



A publication of the Friends of the National Arboretum

ARBOR FRIENDS

WINTER 2021



Thank you to our friends and supporters!

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

AS WE SAY GOODBYE TO 2020 and look to a fresh new year, **we want to thank you for your support!** It wasn't an easy year, but everyone at FONA has responded to the challenges, and we continue to effectively serve the U.S. National Arboretum and our community. As we approach the National Arboretum's 100th anniversary in 2027, we're pleased to continue to support the Arboretum's objective of being a national leader in science and research as well as being an amazing public garden and oasis of green space in our city.

FONA MADE IT HAPPEN IN 2020

Change was certainly the order for 2020. All of our strategies, programs, and events had to be adjusted. There was no FONA Garden Fair, no Dinner Under the Stars, no in-person school field trips, no teacher trainings in the youth garden—but we didn't give up. We took a step back, got creative, and pushed forward. While it wasn't the year we planned, it turned out to be a good year for FONA and the Arboretum because we stayed positive, made the best of the opportunities available and, most importantly, we had your generous support. **Here are some of the ways we took advantage of those opportunities:**

- First and foremost, we knew our community needed support this year. We decided that sharing the bounty of our Washington Youth Garden was the best way to help, so we supercharged our efforts to maximize output and **donated more than 4,000 pounds of food**—vegetables, fruits, and herbs—to the families of our DC partner schools and to DC Central Kitchen. Our whole

team pitched in to make this happen. There were many long days in the garden, but we're proud of doing our part for those around us.

- Even though we weren't able to offer our traditional programming with kids in the garden this year, that didn't stop us from sharing our knowledge and expertise. We developed a **virtual field trip** to take youth through our garden to show them how we grow food and take care of the environment. We also made more than **2,000 Grow-at-Home kits** (pots, soil, and seeds) and distributed them through teachers and the school system to children in DC so that they could experience the joy of gardening at home.
- And we didn't forget about the teachers. We created a **virtual Summer Institute for Garden-based Teaching** that engaged more than 100 DC teachers this summer. Thanks to a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to School grant, we are now able to mentor a select group of teachers throughout the school year.
- Other small DC nonprofits in the agricultural sector needed help, too. So we served as a convener to form a support group for more than 25 like-minded organizations (many focused on food education in underserved neighborhoods). Together, we **collaborated** to better serve our community and each other.
- We also focused inwardly and worked to strengthen the foundation of the organization. We hope you've seen one product of this work, our **FONA Field Notes e-newsletter**. It's produced

weekly by our entire team, and while it offers a lot of information on the Arboretum, you can also learn about the world of agriculture, social justice, and how you can make a difference. Our new website will also be launched very soon.

We've done all of this while maintaining a virtual workspace for our team and learning how best to work together in this new environment.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A lot of our work this year focused on what comes next for FONA and the National Arboretum. We jointly decided that the entire Arboretum enterprise needs investment if we're going to be successful. As a result, **we developed a strong vision that charts a clear path forward** with concrete steps. Here are some of the highlights:

- FONA partnered with the Arboretum and Reed Hilderbrand landscape architects **to present the Core Framework of the Arboretum's Master Plan to the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts**, the agency responsible for reviewing the "design and aesthetics" of DC construction projects. The plan, which focuses on both car and pedestrian access to the Arboretum, facility improvements, and visitor flow through the property, was unanimously approved, and it was noted that our proposal should be used as a model for other organizations.
- We're getting ready for a **big celebration in 2027** when we will be commemorating the **National Arboretum's 100th anniversary**. The Master Plan, mentioned above, provides us with a



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road map for this special occasion, and we look forward to preparing for it.

- This coming year, **in 2021**, we will celebrate the **50th anniversary of the Washington Youth Garden (WYG)**. The WYG has reached a great many children and Green Ambassadors by connecting them to the land, food, and each other over its 50 years, and we're going to make sure we properly recognize this important milestone. Keep an eye out for your opportunity to celebrate with us.

WE'RE HERE TO SERVE

In addition to everything else we have done, we're going to keep our mission of supporting the National Arboretum

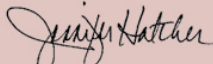
at the forefront. We've worked hard all year on the partnership between our organizations, and we will never forget why we exist: to serve the Arboretum, our community, and you. We know we can accomplish far more by working together than on our own.

As you can tell, we're excited about what we've been able to accomplish this year and about our plans for the future. We appreciate your support because without it, none of this would be possible. We're going to keep raising the bar so that we can exceed your expectations and make our plans for the future a reality.

