

2020

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT



FRIENDS
OF THE
NATIONAL
ARBORETUM



FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends,

We hope you will be as excited as we are about FONA's 2020 achievements! This report, a window into the work of FONA, illustrates how our public/private partnership has supported the U.S. National Arboretum and our community this past year.

Despite calls for individuals to socially distance themselves, our commitment and digital connection have allowed our organizations to work closer than ever on our respective missions. We've had to adjust what we do and how we do it to continue to provide healthy green space, a respite during these difficult times, as well as educating children and feeding families. It has been a challenging year and we're proud of our collaborative response. With a lot of creativity and teamwork, the results are rewarding.

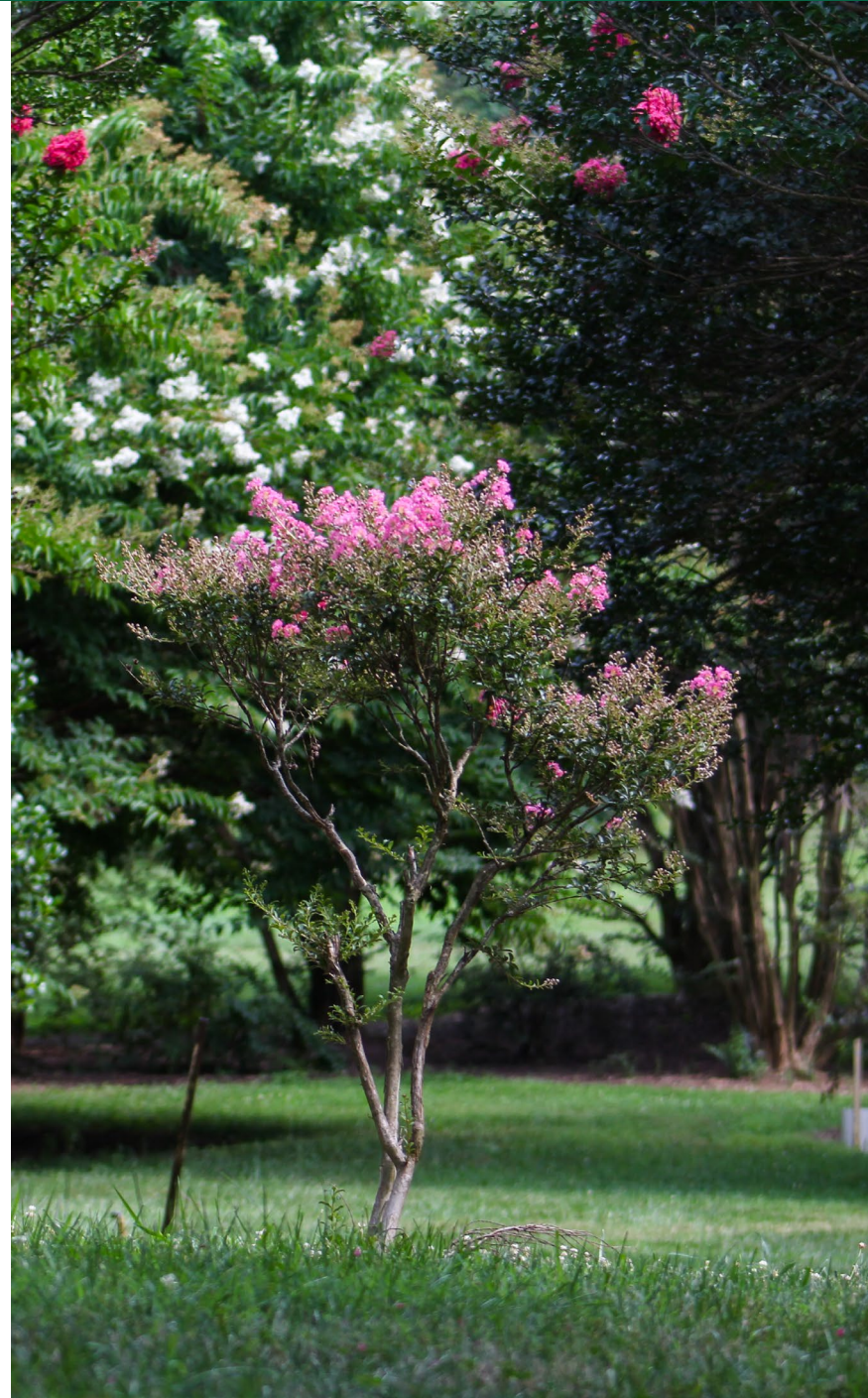
What you don't see in this report are extensive details about our efforts to plan for the future of the Arboretum. We recently completed the Arboretum's Master Plan, outlining a vision that includes plans for improved visitor access and experience, and more. We are confident that the Master Plan will help guide us in our efforts to serve the Arboretum for years to come.

