



Seasons of growth

A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF LAURITZEN GARDENS

FALL/WINTER 2012

SPECIAL EDITION
CHANGES ARE COMING!

a letter from the Director



Spencer Crews

In this issue of *Seasons of Growth* I am excited to share some news about a transformation that is just beginning to take place at the garden. After several years of careful planning and coordination with the City of Omaha, October 1 will mark the beginning of construction for a major sewer separation project within the garden. The following pages will outline the project and how the garden will benefit from it. This is a large project and it will take a significant amount of

time to complete. In fact, it is estimated to require a full year. Once completed, the garden will have many new opportunities and spaces for future development that are not currently available to us. We are pleased to participate in this important citywide project to improve the water quality and environment of our community.

On October 6 and 7 we will celebrate the completion of another significant project for the garden; the restoration of the historic Storz gazebo. Since early May of this year, garden guests have been intrigued by what is going in the temporary structure near the children's garden. Now totally restored, this 114-year-old garden gazebo, purportedly the only remaining structure from the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898, has been moved to its permanent location in the Hitchcock-Kountze Victorian Garden. During the annual member preview party for the fall chrysanthemum show we will cut the ribbon on this important piece of Omaha history. Lauritzen Gardens is proud to be the new caretaker of this historic artifact. The gazebo makes a great addition to the other architectural treasures that are found in the Victorian garden.

Coming in February is an exhibit that is sure to be a family favorite. *Nature Connects*, an exhibit of 27 sculptures inspired by nature and constructed completely with LEGO® bricks, will be on display through May. This creative traveling show was conceived by the staff of Reiman Gardens in Ames, Iowa and was constructed by the first certified LEGO® artist Sean Kenney in his New York studio. Mark your calendar for this one of a kind event here at the garden. It will be a must-see show for the young and young at heart.

These three projects I have mentioned are just a few of the ones planned for the coming year. We are very excited about what is just beginning to happen and we invite you to join us in celebrating the continuing growth of Omaha's garden.

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Photos on pages 3, 10, 11 and 15 courtesy of Larry Fasnacht

SEASONAL OFFERINGS COMING TO A CLOSE

As winter approaches and our busy season winds down, many of our activities become dormant until spring. Please make note of the changes below.

Model Railroad Garden

Closes for the season September 30

Tram

Ends seasonal operation September 30

Adult Admission Fee

\$7 admission ends on October 31 and \$6 admission begins November 1

HOURS:

Daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

ADMISSION:

November through March: Adults: \$6. April through October: Adults: \$7 Children ages six to 12: \$3. No fee for members and children under six years of age.



CHANGE, GROWTH ON THE HORIZON

EVEN THE LONGEST JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A FIRST STEP AND SO, THIS FALL, BIG CHANGES ARE COMING TO LAURITZEN GARDENS. THE CITY OF OMAHA PLANS TO UNDERTAKE EXTENSIVE WORK ON GARDEN GROUNDS AS PART OF ITS CLEAN SOLUTIONS FOR OMAHA! PROGRAM, A LOCAL INITIATIVE DRIVEN BY A FEDERAL MANDATE TO IMPROVE THE WATER QUALITY OF THE MISSOURI RIVER AND PAPILLION CREEK BY REDUCING OVERFLOWS FROM THE CITY'S COMBINED SEWER SYSTEM.

The following pages detail the activity that will be happening at the garden in the next two years, detailing the Clean Solutions for Omaha! Program and the unique garden experiences available to members and guests during this time.

WHAT IS A COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW?

Combined sewer overflows, are remnants of the country's early infrastructure. In the past, communities built sewer systems to collect both stormwater runoff and sanitary sewage in the same pipe. During dry weather, these "combined sewer systems" transport wastewater directly to the sewage treatment plant. In periods of rainfall or snowmelt, however, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant. For

this reason, combined sewer systems are designed to overflow occasionally and discharge excess wastewater directly to nearby streams, rivers, lakes, or estuaries. This is a major water pollution concern for cities with combined sewer systems.

Combined sewer overflows contain untreated raw sewage, toxic materials, debris, and pollutants that include human bacteria and viruses, chemicals, oils, animal wastes and other contaminants that all have the potential to cause health concerns and illness. A CSO allows millions of gallons of untreated sewage and stormwater to enter the waterways in a typical year. Concerns associated with these discharges include:

- The possibility of human contact with raw sewage that can carry disease-causing organisms
- Impacts on aquatic life, such as fish
- Impacts on stream and park recreation, as most area streams do not meet the state's water quality standards for recreational activities, such as swimming or wading
- Offensive odors and unsanitary debris along banks of rivers and streams

The extent of the health concerns from a CSO discharge depend on the amount of water dilution from the size of the receiving stream, the amount of precipitation that causes the overflow, and if the overflow occurs during peak sewage periods such as the morning or evening.





CSO! PROJECT OVERVIEW

- The federal government has identified at least 772 communities nationwide, including Omaha, that must reduce their combined sewer system overflows in order to improve water quality. Omaha is committed to implementing its Clean Solutions for Omaha! Long Term Control Plan by October 2024.
- The Martha Street Sewer Separation Project, which includes work to be done at Lauritzen Gardens, is just one of 87 projects/solutions outlined in the CSO! Long Term Control Plan.
- The CSO! Project is funded by sewer fee rate increases. Costs for the project are estimated to be \$1.6 billion dollars.
- Activity at the garden will begin in October 2012 and will continue until the spring of 2014.
- The old combined sewer system will be abandoned and new, separate systems will be installed.
- Massive regrading will occur in the garden, with more than 100,000 cubic yards of new soil slated to be added to the garden. The new soil will reshape the landscape and establish new, more effective drainage systems to direct water away from the balefill (see page 5).
- The garden welcomes the enhanced protection that this necessary work will provide for the community waterways and ecosystems and now looks forward to the community's enjoyment of existing garden areas and the new garden features to come.
- The garden remains committed to provide unique, fulfilling garden experiences throughout this time of change.
- For more information on the Clean Solutions for Omaha! Program, visit www.omahacso.com.

