

North Carolina Botanical Garden

Strategic Plan 2010-2012

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

I. Introduction

The North Carolina Botanical Garden's first strategic plan (2005-2007) was the result of a series of planning sessions, focus groups, and discussions facilitated by Richard Daley of EMD Consulting Group, LLC. Much has changed since that planning period: a new 31,000 sq ft building, the Education Center, which began construction in November 2007, opened in the fall of 2009. This project also reconfigured circulation, parking, and outdoor garden spaces and closed the segment of Laurel Hill Road that long separated our display collections from visitor parking. The roadbed has been replaced with parking, paths, and beds for new gardens. The 2010-2012 Strategic Plan will guide the first years of operation of the new facilities and gardens.

The next projects in our long-term development plan include the planting of new garden collections around the Education Center, a facility to house the UNC Herbarium, the renovation of the Totten Center as a base for our horticultural department, the upgrading of the Forest Theatre to facilitate its use in performing arts, continued work to assure the conservation of the lands we manage, and continued work to secure the conservation of lands adjacent to our natural areas.

As in 2005-2007, the 2010-2012 strategic plan includes statements of:

- Mission and Vision
- Core Values
- Sustainable Competitive Advantage
- Institution-wide Goals
- Objectives

The Mission, Vision, Core Values, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, and Institution-wide Goals are the foundations of the institution. They change slowly, if at all, and they remain constant for a period of many years. Our presentation of these sections follows closely the ideas presented in the 2005-2007 plan.

We use “goals” to mean those plan elements that are broad statements of general intentions. Objectives help make those abstractions more concrete. They include targets, deadlines, and departments and staff members responsible for their completion.

For ease of reporting and tracking, the objectives are attached in an appendix to this report. That list of objectives will become part of the regular discussions of the Garden's management team (the Director and the Garden's leaders of Conservation, the UNC Herbarium, Horticulture,

Education, Development, and Business Management). These objectives also will be the basis for annual reporting, evaluation, and work planning.

The objectives will be reviewed and revised annually, but the Strategic Plan itself will be reviewed and revised on a three-year schedule. In the last six months of every three-year period, a revised plan will be presented to the Garden's Administrative Board and the Board of the Botanical Garden Foundation, Inc. The annual planning periods correspond to the Garden's fiscal years: July 1 to June 30 (for instance, fiscal year 2010 began on July 1, 2009).

New Sections Developed for the 2010-2012 Strategic Plan

The 2010-2012 plan begins with a new section on the Garden's Planning Context. This section is divided into two subsections: External Initiatives and Internal Initiatives.

The External Initiatives section gives an overview of guiding institutional documents that have shaped our approach to the plan. This section is divided into three parts:

- The Diversity Plan of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- The UNC Tomorrow Initiative
- The Plant Conservation Alliance National Framework and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Botanical Garden Conservation International.

The Diversity Plan was designed to strengthen the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's commitment to diversity by establishing a campus-wide set of goals. The UNC Tomorrow Initiative is framework developed for the University of North Carolina's Office of the President to ensure that university systems continue to meet North Carolina's needs in the years to come. Because of the importance of our conservation programs, we also have included the third new section outlining our support for national and global strategies for plant conservation.

The second section of Planning Context, Internal Initiatives, gives a statement of principles developed internally. These are presented under two headings: the nature of botanical gardens and the Conservation Garden, a philosophical statement about the unique mission of the North Carolina Botanical Garden. The objective of these statements is to capture the history and central identity of the Garden.

II. Planning Context

A. External Initiatives

Three planning initiatives give context to the development of this strategic plan: the University's Diversity Plan, the UNC Tomorrow Initiative, and two statements of national and global strategies for plant conservation.

i. The Diversity Plan, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The University's Diversity Plan states that a diverse and inclusive community is critical to the success of a 21st century educational institution. Diversity is broadly defined by the Plan to include race, gender, age, class, sexuality, culture, nationality, disability, religion, and region. The Plan asks campus leaders to establish goals, identify benchmarks, and report on accomplishments.

