

## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY EDUCATION COLLECTIONS**

**August 24, 2017**

Approved: Art Committee, September 28, 2017

Approved: Chatfield Farms Committee, August 31, 2017

Introduced: Gardens and Conservation Committee, November 7, 2017

### **Statement of Authority**

Board-level authority sits with Committees as indicated, consisting of appointed Board members, the Gardens' CEO, and appropriate director-level staff. Overall, Denver Botanic Gardens staff hold authority to make decisions concerning Education Collections. Implementation and evaluation of the Education Collections is managed by staff as noted within each subgroup. Education Collections holdings are not formally accessioned into Denver Botanic Gardens permanent collections.

### **1. Purpose of Acquisitions**

Education Collections contain items adapted into active use, hands-on demonstrations, and educational functions. Overall, these collections consist of reproductions, restorations, period artifacts, specimens that may not be accompanied with appropriate data/documentation to serve a scientific purpose, or items of educational value not necessarily tied directly to mission or program priorities. Other criteria include: the Gardens has multiple representatives (better condition) in permanent collections, or the object has some damage that makes it less significant or not suitable for inclusion in permanent collections. Every effort is made to prolong the life of artifacts in the Education Collections by according them secure environments as objects in permanent collections, and by training volunteers in proper methods of handling and care. Use may affect their condition, so objects may be restored and repaired to help prolong their interpretive life, as wear, breakage and possible loss of these items is expected. Objects may be common and readily available on the market for purchase or by donation to the Gardens. The Education Collections shall be maintained separately from permanent collections.

### **2. Education Collections Subgroups: Oversight & Collections Emphases**

#### **Art**

General, board-level oversight rests with the Art Committee. Management and coordination of collection items is the responsibility of Exhibitions & Interpretation staff. Implementation staff include: Director of Exhibitions, Art & Interpretation; Associate Director of Exhibitions & Art Collections/Associate Curator of Art; Manager of Exhibitions & Art Collections; and the Coordinator of Art Collections & Registration.

The Art Education Collection includes ephemeral items; 2D and 3D artworks; reproductions; and other cultural materials.

#### **Chatfield Farms**

General, board-level oversight rests with the Chatfield Farms Committee. Management and coordination of collection items is the responsibility of Exhibitions & Interpretation staff, in coordination with Chatfield Farms personnel. Implementation staff include: Director of Exhibitions, Art & Interpretation; Associate Director of Exhibitions & Art Collections/Associate Curator of Art;

Manager of Exhibitions & Art Collections; and the Coordinator of Art Collections & Registration.

The Chatfield Farms Education Collection includes products of material culture to support the key interpretive areas of: Agriculture Past & Present; Gardens for the West; and Deer Creek Natural Area. Specific areas of strength can be found in the Hildebrand Ranch and historic home. Objects range from antique farm implements to home furnishings.

### **Herbaria (Natural History Collections)**

General, board-level oversight rests with the Gardens & Conservation Committee. Management and coordination of collection items is the responsibility of Research & Conservation department staff. Implementation staff include: Director of Research & Conservation; Associate Director of Research/Head Curator of Gardens' Herbaria; Curator of the Sam Mitchel Herbarium of Fungi; Assistant Curator of Mycology; Herbarium Associate; Research Associate in Floristics; and the Research Coordinator.

Herbaria (Natural History) Education Collections include mounted plant specimens, dried fungi, lichen, arthropod specimens, ethnobotanical preparations and products as well as bound herbaria and other items related to natural history collections.

## **2. Acquisitions Principles**

### **Definition of terms:**

*Accession/Accessioning:* the process of creating a formal, unique, and permanent numbered record of an object for which the Museum has custody, right, or title to add that object to the Gardens' permanent collection.

*Acquisition:* The discovery and negotiation for custody and title of potential additions to the Museum's collections, whether through sale, gift, or bequest.

Education Collections are *not* accessioned into the Gardens' permanent collection.

- 2.1 The Gardens will not acquire objects unless they are legally available for acquisition. If the Gardens is in doubt it will not proceed with the acquisition. Transferors and/or the Gardens should complete a written record to demonstrate that due diligence has been exercised in respect of title and provenance.
- 2.2 The Gardens will not collect ethically problematic objects regardless of their legal availability, including human remains, regardless of their relevance to the collection or institutional history.
- 2.3 The Gardens will not accept, whether as gift, bequest, or purchase, any object without confirmation of the donor, executor or seller that s/he owns the object, and is able to transfer it free from encumbrances. The Gardens will not acquire any object where it has reasonable cause to believe that the current holder is not legitimately entitled to retain the object or that the object was stolen, illegally exported, or illegally imported. For Living and Natural History Collections, proper permits for collecting materials is required.
- 2.4 The Gardens will not buy works of art, specimens, artifacts or other objects from any person or entity barred from transacting with the Gardens by applicable law, nor from its staff, Trustees, or business entities in which these individuals or their

