
SUNNYSIDE THYMES

Volume 31, Issue 11

“Helping Others Grow”

October 2022

Botanical Gardens to Love

By Jean Wolph, SMG Member



Although I've visited the Denver gardens, I didn't notice until I started researching that they are the Denver Botanic Gardens, not botanical. The garden is located in what feels like the heart of Denver, 1007 York Street, Denver, CO 80206, less than 2 miles from the state capitol building. As an accredited museum, it has a broad mission that integrates education with the collection and preservation of plants.

One characteristic that distinguishes them is their emphasis on the arts. In addition to the typical maze of exotic plants, DBG has a rich calendar of exhibits. For instance, in June and August, they host number of "al fresco" evenings, 4:30-8:30 p.m., with local musicians playing while guests stroll the grounds. There are exceptional rotating exhibits of sculpture and paintings, often by artists of renown. A current show is "Abundant Future: Cultivating Diversity in Garden, Farm and Field," in which they curate botanical art to make a horticultural point. They offer all manner of classes, including one resulting in a Botanical Illustration Certificate.

The living collections - for research and conservation as well as for aesthetic purposes - can be found growing on the grounds and inside the greenhouses and the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory. There are 8 divisions: Alpine, Amenity, Aquatic, Native, Steppe, Tropical, Cactus & Succulents. Most of these are self explanatory, but it may be helpful to know that the Amenity Collection, found throughout the Gardens, are traditional garden plants of the Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regions, such as lilacs, daylilies, peonies, roses and bulbs.

The Science Pyramid exhibit focuses on "living things are deeply intertwined through landscapes and the finite resources we share," exploring how our human habitat is shared with millions of plants, animals, fungi and other organisms.

DBG recently moved their non-living collec-

tions (natural history, library and art) to an adjacent building, the Freyer-Newman Center for Science, Art and Education.

Take An Armchair Visit!

An exciting feature of their website is a virtual tour. I counted 23 different tours that are planned by the staff, as well as an option to create your own tour. To try this feature, go to <http://navigate.botanicgardens.org/ecmweb/FindTour.html>

Or Plan an In-Person Trip

The Denver Botanic Gardens are also affiliated with the Plains Conservation Center where you can visit an 1880s village and enjoy an agricultural festival. The Gardens also own and manage, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chatfield Farms, a 700-acre native plant refuge and working farm with attractions such as an historical ranch, a restored 1918 dairy barn and silo, the 1874 Deer Creek Schoolhouse, 2.5 miles of nature trails, and wildflower gardens. Chatfield Farms' special claim to fame is its exceptional bird watching; it's designated as a birding hotspot on Cornell's eBird citizen science website.

With so many attractions at York Street and at the conservation center and farm, the Denver Botanic Gardens is a great vacation spot. Tickets are very reasonable--\$15 for adults and \$11.50 for seniors. They also offer about one free day per month; plan your trip and register ahead at <https://www.botanicgardens.org/events/free-days>. While you're planning, use the flower navigator so that you can see what will be blooming during your travel window: <http://navigate.botanicgardens.org/FindFlowers.html>. For more information call 720-865-3500 or visit their website, <https://www.botanicgardens.org/>.