Happy New Year to you and yours! 🌳

With warm wishes




Jennifer Hatcher
FONA Board Chair




Craven Rand
FONA Executive
Director

ON THE COVER Blooming cherry trees attract pollinators, even in the cold. The National Arboretum's breeding program has introduced several hybrid cherry trees.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Hindsight is finally 2020



WE MADE IT, TOGETHER AND STRONGER, to 2021. Hindsight is 2020, with the past year clearly showing the critical role our stakeholders

play in fulfilling the shared vision of the National Arboretum. And 2021 will be no

Budget increases have led to significant investments in maintenance and repairs that had been deferred for some time. Our perimeter fence replacement project is being informed by our new Master Plan and is now fully funded. In 2021, we plan to finish the designs for the long overdue new entrance on Bladensburg Road. The next step will be to secure funding for this critical piece of capital improvement

research greater access to this valuable information.

Now more than ever, we see the inherent value of our cultivated landscapes as oases of nature that connect people with plants. We have seen a record number of visitors at the National Arboretum, which demonstrates the critical role we play in providing a vital and green component to Washington, DC, and beyond. So as the



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exception. The ball is already rolling on great initiatives that cut across all aspects of the National Arboretum, from our field plots in Tennessee to the laboratories in Maryland to our gardens and collections in DC.

Our hiring efforts have refilled critical positions for professionals like gardeners, laboratory technicians, interpretive specialists, and education program leaders, and we have new staff in financial and facilities leadership positions. We're starting the calendar year with the best staffing levels we have had since I came on board as Director. Look for new offerings from virtual and on-site educational programming as the year unfolds.

which will alleviate traffic for our neighbors and improve access for all.

On the research front, our scientists continue to protect and enhance American agriculture through developments in virus and disease detection in ornamental crops; genomic improvements in landscape trees, shrubs, and turf; and collecting and conserving specimens to help us characterize the genetic diversity of our plant collection. To this end, we have embarked on digitizing our herbarium by scanning our entire collection of preserved plant specimens to create an updated database that will give taxonomists and botanists across the country and around the globe who are conducting systematic

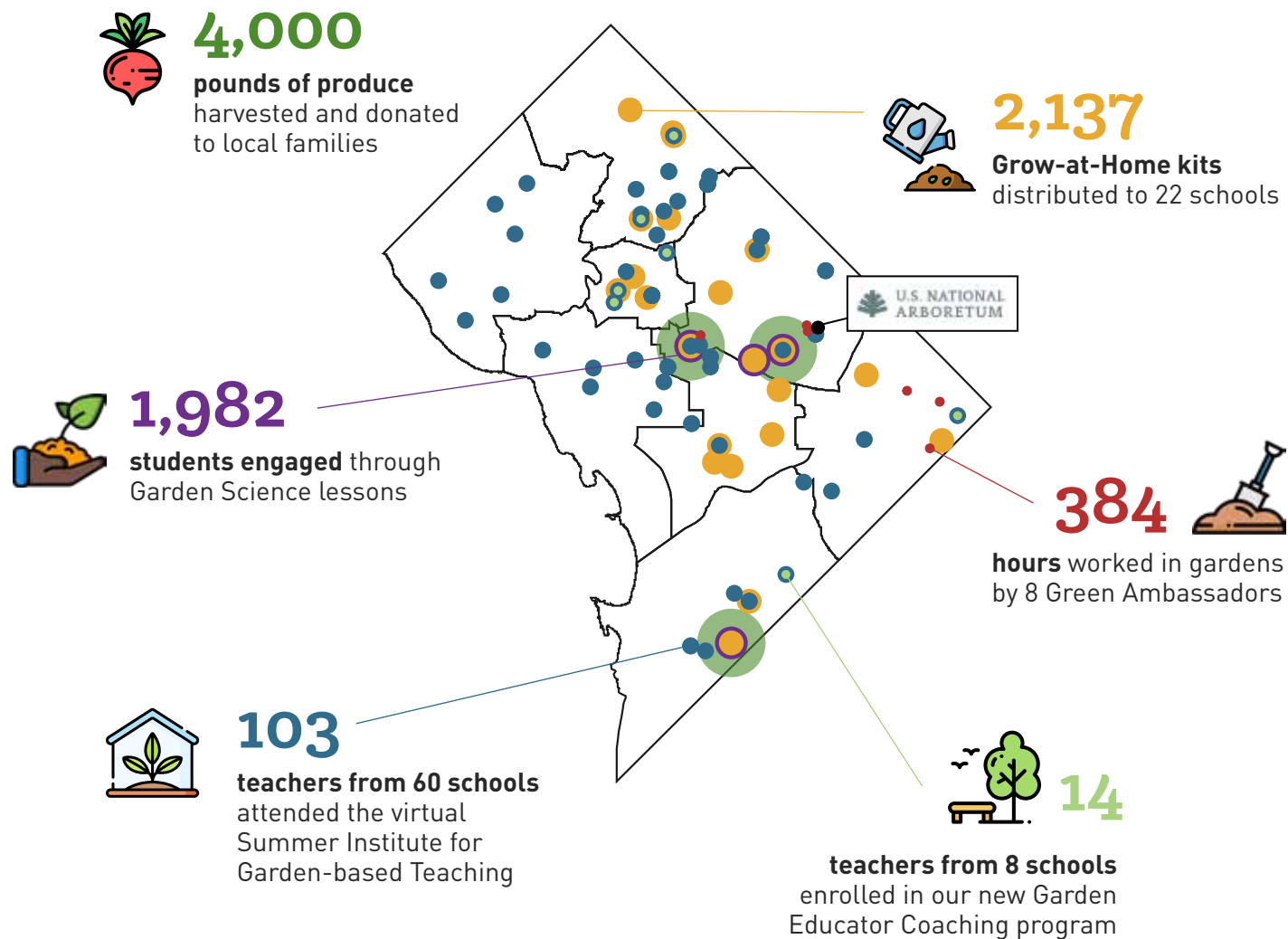
days grow longer and we advance toward spring, we look forward to the blossoming of the National Arboretum in 2021. 🌳

