The Garden of Tomorrow BEGINS TODAY
The Garden of Tomorrow

Why?
Why doesn’t NBG have walk-in ticketing like most other museums and public gardens? It’s because our original parking lot was ceded to the Airport Authority in the 1970s and the main parking was moved back by the Rose Garden. The tollbooth was then added to capture tickets and memberships at the road.

What if?
What if we could design a new, modern space conveniently located at the end of an expanded parking garden which would allow visitors to walk in? What if we could expand bus tour drop-off and restroom facilities, increase accessibility and add more electric vehicle charging stations?

How?
After a national search, the local firm Dills Architects presented a plan to build a new, LEED Platinum Entry Pavilion. They also proposed we site our new Conservatory directly behind it, thus creating a dynamic entry experience.

The Garden of Tomorrow will take us to the next level — connecting even more people to nature and expanding our conservation efforts. Tomorrow begins today!
The Garden of Tomorrow includes the following renovations:

1. Revitalization of the historic Administration Building, completed May 2018
2. NATO Tower, completed May 2020
3. Replacement of Cobblestone Bridge, expected completion Fall 2021
4. Innovation construction begins 2021 with expected completion in 2023
After a national search, Virginia Beach-based Dills Architects was selected to design The Garden of Tomorrow. The architects created an exciting model for each new building that utilizes a “transparency of purpose” concept that places the focus on the gardens and surrounding landscape rather than the structures themselves. The buildings will incorporate the strategic use of glass, open air, and structural design to maximize visual impact. Additionally, the new buildings will provide multiple dedicated indoor spaces for school field trips and group tours to participate in educational programming and events during inclement weather.

While the entry pavilion and conservatory are separate entities, they will be connected by a courtyard and a skywalk that begins inside the conservatory and wraps around the outside to the roof of the entry pavilion, ending in a viewing platform built into a green roof. These structures will be unlike any other in Virginia. The end result will be a spectacular building that transforms the visitor experience, stimulates community imagination and provides a dynamic location for education and exploration. The designs also allow NBG to control traffic flow while easily facilitating access for visitors. The entry pavilion and conservatory will be surrounded by rich landscapes and educational gardens that demonstrate sustainable environmental practices, such as rain gardens and gardening with native plants.

The ultimate goal is to achieve LEED Platinum® status for all new buildings. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is the most widely recognized green building rating system.

It was Dills Architects’ commitment to the environment, regenerative design process, attention to detail and technical ability that won them this prestigious commission. Their design work strives to uplift and reinforce human relationships to make the future of built and natural spaces we inhabit more resilient. They work closely with clients, contractors and communities to achieve shared goals for the mutual well-being of all species and our planet.
Regenerative design is a forward-thinking approach to the built environment. While grounded in principles of sustainability, it goes beyond the general objective of just having a neutral impact on the environment. The goal of regenerative design is to contribute to the restoration of what has been lost during the construction process – the ecosystem, habitat, natural resources, etc. What makes regenerative design revolutionary is that it’s a “whole systems” approach where equal consideration is given to both the local community and the ecosystem. Social equity solutions and health and wellness are core principles along with achieving net-positive impacts on carbon, water quality, air quality and biodiversity.

Can you imagine a garden growing its own cement?

The company Biomason developed technology based on the way nature grows one of its most robust and enduring structures: coral. Combining carbon and calcium, they manufacture biologically formed limestone building materials that are three times stronger than traditional concrete. Biomason’s sustainable building materials are stronger, made by carbon-neutral processes, and are healthier for humans and the planet.
Responsibly sourced material is a hallmark of sustainable construction. A magnificent red oak tree had witnessed over two centuries of life along the Lynnhaven River, contributing to its designation as a Virginia Beach Notable Tree. Unfortunately, due to declining health and inherent safety concerns, it had to be taken down. NBG Board member Stephanie McSweeney and her husband Joe afforded us the opportunity to give it a second life.

How do you weatherproof wood siding without using chemicals?

Yakisugi is an ancient Japanese technique for naturally preserving wood by charring the surface with a hot flame. The heat actually enhances durability and is a means of preserving without chemicals, paints or other toxic surface treatments that could leach into the environment. The final product is low to no maintenance, fire and pest resistant with the potential for lasting decades.

“While our building footprint expands significantly, so will planted green space. We will have a much greener footprint – we’ll be even greener than before.”

