

ZILKER BOTANICAL GARDEN

A Jewel in the Heart of Austin

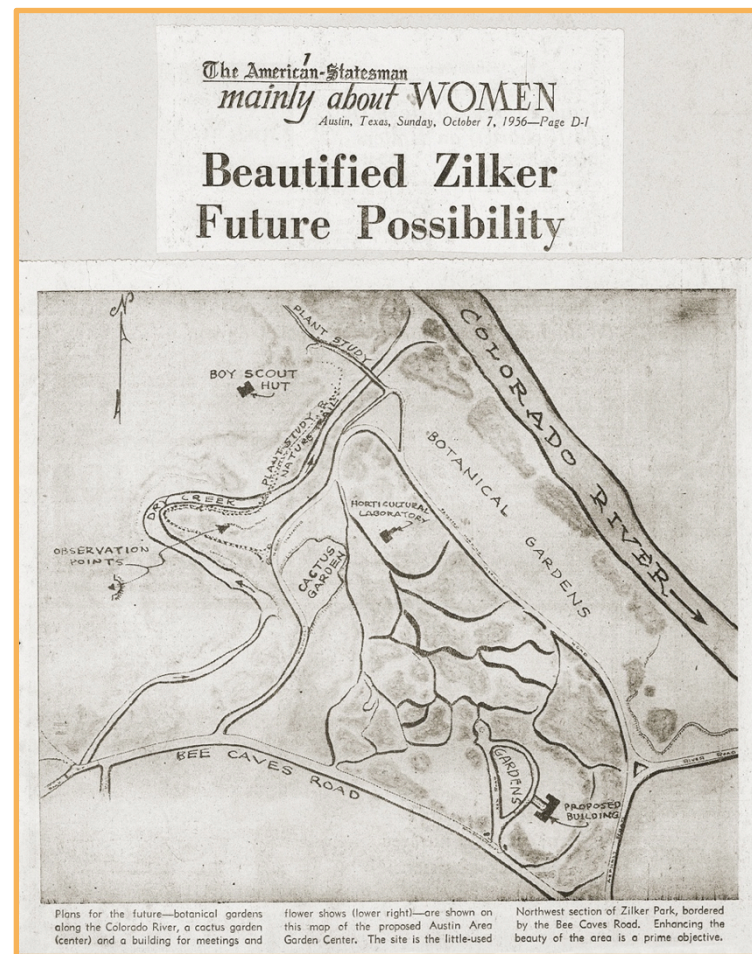


Presented by the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy

April 2015

A Dream Realized

- 1924: Clara Driscoll founds the Violet Crown Garden Club to promote an interest in gardening, education, and civic beautification.
- Mid-1940's: Violet Crown seeks a place to meet and hold flower shows.
- Joined by a handful of other garden clubs, members present their vision for a garden center to Austin Recreation Department Director, Beverly Sheffield.
- 1955: Six garden clubs form the Austin Area Garden Center, Inc., or AAGC to promote education in the art of gardening.



- The City of Austin allocates land in Zilker Park and approves plans.
- 1963: Mayor Lester Palmer and Mabel Davis turn the first shovel of earth with Douglas Blachley.
- 1964: The Austin Area Garden Center is dedicated.



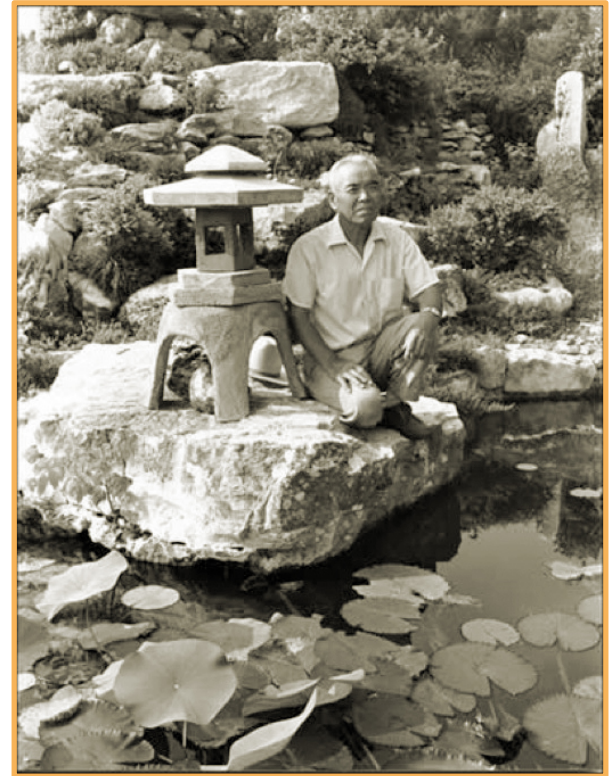
Walter Barnes

Mrs. Alden Davis, Mayor Lester Palmer and Austin area president Douglas Blachley are jovial indeed as they break the earth at the site of the area gar-

den center building. The local leaders of the garden world of Austin were among those who rejoiced Sunday, Sept. 8, for "a dream coming true!"