WHAT ABOUT OMAHA?

Like many other cities in the United States, Omaha has a combined sewer system that was originally designed to carry both storm water and sewage into the Missouri River and Papillion Creek.

The combined sewers are generally located between the Missouri River and 72nd Street, from Harrison Street on the south to the I-680 area on the north, an area of approximately 51 square miles. Omaha's combined sewer collection system dates back to the 1800s and was designed to move wastewater and storm water out of the increasingly urbanized areas and allow the Missouri River to disperse and carry pollution away. By the 1960s, it became apparent that dilution was not the total solution to pollution, and a system of diversion structures, lift stations, and interceptor sewers was constructed to direct dry weather flow (sanitary sewage) to treatment plants before discharge of treated wastewater to the Missouri River. Since the 1960s, Omaha's newly constructed sewer systems include separate pipes for wastewater and stormwater, and many projects have been initiated to separate parts of the existing combined sewers to prevent backups of sewage into basements. However, most of the older combined sewer system is still in use. When it rains a tenth of an inch or more (approximately 50 times a year), the combined system overflows, sending untreated sewage into the waterways, compromising water quality and aquatic life. Additionally, these heavy rains can cause street flooding, as well as sewer backups and odors in homes and businesses. The federal government has mandated that Omaha control the release of this untreated sewage flowing into those waterways by 2024.

The CSO! (Clean Solutions for Omaha) Program is designed to improve the water quality in our local rivers and streams. Key components of the plan include a combination of separating combined sewers, constructing new high-rate storm water treatment facilities and constructing a 5.4 mile tunnel along the Missouri River, and holding tanks to carry storm water to one of the treatment plants. It also includes a new 1.5 mile storm sewer pipeline that will carry stormwater from northeast Omaha sewers to the Missouri River. The goal of the long term control plan is to reduce the overflows from combined sewer outfalls to improve water quality in the Missouri River and Papillion Creek. Today, approximately 52 times each year, raw sewage mixed with stormwater flows into the Missouri River and the Papillion Creek. Through the CSO! Program, that number will be reduced to four times per year.

Though there are 82 projects in the CSO! Long Term Control Plan, one project, the Martha Street Sewer Separation Phase I, will significantly impact the garden in the next 18 months.

WHEN DOES THE BIG DIG BEGIN?

The purpose of the Martha Street Sewer Separation Project is to separate combined sewer flow in a portion of the South Interceptor Basin to reduce overall flow to the downstream combined sewer system and to reduce overflows near 1st and Martha Streets. Approximately 240 acres of the South Interceptor Basin bounded by Hickory Street on the north, the Missouri River Levee on the east, Bancroft Street on the south, and South 9th Street on the west will be separated as part of the project, with all sanitary flow rerouted around the balefill. The project has been divided into two distinct areas: the residential area and Lauritzen Gardens. Beginning in October 2012, the City of Omaha plans to undertake extensive sewer separation work on the grounds of Lauritzen Gardens as part of the Martha Street Sewer Separation Phase I project. This project is necessary for the community and is critical for the environment, so the garden embraces the role it must play in making way for the City's work and the changes it will require at the garden.

WORKING TOGETHER TO MINIMIZE IMPACT

Garden staff have worked tirelessly with representatives from HDR, Inc. and the City of Omaha during the study and design phase in order to minimize the impact that the project will have on the garden, but some areas will be disrupted. Extra time has been dedicated to ensure that the gardens are protected and that vegetation is left intact as much as possible. Respect was given to the growing season and the programs and events at the garden, scheduling work to have the least effect on visitation hours. Respect was also given to the challenges that the balefill has presented over the years, with major regrading scheduled to resculpt the landscape in order to address and resolve drainage issues. Staff will be able to monitor the schedule and progress closely to ensure that contractors remain on time with their delivery.

Trenchless construction was selected for installation for the majority of the sanitary and storm sewers for this project to minimize the impact of the project on garden exhibits. Trenchless construction allows for installation of the sewers without disturbing the surface features. The following are the four types of trenchless construction that will be used on this project: horizontal directional drilling, pipe jacked tunnels, microtunneling and pilot tube microtunneling (see page 6). Because parts of the site are above an old municipal landfill, a specialized pipe bridge will be constructed in order to get storm water and sanitary systems across these parts of the garden. The new sanitary system will lay over the bridge and a cast-in-place reinforced concrete box will carry the storm water. The top will be covered with



BENEATH THE SURFACE

Did you know that a portion of the land that is now Lauritzen Gardens was formerly a solid waste balefill operation?

Baling is a volume reduction technique where municipal household waste is baled into large blocks, often weighing a ton or more. In Omaha, a solid waste balefill operation was initiated in early 1976. Because of the unavailability of conveniently located landfills, Omaha initiated the baling concept to reclaim a washed-out gully area for use as a park near a residential neighborhood at 2nd and Martha Streets.

The operation included a baler station located about three miles from the fill site, where municipal household waste was compacted into large blocks, or bales. The original concept included hauling bales by rail to the fill site, hereby avoiding truck traffic in the adjoining residential neighborhood. About 50 percent of Omaha's residential solid waste was handled by the system (about 83,000 tons in 1978).

The system operated as originally intended until early 1981 when the City of Omaha decided to discontinue use of and close the site in accordance with plans approved by the the State of Nebraska Department of Environmental Control.