- spouses/partners hold any beneficial interest.
- 2.5 The Gardens will not buy or accept the gift, bequest, or exchange of, works of art, specimens, artifacts or other objects that bear restrictions on their display, access, disposal or management (unless, in the opinion of the advised CEO, the Art Committee or Gardens and Conservation Committee and the Gardens' Board of Trustees, the proposed restrictions are not deemed onerous or inappropriate and the Gardens' best interest is served by accepting them.) The Gardens will seek to attain copyright and related intellectual property rights (or the appropriate permissions) for objects where possible and appropriate.
  - 2.6 The Gardens reserves the right to decline a gift or bequest if the costs of its transportation, installation, storage, or conservation are prohibitive, or if it does not meet the goals for the Collection. The Gardens also reserves the right to decline a gift or bequest if it is unable to provide for its storage, protection, and preservation to professional standards within existing facilities and conditions.
  - 2.7 The Gardens will not maintain gift collections as separate physical entities, except under extraordinary circumstances determined at the time of acceptance of gift.
  - 2.8 The Gardens will not provide an appraisal for a donated object. Items with an estimated value over \$5,000 must have a current appraisal upon presentation to the Gardens for acquisition consideration. All appraisal fees are the sole responsibility of the donors. Donations are tax deductible per guidelines established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
  - 2.9 Objects found in the Gardens' collections that lack records or provenance may be acquired as abandoned property, if all appropriate legal action has been exhausted, ownership cannot be identified, and the object's known history is consistent with legal definitions of abandoned property.

### **3. Acquisitions Criteria**

- 3.1 Objects are added to Education Collections by managing staff when said objects or specimens are relevant to and consistent with the purposes and activities of Education Collections and align with the aims of collection subgroups as stated above. Objects are additionally evaluated based on physical condition, relevance to permanent collections, and relevance to interpretation and/or learning engagement aims.
- 3.2 The Gardens must be able to provide for the storage, protection, security, and appropriate processing of all acquired objects under conditions that ensure their availability for the Gardens' purposes and in keeping with accepted professional standards.

### **4. Acquisitions Process**

- 4.1 Managing staff of Education Collections can acquire and designate objects for Education Collections when criteria are met and appropriate care for the item can be accommodated. Director-level staff approval for incorporation of objects or specimens into Education Collections considers space requirements; transportation; likely programmatic use; insurance; security risk; conservation/preservation and required financial support.
- 4.2 If the acquisition is a donated object or bequest, the donor or donor's representative will then sign an in-kind donation form, which will become part of the object record as well as part of the Gardens' Development Department records. Any donor will understand that items in the Education Collections will not be maintained in perpetuity. Disposal is at the discretion of Denver Botanic Gardens.

- 4.3 An accessioned object can be moved from any of the permanent collections to an appropriate Education Collection only with deaccession approval from the appropriate governing board-level committee (Gardens and Conservation Committee; Art Committee). Staff cannot reassign accessioned collections objects/specimens to any of the Education Collections independent of this deaccession process.

## **5. Content Management and Recordkeeping**

- 5.1 Education Collections are cataloged, managed, and tracked within collections databases separate from permanent collections databases. Physical inventorying of objects/specimens within the Education Collections is a continuous and ongoing process.
- 5.2 All objects/specimens are assigned a unique identification number with the prefix or suffix "EC" to differentiate from items formally accessioned into permanent collections.
- 5.3 Confidential information such as shipping and insurance histories, appraisals, tax documents, purchase orders, donor addresses, and telephone numbers is restricted and may be available only to certain members of the professional staff as needed.
- 5.4 Collections and object registration records must not be dispersed or destroyed except in accordance with the Gardens' record retention policy.

## **6. Disposal**

*Disposal* – The physical removal of the object from the organization via sale, exchange, destruction, or other transfer of the object.

### **A. Disposal Criteria**

The Gardens may dispose of an Education Collections object/specimen because:

- 6.1A The object is no longer relevant to the mission of the Gardens or to the Education Collections
- 6.2A The object is of lesser quality than other objects of the same type that are already in the collection or that are about to be acquired.
- 6.3A The object has been found to lack sufficient aesthetic merit, value, or historical importance to warrant retention.
- 6.4A The object is in irredeemably and unusably poor condition, or preservation of the object in poor condition is more costly than its aesthetic or historic value, or the object can be replaced by a comparative one at less cost than conservation.
- 6.5A The Gardens is unable to preserve, secure, or store the object in accordance with professional standards.
- 6.6A The object is unduly difficult or impossible to care for or store properly, or poses a threat to the rest of the collection.
- 6.7A The legal status of the object is problematic, or the object is inauthentic.
- 6.8A The object is hazardous.

