The U.S. National Arboretum offers lovely memorial benches as a means to commemorate family, friends and loved ones, or an occasion such as a birth, wedding, or retirement.

The U.S. National Arboretum comprises 446 acres in Washington, DC. Established by an Act of Congress in 1927, the Arboretum was founded to serve the public need for horticultural research, conservation, and education. Today over 600,000 people from around the world visit annually. It is a wonderful gem in our nation’s capital and provides a peaceful escape from busy city life among its 16 major gardens, including azaleas, dogwoods, boxwoods, camellias, lilacs, the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, and much more.

Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA) was founded in 1982 as an independent non-profit partner to support the mission of the Arboretum, in large part through raising private funds. Since its inception, FONA has helped support the installation of the Capitol Columns, implement the Flowering Tree Walk, manage the Washington Youth Garden, fund horticultural research interns, and lead the environmental restoration of Spring House Run, and more.

As we look towards the Arboretum’s 100th anniversary in 2027, FONA’s efforts are focused on: expanding the Washington Youth Garden; continuing to restore Springhouse Run; supporting the critical preservation of the Capitol Columns; increasing public programs such as the Summer Concerts Program; working with federal, city, and regional leaders to secure additional long-term support for the Arboretum and promoting collaboration with regards to regional growth plans; funding a revised master plan for the central grounds; and more.

When you purchase a bench, your support provides important funding to further these important efforts!

Thank you for your support and we look forward to working with you.
**Frequently asked questions:**

**About the benches:** FONA provides beautiful teak benches that are very sturdy and comfortable. They have a long life span and, as they age, the color mellows from yellow to a warm brown.

**How much does a bench cost:** FONA offers two options:
1. 6 ft bench used for all locations other than the National Herb Garden – the cost is $5,000
2. 8 ft bench used only in the National Herb Garden – the cost is $10,000

**What are payment methods:** Payment may be made by credit card, cash, check, or stock transfer.

**Is this tax deductible?** Yes, a donation of a commemorative bench is tax deductible to the extent of the law. Once payment is received, we will provide you with a tax acknowledgement for your records.

**Do I own the bench?** No, your “purchase” is actually a tax deductible donation.

**What is the term of the bench?** The term of a commemorative bench is 15 years. After 15 years, you, or another designated contact that we have on file, will be contacted to discuss renewing or ending the term. If you would like the term of the bench to be 30 years or more, you are welcome to purchase more than one term up front. *Example: $10,000 for a 6 ft bench for 30 years.*

**Is there a plaque on the bench and what can I put on it?** Yes, we will have a plaque made and mounted on the bench for you. The plaque is 2.25” by 4.50”. Guidelines are available as to the number of lines and length of text available. Unfortunately, we are required by the Arboretum to adhere to these guidelines – no exceptions can be made.

**Who maintains the bench?** The Arboretum will be responsible for the care, repair and maintenance of the bench. Only if the bench is broken or deemed unsafe, will it be replaced. Future development on Arboretum grounds may necessitate moving a bench. While every effort will be made to keep it in place, no guarantee can be made that it will not be moved.

**How long does the process take?** The bench and plaque will only be ordered once payment in full is received and we have your final inscription for the plaque. At that time, the orders will be placed. Please allow six weeks for the bench and plaque to be received and put in place. We will alert you as to when it is ready.

**Is it possible to have a small ceremony when the bench is ready?** Yes, you are welcome to gather by the bench during regular hours of operation, as long as the gathering is not disruptive to other visitors and it does not involve chairs and tables. Please note that FONA is not able to provide any “event” support. Dogs are welcome on a leash.

**May I select where, at the Arboretum, the bench is placed?**
There are pre-approved locations for benches at the Arboretum. FONA will review these with you so that you may select a location. All locations must be approved by the USNA and, therefore, no request can be guaranteed.

**Whom do I contact to discuss a bench?**

Friends of the National Arboretum  
3501 New York Ave. NE (mailing address)  
2400 R Street NE (visitor entrance)  
Washington, DC 20002  
Office: 202.544.8733  
info@fona.org
Examples of current benches: