Support the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Annual Fund

Organization Description

Mission

_Nature is fundamental to human health and well-being_ – The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum connects people with nature offering a restorative and inspirational experience that is unique in Minnesota. As a community and a national resource for horticultural and environmental information, research and public education, the Arboretum sustains magnificent gardens, collections, and natural areas; offers lifelong learning opportunities; and conducts cutting edge research on cold hardy plants and fruits.

History

In 1908, the University bought 78 acres of farmland west of Minneapolis in Chanhassen and formally established the Fruit Breeding Farm to develop cold-hardy fruits, vegetables, and later, landscape trees and shrubs. The Arboretum was founded in 1958 on a site near the Fruit Breeding Farm. It began as a research and education facility under the direction of Dr. Leon Snyder, head of the University of Minnesota's Department of Horticultural Science. In 1976, the Fruit Breeding Farm was renamed the Horticultural Research Center, and in 1985 it merged with the Arboretum.

_Programs/activities, Strengths & Accomplishments_

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum consists of 1,137 acres of unique public gardens, natural spaces and research areas that include 32 display gardens, 48 collections of plant genera, 5,000 species of plants, and 8 native and restored environments. As an important public resource for the region, the Arboretum annually serves a broad audience of over 325,000 and 22,000 member households. In addition, over 60,000 children, adults, teachers and families participate in environmental education programs every year. The Minnesota Landscape...
Arboretum plays an important role as one of the few academic nonprofit institutions worldwide that identifies and develops cold-hardy fruit and landscape plants at its Horticultural Research Center. Several well-known varieties of fruit and landscape plants including the Honeycrisp Apple and the Northern Lights Azalea were developed at the Arboretum.

**Relationship with Other Organizations**

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is a unit of the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences and works collaboratively with that department as well as with the Center for Spirituality and Healing that houses the academic portion of the Nature-based Therapeutics Program. In addition most recently the Statewide Master Gardner’s Program has come under the umbrella of the Arboretum – providing unique opportunities to reach out and engage residents across Minnesota.

Overall, the Arboretum accomplishes much of its education mission in partnership with a wide variety of partners including the University of Minnesota, hundreds of schools, and multiple community-based organizations each year. Finally, the Arboretum is a leader in addressing critical issues of the day related to the environment. In its role as a convener, the Arboretum brings together partners from the nonprofit, government and business sectors – from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to the American Society of Landscape Architects – to address these issues through its public policy summits.

**Number of board members, full-time paid staff, part-time paid staff and volunteers.**

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum has a paid staff that ranges seasonally between 126 (66 FTE) and 234 (112 FTE). During 2013, a volunteer corps of 919 people spent 38,475 hours in various capacities, including helping in the Education Department, garden maintenance, administrative assistance, and special events. The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Foundation is overseen by a 35 member Advisory Board of Trustees.

**Long-term Funding Strategies**

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum receives 11% of its revenue from University of Minnesota. To meet the rest of its $10.5 million operating budget, the Arboretum relies on a combination of earned income (28%), philanthropic support, (48%), and memberships (12%). The Arboretum is seeking to strengthen all of these funding streams. For example, while individuals compose the primary source of philanthropy for the Arboretum, we continue to cultivate support from private foundations and corporations and have strategically chosen to elevate the position of corporate relations to grow relationships and support in this area.
Opportunities and Challenges

Plants are critical to human health and well-being. People need plants for food, for life saving medicine, to cleanse the air we breathe, and much more. We live in a delicate balance with the plants in our world. Continued development and our lifestyles are tipping this balance – making it imperative for organizations like the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum to provide meaningful opportunities for people to connect with, appreciate and ultimately support expanding access to natural environments.

Given reality of these competing priorities – development vs. natural spaces – the Arboretum must engage with several audiences from garden enthusiasts, to nature lovers; from school groups to city officials to ensure that those who can “speak for the trees” make their voices heard in their communities. Through hands-on education, cutting-edge information, and high quality experiences on its grounds the Arboretum seeks to inform these audiences on the critical role of plants in our world, in the process building their affinity for the Arboretum and the causes it champions. An example of how the Arboretum serves in this public education role is a campaign that was conducted in 2012 by the Arboretum along with its academic partners in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota and University of Minnesota Extension. The public was asked to consider The Top 10 Plants that Changed Minnesota. The public was asked to nominate plants for a based on their significant impact—positive or negative—on what we eat, the landscape, the economy, our culture, history and more. The initiative aimed to build awareness of the crucial role plants play in nourishing and sustaining life on Earth. This campaign lives on through curriculum, reading lists, and a wealth of materials available for free download at http://top10plantsmn.org/.