### **B. Disposal Process**

- 6.1B Education Collections material may not be purchased by a Denver Botanic Gardens staff member, volunteer, or Board member, nor may these parties or their affiliations benefit from the disposal of an object.
- 6.2B Pending the terms of acquisition, appropriate methods of disposal may be:

Sale: The object may be sold privately or at public auction.

Donation: The object may be donated to another repository or educational organization.

Exchange: The object may be exchanged with another repository or educational organization.

Destruction: If an object has deteriorated or been damaged beyond repair, poses a health or safety hazard, poses a threat to collection, is determined to be a fake or forgery, or holds neither intrinsic nor monetary value, it may be deliberately destroyed.

**C. Proceeds**

6.1C The Gardens will place all net proceeds (proceeds less out-of-pocket expenses) from any sale of Education Collections into collections care. Funds will be utilized for direct care of collections, including conservation of collections objects, the improvement of housing, display, storage, or acquisitions.

6.2C No staff member, volunteer, Board Member, or their affiliations shall benefit from the disposal of an object.

**7. Access & Use**

Education Collections shall be accessible for educational programs, display, research, demonstrations, or other suitable activities that meet interpretation and learning engagement aims. Access to collections or collection records can be denied if such access may create a substantial risk of harm, theft, or destruction of such objects or of the area or place where the objects originated.

**A. Requests**

7.1A Collections managers may require a written request, stating which objects are to be examined, the method of examination, and the reasons for the examination.

7.2A Collections storage areas are not accessible to the unaccompanied public or non-authorized staff. If non-collections staff requires access to collection storage facilities (for repairs, pest remediation, inspection, etc.), persons must be accompanied by appropriate collections Gardens staff at all times. Photography and scanning of non-displayed objects by non-Gardens staff is strictly regulated.

**B. Confidential Information**

7.1B The Gardens' collection registration records are not a public record and are considered confidential information. Collections managers may provide portions of registration records to qualified researchers, but restrict access to information on donor and value.

**C. Other Uses**

7.1C At the discretion of collections managers, select objects may be made available for scholarly media use including educational films, electronic media, or still photography for scholarly publications or like on-site supervised uses.

7.2C At the discretion of collections managers and with administrative approval, objects or their images may be made available for reproduction or replication for commercial use. Collections staff, shall be the judge(s) of quality control, selection. Such commercial use shall be for the benefit of the collections and consistent with this collection policy.

7.3C The Gardens does not grant approvals for use on behalf of third-party copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights holders.

## **8. Loans**

### **A. Incoming Loans of Education Collections**

The purpose of a loan is to enhance the mission of the Gardens by enabling display and/or interpretation of objects which the Gardens does not hold. Loans to the Gardens should augment the institution's purpose, including broadening its reach to diverse and new audiences. Collections managers make recommendations that the Gardens lend or borrow Education Collections objects from an artist, private collector, institution, school, or government entity.

- 8.1A The Gardens will borrow items from other institutions for exhibition, interpretive, or education purposes using a properly executed loan form and/or exhibit contract with checklist.
- 8.2A The Gardens will only borrow objects for which the Gardens can provide care under the same standards as its own Education Collections and will maintain the highest possible standards for safe handling and installation.
- 8.3A Borrowed objects to be displayed outdoors are understood to incur a degree of unavoidable risk due to weather, climate, flora and fauna, and handling, as are objects borrowed for purposes in which direct visitor interaction is intended. Risk to borrowed objects will be mitigated where possible by Gardens collections staff.
- 8.4A All incoming loaned objects will be examined for condition, documented, photographed, and assigned unique numbers for tracking. Borrowed objects may additionally be tracked using the collections database.
- 8.5A Borrowed items will be examined for condition and damage at the end of the exhibition or use, prior to return to the lender. Reports on the incoming and outgoing condition of borrowed objects will be available only to their owners or for insurance purposes.
- 8.6A All borrowed objects will be fully insured by the Gardens while on site at the Gardens or while in Gardens transportation per insurance values provided by the lender, unless agreed in writing otherwise.
- 8.7A The Gardens does not accept items on permanent loan, except in unusual and exceptional circumstances. Typical loan duration is for a year or less.
- 8.8A Per Colorado law, property is generally presumed abandoned five years from the date of the last contact. If a loan is abandoned, DBG reserves the right to turn the property over to the state, managed by the Unclaimed Property Division of the Colorado State Treasury.

### **B. Outgoing Loans from the Gardens' Education Collections**

Loans from the Gardens extend the institution's purpose outside the walls, promoting awareness and public exposure of the Gardens' collections. Education Collections can be readily loaned to non-traditional/non-museum entities including schools, libraries or other educational institution or program. All loans require properly executed loan forms and registration records. The Gardens will not grant "permanent loans."

