



**Elevating the Guest Experience through the Botanical Gardens:
An Outline for 2019.**

OBJECTIVE: *Elevate* the Oklahoma City Zoo’s Botanical Gardens to one of Oklahoma’s premiere horticultural destinations. Create a transformative experience using the botanical gardens and natural landscapes.

STRATEGY: *Develop* and implement programs throughout **2019** that emphasize the botanical garden’s commitment to Conservation, Research, Collections and Education. Use the 2019 foundation to “grow” the botanical gardens reputation in 2020.

TACTICS: *Promote* state and national botanical garden events through social media, plant sales, garden tours, and educational opportunities for the community. Cultivate botanical garden awareness using the formal gardens as a clean start of plant accessioning and horticulture excellence.

CONSERVATION

- Support the Zoo’s conservation mission through the development of plant conservation actions (in situ and ex situ) to align with the animal conservation activities already in place. Develop and evolve these actions over the course of 2019 to establish them in 2020. June 1, 2019-actions identified. January 2020-actions in place with 2020 goals established.
- Bring awareness to habitat loss and tie it to the animal conservation actions.
- Continue to use green/environmental products and services.
- Continue to develop the compost program and tie this into educational classes.
- Work with Zoo’s animal/education and “Green” teams to promote/implement eco-friendly alternatives where possible especially with the use of chemicals and pesticides.
- Assist marketing team to promote Zoo Poo compost for launch in spring 2019.

RESEARCH

- Collaborate with local university to develop a research program that benefits the OKC Zoo’s botanical program.
- Create horticulture internship program by working with the education team. May-July, 2019.
- Find graduate students that will benefit from using the botanical collection for studies/experiments.

COLLECTIONS

- Develop at least one botanical collection per area. January 2019. Add to each collection quarterly. Accession/GPS locate plant materials as planted.
- Develop new botanical signage system for plant labeling. Label plants/trees/collections in a strategic fashion. Formal gardens and collections first. Have 500 plants labeled by June 2019.
- Grow Zoo volunteer groups by working with the education team to help implement bigger annual projects (e.g. planting bulbs, annuals, mulching etc.) that require lots of simple/manual labor.
- Identify the botanical gardens three (3) most unique botanical features and begin plans to cultivate and grow them:
 - Cross timber trees: label, protect, promote 200 year old trees
 - Oklahoma Cacti: label, protect and promote unique cacti of Oklahoma
 - Zoo Blooms: develop program to emphasize blooms (beyond tulip bulbs) that can be promoted in the spring.

EDUCATION

- Work with Zoo's education team to develop an "evergreen" or seasonal botanical class schedule offered to elementary and high school students for spring 2019.
- Develop monthly classes or activities that engage the public with an introductory botanic program: wreath making, planting a terrarium, etc.
- Develop a "behind the scenes" botanic tour that shows guests a unique look at both the Zoo's landscape and how it is taken care of.
- Create a monthly garden tour schedule highlighting a new tour each month. Begin in 2019. Create self-guided tours.
- Create one written blog on gardening per month for the website, and work with the marketing team to create content for a weekly horticulture related social media post.
- Work with *Oklahoma Gardening* to promote classes and plant sales on weekly television program. "Botanical Events Section" at the end of the program.
- Strategize a collaboration with the Myriad Botanical Garden.
- Create a "Currently Blooming Display" for guest relations office. A place where guests can find information specifically about the botanical garden and what is in bloom.
- Weekly social media posts to feature a plant of the week or information on a specific garden task occurring in the gardens. Monthly blog articles written by the horticultural curator on timely aspects of Oklahoma gardening. Monthly horticulturally related educational programs. Monthly garden tour themes with tours happening weekly. Quarterly plant sales featuring plant material propagated from the botanical collection.

Botanical Garden Events, Plant Sales, Garden Tours, and Classes for 2019:

- Publicize on social media and the OKC Zoo website. Organize plant sales and garden tours alongside these events to increase attendance and elevate the guest experience.

ANNUAL BOTANIC GARDEN EVENTS:

- **Earth Day:** Monday, April 22, 2019. Compost presentation/demonstration for guests.
- **National Arbor Day:** Friday, April 26, 2019. Arbor Day Tree Sale. Ceremonial Redbud Planting. Friday, April 26, 2019.