Richard T. Olsen, Director
The United States National Arboretum

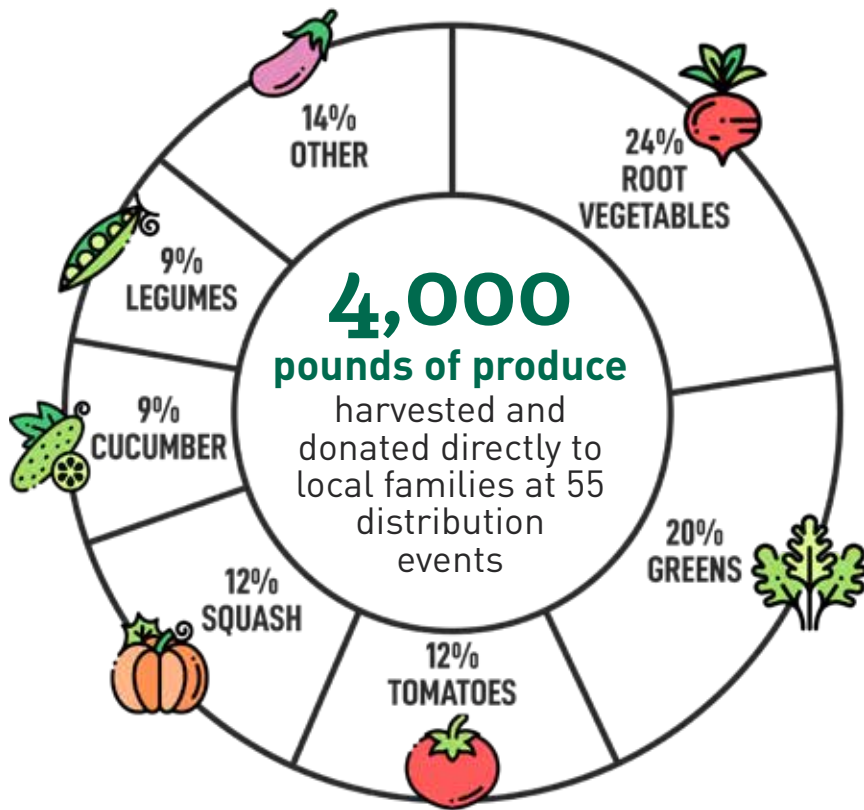


YEAR IN REVIEW

FONA tackled the challenges of COVID head on in 2020! We grew food for donation to local families, adapted our programs to educate students and support teachers through distance learning, and provided safe outdoor activities.



FOOD ACCESS



We grew 4,000 pounds of fresh produce to donate to DC Central Kitchen and to students and families at several of our Title 1 partner schools

- Friendship Armstrong Public Charter School
- KIPP DC Webb campus
- Hendley Elementary School

3,000 pounds were grown at our 1-acre Demonstration Garden at the National Arboretum and the remaining 1,000 pounds were harvested from our partner school gardens

"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 at Friendship Armstrong PCS



SUPPORTING SCHOOLS



103 teachers from 60 schools

attended the virtual Summer Institute for Garden-based Teaching to learn how to improve their school garden program

15 of those teachers from 8 Title 1 schools joined our inaugural Educator Coaching Program for Garden-based Teaching to receive individualized support during the 2020-21 school year.