Your financial support is also essential to our success, so we invite you to continuously donate as we continue to shape the future of the Arboretum. We trust you will be proud of the results of these efforts, and will remain confident in our pursuit of ensuring the success of the U.S. National Arboretum.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Craven Rand, FONA Executive Director
Dr. Richard T. Olsen, USNA Director



OUR MISSION



Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA), incorporated in 1982, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit membership organization with the mission to preserve and enhance the 446-acre U.S. National Arboretum (USNA) by facilitating events, communications and experiential programs that instill a love of plants, nature and the outdoors in all who visit.

As the primary non-profit partner of the U.S. National Arboretum, FONA fills a role that the National Arboretum cannot. The National Arboretum was chartered by Congress in 1927 with the dual purpose of plant research and public education, but as an agency under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Services (ARS), nearly all of its funding is directed towards research and maintenance.

Our work is critical to ensure the National Arboretum is accessible and educational for the local community and for visitors from all over the world.

Washington Youth Garden (WYG), our youth outreach and education branch, nurtures curious minds and healthy bodies by connecting youth to food, the land, and each other. Washington Youth Garden awakens thousands of underserved children and families every year to the science and beauty of growing and eating food right from a garden. For almost 50 years, our programs have provided immersive learning experiences at our one-acre Demonstration Garden at the National Arboretum and at Title 1 schools throughout D.C., addressing deep disparities in food access and science education.

RISING TO CHALLENGES

In response to COVID-19, the Arboretum closed from March through June and FONA programs and events came to a halt:

- The Garden Fair that brings plant enthusiasts together every spring was cancelled
- The Dinner Under the Stars summer gala was put on hold
- Washington Youth Garden in-person education programs were suspended

This challenging time led to stronger partnerships and collaboration. Throughout the year, we facilitated regular discussion sessions with 25 peer food and garden organizations to foster support and navigate how to best serve our community. These partnerships with our schools, peer organizations, local government, community leaders, and our supporters made our work possible.

In 2020, FONA shifted its focus to grow and donate fresh produce, coordinate safe outdoor activities, and offer multi-sensory programming to support students, families and teachers.

In this report, you'll find:

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AT A GLANCE

“This is great! We’ve felt so cooped up, so when I saw the email from our teacher, I was like ‘What?! It’s not VIRTUAL!? Thank goodness!’”