The Plan presents five goals to inform University leaders in developing strategies and identifying measures of evaluation for the review of the University's progress and achievements in diversity. These five goals, with a brief list of objectives, accomplishments, and plans for the Garden, are:

1. Clearly define and publicize the University's commitment to diversity.

The Garden has incorporated a statement on diversity in our Institutional Core Values:

- *Respecting and embracing human diversity in all that we do*

The Garden makes this commitment visible through its website, publications, and interpretive exhibits, and through a breadth of educational programming to show the connections that natural diversity and environmental issues have with human diversity, to highlight diversity through partnerships with University and civic groups, to increase participation in our own programs (including volunteer work projects), and to reach a diverse audience.

2. Achieve the critical masses of underrepresented populations necessary to ensure the educational benefits of diversity in faculty, staff, students, and executive, administrative and managerial positions.

The Garden makes staff vacancies, internships, and other opportunities known to a wide and diverse pool of applicants. We will work to appoint committees and advisory groups that broadly reflect the diversity of our community. The Garden will strive to be an open and welcoming place for all.

3. Make high quality diversity education, orientation, and training available to all members of the university community.

Our Institutional Core Values include:

- *Offering educational opportunities and inspiring experiences to a diverse audience—people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic status*
- *Connecting themes on the diversity in nature to the diversity of human cultures*

The Garden can accomplish this purpose working with public schools, forming partnerships with University departments and the community to present multicultural programs, targeting underserved communities and populations in program development, and expanding the need-based scholarships available for participation in our programs. Our horticultural therapy program has produced heritage gardens that celebrate Latino, African American, Native American and Asian cultures. We have collaborated with the Cherokee Indian Museum on our Native American Garden and have produced an educational video based on this work entitled “Plants and the Cherokee”.

4. Create and sustain a climate in which respectful discussions of diversity are encouraged and take leadership in creating opportunities for interaction and cross group learning.

An Institutional Core Value states:

- *Providing a great work environment for staff and volunteers, practicing respect, and treating all with dignity*

Additionally, the Garden formulated a statement called “the Employee Bill of Rights” to promote good team work, respect, and clear communication in our work environment. This statement is periodically discussed at staff meetings and has been used as part of annual work planning and evaluation at the Garden.

5. Support further research to advance the University’s commitment to diversity.

The Garden has collaborated with University departments and outside groups in research that advances the University’s commitment to diversity. Examples include our work with UNC Occupational Sciences (e.g., in the areas of horticultural therapy and obesity and eating disorders), the Natural Learning Initiative (NC State University) and others working on early childhood education, and the School of Library and Information Science on using digital media to foster learning in the sciences for underrepresented groups.

ii. The UNC Tomorrow Initiative

The General Administration of the statewide university system developed the University of North Carolina Tomorrow Initiative to determine how the university system could respond directly and proactively to the 21st century challenges facing North Carolina. A majority of the Initiative's recommendations address areas to which Garden can contribute. We list the UNC Tomorrow Initiative recommendations that are relevant to the Garden (hence the number scheme below, taken from the Initiative's report, omits numbers associated with recommendations that are not relevant),

UNC Tomorrow's major findings and recommendations:

4.1 Our Global Readiness

Major Finding: UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21st century, and to do so should enhance the global competitiveness of its institutions and their graduates.

4.1.1 UNC should prepare its students for successful professional and personal lives in the 21st century, equipping them with the tools they will need to adapt to the ever-changing world.

4.1.2 UNC programs, especially research programs, should be globally competitive to ensure that they are globally relevant and significant.

4.1.3. UNC should promote increased partnerships between its own campuses and international universities and enhance the global awareness of its faculty and students.

The Garden has participated in several international programs. Our pioneering policies on the role of horticulture in spread of invasive species led to an international workshop that produced a statement of voluntary codes of conduct on this issue that were based on principles articulated at the Garden. The Garden joined the Millennium Seed Bank project of Kew Gardens, a worldwide germplasm storage network. The Garden is also currently involved in an international project to create a worldwide network of gardens that will function as "sentinels" of new pest species. The Garden should form peer-institution relationships with one or more gardens across the globe that have similar missions in research, conservation, horticulture, and education. The UNC Herbarium is the leading museum collection documenting plant diversity in the botanical rich Southeastern United States and so is a key reference collection at a global scale. We have also proposed the Garden as a site for an international project using gardens in public schools to teach about the connection between people and their environment and which will connect school children internationally through the internet.

4.2 Our Citizens and their Future: Access to Higher Education

Major Finding: UNC should increase access to higher education for all North Carolinians, particularly for underserved regions, underrepresented populations, and non-traditional students.

4.2.1 UNC should increase access to its educational programs – including academic courses, degree programs at all levels, and certificate programs – for traditional students, non-traditional students, and lifelong learners.

4.2.2 UNC should continue ongoing efforts with the North Carolina Community College System to strengthen and streamline articulation between the two systems to develop a more seamless relationship.

4.2.3 UNC should be a model for accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities, including students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

4.2.6 UNC should help ensure that all students are better prepared to enter and succeed academically in college.

The Garden has a variety of programs that contribute to these goals. We are developing scholarship funds for our public classes and children’s summer camp. We will soon open a new Education Center that will allow us to teach more students on site, including students in our certificate programs and lifelong learners who participate in classes and lectures. We have two existing certificate programs and will develop more in the future. We will assess whether these can be made available statewide through collaborations with other institutions, including community colleges, or through the internet. The Garden pioneered Horticultural Therapy in North Carolina and published a training manual for this field through UNC Press. Horticultural Therapy uses gardening in therapies for individuals with physical and neurological challenges. The Garden’s new building will be a model for accessibility. We are seeking to develop a Horticultural Therapy Certificate program with Occupational Sciences of UNC Allied Health program. We have also developed an educational project that works in schools in Tier I (underserved) counties.

4.3 Our Children and their Future: Improving Public Education

Major finding: UNC should be more actively involved in solving North Carolina’s public education challenges.

4.3.1 UNC should improve the quantity, quality, and geographic distribution of public school teachers.

4.3.2 UNC should help address the shortage of science and math teachers, especially in rural areas.

4.3.3 UNC should strengthen efforts, in cooperation with the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and the Community College System, the North Carolina State Board of Education, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to

enhance the teaching skills of public school faculty and the leadership skills of public school administrators.

4.3.5 Strengthen partnerships of develop a seamless education continuum from preK-higher education.

The Garden carries out a wide array of programs for public schools, including teacher training workshops, curriculum outreach materials, inquiry-based activities on field trips to the Garden, and guest lectures at local elementary, middle, and high schools. The Garden is a regional training center for Earth Partnership for Schools project (a project that uses school garden projects in a variety of school activities). The Visiting Plant program takes a series of living plants to classrooms, where they reside for a week and become the focus of student activities in a variety of subjects, including science, math, history, and environmental studies. We are developing “ecoleaders” as a program to attract area high school students to the Garden as volunteers. The Garden has a long-standing partnership with Glenwood Elementary School. With Laurel Hill Press, we developed the Take a Closer Look video series, including Fire and the Longleaf and Plants and the Cherokee. We have developed Nature trails, a CD for providing teachers with information for using the study of native plants across the curriculum. We have a partnership with the North Carolina Office of School Readiness and the North Carolina Partnership for Children which involves professional development for 300 preschool teachers throughout North Carolina. We have developed programming for pre-K children and for families with young children, using the outdoor learning environment.

4.4 Our Communities and the Economic Transformation

Major Finding: UNC should be more actively engaged in enhancing the economic transformation and community development of North Carolina’s regions and the state as a whole.

4.4.1 UNC should increase its capacity and commitment to respond to and lead economic transformation and community development.

