

# THE GARDEN COLUMNS

Spring / Summer 2021

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

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**HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN**





#### A Note to Our Community:

## Welcome to your new Garden Columns!

We are delighted to be sharing with you the first issue of the relaunched *Garden Columns*, now published as the Garden's own magazine.

Just like in our former newsletter, you will find information and articles about what's going on at the Garden. The *Garden Columns* will give you an inside look at the mission activities happening at the Garden every day. We aim to bring you in-depth stories, unique perspectives, and stunning photographs. You will hear from staff members and volunteers, learn more about our partnerships and research projects, and discover all of the fun new ways you can get involved.

The Garden is here to help you connect with plants. Everything we do seeks to inspire you to find joy in nature, discover the beauty and wonder of our environment, and even take action to protect and steward the green spaces around you. We hope this magazine does a little bit of all of that.

Thank you for supporting the Garden, and happy reading!

#### The Garden Team

#### Butterfly Fact #1



The Purdy Butterfly House is home to about 25 different butterfly species!





This 'Cayuga' viburnum near Little Smith Lake is a hybrid cross between *Viburnum carlesii* (Korean spice viburnum) and *Viburnum x carlcephalum* (fragrant snowball).



## Greetings from our CEO

### Hello everyone!

In the spring and summer months, the Garden is a delight for the senses: colorful flowers burst from their buds, the fragrance of fresh blooms wafts on the breeze, and the buzz of pollinators fills the air. Each day, new wonders emerge, waiting to be discovered. Surround yourself with the flurry of thousands of butterfly wings in the Purdy Butterfly House, or enjoy a moment of peace as you rest in the cool shade of the Fern Glade. Wherever your stroll through the Garden takes you, you are sure to find something surprising, unique, and inspiring.

Among the leaves and the blooms, there are so many exciting things to discover, and we are thrilled to be bringing you two new experiences to explore this season:

Beginning in June, you can learn and play in larger-than-life structures that reveal the connection between birds and people during our newest exhibit, Uncaged: Birds, Nature, and You!

Beginning in July, as night falls, you can experience the Garden's living collections like never before in Night Blooms, an enchanting journey through a dreamscape of botanical lanterns.

With so much to enjoy at the Garden right now, this issue of the *Garden Columns* celebrates the joy and excitement of the spring and summer months. In these pages, you will find exciting new research in plant science and conservation, helpful tips for your own landscape, a guide to what's blooming in the Garden, and so much more.

We hope these stories and images inspire you to spend time outside this season, whether at the Garden or in your own backyard.

See you at the Garden!

Sue Wagner

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Alabama  
Native Plant  
Are You?

and more!

### Visit Us:

**In Person:** 4747 Bob Wallace Ave,  
Huntsville, AL 35805  
**Online:** [hsvbg.org](https://hsvbg.org)

### Contact Us:

**Phone:** 256-830-4447  
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**Butterfly Fact #2**  
Butterflies can't smell!  
Instead, they have taste  
receptors on their feet.



## Who We Are

Open year-round, the Huntsville Botanical Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 112 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Garden is an ArbNet-accredited arboretum and a member of the American Public Gardens Association, the North American Plant Collections Consortium, the American Horticultural Society, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

### On the cover:

A young guest finds a quiet  
moment of curiosity and joy  
while exploring in the Garden.



# Events & Exhibits at the Garden

MAY - SEPTEMBER



JUNE 11 - OCTOBER 31



JULY 21 - SEPTEMBER 26



SEPTEMBER 4 - OCTOBER 31



## MAY

- 19, 26 The Golden Hour
- 26 Meet & Greet the Artist | Joann Bugg
- 31 Memorial Day (Free admission for military personnel and immediate family)

## JUNE

- 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 The Golden Hour
- 12 Butterfly Release

- 20 Father's Day (Free admission for dads)

## JULY

- 4 Independence Day (Free admission for military personnel and immediate family)
- 10 Butterfly Release

## Adult Programs

### JUNE

- 3, 19 Selecting Native Plants that Thrive in Summer | 🌿
- 5 Home Propagation 101 | 🌿
- 17 Ahead of the Curve: New, Rare, & Unusual Plants | 🌿
- 26 Keep the Animals Out! | 🐾

### AUGUST

- 5, 12, 19, 26 Understanding & Improving Garden Soils | 🌿 🐾
- 28 Leaf Castings | 🌿