"This was a new experience in my way of teaching, but it makes total sense with my ideas as an Educator. I really believe, now more than ever, that having nature as the third teacher is the most beautiful and meaningful way to learn."

— Teacher participant from the Summer Institute

REACHING CHILDREN



2,137

Grow-at-Home kits
distributed to 22 schools



1,982

students engaged through
Garden 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

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 DC to distribute 2,137 kits to their students. Kits included seeds, germination bags, growing medium, a small pot, and an activity guide with science experiments.



384 hours

worked in gardens by 8 Green
Ambassadors

100% reported growth in
professional skills
— communication, teamwork, and
initiative

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

— Aliyah, Green Ambassador

EMPOWERING YOUTH



CONNECTING WITH NATURE

"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



271

runners

competed in a semi-virtual 5-mile race



250
students and their families

attended 9 Arboretum Family Days

100



forest bathers

meditated on 16 guided walks

12



weddings were safely hosted at the Arboretum

Arboretum Family Days: Six DC 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 more than 250 visitors.

Read the full report at fona.org

Forest Bathing Walks: More than 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.

"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 Elementary School parent from Arboretum Family Days



Save the Date Tuesday, September 14, 2021

This year Dinner Under the Stars will be held in the fall. Join us for a celebratory evening in support of the U.S. National Arboretum.

Many thanks to those who have already made sponsorship pledges:

Benefactor
Syngenta

Patron
Abbott
CropLife America
Food Marketing Institute
National Association of Wheat Growers

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
please email info@fona.org



Join the David Fairchild Society today!

Join the David Fairchild Society and enjoy camaraderie with like-minded members while knowing that your support is critical to the success and future of the Arboretum and to our work to support local families. Go to www.FONA.org for more information.



David Fairchild – \$50,000+



Azalea – \$25,000



Boxwood – \$10,000



Magnolia – \$5,000



Crapemyrtle – \$2,500



Holly – \$1,200





Winter Garden Tips

Spring is almost here. Get ready!

Nancy and Pierre Moitrier

- Before buds open, **apply dormant oil** to trees and shrubs with known pest problems like scale, mites, or aphids. Dormant oil organically smothers overwintering pests and their eggs.
- **Prune** out obvious dead, diseased, and winter-damaged branches on shrubs and trees.
- Now is the time for **formative pruning** of young deciduous trees and shrubs while branch structure is obvious.
- **Thin boxwood** to improve air flow and light penetration.
- **Identify lateral shoots on wisteria** and shorten them back to three buds, which encourages additional bloom-spur formation.
- **Prune fruit trees** for best production by removing suckers and damaged branches and opening the center.
- **Remove leaves from beneath fruit trees** to minimize spread of foliar diseases.
- **Spur-prune grape vines** back to previous season's fruiting shoots.
- **Prepare vegetable garden beds**, perform soil tests, and apply a layer of compost.
- **Avoid working wet soils** to prevent structural damage.
- **Cut back winter-interest perennials** left standing as winter shelter for beneficial insects.
- **Cut down ornamental grasses** into a rounded clump around 4 inches tall.
- **Sanitize tomato cages** by soaking them for ten minutes in a trash can filled with a 10% bleach solution to kill tomato blight spores.
- **Feed cool season lawns** with a ¼-inch layer of leaf gro compost.
- **Hand pull winter annual weeds** before they go to seed. Common winter weeds include hairy bittercress, henbit, and chickweed.
- **Check stored tubers and roots** (canna, dahlia, alopecia...) for humidity; if they are dry, mist lightly with water. Discard any with evidence of rot.
- **Clean out nonviable seeds** by using a seed viability chart for reference. Order seeds now for best selection.
- **Organize stakes** by size and use; remove tired twisty ties and string.
- **Sharpen clipper blades** or install new blades.
- **Scrub patio furniture.**
- **Discard old potting soil** from containers into compost. Decaying plant debris, insects, nematodes, bacteria, viruses, and weed seeds may be lurking within.
- **Empty bird nesting boxes** and consider repositioning them if they are uninhabited. Add baffles to deter predators.
- **Clean bird feeders and baths.**
- **Evaluate walkways** for tripping hazards. Winter heave may have dislodged stones or bricks.
- **Arrange consultation services** or secure a landscape designer for improvements to your personal patch of nature for the coming season. 🌳



NANCY AND PIERRE MOITRIER operate *Designs for Greener Gardens*, a boutique gardening company that specializes in designing, creating, developing, and maintaining distinctive gardens of all styles. Pierre hails from France and brings the charm of the Old World to their garden creations. Nancy's 40 years of gardening experience combined with her design knowledge and innate artistic eye add a superior dimension to their garden projects. Follow *Designs for Greener Gardens* on Facebook.

