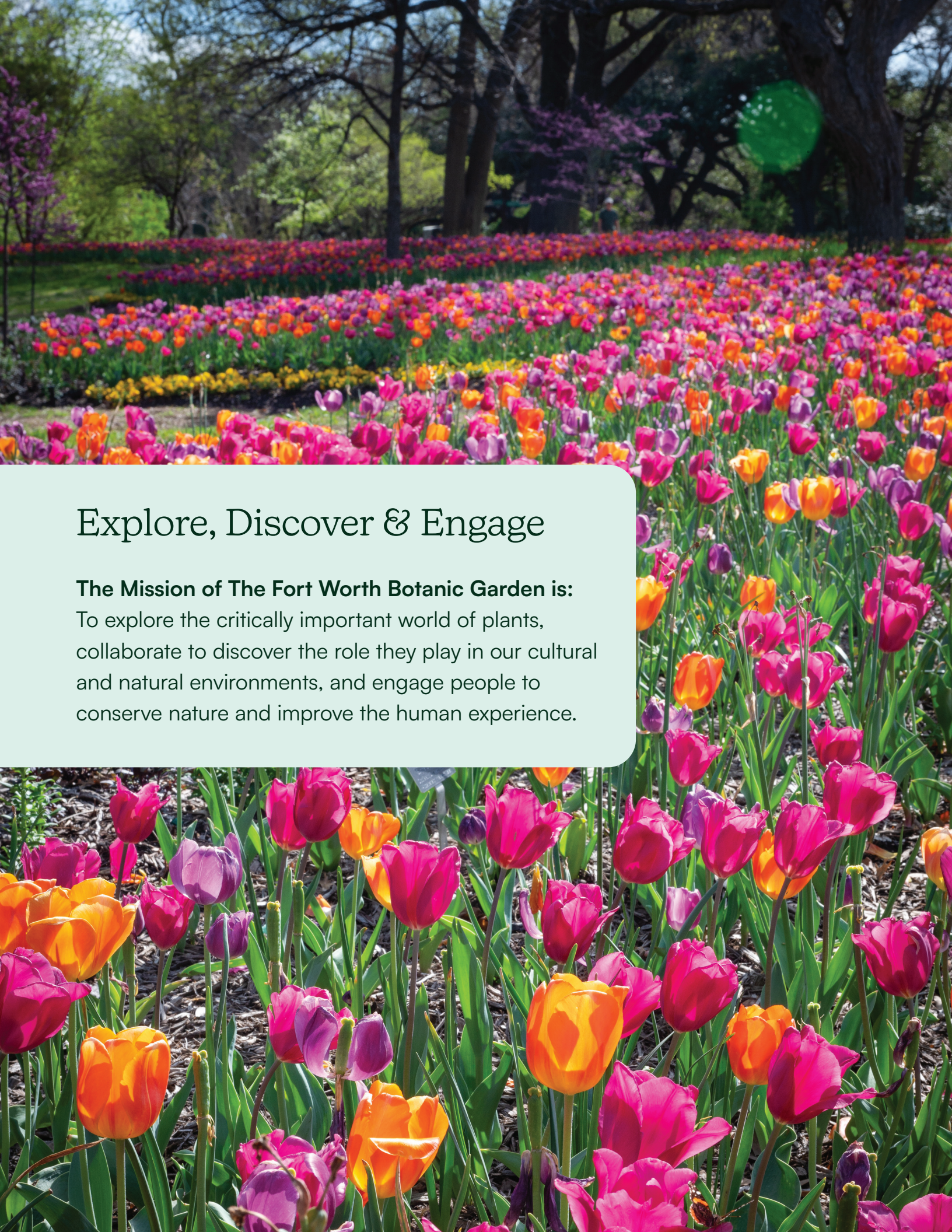




FORT WORTH
BOTANIC
GARDEN



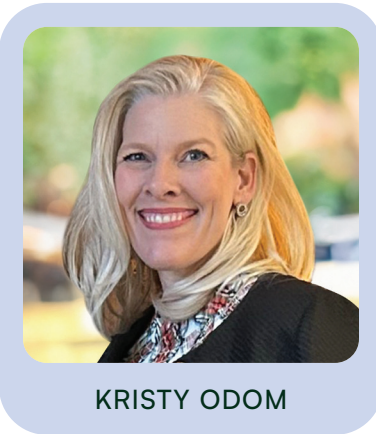
BIENNIAL REPORT
2023—2024



Explore, Discover & Engage

The Mission of The Fort Worth Botanic Garden is:
To explore the critically important world of plants, collaborate to discover the role they play in our cultural and natural environments, and engage people to conserve nature and improve the human experience.