Prior to the construction of the first trails and gardens at Lauritzen Gardens, both soils and water needed to undergo extensive testing for contaminants. After testing, it was deemed that the garden was an excellent extension and use of the area, as park space was one of the intended uses for the property after the balefill was completed. In addition, potential soil settling issues had to be accommodated in the master planning process. Though the land has presented some development challenges over the years, the garden is great reuse of land with restrictions that the balefill imposes. ■

Above: The solid waste balefill operation, circa 1980.
Photo courtesy of the Charles Geisler family.

TRENCHLESS CONSTRUCTION METHODS TO BE USED AT LAURITZEN GARDENS

■ Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)

In horizontal directional drilling, a pilot hole is drilled the full length of the pipe run. A drill bit is attached to a steel shaft and after it enters the receiving pit, the bit is removed and a reamer is attached to the shaft. The plastic sewer pipe is assembled above ground at the receiving pit and the joints are fusion welded. The pipe is attached to the reamer and the reamer and pipe are pulled back through the hole. The reamer and shaft are then disconnected from the completed pipe. This method will be used at the garden to install smaller sanitary sewer pipes.

■ Pipe Jacked Tunnels

Pipe jacked tunnels are typically used for the installation of steel casings under railroads or highways or with large diameter reinforced concrete pipe. A jacking head is installed at the face of the excavation on a set of rails with the pipe or encasement set behind the jacking head. Hydraulic rams force the jacking head forward. Dirt is removed from the inside of the jacking head and carried back through the pipe to the bore pit. The jacking head is removed from the receiving pit after the pipe or encasement has been installed. Pipe jacking is typically used for larger diameter pipe and encasements and is limited in length.

■ Microtunneling

Microtunneling is similar to pipe jacking except that the jacking head is replaced by remotely controlled, steerable bore machine. This control means that contractors can make corrections to the pipe alignment during installation. In addition, the openings on the face of the bore machine can be adjusted for the various types of soil encountered. For example, if a pocket of sand or saturated material is encountered during the operation, the openings can be closed to control the amount of material entering the bore machine. Microtunneling will be used at the garden for the installation of the storm sewers.

■ Pilot Tube Microtunneling

Pilot tube microtunneling is a microtunneling method for small diameter pipe that does not allow for a person to enter the pipe. The drilling head is remotely controlled and steerable and is smaller than the pipe being pushed behind it. The smaller drill head allows for the accurate placement of the pipe on line and grade. A reamer behind the drilling head creates an opening big enough for the pipe and the pipe is pushed into position as a continuous operation. The drilling head is then recovered from the receiving pit. Pilot tube microtunneling allows for installation of the smaller diameter storm and sanitary sewers at relatively flat grades.

18 inches of soil to allow for vegetation on top of the bridge.

With highly erodible loess soil present, the original design logic of the balefill site was to collect all surface water onsite in a series of basins to prevent water from flowing over and taking the soil with it. Water was collected, contained and channeled from the basin into the sewer system. After 31 years of use, this drainage system is no longer adequately working and will be redesigned as the combined sewer is abandoned. Large amounts of soil will be brought in to change the grade of the land and, therefore, the flow of surface water. Essentially, the garden is going from basins to a series of contoured hills, with a new design that will allow for surface water to run downward to different locations. This regrading is what will result in the most visually noticeable changes for the garden.

Unfortunately, though inevitably, some trees will have to come down and some garden areas, like the Song of the Lark Meadow and the Spring Flowering Walk, will be permanently altered. The garden has taken every precaution to make sure that no rare, endangered, or threatened species are disturbed and has moved or will transplant as many specimens as possible to keep them as part of the collection at Lauritzen Gardens.

In order to complete work on time and maintain guest safety during the project, visitor access will be limited beginning October 1, 2012 (see page 9). Areas available for enjoyment and discovery include Kenefick Park, arrival garden, parking garden, woodland trail and festival garden. The visitor and education center will remain fully operational during this time and will still house educational programs, the fall chrysanthemum show, holiday poinsettia show and spring flower show, the gift shop, café, horticultural library and rental facilities.

Upon completion of the first phase of work, the garden will reopen in the spring of 2013 with access for guests along the main garden road to the rose garden. The children's garden, Sunpu Castle Gate, Founders' Garden, Song of the Lark Meadow and the spring flowering walk will remain closed until the second phase of separation work and regrading has been completed, which should be in the spring of 2014. While established gardens will be affected, Lauritzen Gardens welcomes the enhanced protection that this necessary work will provide the community waterways and ecosystems and we look forward to the community's enjoyment of the new garden features to come.

LONG-TERM GAINS FOR THE GARDEN

The garden's momentum will continue with new, promising things ahead. Though the disruption is temporary, there will be long-term gains from this project. Working closely and creatively with the City of Omaha



ABOVE: The new plan of the piping that will be installed beneath Lauritzen Gardens. Image courtesy of HDR, Inc.

and HDR, Inc. has afforded the garden the opportunity to reshape the landscape of Lauritzen Gardens to better serve members and guests in the future.

- New, scenic views will be opened up toward the undeveloped property near Village Green Apartments and the regrading of the land toward Village Green will allow the garden to take the first steps toward building an amphitheatre and establishing other plant collections in this currently unutilized space.

- Work in the Song of the Lark Meadow will provide the opportunity to resculpt the landscape and build creative landforms to address and resolve the compounding drainage issues in that garden area.

- The regrading of the land near the Sunpu Castle Gate has provided the opportunity to create a third pond around Mt. Fuji, as originally intended.

- Regrading between the Sunpu Castle Gate and the Founders' Garden gives the opportunity to establish unique microclimates for future conservation plantings.

- Stripping, stockpiling and reusing the topsoil with the seed bank from the Song of the Lark Meadow will help to reestablish this area and avoid a total loss of the prairie restoration process.