4.4.2 UNC should focus specific effort in meeting the needs of rural and underserved areas of the state.

4.4.5 UNC should facilitate inclusive discussions on important community issues.

The Garden introduces new plants to the nursery industry through the distribution of a seed catalog and living plants. Among these plants are new cultivars and plants that meet the increasing demand for native, non-invasive species, and for such problems as drought tolerance. The Garden has issued a statement of Conservation Principles for Development. The Garden staff participates in many local civic and mission-related agencies and organizations. The Garden supports the development of community gardens, including serving as the host of a project for UNC employees. The Garden seeks generally to collaborate with other public gardens in North Carolina to support local tourism; in our own area, we have proposed a public bus loop on weekends which would include all of the cultural institutions in our area and link them to

downtown Chapel Hill (such as, Carrboro Arts Center, Ackland Art Museum, Morehead Planetarium and Science Center, Coker Arboretum, Battle Park and Forest Theatre, the Chapel Hill Museum, Kidzu, and the Garden itself). We are working with the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau to market the Garden as a site within their “green meetings” initiative to attract professional meetings to the town.

4.5 Our Health

Major Finding: UNC should lead in improving the health and wellness of all people and communities in our state.

4.5.1 UNC should lead in improving health and wellness in North Carolina.

4.5.2 UNC should educate more health professionals.

The Garden introduced Horticultural Therapy in North Carolina, published a leadership manual on training in this field and consults with Health Care professionals interested in the use of gardening in physical and neurological therapies. The Garden participates in health awareness activities on campus and promotes gardening and hiking as supporting healthy lifestyles. The Garden is exploring a new certificate program in horticultural therapy, as well as a course of study for students in UNC’s program in occupational health. The Garden supports community gardening and efforts to increase local food sources.

4.6 Our Environment

Major Finding: UNC should assume a leadership role in addressing the state’s energy and environmental challenges.

4.6.1 UNC should embrace environmental sustainability as a core value among its institutions.

4.6.2 UNC should leverage its existing research expertise to address critical environmental and energy issues.

4.6.3 UNC should increase community awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.

The Garden is one of North America’s leading botanical gardens in environmental and sustainability issues in gardening and conservation. We received the 2004 Program Excellence Award for our work in this area from the American Public Garden Association and, in the same year, a state-wide award, the Sustainability Award, from Sustainable North Carolina. We have constructed the Education Center, which is designed to be the first UNC building statewide to receive the highest level of environmental certification, Platinum, under the LEED program of the US Green Building Council. Environmental issues are emphasized frequently in the Strategic Plan, including Mission, Vision, Institutional Core Values, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage. The Garden promotes sustainable gardening practices and conservation

issues, including land conservation, water use, fertilizers, pesticides, and renewable energy. We have worked with the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) to mitigate the impacts of several projects, one of which generated a research study on the long-term effects of construction activities on mature trees. We have participated with OWASA, the Town of Chapel Hill, the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce, and others on public discussion of waterwise landscaping. The Garden assists numerous federal, state, and conservation agencies in protecting endangered plants, restoring natural habitats, and reducing threats from invasive species. The Garden was a founding institution of the Center for Plant Conservation and is currently one of 35 institutions that holds a significant portion of the National Collection of Endangered Plants (germplasm samples stored as a last resort to prevent extinction and for use in research and ecological restoration). The UNC Herbarium is the largest museum collection of plants in the Southeast and has made available critical data bases, including services for identification, environmental impact statements, and the detection of new weeds and invasive species in the State.

4.7 Our University's Outreach and Engagement

Major Finding: UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole.

4.7.1 UNC should apply, translate, and communicate research and scholarship to broader audiences.

4.7.4 UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences.

The Garden seeks to serve the state of North Carolina and the public through lectures, classes, workshops, symposia, and field trips and through direct collaborations with government and environmental organizations, and print and web-based information. The Garden makes wide array of data available to a large community of researchers and conservationists through the web site of the University of North Carolina Herbarium. The Garden collaborates with the Garden Club of North Carolina on the Wildflower of the Year project, an effort that distributes seeds, gardening, and conservation information to schools, agencies, garden clubs, and individuals across the state. We participate in the North Carolina Plant Conservation Program, the North Carolina and Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Councils, the North Carolina Native Plant Society, the Friends of Plant Conservation, and the Center for Plant Conservation, all projects which bring our expertise to land managing agencies, nurseries, and individuals throughout the state.

iii. The Plant Conservation Alliance’s National Framework and the Botanic Gardens Conservation International’s Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

The Plant Conservation Alliance and the Botanical Garden Conservation International have developed frameworks for plant conservation. The North Carolina Botanical Garden is committed to the work described by these frameworks and to carrying out the specific actions listed below each entry. Below we summarize these two frameworks as a single set of goals.