OPENING MESSAGE



Gardens teach patience and promise: that with time, care, and hope, even the smallest seeds can grow into something magnificent. Over the past two years, we have carried that lesson into everything we do, nurturing a vision that stretches beyond the horizon.

During 2023 and 2024, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden saw extraordinary seasons of growth. The seeds planted in years past, through planning, perseverance, and partnerships, have begun to bloom in beautiful and tangible ways.

At the Garden, our pathways are livelier than ever, as attendance continues to climb, bringing new faces and new energy. Educational programs have flourished, opening doors for more children, families, and learners of all ages to wonder, explore, and fall in love with the natural world. BRIT research teams completed major projects, many funded by the National Science Foundation, adding vital knowledge to the global understanding of plants and their essential role in sustaining life.

In November 2024, FWBG also broke new ground, literally, with the launch of the Baker Martin Family Garden, the first project to emerge from our 20-year Master Plan. The two-acre space will be a “garden of yes” that welcomes intergenerational enjoyment, encourages interactive exploration, and beckons unstructured play and discovery. It marks the beginning of a campaign that will continue to transform the Garden for decades to come.

With every step, every blossom, and every breakthrough, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden continues to move forward, rooted in hope, reaching for tomorrow, and inviting all to share in the beauty of what is yet to come.


Patrick Newman,
CEO and President


Kristy Odom,
Chairwoman of the Board

The First Steps of Our Master Plan

In November 2024, campaign donors, city leaders, project partners, and Garden leadership celebrated the groundbreaking of the Baker Martin Family Garden.

Louella Martin’s naming gift, along with a leadership gift from Campaign Chairs Laura and Greg Bird and the Bird Family Foundation, has been instrumental in advancing the campaign and inspiring others to contribute.

We’re thrilled to share that \$22 million of our \$25 million goal has been raised, including \$6 million from the City of Fort Worth. This milestone reflects the dedication of supporters like you who believe in our mission and the positive impact this project will have on our community.

In 2023, we also made key infrastructure upgrades, including reopening Old Garden Road, improving the South Vista’s drainage, and renovating part of the Trial Garden to further the Garden’s mission.



From left to right: donors and supporters Dana Porter, Brooke Lively, Laura Bird, Greg Bird, Louella Martin, Mayor Mattie Parker, William Brentlinger, Patrick Newman, and Richard Zavala celebrate the groundbreaking of the Baker Martin Family Garden. Some are joined by their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, adding to the joy and anticipation for the future of the Family Garden.



Guest Experience: Building a Community Inspired by Nature

Guest Services showcased exciting exhibits over two years, including World of Orchids and ZimSculpt in 2023, followed by Florigami, Butterflies in the Garden, Dinosaurs in the Garden, Seward Johnson, and Kokedama in 2024. Combined, these exhibits drew 875,949 visitors.

We also hosted popular annual events like ¡Celebremos!, spring and fall plant sales, Japanese Festivals, free admission days, and monthly Dog Days, bringing the community together to celebrate the Garden’s beauty and diversity.



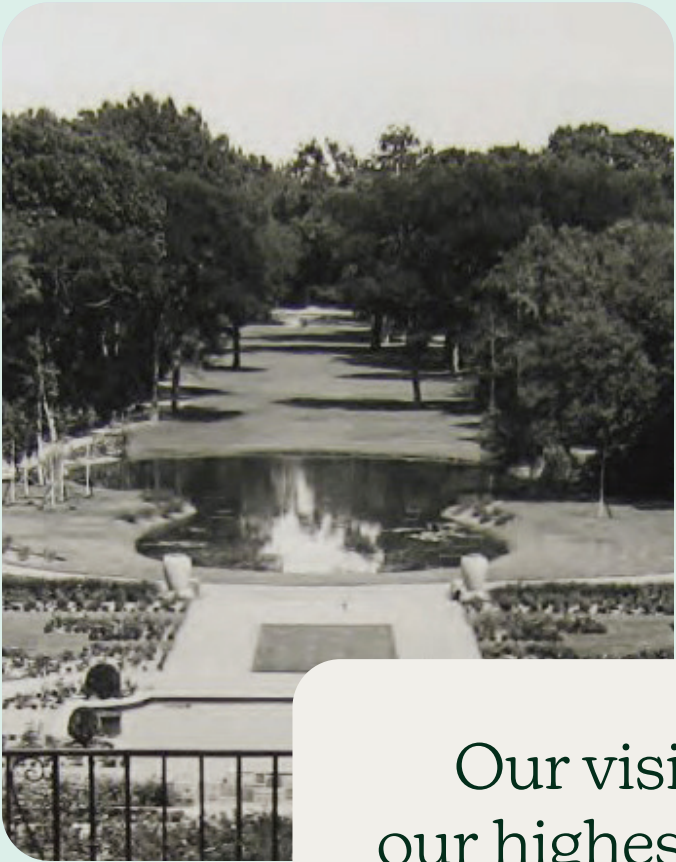
“Love the garden! You have done so much great work to enhance the physical space and bring in new events.”
– Garden Member