Gardens Develop

- 1969: The Taniguchi Japanese Garden opens as the first of Zilker Botanical Garden's major attractions. Isamu Taniguchi built it as a gift to the people of Austin.
- 1973: The Mabel Davis Rose Garden is dedicated.
- 2002: The Hartman Prehistoric Garden opens. A unique, two-acre site, it was developed as a Cretaceous plant habitat after amateur paleontologists discovered hundreds of tracks of ancient reptiles in the area.



The Garden Today

- There are 20 gardens and specialty beds and several historic structures and relics of Austin's past.
 - Gardens & Specialty Beds:
 - Isamu Taniguchi Japanese Garden
 - Herb Garden & Native Herb Garden
 - Mabel Davis Rose Garden
 - Doug Blachly Butterfly Trail & Garden
 - Organic Garden
 - Green Garden
 - Cactus & Succulent Garden
 - Hartman Prehistoric Garden
 - Daylily Beds
 - Children's Garden
 - Tropical & Subtropical Garden
 - Willie Birge Memorial Pond
 - Freda Bodine Caladium Garden
 - Posey Perennial Garden
 - Native Habitat Area
 - Iris Beds
 - Endemic Beds
 - Meanderer's End Stone Plaza
 - Fern Beds
 - Escarpment Trail
 - Historic Structures and Other Features:
 - Blacksmith Shop
 - Esperanza Schoolhouse
 - Swedish Pioneer Cabin
 - Mamie Wilson Rowe Summer House
 - Butler Window
 - Congress Avenue Footbridge
 - Antique Light Standards
 - Bickler Cupola
 - Composting Demonstration
 - Rainwater Harvesting
- The Garden draws around 110,000 visitors each year.

Current Operations

- PARD and volunteers share the responsibilities of the Garden.
- The City owns the land and furnishes:
 - Utilities
 - Grounds maintenance
 - Building repairs
 - Garden staff
- AAGC is composed of 31 member clubs with 1,500 members. Contributions and activities include:
 - Funds and volunteers to support:
 - Horticulture
 - Education
 - Publicity
 - Gift shop management
 - Garden clubs:
 - Hold plant shows & sales.
 - Give educational programs on horticultural topics.
 - Seven clubs have Adopt-A-Garden agreements, with one more in the works. Each collaborate on theme gardens.



Challenges Facing the Garden

- The gardeners, though dedicated, are not sufficient in number to maintain the grounds to a botanical garden quality.
- There is no longer a full time on-site manager and the number of full time employees has been reduced to one-third of what it was seven years ago.
- Budgets continue to shrink while needs increase.
 - The current budget is not sufficient to maintain the existing gardens.
 - It does not include funds for future improvements or expansions in order for the garden to reach its full potential.
- The City of Austin is not alone in facing these challenges.