- Trees that must be removed as a result of the project will be mulched and the organic material will be reincorporated into the soil to improve its composition.

- A new, industrial quality deer gate will be installed at the east gate off of Cedar Street, which will help to protect the garden from wildlife.

Though this is ultimately not the path that we would have chosen, the garden will continue to build for the future, to protect

its current investment and product and to work toward achieving our vision for Lauritzen Gardens.

GARDEN FUNCTIONS WILL CONTINUE

Throughout this time of change, the garden remains dedicated to providing unique and fulfilling garden experiences. Despite the construction, there will still be vibrant events and activities offered at the garden and quality experiences to be had. These opportunities, as well as promising plans for the future, make continued membership support and regular garden visits more important than ever.

The garden's mission will continue to be carried out by displaying plants and practicing the art of horticulture to provide a beautiful and hospitable setting for the delight and inspiration of the public. Three floral displays will interchange in the floral display hall, starting on October 5, 2012



BANKING FOR A BRIGHT COMEBACK

It was the spring of 1999 when seed was first sown into the freshly tilled soil of what was to become the Song of the Lark Meadow. The seed mix included grasses and wildflowers native to the tallgrass prairie that historically covered much of the region.

It is the nature of some plant species to take advantage of open ground by establishing quickly and blooming before other plants begin to compete. The annual sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) of Midwest roadsides is a familiar example. Other species take a number of years to mature before they come into flower, investing first in a deep root system to carry the plant through times of drought.

Prairie blazing star (*Liatrix pycnostachya*) and white false indigo (*Baptisia alba* var. *macrophylla*) represent the second strategy. The presence of these stately wildflowers indicates a prairie planting that is making good progress. So it is understandable if there was a bit of a celebration when these two species flowered for the first time in the meadow, the blazing star in 2010 and white false indigo earlier this year.

The Song of the Lark Meadow will be severely disturbed by the sewer separation project, and restoration efforts will be required. We will be taking special steps to foster the recovery and recoup as much of the time and effort that went into the initial planting as possible.

Topsoil from the meadow will be harvested prior to construction, stockpiled, and then reapplied after construction. Not only will this soil provide an excellent medium for re-seeding the site, it will contain a "bank" of seed from the former residents of the meadow that will help repopulate the site with native prairie plants.

The sunflowers, no doubt, will be back quickly. The celebration will be even sweeter when the blazing star and white false indigo make their triumphant return. ■

and running through May 19, 2013. Unique, four-season displays will still be maintained for the public's viewing pleasure.

The garden takes pride in providing cultural experiences in a pleasant garden setting and hosts a wide-array of special events each year. Special events are designed to bring visitors to the garden for a variety of activities that involve the community in garden-centered events, that provide entertainment and encourage attendance. The popular festivals, brunches, concerts and other events that have delighted visitors for the past eleven years will still continue to grow and thrive and new activities will be added as the schedule allows.

The garden will continue to be committed to education, teaching children and adults about nature, as well as making available instruction in the skills required to grow plants and maintain beautiful gardens. A full schedule of adult and youth programs, field trips and more will be offered from the educational department, on a variety of topics reflective of the seasons and of the garden areas accessible to the public. Classes, workshops and curriculum will be developed and revised to evolve with the garden.

We are currently increasing our efforts in conservation in order to aggressively identify our region's most imperiled plants. We are doing so by establishing the Center for Plant Conservation of the Great Plains at Lauritzen Gardens. This distinction will make the garden an even greater source of community pride and will help to preserve our community's biological heritage.

Lauritzen Gardens is a community asset like no other, a living museum of four-season plant displays, maintained to the highest standards consistent with environmental stewardship, and meaningful educational and aesthetic experiences for all. This is an exciting and important time to support the gardens as change and growth are on the horizon. The garden is, and will continue to be, a valuable natural resource and a place of great beauty for our community and region.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PATIENCE AND CONTINUED
SUPPORT DURING THIS
TIME OF CHANGE.

PARTS OF THE GARDEN NOT AFFECTED

Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Memorial
Foundation Parking Garden
Kenefick Park
Arrival Garden
Visitor and Education Center,
including the Floral Display Hall
Woodland Trail
Festival Garden

AREAS CLOSED THIS FALL AND WINTER

Woodland Waterfall
Hitchcock-Kountze Victorian Garden
English Perennial Border
Tree Peony Garden
Garden in the Glen
Arboretum and Oberman Bird Sanctuary
Model Railroad Garden
Robert H. Storz Family Rose Garden
Garden of Memories

AREAS CLOSED FROM FALL 2012 TO SPRING 2014

Children's Garden
Japanese Garden and Sunpu Castle Gate
Herb Garden
Founders' Garden
David and Pamela Gross
Family Spring Flowering Walk
Song of the Lark Meadow





PLANT PROFILE: ASTERS

Trenton Erickson, *plant records curator*

As the gardening season winds down and fewer and fewer blooming plants can be found, asters or symphyotrichums (depending on your taxonomic authority of choice) begin to take center stage. Asters come in a wide variety of colors and sizes. You can find them in shades of white, pink, purple, and even blue. They are also relatively drought resistant and can handle exposed, full sun sites. Best of all, many asters, such as *Aster fendleri*, *A. laevis*, *A. novae-angliae*, and *A. oblongifolius* are native to Nebraska.