Horticulture: Nurturing Seeds and Watching Them Flourish

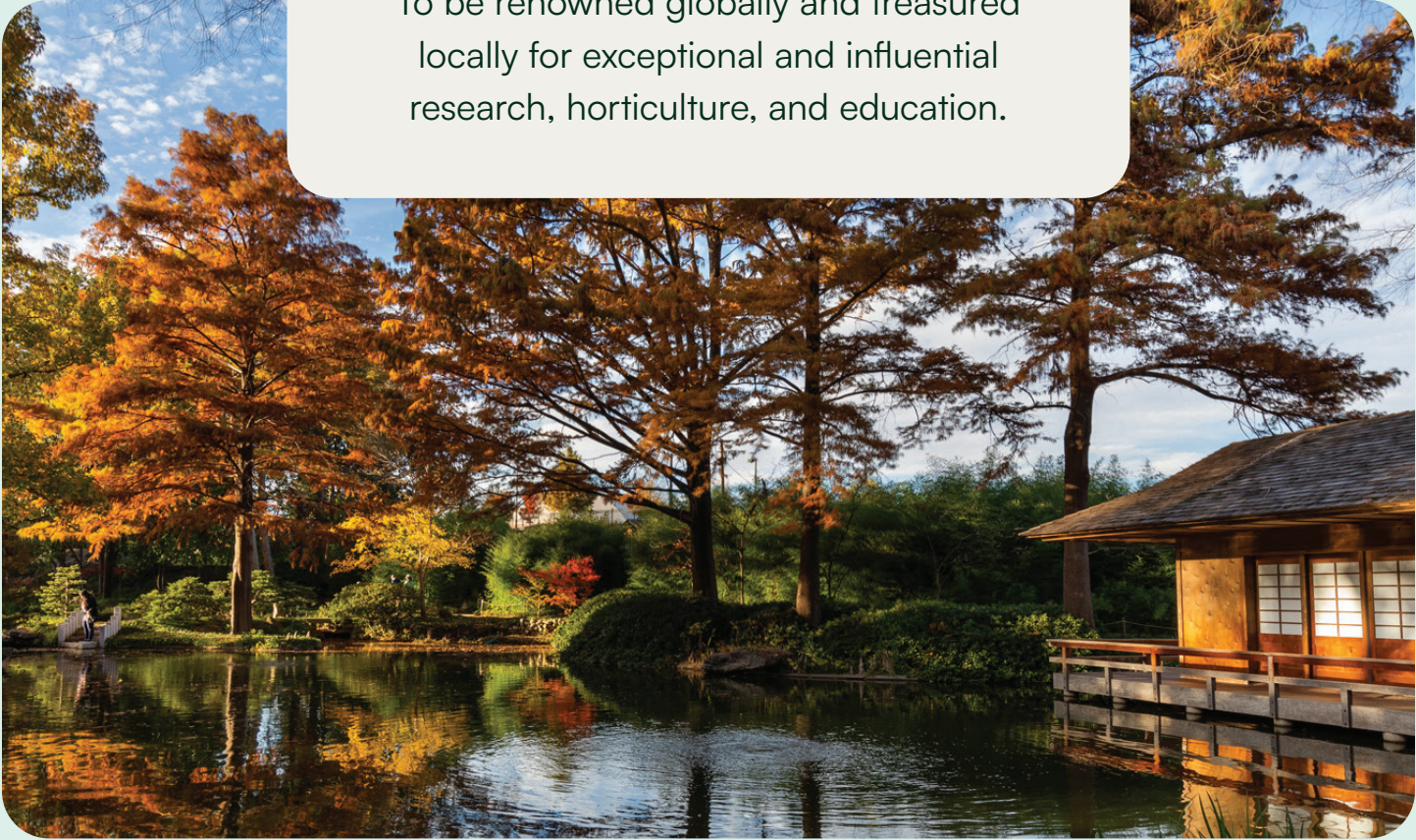
In 2024, FWBG also achieved major operational milestones, earning accreditation from Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) for our work in plant conservation. Our Begonia collection, the only accredited Begonia collection in the nation, moved to the upgraded Conservation Greenhouse, while a new fernery was added to the Exhibition Greenhouse. The Backyard Vegetable Garden was also renovated with grant funding, another highlight of the year.