— Payne Eementary School parent at School Family Days



4,000

pounds of produce
harvested & donated
to local families



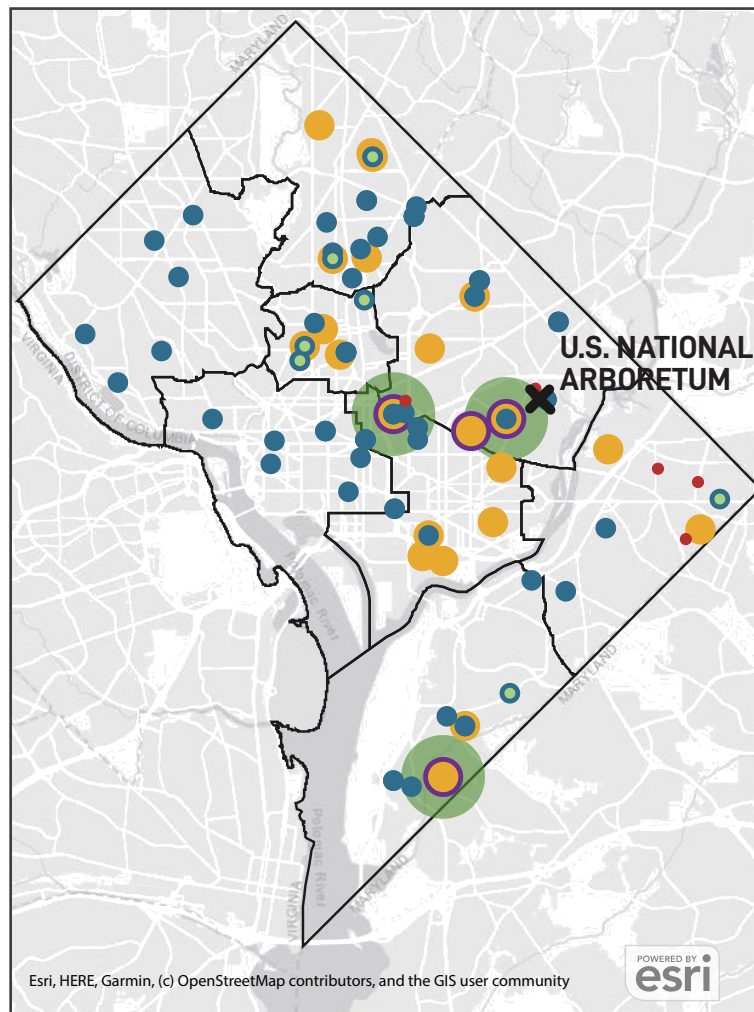
2,137

Grow at Home Kits
distributed to 22 schools



1,982

students engaged
through Garden
Science lessons



WYG participants range from early childhood years to young adults who are primarily African American youth from D.C. Half are considered “at-risk.”

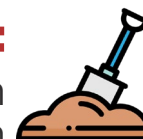
103

teachers from 60 schools attended
the virtual Summer
Institute for Garden-
based Teaching



384

hours worked in
gardens by 8 Green
Ambassadors



14

teachers from 8 schools enrolled in our
new Garden Educator
Coaching program



PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Michelle grew up in a neighborhood just outside the National Arboretum and has participated in Washington Youth Garden activities since she was six years old. This summer, as a recent high school graduate, Michelle completed her fourth consecutive summer internship as a Green Ambassador. Michelle shares that without hands-on programs like those at Washington Youth Garden to engage youth in public gardens, young people like her “would be completely left out.”

Over the past decade, Michelle has become curious about plants, moved outside of her comfort zone, and learned about new career paths. Her decision to study environmental science in college is a testament to the impact of FONA's work to engage local youth at the Arboretum and support them as they explore green careers.



Michelle has participated in Washington Youth Garden Programming since she was six years old.



Michelle just completed her fourth consecutive summer internship as a Green Ambassador.

REACHING CHILDREN

2,137 **Grow at Home Kits** distributed to 22 schools

1,982 **students engaged** through 345 Garden Science lessons

10 **videos** created for Virtual Farm Field Trips

Objective: Students are engaged in immersive garden-based educational experiences despite the pandemic.

Grow at Home Kits

Our Grow-at-Home Kits provide a hands-on experience, an alternative to virtual learning which is especially important during the COVID-19 crisis. We coordinated with teachers from 22 schools across D.C. to distribute 2,137 kits to their students. Kits include seeds, germination bags, growing medium, a small pot, and an activity guide with science experiments.

Virtual Farm Field Trips

After cancelling our SPROUT field trip program, we shifted to produce 10 educational videos with an accompanying activity booklet in partnership with Common Good City Farm and City Blossoms. Videos focused on STEM concepts such as plant identification and pollination.

Garden Science School Garden Development Program

As part of this multi-year school garden development program for elementary students, we engaged 1,982 students at our five Title 1 partner schools during the 2019-2020 school year. Students participated in taste tests of fresh produce, 8 School Garden Markets, and 345 in-person and virtual nutrition and science lessons.



“All 27 students have planted one of the seed packets in their kits. Then they picked one packet to donate to our school garden. They have been watching their plants grow, documenting when they water their plants, and even measuring the sprouts at home!”

— Stacey, Capitol Hill Day School Teacher

EMPOWERING YOUTH

384 hours worked in gardens by 8 seasoned Green Ambassadors

100% reported growth in professional skills – communication, teamwork, & initiative

12 local leaders participated in our Agro-preneurship panel

Objective: Young people develop 21st Century skills and connect with community leaders.

Green Ambassador Program

This summer we modified our paid agriculture and youth development internship and hired past participants only (ages 16-20). Youth worked together to grow food, build raised beds, and connect through weekly virtual training.

During the 8-week summer session, 8 Green Ambassadors:

- Performed 384 hours of garden work at the Demonstration Garden and school gardens to help grow and harvest 1/3 of our total produce donated this year.
- Participated in virtual workshops and discussions with community experts and entrepreneurs to explore topics such as food apartheid, digital storytelling, and vegan cooking.
- Started a new community garden in the Deanwood neighborhood in D.C., and facilitated a virtual Agro-preneurship panel of influential Black and Brown entrepreneurs in agriculture.



“The Green Ambassadors Program made me more aware of community issues and how I have the power to solve them.”

— Aliyah, Green Ambassador

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

103 **teachers** from 60 schools attended the virtual Summer Institute for Garden-based Teaching

14 **teachers** from 8 schools joined our inaugural Educator Coaching Program

10 **webinars and discussions** facilitated in partnership with 9 different organizations

Objective: Teachers are equipped to use garden-based lessons and advocate for their school garden programs.