Aster cultivars that work particularly well in the Omaha area:

- *Aster dumosus* Wood's Series – These asters are compact, growing just 10-12" tall and come in pink, purple or blue. They are very hardy as well as mildew and rust resistant.
- *Aster fendleri* 'My Antonia' – This aster has pure white flowers with yellow centers. It grows to 12" tall and has the distinction of being a Nebraska Statewide Arboretum GreatPlants™ selection.
- *Aster laevis* 'Bluebird' – This is a large aster with cone-shaped clusters of single, violet-blue flowers with golden centers. This is a back of the border plant as it grows to 48" tall.
- *Aster novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome' – This aster is highly prized for its royal purple flowers with greenish-gold centers that are so vivid in the fall. It is a compact (just 18" tall), disease resistant cultivar of *A. novae-angliae*.
- *Aster oblongifolius* 'October Skies' – This aster has showy sky blue flowers that are in bloom from September to October. It grows 18" tall by 18" wide.

Some fun combinations to try with asters:

- Combine purple asters with rudbeckia or goldenrod in the garden for a great complementary color combination in the fall.
- Combine asters with roses in the garden. The asters will continue the show of color as the roses begin to fade in the fall.
- Combine asters with chrysanthemums and grasses in pots for beautiful fall containers.

Look for asters and different ways they can be utilized in the landscape throughout the arrival and festival gardens. ■



FESTIVAL FEATURES THE VIBRANT AND BEAUTIFUL JAPANESE CULTURE

Jennifer Evans, *director of visitor services*

Japanese Ambience has become an annual tradition since Omaha's Sister City, Shizuoka, Japan, presented the city of Omaha with a replica of their iconic Sunpu Castle Gate and installed it at Lauritzen as a gift to the residents of the city in 2005. This year, the sights, sounds and tastes of Japan will come alive once again on October 6 and 7 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the visitor and education center, giving guests and members the opportunity to experience a little bit of Japan during this multi-cultural weekend event.

Events during this two day festival will include Bonsai and Ikebana displays and demonstrations, and the unveiling to the public of the incredible indoor chrysanthemum show, featuring the garden's collection of *koinobori* in the floral display hall. The Omaha Sister Cities Association will provide activities on the festival garden lawn and patio, including: traditional Japanese games for children, dancing and martial arts demonstrations as well as calligraphy, origami and, back by popular demand, Japanese food sampling.

Ballet Nebraska, a partner in this event, will give sneak peek performances of excerpts from their new ballet, *Sadako*, based on a traditional Japanese story of a young girl who attempts to fold 1,000 paper cranes in order to obtain a wish.

Saturday will feature several sushi-rolling demonstrations by one of the talented sushi chefs at CRAVE restaurant, and Sunday will feature the heart pounding Taiko drums performing their thunderous sounds in the festival garden.

Lauritzen Gardens education staff will host an area both days with fun activities for children and adults, including clay jewelry making, mini pumpkin painting, Japanese lantern making, mini *koinobori* kite making and herb corsage making. Hap Abraham Catering will provide concessions for the festival with tasty food appealing to both Japanese and American palates. Traditional fall snacks will also be available for purchase in the café. ■



UNIQUE JAPANESE-INSPIRED DESIGN ELEMENTS ADD INTEREST TO THE FALL CHRYSANTHEMUM SHOW

Mia Jenkins, director of marketing

CHRYSANTHEMUMS WERE BEING GROWN IN JAPAN BY THE 8TH CENTURY B.C. THE JAPANESE WERE SO TAKEN BY THIS FLOWER THAT THEY ADOPTED A SINGLE-FLOWERED CHRYSANTHEMUM AS THE CREST AND OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE EMPEROR AND DECLARED IT TO BE THE NATIONAL FLOWER.

Each year, Lauritzen Gardens celebrates the beauty, history and importance of the chrysanthemum and its relationship with its Sister City, Shizuoka, Japan, during its fall chrysanthemum show. In bold shades of red, yellow, white, pink, purple and bronze, the mums accompany lanterns, *koinobori*, and other design features to create a Japanese-inspired show with unique interest.

Lanterns became a part of Japanese architectural ornamentation about 1,400 years ago. The first Japanese lanterns were found in front of Buddhist temples and pagodas and the flame inside the lantern was considered sacred. Today these beautiful works of art primarily serve an ornamental role. The Japanese lanterns displayed in the fall chrysanthemum show are part of a collection of 24 stone lanterns that

were formerly displayed in a garden in Shizuoka, Japan. The lanterns were a gift to the people of Omaha from Mr. Yoichiro Suzuki and Mr. Tsutomu Asada.

A gift to the people of Omaha from our Sister City, dozens of colorful *koinobori* hang overhead in the floral display hall. These fanciful streamers represent koi, a type of carp. Traditionally flown on Children's Day in Japan, the colors of the *koinobori* symbolize different members of the family: black for the father, red for the mother, and blue and green for male children.

In addition to the lanterns and *koinobori*, garden staff and volunteers have created two new design elements to showcase chrysanthemums. A seven-foot tall pagoda with three tiers of lush mums will be a focal point of the 2012 show and

two walls of mums will create a grand entrance to a traditional Japanese porch, which will feature a variety of bonsai mums. Similarly to the hanging baskets featured in the 2010 show, the mums for the walls and the pagoda were grown in the production greenhouses from January through May. As they grew, growers pinched off unwanted flower buds and tied down the new growth on a weekly basis to train the plants to their forms.

The fall chrysanthemum show will bloom from October 6 to November 18. A special member preview party will take place on Friday, October 5 from 4 to 8 p.m., which will allow members to get a sneak peek of the exhibit before it opens to the public. RSVPs should be provided to m.sears@omahabotanicalgardens.org or (402) 346-4002, ext. 201. ■



YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE BIERSTUBE!

After four months of work, the restoration of the Storz gazebo is nearing completion. This gazebo structure is thought to have been used as a *bierstube* during Omaha's historic Trans-Mississippi & International Exposition of 1898. German for "beer room" the *bierstube* reflects the German heritage of Gottlieb Storz, whose Storz Brewery is thought, by one account, to have built the structure for the historic event. By many accounts the *bierstube* would have been part of a collection of similar structures used as a beer garden or places for relaxation while visitors enjoyed the fair's other attractions. The gazebo has undeniable value as a century-old piece of Omaha's architectural landscape and cultural history.