2020 DONORS

Thank you...



DAVID FAIRCHILD SOCIETY

The David Fairchild Society, FONA's highest level of membership, is a group of exceptionally dedicated individuals who support FONA and the U.S. National Arboretum.

David Fairchild **\$50,000+**

Robert and Kate Bartlett
Betty and Alex Boyle
Lynne H. Church

Azalea \$25,000

Linda and John Derrick
Lynne and Joseph Horning
Lucy S. Rhame
Barbara and James Shea
Margaret Strand

Boxwood \$10,000

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Crapemyrtle \$2,500

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Jay and Jamie Vroom
Elsa Williams
Valdez and Lavonda Williams

FONA'S 'ROCK STARS'

This fall we had a number of close friends who provided generous lead gifts as a match to inspire others to support FONA.

Robert A. Bartlett Jr.
Betty and Alex Boyle
Lynne H. Church
Linda and John Derrick
Joe and Lynne Horning

Lucy S. Rhame
Barbara Shea
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The Kay Family Foundation
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\$25,000+

International Paper
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The Morris and Gwendolyn
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\$10,000 – \$24,999

American Public Gardens
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DECK Foundation
Greater Washington Community
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William H. Donner Foundation

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International Paper Foundation
Mars Foundation
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Nora Roberts Foundation
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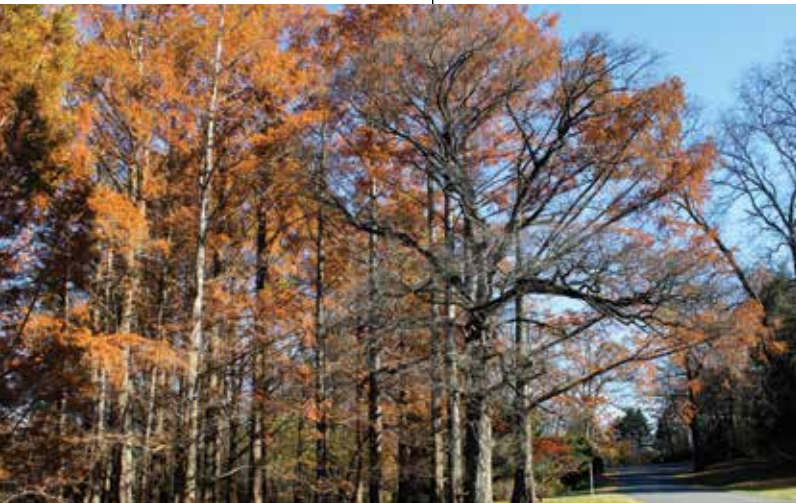
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American Seed Trade Association
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Nick Pearson
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Regina Pollock





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Ann Fessenden Clymer
Edith N. K. Meyer Trust
Dorothy Kidder
Herman W. Koch and Rosalie Martin Koch
Frederick G. Meyer

With appreciation to those who have made a provision in their estate planning for FONA:

Anonymous
Harold Belcher
Lynne H. Church
John Cooney
Robert C. Daniels, Jr. and Richard R. Beman, Jr.
Michael G. Stevens

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In Memory of Joe Doneghy

Florence Atkinson

In Honor of Calvin Dow

Sarah Mosbacher

In Memory of Mary Varas Foley

Harold Belcher

Marijean Berry and
Jonathan Auerbach

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and Evan LeFevre

Lisa and Kurt Strand

Mary Toborg

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This list reflects gifts dated through 12/31/2020. Please contact Claire Broderick to note any errors or correct our records at cbroderick@fona.org or 202.544.8733

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HAPPENINGS

For more information, visit usna.usda.gov or fona.org

GET UPDATES BY EMAIL AND ONLINE

Sign up for the FONA Field Notes email newsletters at FONA.org to get regular updates from the Washington Youth Garden, behind-the-scenes stories, pictures of the Arboretum, and the latest updates — like the long-awaited return of the koi fish!



GARDEN FAIR

The annual FONA Garden Fair & Plant Sale will not be held this April, but the committee is looking into hosting a smaller sale this fall.

EVENTS

The calendar of events is updated regularly at FONA.org. Meditative forest bathing sessions are offered several times a month. Register online.

STREAMING NOW

Watch the Arboretum bald eagles through the Eagle Cam. See streaming video of the nesting pair at naeaglecam.org