The same year we proudly celebrated the 90th anniversary of Fort Worth Botanic Garden. On December 18, 1934, Rock Springs Park and its newly established Rose Garden were officially renamed by the Park Commissioners, marking the beginning of what is now the oldest botanic garden in Texas. Over the past 90 years, the Garden has blossomed into a breathtaking oasis in the heart of Fort Worth, featuring 23 unique gardens thoughtfully designed for visitors to explore. It has become a cherished sanctuary where communities can come together to experience the peace, joy, and well-being that only nature can provide.



Our vision reflects
our highest aspirations:

To be renowned globally and treasured
locally for exceptional and influential
research, horticulture, and education.





Science and Conservation: Rooted in Research

Funding for several projects ended on schedule during the 2023—2024 timeline for the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT). The bulk of the work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate the status of the rare small-headed pipewort (*Eriocaulon koernickianum*) was completed, although seed germination trials with material collected over the course of the project are still ongoing.

The BRIT herbarium has now imaged all the mounted vascular plant specimens in the herbarium, making over a million specimens available online. This achievement could not have occurred without the dedicated efforts of our staff and the kind help of volunteers, as well as generous support from various funding sources, including the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), Google Arts and Culture, and private philanthropy.

The NSF-funded Philippines Biodiversity project was completed at the end of 2024. The project included six expeditions over the course of several years, each of one month duration. Through this project, researchers from BRIT and other organizations collected over 100,000 specimens, most of which have been deposited in our collection and led to many new species discoveries. Dozens of students were trained, including two Ph.D. students currently at Texas Christian University and The University of Texas at Arlington, co-mentored by our research botanists.

From 2023 to 2024, BRIT Library accessioned 255 artworks into the Arader Natural History Art Collection totaling a fair market value of \$2.57 million. The library mounted six art exhibitions, including “Illuminations: Past, Present and Future of Fern Research,” a collaborative exhibit between BRIT Research staff and artist Dornith Doherty. The exhibit highlighted the department’s archival materials, biological specimens, and collecting efforts—specifically as part of the Ferns of Colombia project.

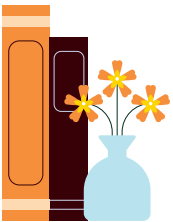


Grant Awards: Delivering Support Where It Matters Most

The Research team continues to secure outside funds to support its research. In 2023 and 2024 BRIT was awarded just over \$1 million in new grants and funding from existing projects was increased. This included \$830,000 to understand the complex evolution of the Ironweeds Tribe of the sunflower family with expeditions to South and Central Africa, \$101,000 to digitize our existing Asian collections, and \$53,000 to conduct work with rare Texas species and increase public conservation efforts.

Two of our existing projects were granted funding extensions. Google Arts and Culture provided an additional \$50,000 to complete imaging of the accessioned vascular plants in the BRIT Herbarium collection. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provided an additional \$28,000 to continue work on the quillworts (*Isoetes*) of Texas.

Work on other NSF-funded projects continued, including the Carlquist archives, TORCH digitization, taxonomy of the true blueberries, and Ferns of Colombia biodiversity project.



Publications: Exploring the World of Botany

In the past two years, BRIT Press has published 10 new titles and four issues of the periodical *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas* (JBRIT), with 76 articles between them. These titles included botanical reference books such as “The Desert Edge: Flora of Guaymas-Yaqui Region of Sonora, Mexico, and Plant Guide: Natural History, Channel Islands, California,” as well as narrative books such as *Putting Down Roots: Foundations of Botany at Carolina*. The BRIT Press brought in \$445,000 in revenue from book and journal sales.

BRIT Researchers published 49 peer-reviewed articles across a wide array of scientific journals such as *American Fern Journal*, *Brittonia*, *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*, *Evolution and Ecology*, *JBRIT*, *The Lichenologist*, and *Phytotaxa*. Their research also featured in popular venues such as CNN, NPR, and Texas Highways.