### SEPTEMBER

- 8 Divide & Conquer: Getting the Most Out of the Plants You Have | 🌿
- 9, 11 Selecting Native Plants that Thrive in Fall | 🌿
- 9, 16 Pruning for the Homeowner | 🌿 🐾
- 18 Morning Bird Walk with Herb Lewis | 🌿

### OCTOBER

- 5 The Introvert's Garden: Hedges, Thorns, Prickles, & Poisons | 🌿 🐾

## Youth & Family Programs

### JUNE - JULY

**SUMMER CAMPS**  
See page 15 for more information!

### JUNE

- 8, 22, 29 Firefly Garden Hike
- 18 Family Campout in the Garden (Members only)
- 19, 25 Flowers | Seeds to Sprouts

### JULY

- 6, 13, 20, 27 Firefly Garden Hike
- 9, 17, 30 Pollination | Seeds to Sprouts

### AUGUST

- 13, 21, 27 Trees | Seeds to Sprouts
- 17, 19, 24, 28 Nature Academy

### SEPTEMBER

- 4, 17, 24 Soil | Seeds to Sprouts
- 7, 9, 11, 21, 23 Nature Academy
- 23 Monarch Release

### OCTOBER

- 1, 15 Family Campout in the Garden (Members only)
- 4-8 Fall Break Camp
- 12, 14, 23, 26, 28 Nature Academy
- 8, 22 Scarecrow Trail Night Hike
- 22, 30 Fall Leaves | Seeds to Sprouts

🌿 - In-Person Class   🐾 - Virtual Class   🌿 🐾 - Virtual Class Series



### Butterfly Fact #3



We raise around 18 different butterfly species on-site at the Garden.



Presented by **Window World**  
"Simply the Best for Less"

**June 11 - October 31**

Included with regular Garden admission

Learn more at [hsvbg.org/uncaged](https://hsvbg.org/uncaged)

**Night Blooms**

Presented by **PNC**

**July 21 - September 26**

Select evenings only

Learn more at [hsvbg.org/nightblooms](https://hsvbg.org/nightblooms)

Photo by Hanart Culture

### Butterfly Fact #4



During Peak Butterfly Season, the Purdy Butterfly House is home to around 1,200 butterflies at a time.



# What’s Blooming in the Garden?

The Huntsville Botanical Garden is full of interest and variety year-round, and the stunning colors in the spring and summer are simply not to be missed! Here are some of our favorite must-see blooms and lush vegetation you can enjoy this season, including when and where to find them in the Garden.



**When:** May  
**Where:** Bush Azalea Trail, Harbarger Hydrangea Border



“Hydrangeas are the quintessential summer garden shrub, and everybody should have at least one! They are very easy to grow, especially the native varieties. The first year after you plant them, make sure they get plenty of water and research when to prune, and they will bloom every year!”

*Elaine Alspach, Garden Volunteer and Board of Directors Member*

**Butterfly Fact #5**  
Every butterfly in the Purdy Butterfly House is native to our region.



“Coneflowers are awesome perennials that attract pollinators like bees and butterflies. When the flowers fade, the seeds also provide food for the birds. Coneflowers come in beautiful bright colors like pink, purple, yellow, and orange, so they look great in any landscape!”

*Rebecca Turk, Director of Learning and Public Engagement at the Garden*



**When:** June/July  
**Where:** Tweetsville, Native Plants Teaching Garden



**Fun Fact:**  
Some water lily flowers only open in the morning or in the evening to attract insect pollinators.

“I enjoy the water lilies because they are a surprise of color every year. Water lilies are the jewel of the Garden throughout late spring and summer with their varied bloom times, hardiness, and varieties. The hardy water lilies stay in the pond all season and are the first to bloom. The tropical water lilies put on a show at the end of the summer when temperatures are warm, and the night bloomers light up the night.”

*Sherry Hoyt, Lead Gardener at the Garden*



**When:** June/July  
**Where:** Damson Aquatic Garden



**When:** August  
**Where:** Fern Glade



**Fun Fact:**  
Peggy’s secret ingredient for beautiful, lush ferns is fish emulsion. Fertilize with fish emulsion in the spring, and watch your ferns grow!

“The reason I like ferns is because they are everything plants should be. Some are evergreen, some are deciduous, some are lacy, and they all have individuality. They are so different, yet all in the same family. You just have to be patient to grow them.”

*Peggy Patch, Garden Volunteer*



# Worth the Hike:

## What it takes to save an Alabama native from extinction

Beneath the shade of the trees, the June morning air still feels cool as Tracy Cook treks carefully through the undergrowth at Monte Sano State Park. Her eyes scan the landscape, and spread out around her, the other members of her field team are doing the same. Somewhere nearby, camouflaged amongst the greens and browns of hundreds of other plants, hidden by the kaleidoscope of dappled sunlight streaming through the canopy, a delicate draping vine grows, and they are here to find it.