Returning the Storz gazebo to its glory days has required extensive and careful restoration work, including a new metal roof, reconstruction of the original cupola, and abatement of the original lead-based paint. Tim and Karen Conn and Hempel Sheetmetal used historical photographs to accomplish the work in a historically accurate manner. Missing features were reproduced using the highest quality material to guarantee maximum life, accurate period construction and minimum maintenance.

Work will be completed the last week of September and the structure will be moved the first week of October to its permanent location near the Hitchcock-Kountze Victorian Garden. Gazebos were typical of the ornate décor of the elaborate gardens of the Victorian Era (1837-1901), and were usually placed as the grand focal point of the garden. Locating the Storz gazebo here is also appropriate because the Victorian garden incorporates architectural remnants salvaged from buildings of historical significance that once stood in Omaha and Council Bluffs.

A formal ribbon cutting will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, October 5 during the fall member preview party and guests will be able to view the finished gazebo from 4 to 6 p.m. that evening. All are invited to see the amazing transformation- you won't believe the *bierstube*!

The gazebo was a gift from Rhonda and Wayne Stuberg. Restoration was made possible by a grant from the Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund. ■



GHOULISH GARDEN ADVENTURE SHOWCASES THE NATURAL ELEMENTS OF FALL

Mia Jenkins, director of marketing

Get into the spirit of Halloween as the garden presents a Ghoulish Garden Adventure, Sunday, October 28 from noon to 4 p.m. Bring young goblins dressed in their best to trick-or-treat through the visitor and education center and festival garden and learn about the natural elements of fall. With leaves, pumpkins, bats, bugs and spiders it is bound to be a scary good time.

As guests explore, they can enjoy fun, interactive activities at stations throughout the garden and the visitor and education center. They can go on a scavenger hunt for scarecrows and learn about their role in the garden, discover the world of creepy crawlies at the bug booth, enjoy eerie entertainment from Basil the Clown and sit down to enjoy spooky tales of the season. Guests can see a display of venus fly traps and other "wicked" plants, play games and learn about the webby world of spiders in the spider's lair, pick a small pumpkin from the pumpkin patch to decorate and take home, hoot and holler with owls, hawks and other birds courtesy of Raptor Recovery, and learn about worms and composting in the plant graveyard. Multiple crafts and fun activities will be at each station.

Bring a camera to take memorable snap shots and a trick-or-treat sack to collect ghoulish goodies! The café will have a seasonal menu of beverages, snacks and food available for purchase. This spooktacular event is designed to provide a safe and fun Halloween event for families in a garden setting. Admission is \$7, \$3 for children 6-12, and is free for children under 6 and garden members. ■



GARDEN'S BIRD CHECKLIST CONTINUES TO GROW

Jim Locklear, director of conservation

THE NUMBER OF BIRD SPECIES OBSERVED AT LAURITZEN GARDENS CONTINUES TO GROW. SINCE GARDEN STAFF FIRST STARTED RECORDING AND COMPILING OBSERVATIONS IN 2010, 87 DIFFERENT SPECIES HAVE BEEN SIGHTED, WITH 18 NEW SPECIES ADDED TO THE LIST THIS YEAR AS OF MID-SEPTEMBER.

Among the more noteworthy additions in 2012 are Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*) and Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), two species that occur in extremely different habitats.

Looking like a smaller version of a Meadowlark, Dickcissels (pictured above) are grassland birds with a fondness for tallgrass prairie. Given their habitat preference, Dickcissels would not be expected to occur in urban Omaha, yet they could be seen and heard singing this spring and summer in the Dr. C. C. and Mabel L. Criss Memorial Parking Garden, as well as in the restored prairie areas around the parking lot and visitor and education center. Their association with these areas of Lauritzen Gardens is like an avian "seal of approval" of our prairie plantings.

Red-shouldered Hawks are considered a "scarce" species in Nebraska, with the relatively few sightings mostly associated with Fontenelle Forest. Unlike the familiar Red-tailed Hawk of open country, Red-shouldered Hawks are more secretive birds that prefer forested habitat. This species was sighted on several occasions this summer in the ten-acre stand of oak-hickory forest traversed by our Woodland Trail.

Other additions in 2012 include: Tufted Titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*), Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*), Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*), Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*), Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*), Purple Martin (*Progne subis*),

Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*), American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*), Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*), Barred Owl (*Strix varia*), Carolina Wren (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*) and Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*).

While the gardens and natural areas of Lauritzen Gardens delight thousands of human visitors every year, it is heartening to know that birds and other wildlife are also benefiting from the presence of this urban oasis. ■





NATIONAL POINSETTIA DAY

Mia Jenkins, director of marketing

Wednesday, December 12 is National Poinsettia Day, which celebrates the beautiful poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) and pays tribute to the life of the first United States Ambassador to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett, the man who helped introduce the plant to America.

In 1828, as the first Ambassador to the new Republic of Mexico, Poinsett discovered a fascinating ruby-red leafed woody shrub while visiting the Taxco region. Native to Central America and Mexico, the poinsettia may have stayed a regional delight if not for the efforts of Poinsett, who became enamored with the plant and began shipping cuttings of the plant back to his greenhouse in South Carolina. He would later propagate the cuttings and send them to friends and botanical centers around the United States. Due to these trading and introduction efforts, by 1836, the plant was most commonly known as the poinsettia.

National Poinsettia Day was established as a holiday in the United States in 2002, by order of a House of Representatives resolution. The holiday occurs on the anniversary of the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett.