Programs and Activities

Gardens and Collections

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is renowned for its collection of beautiful display and specialty gardens and model conservation areas that offer many replicable ideas for both home and commercial landscapes. Some of the specialty gardens include the Bailey Shrub Walk, the hosta glade, the shrub rose garden, the ornamental grass collection, the Japanese garden, a wildflower garden and a series of home demonstration gardens. Models for commercial replication include rain gardens in parking areas that are designed to allow rain water to collect in areas planted with hardy perennials and native plants and then slowly seep into the soil. This helps recharge groundwater, maintain the base flow of streams, filter pollutants and prevent erosion. Other important collections include the Arboretum’s preservation and restoration of several native environments including maple and basswood forests, prairie, woodland, sedge meadow, wetland, tamarack bog, and oak savanna.
**Andersen Horticultural Library**
Andersen Horticultural Library’s collection is a rich resource for everyone from the weekend gardener planning a perennial border to the professional horticulturist. Its vast collection of nearly 20,000 books and 300 subscriptions to magazines, newsletters, and scientific journals provides information and inspiration—from the literature of horticulture, botany, landscape architecture, and local natural history to children's books and specialized horticultural research.

**Youth, Teacher, and Family Education Program**
The Arboretum’s Youth, Family, and Teacher Education Department is a leader among public gardens because of the breadth and quality of services offered. Innovative natural science and horticultural education programs are offered for individuals of all ages including field trips, Plantmobile programs, urban outreach, family activities, and teacher conferences. Education staff works to develop and deliver innovative, quality programming that immerses children and active learners of all ages in hands-on experiences with nature. The curriculum developed for field trips and the PlantMobile program exceeds Minnesota State Science standards.

**Urban Garden: Children’s Garden in Residence**
The Children’s Garden in Residence was established nearly 30 years ago to provide children with a meaningful opportunity to connect with nature in a science-rich gardening experience. In this program, 200 children ages 5-11 meet weekly for two hours over eight weeks of summer to plant and care for their own garden patches and learn about science and nutrition. Children work side-by-side and build relationships with a well-qualified staff team that includes Arboretum instructors, community volunteers, and garden program graduates. Specifically, this program works to increase children’s knowledge of horticultural and science concepts that exceed Minnesota State Science Standards, along with gardening skills.
Urban Garden Youth Employment Program
The Arboretum's Urban Garden Youth Employment Program focuses on developing entrepreneurial and leadership skills for 50 youth ages 12-19 during the summer. In this program youth are engaged in goal oriented work activities from selling vegetables that they grow to local restaurants to creating a new garden-based product that they market to local businesses.

Education for Adults
The Arboretum supports life-long learning. The Adult Education Program provides formal and informal activities for a range of plant enthusiasts, from the novice amateur gardener to the professional in plant-related fields to the policy maker. Classes and workshops range from landscape design and horticulture to explorations of global food systems. Conferences and symposia bring together a broad range of audiences experts in the field to explore a variety of timely and important issues related to environmental challenges of the day.

Nature-Based Therapeutics
Nature-Based Therapeutics includes: therapeutic horticulture, facilitated-green exercise, therapeutic landscapes, animal-assisted interactions, and care farming. Today the program serves a broad-base of clients with special needs, including developmentally disabled adults, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s patients, adolescents with eating disorders and others to build their self-esteem, coordination, muscle strength, and communication skills. The program offers training in therapeutic techniques to social service professionals, horticulturists, and the general public.

Research Program
The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum has a long and rich history in plant breeding and preservation. The Research Program will advance its efforts in preserving plant germplasm from rare and threatened plants and plants with potential as parents for landscape plant introductions. This enhanced research dimension will support world class research that promotes the creation of multifunctional landscapes for northern gardeners and long-term agricultural research to develop sustainable landscapes and cutting edge plant conservation practices that enable the Arboretum to be a leader and commit to the long-term monitoring and protection of populations of rare and threatened plants in the Upper Midwest.