Suddenly, a shout breaks through the quiet morning. “Tracy! I think I got it!”

The reddish-purple hue. The trailing growth across the rocky terrain. The angle of the leaves positioned just so along the vine. The plant is *Clematis morefieldii*, more commonly known as Morefield’s leather flower, and the hunt for its location is more than an exercise in plant identification; it’s a step towards securing the species’ survival.

Native to northern Alabama, northwestern Georgia, and southern Tennessee, *C. morefieldii* has been listed as a federally endangered plant species since 1992. In the few locations where it exists in the wild, urban development and invasive plants threaten to destroy any remaining plant populations. But conservation efforts to protect the species are stunted by a lack of genetic information about the plant.

That’s where Tracy Cook and her team come in.

### “*C. morefieldii* needs our help,”

says Cook, who serves as Director of Plant Conservation and Curation at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. “This little guy is tough as nails. It is a species that lives in a difficult habitat that can survive storms and natural disasters, but despite it all, it is endangered because of human activities. We need to take action to prevent the extinction of this incredible native plant, but to do that effectively, we need to know more about it first.”

Understanding a plant species’ genetic makeup allows plant conservationists like Cook to decide how to protect a plant based on the species’ unique DNA. In order to learn more about the DNA of *C. morefieldii*, Cook is leading

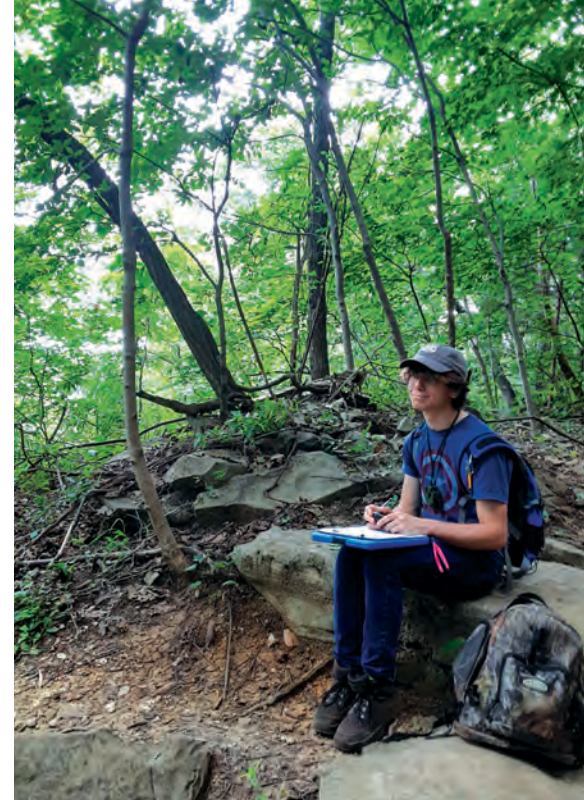
a project to document and protect as much of the plant’s genetics as possible.

This multifaceted project to save *C. morefieldii* includes efforts to locate where the plant still exists in the wild, ethically collect diverse samples, analyze the plant’s DNA sequence, and propagate it to introduce more genetic diversity into the species. The samples of *C. morefieldii* will then be preserved in plant collections at botanic institutions across the country, including at the Huntsville Botanical Garden.

It’s certainly no small task, but Cook and her team are up to the challenge. After completing over 150 hours of fieldwork in the summer of 2020, the project team is currently focusing on studying and caring for the plant samples they collected.

“Saving an entire species is definitely not an easy or simple undertaking,” says Cook with a smile. “But if we can help save this incredible native plant from extinction, without a doubt, it will all be worth it.”

*Tracy Cook is the Director of Plant Conservation and Curation at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. The Clematis morefieldii project is funded by an award from the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, provided for under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. The project is also supported by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands and State Parks Divisions, the Land Trust of North Alabama, the Nature Conservancy, the University of Alabama in Huntsville Department of Biological Sciences, Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance, and HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology.*



#### Butterfly Fact #6



The average lifespan of a butterfly is 3-4 weeks, but some species can live up to 10 months or more.

*C. morefieldii*





An American fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) blooms in the sun outside the Anderson Education Center. Also known as a white fringetree, this deciduous shrub is native to Alabama.



# My 10 FAVORITE THINGS

## About Summer Camp

By Noah Smith, Age 9

- #10. I get to be outside every day. There is way more room to explore than in my backyard at home!
- #9. I met my friend Daniel. He likes bugs, just like me!
- #8. Once during free exploration time, Daniel and I found a big rock hidden under a bush. When we turned it over, we found so many worms! The instructor brought everyone over to see. It was fun to show our friends what we found.
- #7. Our instructor that day was Miss Sadie. She is so nice and funny. She always has something cool to show us!
- #6. Miss Sadie helped us do an experiment. We planted seeds in two different containers to see which one grew better. It was really cool to watch the seeds grow all week long.
- #5. At the end of camp, I got to take the seeds home! I put them on my windowsill in my bedroom. Now they can get lots of sunlight and grow even more.
- #4. One day, we went inside the butterfly house to learn how caterpillars become butterflies. Suddenly, a giant yellow butterfly landed on my arm! It was so close that I could see its antennae. I had to stand very still so that it wouldn't fly away.
- #3. Another day, we went to the Herb Garden. The basil leaves reminded me of Grandma's cooking. I can't wait to tell her about it next time we visit her.
- #2. Miss Sadie said that because I like bugs so much, maybe I will grow up to be a scientist who studies insects. She wrote it down for me: it is called an entomologist. I think that must be the coolest job in the world!
- #1. Mom and Dad keep saying, "It sounds like you're learning a lot!" I guess I am. All I know is I can't wait to go back next week!



**Butterfly Fact #7**  
There are four stages of a butterfly's life cycle: Egg, Larva, Pupa, and Adult.

**The characters in this story are fictional, but the activities described are not! The Garden's summer camps take place outdoors and include various engaging hands-on STEM activities, all led by certified instructors.**

*This year, there are 12 different camp themes in June and July, with options available for ages 5-13 (grades K-6).*

### Summer Camps at the Garden!

Our summer camps are designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and exploration through outdoor STEM projects and nature play.

Grades K-2

- Outdoor Adventures** May 31 - June 4, June 21-25, July 26-30
- Gardening for Kids** June 7-11, June 28 - July 2
- Magic Tree House** June 7-11
- Garden Detectives** June 7-11
- Plant Explorers** June 14-18, July 12-16
- Fairies in the Forest** June 21-25
- Nature's Superheroes** July 12-16
- Bugs: Heroes & Villains** July 19-23

Grades 3-6

- Outdoor Adventures** May 31 - June 4, June 21-25, July 26-30
- Nature's Engineers** June 7-11, July 19-23
- Nature's Mysteries** June 7-11, July 19-23
- Be a Plant Scientist!** June 14-18, July 12-16
- Garden STEM Challenge** June 14-18, July 12-16
- Gardening for Kids** June 28 - July 2

**Registration is open now! Learn more at [hsvbg.org/camps](https://hsvbg.org/camps)**



### Come together at the Garden

Huntsville's Premier Event Facility

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**Butterfly Fact #8**  
Butterflies need two kinds of plants: nectar plants and host plants. The nectar plants provide the butterfly with food, and the host plants are where the butterfly will lay eggs.





**Butterfly Fact #9**  
Some butterfly species migrate. Monarch butterflies can travel upwards of 3,000 miles in a year during their migration!



# Your Summertime Checklist for Home Garden Success

Follow these easy tips to help keep your garden healthy and your plants happy!

## May

- ☐ Allow spring foliage to die back to encourage perennial growth.
- ☐ Prune spring-flowering shrubs like camellias, azaleas, and forsythias.
- ☐ Plant summer-flowering bulbs like dahlias, gladiolus, and lilies.
- ☐ Plant all summer veggies and annuals by the end of the month.
- ☐ Mulch flower beds to help control weeds and give your garden a polished look.

## June

- ☐ Stake any plants that need extra support.
- ☐ Make more plants by taking cuttings of new growth.
- Learn more** about propagating plants in our class, Home Propagation 101, on **June 5!**
- ☐ Feed your plants with fertilizer.
- ☐ Take steps to control weeds, pests, and disease.

## July

- ☐ Deadhead faded flowers to promote re-blooming.
- ☐ Beat the heat by watering early in the morning and in the evening.
- ☐ Get more veggies by planting a second crop of edible plants like green beans, zucchini, and squash.

## August

- ☐ Stay cool indoors and care for your houseplants.
- ☐ Start planting your fall vegetable garden for a bountiful harvest.

## September

- ☐ Start planning your fall plantings.
- ☐ Divide your perennials to save money and have even more plants to enjoy.