1. Strengthening Partnerships: Bring people and organizations together to share resources and talents to effectively conserve the nation's native plants.

The Garden works with a wide variety of conservation agencies and non-profits, including the North Carolina Plant Conservation Program, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, North Carolina State Parks, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the Department of Defense, the Triangle Land Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, the Land Trust Alliance, Nature Serve, and the Orange County Lands Legacy Program.

2. Connecting People and Plants: Provide opportunities for people to enjoy, understand, and value native plants and plant communities.

The Garden presents a rich array of programs on conservation topics, including conservation biology, plant identification, rare plant reintroduction, ecological restoration, and invasive species. The Mason Farm Biological Reserve both protects regionally significant natural areas and provides the public with an opportunity to experience wild nature.

3. Conserving Natural Resources: Ensure conservation and restoration of native plants and natural plant communities through ecosystem-based management.

The Garden carries out restoration projects on its own lands and assists other agencies in restoration, including fire management, and the reintroduction of rare plants to the wild.

4. Encouraging Research: Encourage the scientific community to conduct research and technology development in support of native plant conservation.

The Garden works with faculty and students at the University of North Carolina to facilitate research projects on its rare plant and restoration programs. The UNC Herbarium and its databases are a fundamental resource for research throughout the southeast.

5. Promoting Sustainability: Encourage practices that support appropriate and sustainable uses of beneficial plants.

The Garden was a pioneer in promoting the use of propagated, not wild collected, plants. The Garden promotes sustainability practices in all of its programs.

6. Maintaining Good Data: Promote the development and use of coordinated databases and information-sharing to support native plant conservation.

The Garden shares data with a many agencies and non-profits, including other members of the Center for Plant Conservation network, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and federal agencies involved with status review and recovery plans for endangered plants. The Garden maintains a plant records database to document its own collections. The UNC Herbarium has developed a web-served database that links its own collection to other regional herbaria.

B. Internal Initiatives

In this section, we present our thoughts on the nature and importance of botanical gardens and on a concept that has evolved at the North Carolina Botanical Garden over the last several decades which we call the Conservation Garden. These sections form the background of our statement of Mission, Vision, Core Values, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, and Institution Wide Goals.

i. The Nature and Importance of Botanical Gardens

Science and art

Gardens teach that science is a way of knowing about the environment and a way of getting the knowledge that is important to wise decisions about the human-environment relationship. Gardens are also places for the emotional experience of connection to the living world and provide places for beauty, respite, and inspiration. Gardens can promote a sense of wonder about nature; they should be places of joyful, enlightening experiences. Gardens themselves are an art form, but they also inspire artists and thus become settings for painting and drawing, sculpture, creative writing, and performance.

The human-nature relationship

Botanical gardens are about the world of living plants, but they also support human health and well-being, through physical exercise of gardening and walking and the contemplation of nature. Gardening also connects us to the production of our food supply and supports this connection through community gardens, farmers markets, and local food sources.

Inclusiveness

Some forms of gardening require leisure time and financial wealth and thus create differences among economic strata in our society. The North Carolina Botanical Garden must reach across the economic spectrum and, in addition, connect with people whose interests are in such areas as environmental issues, sustainability, and conservation, as well as horticulture for ornamental gardens. Education and experience at the Garden should be available to a diverse audience—to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Sustainability

Because gardens are fundamentally about the interaction of people and plants in an environmental context, gardens are places to explore and demonstrate issues of sustainability. Gardeners tend to think of themselves as inherently pro-environment, or green, in outlook, but yet overuse water, employ tools that use fossil fuels, contribute to water quality problems through use of fertilizers, release herbicides and pesticides, and participate in the movement of invasive plants, pests, and diseases. We seek to promote gardening and conservation in the context of environmental issues and sustainability. In our everyday activities and programs, we strive to reduce the consumption of natural resources by composting, recycling, and reuse.

ii. The Conservation Garden

Since the 1990s, the Garden has used a subtitle, “The Conservation Garden”, to represent the themes expressed in our mission statement and to label what makes our Garden unique. The phrase Conservation Garden has been adopted in our first Institution-wide Goal: *To be a model conservation garden*. In this section we use an overview of The Conservation Garden as a way of further expanding our mission statement.