Summer Institute for Garden-based Teaching

This 5-week virtual professional development program included 5 webinars and 5 discussion sessions. By switching to a virtual format, we were able to train over three times as many teachers as past years on how to improve their school garden program.

Education Coaching Program for Garden-based Teaching

14 graduates from the Summer Institute were selected to receive continued one-on-one coaching throughout the school year. Each teacher will receive mentoring for their unique needs in order to improve garden-based education at the school or classroom level.

Virtual Lessons

Elementary school teachers registered for garden science lessons (e.g. pollination and insects) during their normal virtual class times, led by our On-Site Program Manager.



“The best part about the training wasn’t just how well it was put together, but how it really brought everyone together across the city. I got to learn from all the experts.”

— Teacher, Summer Institute

FOOD ACCESS

4,000 pounds of produce harvested & donated directly to local families

1,200 seedlings collected from local farms and redistributed to schools in D.C.

Objective: Improve access to fresh produce for students and families at our partner schools.

Produce Harvest

We grew 4,000 pounds of fresh produce for donation. 3,000 pounds were grown at our 1-acre Demonstration Garden at the National Arboretum and the remaining 1,000 pounds were grown at our partner school gardens, making it a team effort!

Produce Distribution

We donated the majority of produce directly to students and their families at three of our partner schools (Friendship Armstrong PCS, KIPP D.C. Webb, and Hendley ES), totalling 660 produce bags at 55 weekly drop-offs. We included recipes to encourage families to cook the produce. Students enrolled at these schools are 96% African American and 62% are considered "at-risk." Remaining produce was donated to D.C. Central Kitchen.

Seedling Distribution

We collected 1,200 excess vegetable seedlings from local farms and redistributed them to school gardens throughout D.C. These seedlings helped communities boost their food-growing efforts at the start of the pandemic.



"Parents were very grateful to be able to get extra produce to take with them. We are very happy to partner with you and your organization to continue to provide the best nutrition possible to our Friendship Scholars. Keep up the great work!"

— Jim Bashim, Nutrition Director

¹ D.C. defines an "at risk" student as one who is homeless or in the foster care system, whose family receives food stamps (SNAP) or welfare (TANF) payments, or who is a year or more behind in high school.

CONNECTING TO NATURE

271 runners competed in a semi-virtual 5-mile race

250 students & their families attended 9 Arboretum Family Days

100 forest bathers meditated on 16 guided walks

12 weddings were safely hosted at the Arboretum

Objective: Our community finds mental and physical well-being by connecting with nature.

Forest Bathing Walks

Over 100 people were guided through meditative walks in different Arboretum collections. These walks helped people experience nature through all five senses and 'bathe' in the ambience of the forest.

School Family Days

Six D.C. schools coordinated nine individual days to bring students, their families, and teachers to the Arboretum. FONA staff hosted a welcome table, suggested areas to visit, and provided activities for over 250 visitors.

Virtual Running Race

271 runners traversed a 5-mile race course and explored the Arboretum. FONA partnered with RunDiscover to offer this event at the Arboretum.

Weddings

250 guests were hosted at 12 outdoor weddings. These smaller weddings and ceremonies offered intimate experiences for families and friends to celebrate safely outdoors.



Photo By: Hannah Bjorndal

“I gained a better understanding and appreciation of how nature speaks, comforts, and heals through its own language when we are in tune with it.”

— Participant, Forest Bathing Walk

LOOKING AHEAD



FONA works to ensure the National Arboretum is an accessible and educational resource for the local community and for visitors from all around the world.

FONA partnered with the Arboretum to present an updated Master Plan for the core area of the Arboretum to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, the agency responsible for reviewing the “design and aesthetics” of all D.C. construction projects. The plan, which focuses on access, facility improvements, and visitor flow through the property, was unanimously approved.

As the National Arboretum approaches its 100th anniversary in 2027, we have identified many capital investment opportunities to increase FONA's capacity so that we may better support the Arboretum. Potential projects include: a canopy trail, the restoration of the iconic Capitol Columns, Anacostia River conservation work, and a new educational center to expand FONA programming. These prospective investments will help FONA evolve as an organization to ensure the National Arboretum is a welcoming and equitable community resource and national treasure for years to come. Thank you for your ongoing support!

OUR SUPPORTERS

We were devastated to cancel Dinner Under the Stars this year, but we still made our fundraising goal! We are thankful for our dedicated supporters — we had 100% participation from those who pledged support before the cancellation. Thank you!