**Learn more** about dividing plants in our class, Divide & Conquer, on **September 8!**

# Quiz Time! What Alabama Native Plant Are You?

## What is your favorite season?

- A** Spring
- B** Summer
- C** Fall
- D** Winter

## How tall are you?

- A** 5' and below
- B** 5'1" to 5'5"
- C** 5'6" to 5'11"
- D** 6' and above

## How would you describe your style?

- A** Simple and understated
- B** Fun and spunky
- C** Delicate and romantic
- D** Polished and timeless

## What is your favorite way to spend a spring day?

- A** Sitting in the shade with a cool breeze
- B** Soaking up the sunshine all day
- C** Taking in the soft light of dawn
- D** Any activity as long as I am outdoors!

## What colors do you like best?

- A** Earth tones
- B** Bright colors
- C** Pastels
- D** Neutrals



**Quiz Answers:**  
*You're a Real Bloomer...*



Mostly  
**A's**

## Trinity Flower (*Trillium spp.*)

You are a trillium! Trilliums can be a bit shy, but once they open up, they bloom beautifully. They love shady spots where they can enjoy a gentle breeze. You can visit the trilliums in the Holmes Trillium Garden, where our accredited trillium collection blooms in the spring.



Mostly  
**B's**

## Bee Balm (*Monarda spp.*)

You are a bee balm! Known by many names, bee balm is a bold, energetic plant. Bee balms are social butterflies: they attract lots of pollinators with their bright colors and striking flowerheads. You can find bee balms in the Purdy Butterfly House and in Tweetsville.



Mostly  
**C's**

## Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

You are an oakleaf hydrangea! Their delicate flowers and large foliage provide consistent beauty from spring to fall, and they bloom best when they receive morning sun and afternoon shade. You can see oakleaf hydrangeas in the Harbarger Hydrangea Border and throughout the Garden.



Mostly  
**D's**

## Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)

You are a southern magnolia! With its large, fragrant blooms and broad, glossy leaves, the southern magnolia is the epitome of classic beauty and poise. They grow tall and proud in a variety of conditions and are happy in the sun or shade. You can enjoy southern magnolias in locations throughout the Garden, such as the Parking Garden and the entrance to the Four Seasons Garden.



# Get Involved:

## Thank you to our Corporate Partners!

The Corporate Partner program is designed to strengthen the relationship between the Huntsville Botanical Garden and the corporate community in the Greater Huntsville Area. Through the annual support of these Corporate Partners, we can provide first-class programs that allow children, families, and Garden guests to connect to plants and gain a deeper understanding of the role they play in their own environment.

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AVISTA Strategies	Northwestern Mutual – Shane Stromei, Managing Director
Barrios Technology	PeopleTec
Blue Origin	Van Valkenburgh & Wilkinson Properties
Davidson Technologies	Viva Health
Edward Jones – Financial Advisor, Andy Johnson, CFP®   AAMS®	

To learn more about the Corporate Partner program, contact [development@hsvbg.org](mailto:development@hsvbg.org).



## New Plaque Honors Garden Guild

In honor of 32 years of dedicated service by the many members of the Garden Guild, we are pleased to announce that a plaque has been placed in the Volunteer Tribute Garden. This plaque will serve as a lasting testament to the commitment of these volunteers and our deep appreciation of all the Guild has done to support the Garden and our community.

The Garden Guild was formed in 1988 to support the Garden through fundraising, educational activities, and volunteerism. From 1988 to 2020, the Guild raised over \$10 million for the Garden through the Spring and Fall Plant Sales, Galaxy of Lights, and other Garden fundraising events.

The Garden would not be the place of learning, joy, and respite that it is today if it had not been for the support of the Garden Guild. Their countless hours of hard work, unwavering dedication, and passion for our mission have built a strong foundation on which the Garden can grow and thrive for generations to come.

Volunteers continue to be a valued and essential part of the Garden. We welcome anyone interested in volunteering with us to email [volunteer@hsvbg.org](mailto:volunteer@hsvbg.org) to learn more about how you can be a part of the Garden, too.

Did you notice the butterfly facts hidden throughout the magazine? How many did you find? Peak Butterfly Season is May through September, so don't miss your chance to see the fluttering butterflies on your next visit to the Garden. Share your favorite butterfly photos on social media using #hsvgarden, and we may even include your photo in our next issue!







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"That beautiful season... Summer....  
Filled was the air with a dreamy and  
magical light; and the landscape  
Lay as if new created in all the  
freshness of childhood."

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

**COMING SOON**  
See inside for details!



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