What do we mean by the Conservation Garden?

We have defined the Conservation Garden in two ways. The “bottom-up” definition describes the individual program themes that have developed at the Garden historically and which contribute to our sense of what the Conservation Garden is. The “top-down” definition describes the overall philosophy that we embrace.

These eight program themes of the “bottom-up” definition of the Conservation Garden are:

Conservation through propagation to promote gardening that significantly reduces damage to wild populations by humans;

Seed banking and reintroduction to protect germplasm reserves as a last resort against extinction in the wild and for use in reintroduction of wild populations;

Natural area protection and restoration to ensure conservation of biodiversity in intact ecosystems;

Elimination of the use of invasive species in horticulture and promotion of native and non-invasive alternatives;

Promotion of gardening in nature’s context, including use of plants that support native biodiversity;

Sustainable gardening and promotion of environmentally sound gardening practices;

Critical information on conservation of the Southeastern flora and on the Garden’s conservation programs, through the UNC Herbarium and associated databases and the outreach programs of the Garden as a whole;

and

Promoting people-nature relations (because plant diversity and natural areas are important to the physical and psychological health of all of us).

The second or “top-down” definition of the Conservation Garden was inspired by the *Hannover Principles* of William McDonough. We call it “top-down” because it summarizes broad principles rather than individual programs. McDonough suggests that all human endeavors can

be discussed under five headings. In the Conservation Garden, these are applied to everything that the North Carolina Botanical Garden does:

Earth, for recycling, non-toxic materials, and sustainably produced products,

Air, for high air quality standards indoors and out,

Fire, for renewable and efficient energy use,

Water, for the wise use and protection of water supplies, lifeblood of gardens and human life and economies, and

Spirit, for the spirit of all living things—to enhance the spirit of visitors, staff, volunteers, plants, birds, butterflies...

Because the Hannover Principles have been so central to the Garden's self-definition, we list here the original nine Hannover Principles (copyright William McDonough Architects, 1992):

1. Insist on rights of humanity and nature to co-exist in a healthy, supportive, diverse and sustainable condition.
2. Recognize interdependence. The elements of human design interact with and depend upon the natural world, with broad and diverse implications at every scale. Expand design considerations to recognizing even distant effects.
3. Respect relationships between spirit and matter. Consider all aspects of human settlement including community, dwelling, industry and trade in terms of existing and evolving connections between spiritual and material consciousness.
4. Accept responsibility for the consequences of design decisions upon human well-being, the viability of natural systems, and their right to co-exist.
5. Create safe objects of long-term value. Do not burden future generations with requirements for maintenance of vigilant administration of potential danger due to the careless creation of products, processes or standards.
6. Eliminate the concept of waste. Evaluate and optimize the full life-cycle of products and processes, to approach the state of natural systems, in which there is no waste.
7. Rely on natural energy flows. Human designs should, like the living world, derive their creative forces from perpetual solar income. Incorporate the energy efficiently and safely for responsible use.
8. Understand the limitations of design. No human creation lasts forever and design does not solve all problems. Those who create and plan should practice humility in the face of nature. Treat nature as a model and mentor, not an inconvenience to be evaded or controlled.
9. Seek constant improvement by the sharing of knowledge. Encourage direct and open communication between colleagues, patrons, manufacturers and users to link long term sustainable considerations with ethical responsibility, and re-establish the integral relationship between natural processes and human activity.

III. Mission and Vision

A. Mission

The mission encapsulates in a single, concise statement the essence of the institution, the reasons that the staff commit their professional lives to it and volunteers devote their time and talents, and the essential justification for people to support the North Carolina Botanical Garden.

The mission of the North Carolina Botanical Garden is:

To inspire understanding, appreciation, and conservation of plants in gardens and natural areas, and to advance a sustainable relationship between people and nature.