The New York Times

In New York, Proposed Budget Shuts Out Zoos, Aquariums and Gardens

By ROBIN POGREBIN
Published: January 21, 2009

National Arboretum exhibits may fall to budget cuts

By Mark Segraves April 26, 2011 - 12:54 am

theguardian
Winner of the Pulitzer prize

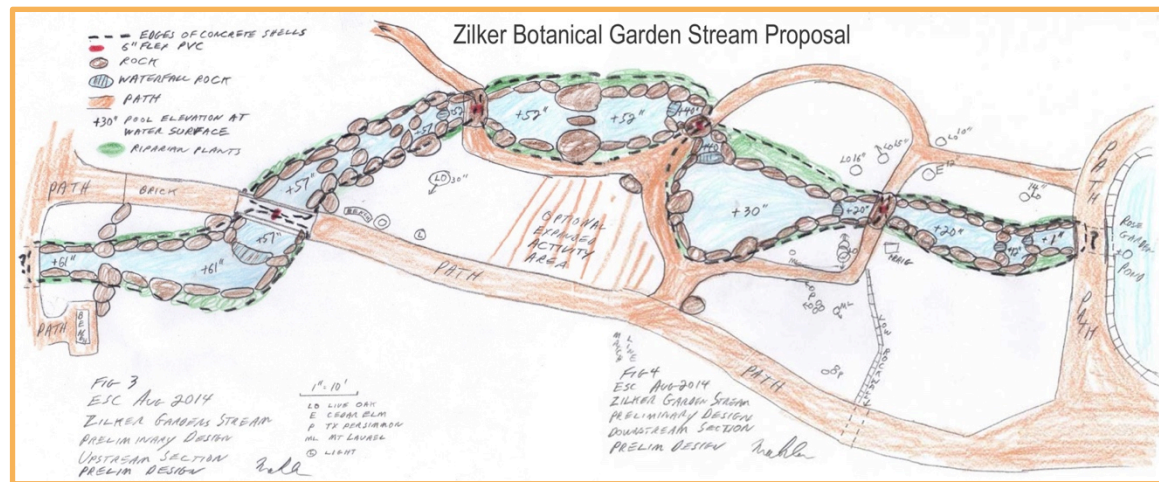
Thursday 24 April 2014 15:36 EDT

Budget cuts threaten Kew Gardens' world-class status

Ian Sample and Alice Bell

A Dream for the Future

Planned projects are awaiting funding:

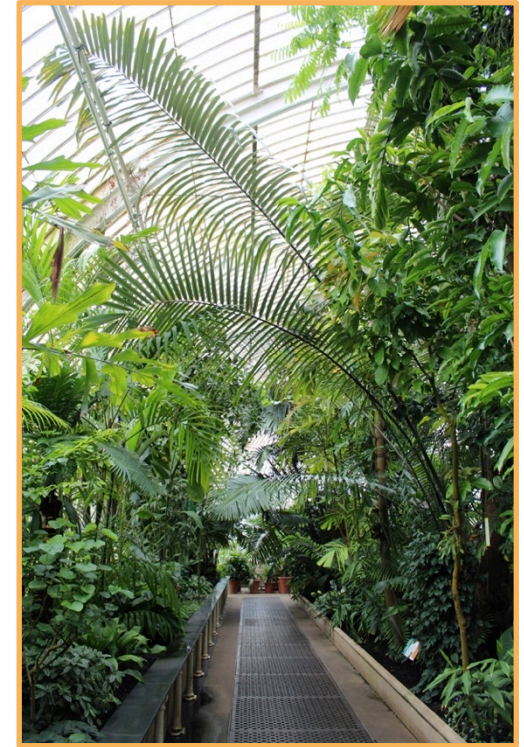


- An area surrounding a leaking stream connecting the Japanese Garden's Lotus Pond with the Rose Pond will be transformed into a beautiful new garden space.
- The Bonsai Society is seeking to make the Garden the home of the Texas State Bonsai Exhibit.



Garden Needs & Possibilities

- PARD and AAGC conducted a visioning exercise which highlighted the Garden's needs and untapped potential.
- Needs for the future:
 - Expansion of meeting and educational facilities
 - Expanded plant collections and gardens
 - Conservatories and display greenhouses
 - Improved outdoor lighting
 - Additional parking
 - Improved ADA access



Moving Forward

- Recognizing that managing a botanical garden does not fall under its mission, AAGC recently conducted a public survey and hired Seeds for Change Consulting to complete a study of funding and management options for the Garden.
- The results of the survey and study make clear that the Garden has the potential to become a world-class botanical garden.

Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy

- A co-manager, nonprofit conservancy to undertake the operation and management of the Garden is the best option for the future.
- A conservancy will have the organizational and structural capacity for maintenance, operations, programming, and fundraising to ensure the sustainability of the garden.
- Already a successful model in Austin and other cities.
- January 2015: Volunteers officially formed the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy to work with the City of Austin and grow the Garden for the future.
 - Our mission: *“To inspire people of all ages to treasure, promote, and protect the botanical wonders of our world.”*
 - Our vision: *“To create a world-class botanical garden in the heart of Austin. We will guide, enhance and fund our urban oasis. Our key objectives are to provide education, conservation and research.”*

Current Status

- The Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy is incorporated in the State of Texas and has filed for federal 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.
- Organizational structures to assume operation of the Garden are being developed.
- Numerous documents have been drafted, including:
 - Bylaws
 - Advisory Board Charter
 - Policy and Procedures Manual
 - Business and Development Plan
- We are meeting regularly with PARD to discuss operations, infrastructure, and plans for a transition.
- We will return to the Parks and Recreation Board with a firm proposal seeking an agreement with the City of Austin.



Thank you for your support!

