby, with over 2,000 attendees, in conjunction with Earth Day. Planning, promotion and sponsor recruitment for 2022 Backyard Biodiversity Day and GROWvember Fall Fest and Plant Sale took place.

- *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:** Initiatives are on-going. Continued planning for a Garden District “meet n greet” and member appreciation gathering for the first night of GROWvember. Scheduled hosting of Leadership Winter Park class for fall 2022.

- *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:** Continued cultivation of and strengthening relationships with leaders of Native Plant Society, Orange Audubon, Daylily and Camellia Societies, as well as the Winter Park Garden Club.

**VII. Fundraising Initiatives:**

- *Conduct quarterly “appeal” emails including the year-end annual appeal letter campaign*

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Completed.**

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

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Transferred sponsorships from cancelled 2020 Duck Derby to 2022 event. Raised additional \$3,000 in sponsorship. Began recruiting for GROWvember sponsorships and vendors.**

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

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT: Committee planning event for Spring 2023 with a “One Enchanted Evening” whimsical garden party theme. Also exploring art exhibits and food truck events.**

- *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: Donations for two customized. Received donation of a variety of plants.**

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

**PROGRESS/ACHIEVEMENT:**

- *Orange Audubon hosts Spring and Fall migratory bird walks: **Spring walks were held throughout April.***
- *Daylily Society hosts annual Daylily Show: **Held in May.***
- *Hibiscus Society hosts annual Hibiscus Show: **Held in April.***
- *Native Plant Society co-hosts the annual Backyard Biodiveristy Day: **Planning for October 2022 got underway.***
- *Winter Park Public Library to co-host Read at Mead: **Program continued through May.***
- *OC Environmental Protection staff provide guest educational leaders for field trips and summer camp: **Engaged OCPS to help with summer camp program enrichment.***
- *At least three outside community (civic or student service) groups participate in a volunteer service activity in the garden; **Edgewater High School members participate in weed wrangles every Wednesday afternoon.***
- *Solicit Eagle Scout candidates for garden projects; **fielded inquiries for two new projects to be done in Summer and Fall 2022 – Adirondack chairs and a garden utility shed.***

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: All of the above fully community garden goals accomplished. Renewal of annual memberships launched in June for the August 1<sup>st</sup> start of the new season.**