Much like how Poinsett first introduced poinsettias to the United States, staff at Lauritzen Gardens start all the poinsettias on display in the holiday poinsettia show from mere cuttings. Greenhouse staff and volunteers begin caring for these cuttings in summer until they are ready for display in late November and throughout the holiday season.

On December 12, the garden will celebrate this great holiday and great plant by giving away 100 poinsettias to the first 100 households who visit the garden. ■



POINSETTIA CARE

Trenton Erickson, plant records curator

As fall draws to a close, poinsettias, which are actually more of a shrub than a flower, can be found everywhere. Here are a few tips to keep a poinsettia happy and healthy during the prime holiday season and beyond:

- Choose plants that have clean, healthy, dark green leaves and colorful bracts. Avoid plants with missing leaves, and check the undersides of leaves for insects. For a longer-lasting plant, choose one with little or no yellow pollen showing, as those shedding pollen are over-mature.
- Keep the plant out of drafts and extreme hot or cold.
- Keep the plant away from furnace vents. High temperatures shorten the plant's lifespan. Day temperatures should be 65° to 75°F and 60° to 65°F at night.
- Place the plant in an area of the house than receives good light, such as near a sunny window. However, do not let the poinsettia touch cold window panes.
- Check the plant's soil daily. Never let the plant wilt or it will lose its leaves. When the soil becomes dry to touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole and discard the water in the saucer. Poinsettias do not like "wet feet" either, so be careful not to drown them with kindness.
- There is no need to fertilize poinsettias during the holiday season. After the holiday season, a houseplant fertilizer can be used once a month.
- Once blooms (the colorful bracts) fade, the plants can be cut back. They can be grown indoors as foliage plants in the summer or moved outside.
- For more information on caring for and over-wintering poinsettias go to: www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/RG316.pdf



HOLIDAY POINSETTIA SHOW

THE HOLIDAY SEASON WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT A VISIT TO THE HOLIDAY POINSETTIA SHOW, WHERE OUR TROPICAL COLLECTION BLENDS WITH THOUSANDS OF POINSETTIAS TO CREATE A WINTER WONDERLAND UNMATCHED IN THE OMAHA AREA.

From the whir and whistle of model trains whizzing in and out of more than 5,000 festive poinsettias to a cascade of twinkling lights and the beaming of delighted guests under a spectacular twenty-foot-tall poinsettia tree, the sights and sounds of Lauritzen Gardens annual Holiday Poinsettia Show make it an event that truly sparkles.

A visual sensation to behold, the floral display hall will be filled with thousands of the enormously popular holiday flower. In shades of red, white, pink, salmon and burgundy, multiple varieties of poinsettias are featured- representing a diversity of color, texture and shape. Repeat visits to the holiday poinsettia show offer the opportunity to see different varieties. Early poinsettias will be ready for display in late November. Later varieties color up more slowly and will replace early varieties as they fade, offering one continuous display. In the center of it all, the twenty-foot-tall poinsettia tree stands tall. Made of more than 700 poinsettias, the tree makes a

stunning show centerpiece and a great backdrop for family photos.

The exhibition of miniature g-scale trains winds across more than 500 linear feet of track and travels over bridges and trestles and through dozens of miniature replicas of Omaha's favorite landmarks. Many iconic buildings are featured in the show, representing landmarks such as Joslyn Castle, the Durham Museum, the Desert Dome at the Henry Doorly Zoo, Central High School, and, of course, Lauritzen Gardens' visitor and education center. Children love watching the trains and finding buildings that they recognize, while adults are always impressed with the detail of the landmarks, made of natural materials by award-winning designer Paul Busse.

The show is redesigned each year to create a new experience for garden members and guests. This year's biggest addition is a 1949 King Amusement Company on-track train. Children will be able to take rides on the train from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with

extended hours and during special holiday events. The train is sure to evoke the warmest greetings of goodwill and cheer and produce big smiles from the youngest of guests.

Combined together, these elements create a cherished tradition that delights people of all ages. The holiday poinsettia show will run from November 23 through January 6.

The holiday poinsettia show preview party gives members the exclusive opportunity to view the poinsettia show before the general public. The preview party will take place Wednesday, November 22 from 3 to 7 p.m. Members are invited to enjoy a complimentary beverage as they stroll the stunning holiday poinsettia show. Luminaries, the crackling fireplace and festive music will complete the ambience of this special event. Dinner will be available for purchase from the café. RSVPs should be provided to m.sears@omahabotanicalgardens.org or (402) 346-4002, ext. 201. ■





IT'S THAT TIME

Trenton Erickson, plant records curator

- Power rake and aerate to prevent thatch build up and disease. This works well in the fall as it does not interfere with pre-emergent herbicide applications in the spring. Fall power raking and aerating are not recommended for lawns that were allowed to go dormant over the summer due to the drought.
- Cut back perennials after the first killing frost, but wait until the ground has frozen about an inch deep before applying three inches of mulch over the bed. This is especially important for new plants in the garden (planted during the 2012 growing season).
- Dig up tender bulbs and tuberous roots of dahlias, gladioli and cannas after the first frost. Let them dry and cure for a few days by laying them out on a bench or other dry surface before putting them into storage in a cool location.
- Continue to water trees and shrubs until the ground has started to freeze. Additional water in the soil will help to prevent winter burn in many evergreen species.
- Harvest vegetables as they ripen to keep plants productive as late into the fall as you like. Covering vegetables during light frosts can protect them so they will produce for a few weeks later in the season.
- Repot houseplants before winter while you still have easy access to an outdoor work area. It is a lot easier to clean up spilled soil on the patio than on the kitchen counter.
- Take cuttings of your favorite coleus varieties, and root them in a clear glass jar of water. Pot them up and keep in a sunny window during the winter. By next spring, you will have plants large enough to plant out in the garden.
- Cut back peony foliage after several hard frosts. Be sure to remove leaf debris and stems from the soil surface where disease can be harbored.
- Create a diagram of your vegetable garden so that next year's veggies can be rotated in a different section. Soil borne diseases may persist in the soil for several years and affect successive crops grown in the same location.



