Celebrating our 10th Anniversary in Style

Nearly 150 people gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens on Friday, September 20, 2019. The warm late summer weather made for the perfect evening. Guests enjoyed cocktails while admiring the stunning sunflower display along the Juan Molls Smith Expansile. An elegant dinner was served under a large tent on the central lawn at tables set with china, votive lights, and artistic arrangements of fresh blooms and garden greenery. Each guest received a coaster made of shining aluminum—the metal associated with a tenth anniversary—or one of three designs (butterfly, hummingbird, and oak leaf). The night concluded with dancing to the music of local jazz band Eastern Standards.

The museum will be built along Bigler Road between the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens and the Joe S. Kutts Building. The two stories tall. Nearby public parking is considered essential because the gardens a common entrance from Bigler Road, and that is no more than 800 feet from the museum. Completion is targeted for late 2022.

Most people have heard that the art museum is moving to a new location at the edge of the University. Penn State has hired the well-known firm Allied Works Architecture, which will also include administrative and operational space for the Arboretum. This firm, based in Portland, Oregon, Cloeppel, is well-known for their previous work on the University of Michigan Museum of Art; the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver; the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio; the National Music Center of Canada in Calgary; and other notable projects. Arboretum Director Kim Steiner and Director of Horticulture Shari Edelson are serving on the core project team.

Although the footprint and exact location of the new building have not yet been determined, the current vision calls for a structure that is spatially integrated with the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens, that shares with the gardens will showcase quite a large array of plants—over 390 unique habitats such as a pond, wetlands, woodland, and dry meadow. The new gardens will be designed to attract all of our region’s insect pollinator species as well as the broadest possible range of resident and migratory birds. To this end, we have worked with a range of Penn State-based and outside experts to develop a design that envisions ecological diversity by incorporating habitats such as a pond, wetlands, woodland, and dry meadow. The new Arboretum will showcase a large array of plants—over 390 unique species and varieties which are native to Pennsylvania or the greater Appalachian region.

As with all our previous landscape projects, the Pollinator and Bird Garden will be one has possible through the generous gifts of the Morr Arboretum donors. We look forward to providing construction update since it all works begins, and are eager to welcome visitors once the garden opens to the public.

Tygel Endowment Funds Educational Programs

A recent endowment to The Arboretum at Penn State, given by Mark J. Tygel, endowed the H.O. Smith Botanic Gardens to offer these new educational opportunities to visitors in 2019. Environmental educator James Flanagan conducted a series of activities in the children’s garden that focused on horticultural topics. Akissa Pendarf of Paper Bird Creative & Education presented two recurring Saturday morning programs that examined the birds and flowers of the wetland and the role of color and camouflage in nature. Finally, Penn State professor Laura Lederer and her graduate student Lauren Cloeppel provided a program to State College Area High School science students that explored the adaptation of forest trees to climate change. We hope to expand the range of program offerings in future years.

Pollinator and Bird Garden: Construction to Commence This Fall

Construction will begin soon on the Arboretum’s new Pollinator and Bird Garden, which will be created on the east side of the Arboretum. The site of the new landscape has been selected in winter 2019, and are now on the cusp of transformation. We have designed the gardens, one of our main aims was to create a space that could attract all of our region’s insect pollinator species as well as the broadest possible range of resident and migratory birds. To this end, we have worked with a range of Penn State-based and outside experts to develop a design that envisions ecological diversity by incorporating habitats such as a pond, wetlands, woodland, and dry meadow. The new Arboretum will showcase a large array of plants—over 390 unique species and varieties which are native to Pennsylvania or the greater Appalachian region.

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