- 8.1B The Gardens may lend Education Collections objects/specimens for exhibition or programmatic use.
- 8.2B Objects shall not be lent to individuals except under special circumstances and with the approval of relevant department directors or associate directors. Before lending to individuals every effort must be made to identify an institutional

affiliation or endorsement for the person. If an affiliation is impossible to establish, then written reasons must be stated with the loan form.

- 8.3B Approval is considered based on the following criteria: the need for the object, the purpose and length of use, the condition and value of the object, risk to the object posed by travel, the method of display, and the anticipated need of the item for the Gardens' own research or exhibition purposes.
- 8.4B Offsite display for any site or purpose requires assessing the condition and preparing objects for travel. This may include matting, framing and the manufacture of special boxes or display cradles; packing and crating; and insurance arrangements for borrowed item while in transit and at the proposed site.
- 8.5B The term of a loan from the Gardens is a maximum of one year. For extended loans, the period may be extended for a year on a year-to-year basis, but for no longer than three years.
- 8.6B Materials placed on loan by the Gardens will be assigned an insurance value prior to shipment. Objects loaned to other institutions must be fully covered by their insurance while on their sites or during transportation with their staff or representatives, per insurance values provided by the Gardens.
- 8.7B Some objects in the Gardens' Education Collections are not available for loan, including unprocessed collections, objects of unclear legal status, and items too fragile or environmentally sensitive to travel. Decisions are at the discretion of the relevant department directors or associate directors.

### **C. Exchange Loans**

- 8.1C Exchange loans may be made for the mutual benefit of the institutions, or a lending institution may request a loan to fill the resulting gap in its permanent exhibition from an institution borrowing an important work.
- 8.2C Exchange loans may be reciprocal loans for long or short periods, or they may be used when an object requested for loan must be replaced at the lender's site for the duration of the loan. They are handled in the same fashion and with the same restrictions as other outgoing or incoming loans, with loan contracts to document the transaction.

## **9. Care & Maintenance**

The Gardens is dedicated to appropriate collections stewardship according to current national standards and best practices, particularly as outlined by the American Alliance of Museums. Considerations include environmental conditions; handling and maintenance procedures; storage, exhibition, packing, transport, and use; pest management; and digitization.

### **A. Preservation**

- 9.1A The Gardens' collections are cared for and maintained in conditions intended to preserve and extend their physical integrity. To this end, the Gardens has established minimum standards of care, including environmental restrictions and housing within appropriate archival quality storage materials.
- 9.2A Education Collections are managed within stable and appropriate environmental standards.
- 9.3A Integrated pest management practices are utilized to monitor and mitigate collections pest issues and concerns.
- 9.4A The Gardens will maintain the highest possible standards of handling and installation to preserve collections objects.

- 9.5A Activities involving the use of the collections carry risk to the objects' longevity and condition. The Gardens seeks to manage and mitigate this risk while balancing the need for reasonable access.
- 9.6A Based on the uniqueness, significance, monetary value, and condition of an item, objects may be selected to be conserved by a professional conservator.

## **10. Security**

- 10.1 No one is permitted to access collections in the absence of collections staff.

## **11. Risk Management**

- 11.1 Refer to Denver Botanic Gardens Disaster Plan (September, 2007) for information including emergency instructions.
- 11.2 Off-site backups of electronic collections databases will be maintained to ensure data is preserved in the event on-site information is destroyed or lost.
- 11.3 Education Collections are covered by the Gardens property insurance. Collections staff coordinate levels of coverage with the Finance Department.

## **12. Inventories**

- 12.1 Denver Botanic Gardens collections staff conduct periodic inventories of its subset collections. Inventory information is recorded in the appropriate collections management databases and catalog files.

## **13. Objects Found in Collection; Objects Left in Custody; Abandoned Property/Unclaimed Loans**

- 13.1 Objects found in collections without documentation will be evaluated by appropriate collections staff in an effort to determine the source of the object, and if possible, the intended purpose.
- 13.2 Found objects that curatorial staff wish to add to a permanent collection will be accessioned according to permanent collection policies as outlined for Living Collections, Herbarium of Vascular Plants, Herbarium of Fungi, Library, or Art.
- 13.3 Objects that are determined to be loans to the Gardens, but remain unclaimed, or objects left in custody will be processed according to Colorado Revised Statutes.

*This policy will be reviewed by Gardens staff as required to maintain an effective collection policy, but at minimum every five years. Changes must be approved by relevant board committees and subsequently by the Board of Trustees.*

### Sources:

American Association of Museums, *National Standards and Best Practices for U.S. Museums*. Washington, DC: AAM, 2008.

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore, eds. *The New Museum Registration Methods*. Washington, DC: AAM, 1998.

Reibel, Daniel B. *Registration Methods for the Small Museum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1997.