- **Oklahoma State Arbor Week:** March 25-29, 2019. Tree sale.
- **National Public Gardens Day** (American Public Gardens Association APGA): Friday, May 10, 2019. Spring plant sale and garden tours.
- **Plant Conservation Day** (Botanical Gardens Conservation International) Saturday, May 18, 2019. Plant conservation educational program and rare plant garden tour for guests.
- **ZooBlooms:** March-April 2019. Tulip and daffodil garden tours weekly during the month of strong bloom. (late February to early April, weather and bloom dependent)

BOTANICAL GARDEN TOURS 2019:

Five different themed tours occurring monthly during the growing season. Garden tours are one hour in length and are free with paid admission. (41 total tour hours annually.)

- **March:** Tulip and Daffodil Tours:
 Friday, 3/8/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 3/9/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 3/15/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 3/16/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 3/22/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 3/23/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 3/29/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 3/30/19 at 1:00PM
- **April:** Tulip and Daffodil Tours:
 Friday, 4/5/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 4/6/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 4/12/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 4/13/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 4/19/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 4/20/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 4/26/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 4/27/19 at 1:00AM
- **May:** Pollinator Habitat Tours:
 Friday, 5/3/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 5/4/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 5/10/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 5/11/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 5/17/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 5/18/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 5/24/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 5/25/19 at 1:00PM
- **June:** Pollinator Habitat Tours:
 Friday, 6/7/19 at 1:00PM
 Saturday, 6/8/19 at 1:00PM
 Friday, 6/14/19 at 1:00PM

Saturday, 6/15/19 at 1:00PM
Friday, 6/21/19 at 1:00PM
Saturday, 6/22/19 at 1:00PM
Friday, 6/28/19 at 1:00PM
Saturday, 6/29/19 at 1:00PM

- **July:** Drought Tolerant Plant Tours:
Friday, 7/12/19 at 11:00AM
Friday, 7/19/19 at 11:00AM
Friday, 7/26/19 at 11:00AM

- **August:** Drought Tolerant Plant Tours:
Friday, 8/9/19 at 11:00AM
Friday, 8/23/19 at 11:00AM

- **September:** Native Plant Tours:
Friday, 9/13/19 at 11:00AM
Friday, 9/27/19 at 11:00AM

- **October:** Century Tree Tours:
Friday, 10/11/19 at 1:00PM
Friday, 10/25/19 at 1:00PM

PLANT SALES 2019:

Vendor plant sales for specialty items and in-house sales of propagated plant materials for spring and fall.

- Arbor Day Tree Sale- April 2019
- Spring Plant Sale- May 2019
- Summer Cactus Sale- July 2019
- Fall Plant Sale- October 2019
- Winter Bonsai Sale- February 2019

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES 2019:

- **January:** Bonsai for Beginners
- **February:** Totally Terrariums
- **March:** Tree and Shrub Planting and Establishment
- **April:** Annuals and Perennials for Oklahoma
- **May:** Using Annuals and Perennials in Mixed Containers
- **June:** Planting for Pollinators
- **July:** Drought Tolerant Plants for Oklahoma
- **August:** Composting for Soil Health
- **September:** Oklahoma Native Medicinal Plants
- **October:** Pumpkin and Gourd Decorating with Fall Annuals
- **November:** Fall Wreath Making
- **December:** Evergreen Wreath Making

MONTHLY BLOG POSTS 2019:

- **January:** Spring Garden Planning and Design
- **February:** Ornamental Grasses/Maintenance
- **March:** Tree and Shrub Planting and Establishment
- **April:** Annuals and Perennials for Oklahoma
- **May:** Animal Browse
- **June:** Planting for Pollinators
- **July:** Drought Tolerant Plants for Oklahoma
- **August:** Composting for Soil Health
- **September:** Bulb Planting and End of Season Garden Tasks
- **October:** Mulching and End of Season Garden Tasks
- **November:** Bamboo and Windscreen Planting
- **December:** Tree and Shrub Pruning