Discovering New Species: Unveiling the Wonders of Our Natural World

In 2023 and 2024, the BRIT Research team described 19 new species of plants and lichens, as well as one new subgenus and one new tribe. These discoveries resulted from the global reach of our scientific research, including through expeditions to the Philippines, Colombia, and South Africa.

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to inspire and engage our community through education, exploration, and connection with nature. The years 2023 and 2024 were transformative, filled with growth, innovation, and meaningful impact. Here’s how we made a difference:

Children and Families: Growing Together

In 2023, our Children and Families programs thrived with 11 camps and 39 classes, generating \$38,060 in revenue. To meet rising demand, we doubled our Homeschool Program offerings in the fall, helping more families connect with nature.

In May of the same year, 4-year-olds from eight Fort Worth Independent School District campuses joined our pilot outreach and field trip program, sponsored by the “PNC Bank” Growing Up Great grant. This initiative reached 476 young students, offering hands-on garden experiences and fostering a love of nature.

With support from the Meta Community Action Grant, the Garden also hosted environmental STEM camps in July 2023 and 2024 for low-income families. These camps introduced kids to STEM concepts through fun, nature-based activities.

By 2024, our programs expanded to 15 camps and 43 classes, earning \$51,769 in revenue.



Adult Education:
Connecting Minds and Growing Roots

Adult Education thrived in 2023, blending art, science, and community. A major highlight was the “Illuminations: Past, Present, and Future of Fern Research” exhibition, which celebrated plant diversity and drew 160 attendees.

The Garden offered 91 classes during the year to 1,385 participants, with 669 classes discounted for members and staff, reflecting our commitment to accessibility. Notably, 147 individuals took multiple classes, showing the value of our programs. In 2024, Adult Education grew further, with 93 classes and \$40,289 in revenue.

Field Trips:
Education in the Garden

Field trips in 2023 set the stage for innovative learning. Through our 4th Grade Initiative, we provided professional development for 29 Fort Worth and Crowley ISD teachers, aligning with new TEKS standards and previewing immersive field trips planned for 2024.

A highlight was **Making Connections in the Japanese Garden**, where students explored Japanese culture through activities like a tea ceremony, dry garden design, and making carp-shaped windsocks (koinobori).

All 5,174 Fort Worth ISD 4th-grade students explored FWBG for their grade-level field trip in 2024. This was accomplished through 42 field trips that engaged 80 schools, 74 of which were Title I funded.

In spring 2024, the **Butterflies in the Garden** program reached 33 schools and engaged 1,258 students. Additional STEM-focused field trip series brought another 700 students to the Garden for hands-on learning experiences. Altogether, these programs generated \$45,000 in revenue.



Volunteers:
Investing in the Future

FWBG’s Volunteer Team introduced Discovery Carts, allowing Junior Volunteers to engage guests through interactive activities throughout the Garden.

By the end of 2024, the Volunteer Team grew to 967 members and managed docent-led tours for Art in the Garden, the Begonia Greenhouse, BRIT, and the Japanese Garden.

The successes of 2023 and 2024 highlight our dedication to education and community engagement. From young children discovering the wonders of nature to adults diving into lifelong learning, our programs are making a lasting impact. Together, we’re not just growing plants—we’re growing minds, connections, and love for the natural world.