B. Vision

The vision of the institution is closely related to the mission and describes “how the world will be better because of the work of the institution.” The vision of the North Carolina Botanical Garden is:

Through our displays, programs, research, and lands, people value the ways that plants, gardens, and natural areas sustain, nurture, and enrich our lives and gain and apply a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainable gardening and conserving biological diversity, thereby the Garden has a profound influence on how people value and interact with the environment and the biologically diverse world.

IV. Core Values

Institutions, like individuals, should live by a set of core values. At the North Carolina Botanical Garden, we are committed to these core values:

Valuing natural diversity

Displaying, interpreting, and promoting the diverse flora of the Southeastern United States in a well-maintained and beautiful garden

Being a leading center for research and education on the flora of the Southeastern United States and the relationship between plants, environment, and the quality of human lives

Offering educational opportunities and inspiring experiences to a diverse audience—people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and socio-economic status

Serving the public

Connecting themes on the diversity in nature to the diversity of human cultures

Respecting and embracing human diversity

Teaching our audiences to embrace science as a way of knowing about the environment and human relations to that environment

Conserving biological diversity, using natural resources sustainably, and integrating a conservation ethic into all that we do

Incorporating a sense of place, at scales ranging from the local to the regional, in order to reflect our garden, our land, and our community.

Building a sense of community and collaboration with other horticultural and conservation organizations

Participating in University research, teaching, and other academic programs

Celebrating and building on the botanical legacy of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Providing a great work environment for staff and volunteers, practicing respect, and treating all with dignity

Securing the financial resources that are essential to carrying out our mission and achieving success

V. Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Institutions are most successful when they clearly understand and articulate the special place they have in the world that distinguishes them from other organizations. By remaining focused on what distinguishes the North Carolina Botanical Garden, the decisions about the future become easier, clearer, and better.

Statement of identity:

We are a university-affiliated botanical garden with an outstanding international reputation as a garden that integrates a conservation ethic into all of its programs. We are the region's most comprehensive center of knowledge on plants in North Carolina and the southeastern United States, and we provide a broad audience with inspirational experiences, opportunities for health and wellness through outdoor activities, and educational programs within a scientifically-based institution.

We seek excellence in:

Propagating, displaying, and interpreting native plants of the southeastern United States

Presenting the continuum of gardens, ranging from human gardens to nature's gardens

Proclaiming ecological gardening in order to seek a more sustainable relationship between people and their landscapes

Conserving rare plants through germplasm storage, reintroduction, and recovery

Conserving, managing, and restoring natural areas, especially in our community and ecoregion

Developing and securing botanical collections, information, and databases through the University of North Carolina Herbarium

Enriching human lives and supporting health and wellness through gardening and direct experiences with nature

Being a leading center for horticultural therapy and in integration of nature with childhood developmental experiences

Offering abundant educational opportunities, outreach, and public service based on our themes

Building collaboration and community among organizations and individuals

VI. Institution-wide Goals

Institution-wide goals cut across departments and require the work of many people. They are achievable goals, but achievable over a period of many (10-15) years. In this way they differ from the mission and vision, which have no time horizons but are enduring, and from the specific objectives, which are scheduled on an annual basis.

GOAL I: To be a model conservation garden.

GOAL II: To be a leading source of information on taxonomy, conservation, and horticulture of plants of North Carolina and the southeastern United States.

GOAL III: To display, in beautiful gardens, the most comprehensive collection of the plants of the southeastern United States and other plants appropriate to the conservation and educational programs of the Garden.

GOAL IV: To conserve in natural areas, biodiversity and restored ecosystems of the Southeastern United States.

GOAL V: To provide diverse audiences with a wide variety of programs that instruct and inspire people to develop a greater understanding and appreciation about the importance of plants and nature, and of their value in our lives.

GOAL VI: To foster learning, research, and collaboration within the University of North Carolina.

GOAL VII: To build community among those who practice conservation, research, education, and horticulture.

GOAL VIII: To develop all the resources and relationships to meet and sustain our goals.