EVENTS MAKE THE HOLIDAY SEASON MERRY AND BRIGHT

Jennifer Evans, director of visitor services

Visit Lauritzen Gardens during one of our fun and festive winter events and create your own holiday traditions! Holiday Harmony begins again for the 2012 season at Lauritzen Gardens with a kick-off for members only during our Poinsettia Show preview party (November 21) with the seasonal music of *Gentle Sounds of Tenderly*. Then, be sure to visit each Sunday until Christmas to hear music groups from around the community as they sing or play for guests each week. Go to www.lauritzengardens.org for exact times and listings.

Fill yourself with holiday cheer with family activities at the garden during our annual Holiday Happening event on Saturday and Sunday, December 1 and 2 from noon to 4 p.m. each day. Walk through the beautiful poinsettia show in the floral display hall, listen to live holiday piano music by Neal Davis as well as other performers. Enjoy holiday food featuring a special, kid-friendly menu, or, just come and enjoy hot chocolate and a piece of homemade red velvet cake for dessert. Santa Claus will be available for pictures, and children can create creative holiday crafts and receive a photo with Santa for an additional fee of \$3 per child.

Trying to find the perfect gift for this holiday season or just need one more ornament to perfect your tree? Visit the Lauritzen Gardens gift shop in the visitor and education center to pick up the perfect gift for yourself or your loved ones this season. Not sure what to buy? Give the gift of a year-long membership to Lauritzen Gardens. Membership prices start at \$30 and last one year from the date of purchase. ■



GIANT LEGO® BRICK SCULPTURES COME TO THE GARDEN

Jim Locklear, director of conservation

LAURITZEN GARDENS IS PLEASED TO BRING A ONE-OF-A-KIND EXHIBIT TO OMAHA IN 2013, GUARANTEED TO THRILL THE CHILD IN ALL OF US.

Incorporated into the spring flower show, the *Nature Connects* exhibit will feature 27 sculptures built from nearly 500,000 individual LEGO® bricks. The garden-inspired sculptures will be on exhibit in and around the visitor and education center from February 16 through May 19, 2013.

Ranging in size from six inches to nearly eight feet, a variety of creatures are represented in the exhibit, including a tiger swallowtail butterfly, a green darner dragonfly, a hummingbird, even a gardener! The largest sculpture is a mother bison made from 45,143 bricks.

Each of the 27 sculptures represents how interconnected nature is. Just as LEGO® bricks connect together to create something fun, colorful, and intricate, all living things on Earth rely on a complex and amazing network that is integral to our planet's health. For example, the ponds in the parking garden will feature

lily pads and a frog, which will show how ecosystems rely on diversity to survive and thrive. A germinating acorn will represent how plants provide food, shelter, and breathable air that link all living things by being the "root" of nearly all food chains. The fox and the rabbit will demonstrate how healthy and balanced populations are maintained; the rabbit provides food for the fox and the fox keeps rabbit populations at optimum levels to preserve their shared habitat. The bumblebee represents the connection between plants and pollinators and how important this relationship is to survival, while the gardener will illustrate how human activity has a deep-rooted and often permanent impact on our planet. Many other connections will be available for discovery in the exhibit.

These dramatic and whimsical sculptures were designed and built by Sean Kenney, a LEGO® Certified Professional based in New York City, N.Y. The exhibit itself

was commissioned by Reiman Gardens at Iowa State University, where it was first displayed to the public in 2012. Lauritzen Gardens will be just the second institution in the nation to showcase these amazing works of art.

This engaging exhibit will present many unique educational opportunities. The Lauritzen Gardens education department is working on a variety of activities and programs to explore these themes during the run of the show. Watch for announcements in upcoming newsletters and on the Lauritzen Gardens website at lauritzengardens.org.

For information about school tours, family programs, scouting activities, birthday parties, and other programming related to the upcoming *Nature Connects* exhibit, please contact Jordan Sherbondy, horticultural educator, at (402) 346-4002, ext. 253 or at j.sherbondy@omahabotanicalgardens.org. ■



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Mr. Christopher Frerich
Christopher Frerich
Ms. Dee Conrad

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FALL/WINTER 2012

QUILTS IN THE GARDEN

The Lauritzen Gardens Guild will hold its third annual quilt show, *Quilts in the Garden: Seasonal Reflections*, November 9 through 11. More than 100 botanically-themed quilts will be on display, along with heirloom quilts from the International Quilt Study Center and Museum collection and other fiber works of artistic excellence created by the Midwest Fiber Art Alliance. Combined with reflective writings and a special exhibit of garden images captured by professional photographer Dorothy Tuma, this show expertly intertwines art and nature to celebrate the distinct beauty of the four seasons. Admission to the show is \$7 and garden members are free. For more information on this exciting guild event visit www.lauritzengardens.org or call (402) 346-4002, ext. 221. ■



SANDHILL CRANE TRIP 2013

Central Nebraska's Platte River is the staging area for 80 percent of the world's population of Sandhill Cranes. By the end of the spring migration, some 300,000 to 400,000 cranes will cover more than 60 miles from Chapman, Neb. west to Odessa, Neb. A trip to see this unexplained phenomenon is one not to be missed.

To observe and view the wonderful world of Nebraska's Sandhill Cranes, consider joining Lauritzen Gardens' annual motor coach trip to the Rowe Sanctuary in Kearney, Neb. March 19 and 20, 2013. Trip reservations can be made with Jane Diesen at (402) 346-4002, ext. 263 or j.diesen@omahabotanicalgardens.org. ■