By the Numbers Combined:
2023 and 2024



Guests who visited
the garden

875,949



2,497

Participants in
education classes
and workshop

5,174

Children explored
the garden through
school field trips

26

Educational
camps

Plant
specimens
digitally
processed

65,389




17,681

Member Households

99

New books
published by
BRIT press



320,559

Bulbs planted

Service hours by volunteers

73,330 hours

3,055 days

9,166 working days

25 years of work



514

Weddings hosted
at the garden

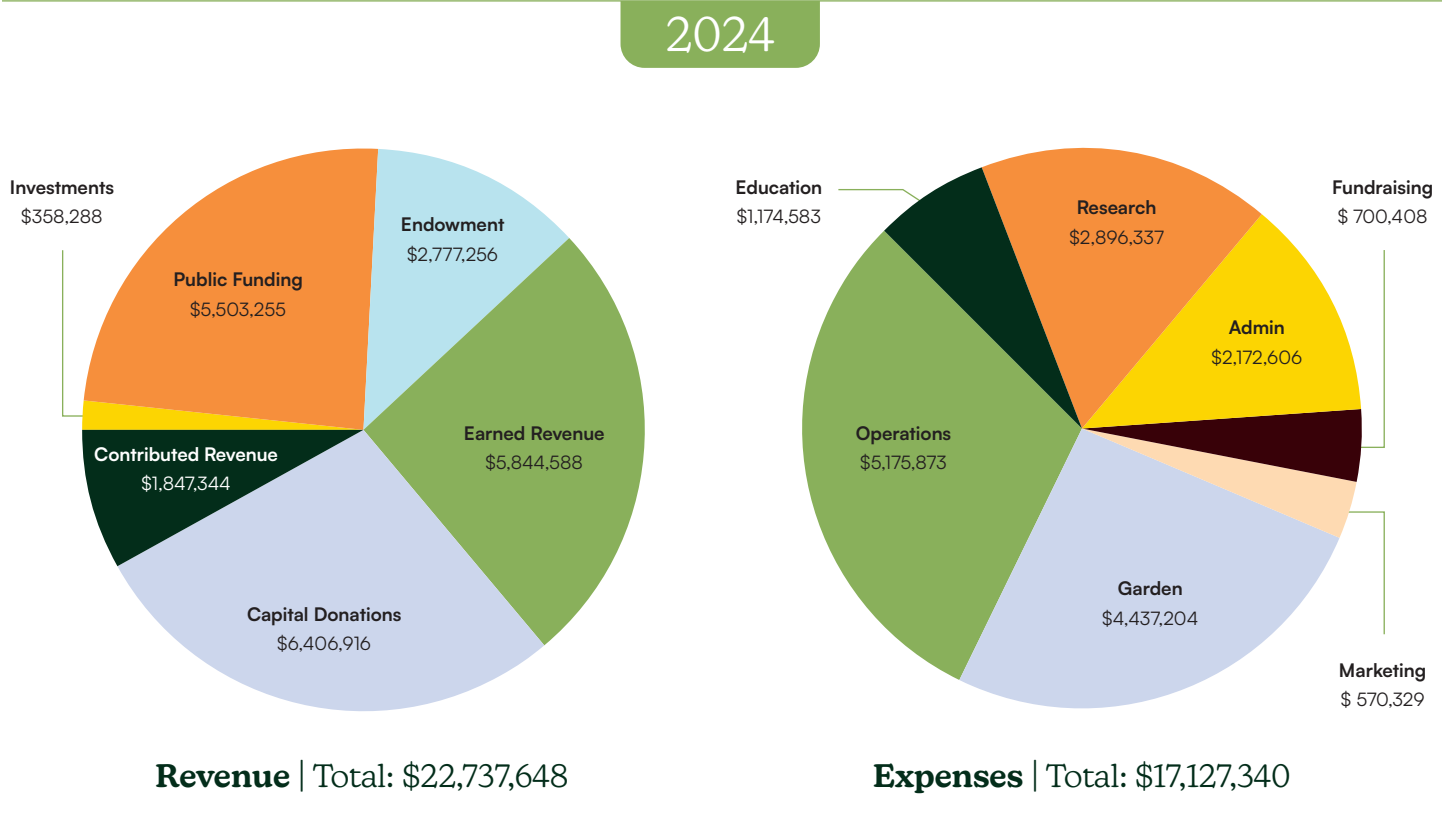
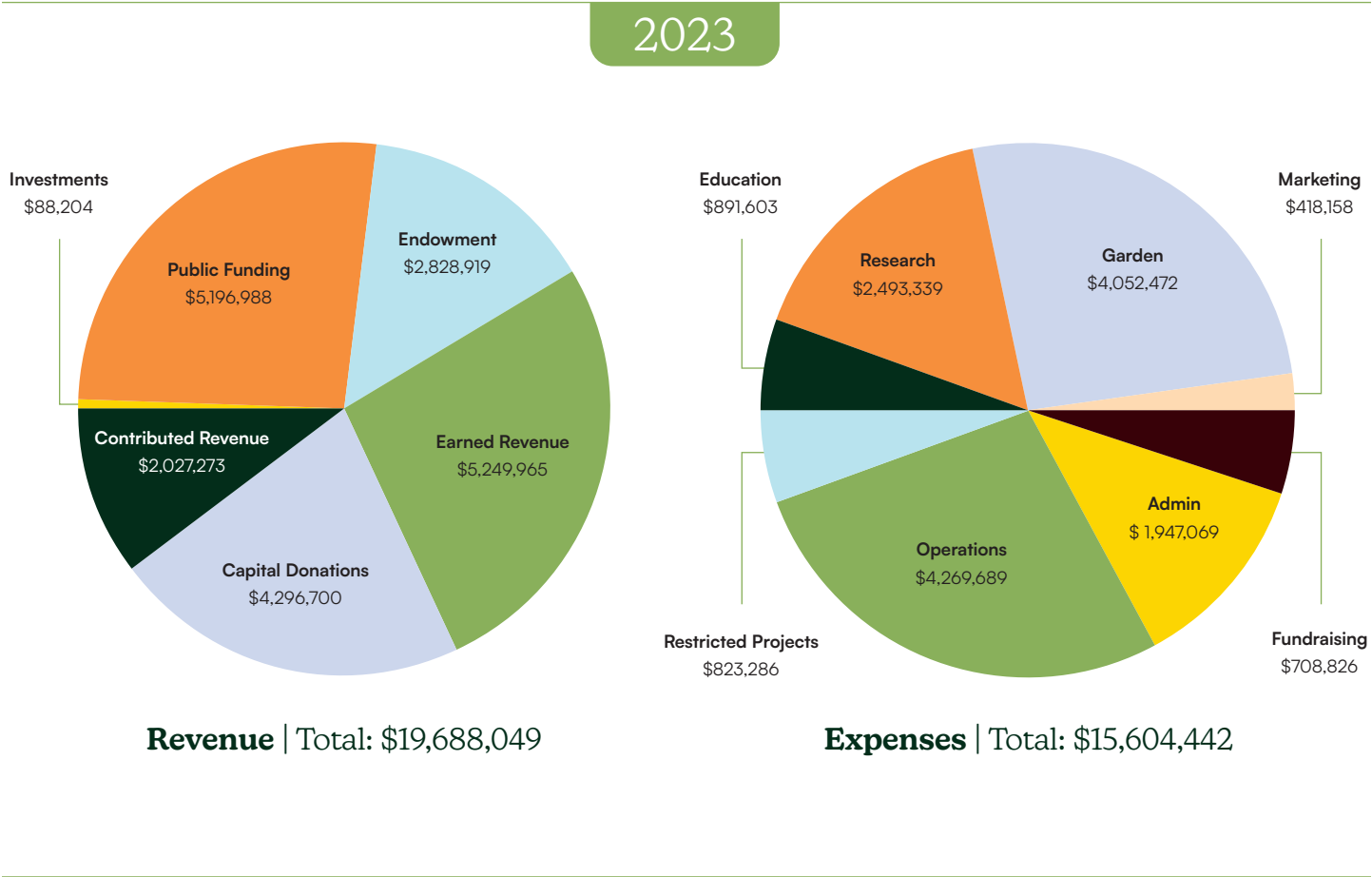
Service hours by
junior volunteers