— NBG President & CEO Michael P. Desplaines
The Hall Water Education and Rowing Center will occupy the space of the current picnic pavilion and the adjacent areas along the water. Native plants will stabilize the eroding shoreline, while the new boardwalk will provide excellent views of the new gardens and the lake’s thriving wildlife. Given the close proximity to Lake Whitehurst, stormwater mitigation is a high priority. Prominently featured rain gardens will be highly effective in reducing runoff into Lake Whitehurst and the nearby canal system.

The large covered roof of the center will harvest rainwater in specially designed storage tanks, holding approximately 5,000 gallons each. This water will be used for cleaning boats as well as providing water for remote areas of the Garden. The covered area beneath the roof provides increased capacity for school groups during inclement weather and on hot summer days, while becoming the only structure of its kind in the region. The Garden will expand water education and activities by offering classes and kayak rentals.

In the past five years, rowing regatta attendance in this area of the Garden has nearly tripled. The new boat ramp, boardwalk and viewing platforms will not only provide easier access to the water and spectacular views of Lake Whitehurst, but will also help to restore and protect the shoreline.
“We are happy to support the creation of a new Water Education Center — introducing the next generation of children and young adults to both water-based educational and recreational activities encouraging a life-long connection to the Garden”

— Kenneth A. and Patricia A. Hall Charitable Foundation
The ecologically advanced Brock Parking Garden is one of the most exciting projects in The Garden of Tomorrow. This unique feature balances both form and function. Through creative engineering, we will add 100 additional spaces, upping the total to 522 spaces, while also planting 75 new trees, one new tree for every seven parking spaces. This will create a thriving tree-lined garden that mitigates stormwater runoff and demonstrates nature-based water conservation techniques.
“Guests will enter a beautiful oasis surrounded by trees and flowers and walk over a foot bridge to an inviting welcome center. The New Brock Parking Garden & Entry Pavilion provides more green space and will transform the visitor experience.”

— Joan Brock
Brock Entry Pavilion
The new Brock Entry Pavilion will replace the current tollbooth and provide easier access by streamlining the entry and ticketing process with one dedicated location to buy tickets, purchase a membership and interact with staff members. Since the early 2000s, our attendance has increased over 200% to a current visitation of half a million visitors. These changes will dramatically improve the visitor admission and membership experience.

Visitors will access the pavilion by walking on a foot bridge over a beautiful water feature. The pavilion’s sleek design uses the Garden as living wall art—bringing the outside in. It features expanded restrooms and new amenities that include new retail space and a world-class farm-to-table bistro with indoor and outdoor seating. The courtyard beyond the pavilion will guide guests to the new conservatory and skywalk. The skywalk will allow guests to return to the entry pavilion where a green garden displays vegetables growing for the bistro below.

The new outdoor spaces surrounding the pavilion include multiple rain gardens, eco-friendly plantings as well as a new amphitheater for concerts and other activities. The size and scope of the pavilion will allow NBG to host events on a much larger scale, which will provide an increased source of income. All proceeds help fulfill the Garden’s mission as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit.
The design for the Perry Conservatory includes a tropical biome, a desert biome, two special exhibit wings and event space. The new 26,000 sq. ft. conservatory will have 6.5 times the indoor exhibit space of our current Tropical Display House and allow for the expansion of our horticultural collection, including rare and endangered species, while adding much-needed indoor plant storage space during winter months. The conservatory will include dedicated space for showcasing endangered species and the efforts to save them. Of the six taxa in the world that are most threatened, three of them are plants: conifers, cycads, and cacti. Our work in the conservatory will focus on two of these plant families, cycads and cacti.
“After visiting Kew Gardens we realized that a world-class botanical garden like Norfolk Botanical Garden needed a world-class Conservatory. We’re happy to provide the lead gift to make this Conservatory, which will be home to see of some of the rarest plants on Earth, a reality.

— Doug & Pat Perry

Skywalk

An elevated indoor and outdoor skywalk provides aerial views of the entire conservatory and one of the largest rose gardens on the East Coast. Guests can travel from the rear of the conservatory to the entry pavilion where the green roof showcases food grown for the world-class garden-to-table bistro below.
With climate change and habitat loss, it is increasingly important for botanical gardens to act as safe refuges for both plants and people. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. According to the IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species, of the six taxa on Earth most threatened by extinction, three are plants: cycads, selected dicots (including cacti), and conifers. The other three are amphibians, sharks, and reptiles. The IUCN Red List is a critical, dynamic indicator of the state of our knowledge about the health and future of global biodiversity.