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DINNER UNDER THE STARS

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020



OUR SUPPORTERS



Thank you to the foundations and government agencies who support FONA and help make our programs possible.

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DC Department of Health – SNAP-Ed Program
DC Small Business Recovery Grant
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
The USDA Farm to School Program
The USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant

OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to our David Fairchild Society (DFS) members! As our highest level supporters, we are grateful to each of you for all you do for FONA and the National Arboretum.

A number of "Rock Stars" made significant lead donations to create our fall DFS matching campaign this year. Their support amounted to over \$250,000 and will match other donations dollar-for-dollar through December. Thank you to our Rock Stars for your passion, dedication, and leadership!

DFS ROCK STARS

Robert A. Bartlett Jr.
Betty and Alex Boyle
Lynne H. Church
Linda and John Derrick
Joe and Lynne Horning
The Kay Family Foundation
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To learn how to join our David Fairchild Society community, please go to www.fona.org/DFS or contact Cathy Kerkam at cathy@fona.org.



OUR SUPPORTERS



YOUR PATH TO DISCOVERY

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Thank you to our team for their dedication to FONA and passion for the U.S. National Arboretum!

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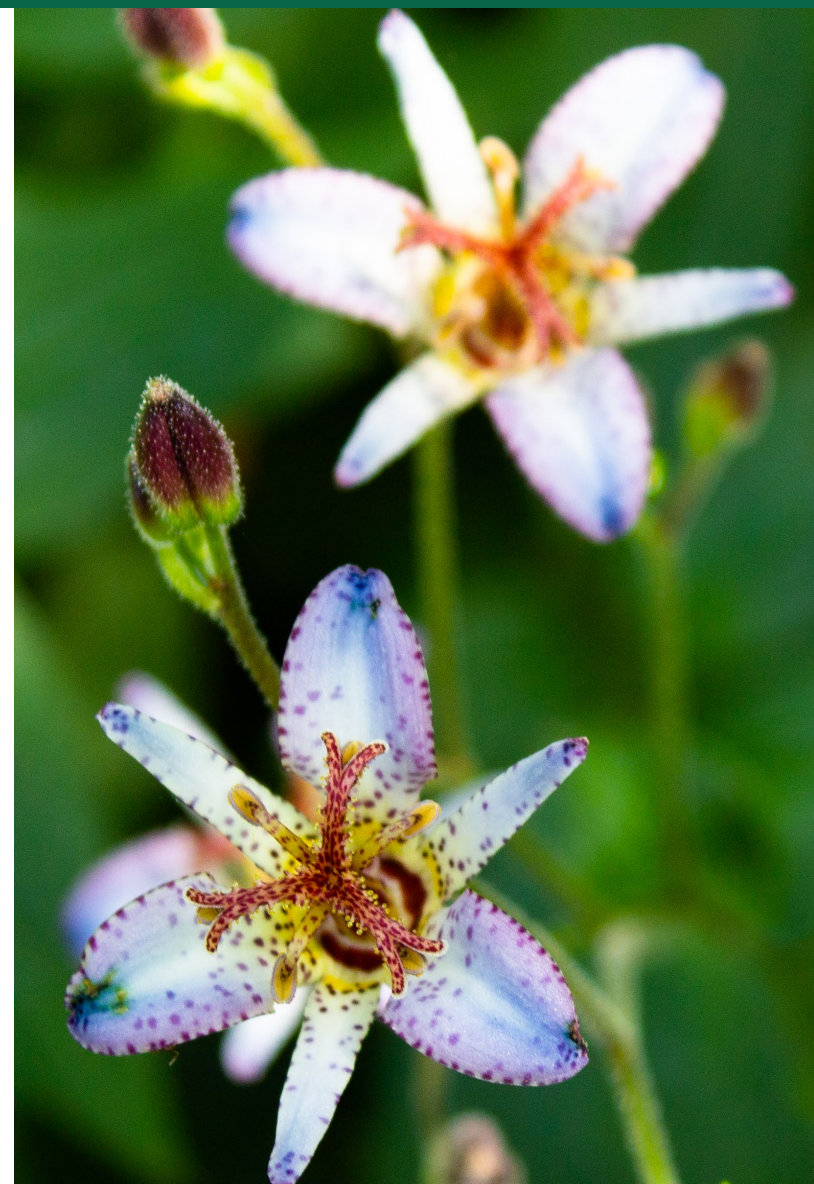
Email cathy@fona.org
for securities and wire
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Thank you for your generous support. You allow us to ensure the long-term success of FONA and the National Arboretum for generations to come.

FRIENDS
OF THE
NATIONAL
ARBORETUM



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