1,147

Service hours by
231 corporate groups

4,629





Giving Circle

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The Fort Worth Botanic Garden and Botanical Research Institute of Texas gratefully acknowledge members of the Giving Circle for their generous support of the Garden's growth in 2023 and 2024.

2023 Donors

We would like to express a heartfelt thank you to all our donors for their generous support.



“The Garden is among the city’s most important public-private partnerships, helping to attract visitors to our city and enhance quality of life for residents.”
– Mayor Mattie Parker

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We thank our corporate, foundation, and individual partners who have supported our exhibits, events, and admissions programs in 2023 and 2024. Beloved experiences such as Butterflies in the Garden and Lightscape are made possible by their generosity, as well as providing opportunities for anyone in our community to visit the Garden and enjoy the value of time in nature through free admission days and accessible admissions avenues.

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Los Vaqueros
Natural Grocers
PetBar Waterside
PetSuites of America
Robert J. Fitzgerald Law Office
Salad and Go
Southwest Wholesale Nursery
Statewide Remodeling
Sweetgreen
Trinity Terrace
Weston Gardens

2023 BRIT Operating Board of Directors

- Mr. Edward Bass, Board Vice Chairperson
- Mr. William Brentlinger, Board Chairperson
- Dr. R. Nowell Donovan, Committee Chair: Research
- Mr. Craig Hamilton, Board Treasurer
- Dr. Marie Holliday, Committee Chair: Marketing
- Mr. Mike Malone, Committee Chair: Nominating & Governance
- Ms. Lauren-Ashton Moncrief, Board Secretary
- Ms. Debbie Morrison, Committee Chair: Education
- Ms. Kristin Odom, Committee Chair: Advancement
- Ms. Debbie Reynolds, Committee Chair: Horticulture
- Mr. H. Terry Siegel, Committee Chair: Facilities & Operations
- Mr. Nick Wanzor, Committee Chair: Finance & Audit
- Mr. Bradford Barnes, Director
- Mr. Greg Bird, Director
- Mr. Steve Brauer, Director
- Ms. Dana Burghdoff, Advisory Director
- Mr. William Burton, Director
- Mr. Kacey Cornelius, Director
- Ms. Elizabeth Cornelsen, Director
- Mr. G. Clark Kemble, Director
- Mr. John Maloney, Director
- Ms. Estela Martinez-Stuart, Director
- Capt. Robert O’Kennon, Director
- Mr. Patrick Reddell, Director
- Mr. Eric Reed, Director
- Ms. Elizabeth Waddill, Director
- Mr. William Welder, Director

2023 BRIT Foundation Board of Directors

- Mr. Edward Bass, Director
- Mr. James Day, Board Secretary
- Mr. Charles Denison, Board President
- Ms. Rebecca Grimmer, Director
- Mr. Alfred Lockwood, Director
- Mr. Robert Bond Malone, Director

Appointees:
Ms. Keri Barfield, Treasurer
Ms. Hannah Rodriguez, Assistant Secretary

2023 BRIT Landowner Board of Directors

- Ms. Forrest Bowen, Board Secretary
- Mr. Randle Harwood, Board President
- Mr. Richard Zavala, Advisory Director

Appointees:
Ms. Keri Barfield, Treasurer
Ms. Hannah Rodriguez, Assistant Secretary



2024 BRIT Operating Board of Directors

- Mr. Edward Bass, Board Vice Chairperson
- Mr. Greg Bird, Imm. Past Chair
- Mr. William Brentlinger, Board Chairperson
- Mr. Gregory Fitzgerald, Committee Chair: Education
- Mr. Craig Hamilton, Board Treasurer
- Mr. Mike Malone, Committee Chair: Nominating & Governance
- Ms. Estela Martinez-Stuart, Committee Chair: Marketing
- Ms. Lauren-Ashton Moncrief, Board Secretary
- Ms. Kristin Odom, Chair Elect, Committee Chair: Advancement
- Ms. Debbie Reynolds, Committee Chair: Horticulture
- Mr. H. Terry Siegel, Committee Chair: Facilities & Operations
- Mr. Nick Wanzor, Committee Chair: Finance & Audit
- Mr. Bradford Barnes, Director
- Mr. Steve Brauer, Director
- Mr. Kacey Cornelius, Director
- Ms. Elizabeth Cornelsen, Director
- Mr. Jonathan Cranz, Director
- Dr. R. Nowell Donovan, Director Emeritus
- Mr. Bourke Harvey, Director
- Mr. G. Clark Kemble, Director
- Ms. Gail Landreth, Director
- Ms. Jesica McEachern, Advisory Director
- Capt. Robert O’Kennon, Director Emeritus
- Mr. Patrick Reddell, Director
- Mr. Eric Reed, Director
- Ms. Elizabeth Waddill, Director
- Mr. William Welder, Director

2024 BRIT Foundation Board of Directors

- Mr. Edward Bass, Director
- Mr. James Day, Board Secretary
- Mr. Charles Denison, Board President
- Ms. Rebecca Grimmer, Director
- Mr. Robert Bond Malone, Director

Appointees:
Ms. Keri Barfield, Treasurer
Ms. Hannah Rodriguez, Assistant Secretary

2024 BRIT Landowner Board of Directors

- Ms. Colleen Blair, Board President
- Mr. Craig Elam, Board Secretary
- Ms. Mary Keller, Vice President
- Mr. Richard Zavala, Advisory Director

Appointees:
Ms. Keri Barfield, Treasurer
Ms. Hannah Rodriguez, Assistant Secretary



Executive Team

Patrick Newman

CEO and President

Bob Byers

Executive Vice President of Special Projects

Stephanie Sellers

Senior Director of Guest Experience

Peter Fritsch, Ph.D.

Vice President of Research and Conservation

Amy Hollenshead, MS

Vice President of Learning and Engagement

Sara Richardson, CFRE

Vice President of Advancement

Ashton Faulds

Vice President of Marketing and Communications

Keri Barfield

Chief Financial Officer

Keith Brock

Senior Director of Horticulture

Connie Johnson, SHRM CP

Senior Director of People and Culture

Greg Gunn

Director of Facilities