NBG is a designated display garden by the American Conifer Society, an honor shared by only a few gardens across the country. Our work on conifer conservation increased in 2013 with new longleaf plantings in our Pollinator Garden and efforts were expanded in 2019 through our IKEA Longleaf Pine Savannah. That same year we received a generous grant from the American Conifer Society which increased our conifer collection significantly.

New partnerships will allow expansion in the areas of cacti, cycads and palms. Partnerships include the National Tropical Botanical Garden headquartered in Kalāheo, on the island of Kaua‘i in the state of Hawaii, the Desert Botanical Garden in Scottsdale, Arizona, Lotusland in Montecito, California, Atlanta Botanical Garden in Atlanta, Georgia, Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden and the Montgomery Botanical Center, both located in Coral Gables, Florida. These partners are experts in plant conservation.
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Every effort has been made for accuracy. If there are any errors or omissions, please contact Leslie Van Horn, Director of Annual Giving at (757) 441-5830 ext. 341.
All donors listed are through July 29, 2021. For a complete list, please visit GardenOfTomorrow.org.
Our Goal: $30 Million

90% of our goal has already been raised!

Over 650,000 Visitors Expected by 2023

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<th>Year</th>
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The momentum toward this $30 million endeavor has been tremendous, and we’ve already secured commitments for more than ninety percent of the cost. We look to you to help complete the vision!

Help us BUILD & PLANT today!

NBG is among only 3% of gardens nationwide to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums

GardenOfTomorrow.org
Here at Norfolk Botanical Garden our mission is to connect people to nature through the world of plants. That mission has never been more prescient as we address the environmental crisis we all face. That passion for plants and nature is shared by many of you and, we hope, the hundreds of thousands of visitors who come here each year. Our collective passion has enabled NBG to grow by leaps and bounds and we now welcome half a million visitors each year. In an effort to make this historical landmark more ecologically friendly, more accessible and yes, even more beautiful, we welcome you to The Garden of Tomorrow. By re-imagining the entire visitor experience from parking to admission to collections we will remake the Garden into an oasis of conservation, education and relaxation.

Our current 400 spot parking lot will transform into a 500+ spot, Parking Garden, featuring new rain gardens and over 75 new tree plantings, nearly one new tree for every seven spaces. New pedestrian-friendly walkways will lead guests to our new Entry Pavilion, replacing the tollbooth which causes back-ups, and polluting engine idling (it isn’t very visitor-friendly either). The Entry Pavilion will enable walk-in ticketing and memberships, allow for new retail space and expanded restrooms while also featuring a fabulous new “garden-to-table” Bistro.

Behind the Entry Pavilion will be the jewel of our plant conservation crown, a 26,000 sq. ft. Conservatory featuring Desert and Tropical Biomes. This spectacular new Conservatory will allow us to expand our plant conservation work to include two of the most threatened plant species on Earth—cacti and cycads. A skywalk above the indoor canopy of the Tropical Biome will exit outdoors and lead guests on a dramatic journey through the outdoor tree canopy and eventually onto the green roof of the Entry Pavilion where guests will walk through roof gardens growing food that then will be served in the Bistro underneath.

Along the waterfront, the new Water Education & Rowing Center will expand our ability to provide environmental education, allowing us to double our capacity for school groups—rain or shine—and serve as a boathouse for local school rowing programs.

You now have an extraordinary opportunity to invest in this experience. If you’re interested in helping us build and plant The Garden of Tomorrow, visit www.GardenOfTomorrow.org to make a donation. If you would like to discuss a 5-year pledge option and naming opportunities, contact Vice President of Development Cathy Fitzgerald at Cathy.Fitzgerald@nbgs.org 757-441-5830 x 319 or Director of Annual Giving Leslie Van Horn at Leslie.VanHorn@nbgs.org 757-441-5830 x 341.

Your donation, whether it be a 5-year pledge, a monthly donation or a one-time gift, will ensure that everyone who visits Norfolk Botanical Garden will connect to nature through the world of plants for many years to come!

— Michael P. Desplaines, President & CEO