Smithsonian Gardens’ mission is to enrich the Smithsonian experience through exceptional gardens, horticultural exhibits, collections, and education.
Established in 1972, Smithsonian Gardens is a prominent asset in shaping the overall visitor experience of the Smithsonian Institution.
It is an honor to present Smithsonian Gardens’ FY 2010–2015 Strategic Plan. This document embodies the hard work and involvement of each member of Smithsonian Gardens. Brought together by our dedication to the Smithsonian Institution, we share the common purpose to enrich the Smithsonian experience through exceptional gardens, horticultural exhibits, collections, and education.

Since its establishment forty short years ago, our organization has matured into a distinguished public garden. The shared hard work of our history has been far-reaching, and now with this Strategic Plan we are determined to raise the collective bar by setting three aggressive goals for ourselves: to build an Accredited Public Garden of Museum Quality, cultivate a Public Garden of National Recognition, and become a Dynamic Organization Dedicated to Professional Excellence.

With this renewed direction and vigor we will continue to develop and refine an enlightened program which is clearly mapped to achieve excellence. In the coming months and years, we will strengthen our operations by focusing our efforts on the accomplishment of these goals. Make no mistake, this undertaking will not be easy or without challenges, but it is our objective. Together we have charted this course so that we may achieve our position as leaders in public horticulture.

I am humbled by the opportunity to lead this exceptional organization and I look forward to the journey together.

Barbara Faust
Associate Director, Smithsonian Gardens
INTRODUCTION

An integral part of the Smithsonian Institution (SI), Smithsonian Gardens creates and manages the Smithsonian’s outdoor gardens, interiorscapes, and horticulture-related collections and exhibits. Established in 1972 to manage the museum’s grounds, Smithsonian Gardens (SG) extends the museum’s exhibits and learning environment in a public garden setting while shaping visitors’ overall experience of the Smithsonian. The recent name change from Horticulture Services Division to Smithsonian Gardens—approved by Smithsonian management in 2009 and announced to the public in spring 2010—more effectively communicates to our valued key stakeholders how we support and realize the Smithsonian’s mission and strategic goals.

In 2010, Smithsonian Gardens was recognized with two prestigious peer awards. First was the American Public Gardens Association’s Horticulture Magazine Award for Garden Excellence. This annual award is given to a public garden that exemplifies the highest standards of horticultural practices which include criteria such as outstanding displays; environmentally responsible gardening practices; collections management; commitment to the horticultural community and education. The second award was the GreenStar Grand Award bestowed by the Professional Grounds Management Society which recognizes the highest degree of garden maintenance and operational management.

Smithsonian Gardens contributes to the qualities and experiences that Smithsonian visitors value and associate with a rewarding visit: being moved by beauty, being inspired, relaxing, gaining information, and seeing the real thing. Smithsonian Gardens complements the museums, adding to the educational, scientific, historical and cultural dimensions of the Smithsonian. With their unique and diverse living plant displays (Smithsonian Gardens and the National Zoo are the only SI entities to show living plant collections), the gardens and landscapes serve as living museums, public garden, and urban sanctuary—safe, relaxing settings for social interaction. They engage and inspire visitors while educating them about horticulture, plants, American history, artistic design, the natural environment and sustainability. For many of the Smithsonian’s tens of millions of annual visitors, Smithsonian Gardens has become a destination in its own right.
SMITHSONIAN GARDENS: MISSION, VISION, VALUES AND KEY AUDIENCES

Mission
Smithsonian Gardens’ mission is to enrich the Smithsonian experience through exceptional gardens, horticultural exhibits, collections, and education.

Vision
An integral part of the Smithsonian Institution, Smithsonian Gardens extends the museum experience in a public garden setting, inspiring visitors with innovative displays and educating them about horticulture, plants, the natural environment and artistic design.

Smithsonian Gardens supports the Smithsonian in meeting its critical challenges of understanding and sustaining a biodiverse planet; interpreting the many roles that plants and gardens play in world culture; and understanding and preserving American history.

A living classroom and urban sanctuary, Smithsonian Gardens provides a memorable, relaxing, and safe destination for visitors to the Smithsonian Institution and National Mall.

Nationally recognized for significant collections, exceptional horticultural displays and educational programs, Smithsonian Gardens contributes unique professional expertise, best practices, and state-of-the-art operations to the field of horticulture.

Values
TEAMWORK: We value mutual respect, open communication, shared responsibility and collaboration.

INTEGRITY: We are committed to upholding the highest standards of ethics and professional conduct.

CREATIVITY: We encourage and recognize creative work and individual initiative that serve to delight, inspire and inform Smithsonian audiences.

EXCELLENCE: We achieve excellence through outstanding service, creative leadership, innovation, dedicated staff, and safe and sustainable operations.

RELEVANCE: We are relevant to the Smithsonian Institution’s mission by extending the museum experience into a living classroom and urban sanctuary, promoting the vital role of plants in an ever-changing world, and utilizing new technologies for wise resource management and sharing of information.

Smithsonian Gardens Strategic Goals
Supporting its strategic goal of becoming an accredited public garden of museum quality, Smithsonian Gardens continues to build its national renown for innovative horticultural displays and education, significant collections, and outstanding service to visitors, professional partners and the Smithsonian museums, while making professional excellence the underlying principle of all its operations.

As a result, Smithsonian Gardens is uniquely positioned to make significant contributions to the Smithsonian’s Grand Challenges of understanding and sustaining a biodiverse planet; interpreting the many roles plants play in world culture; and understanding and preserving American history.

Museum Accreditation
To establish its position as an accredited public garden and fully develop its staff, collections, programs, and operations to meet museum standards by 2012, Smithsonian Gardens will complete the American Association of Museum’s (AAM) Accreditation Review Process. AAM accreditation is a widely recognized seal of approval, bringing national recognition to a museum or public garden for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement.

Completing the rigorous accreditation process will increase Smithsonian Gardens’ credibility with funding agencies and donors and help stakeholders recognize how the Smithsonian’s obligation to the public trust is fulfilled.

Enid A. Haupt Garden
Key Audiences

- Visitors to the Smithsonian Institution and the National Mall, including virtual visitors.
- Visitors whose intended destinations are the Smithsonian Gardens, horticulture-related exhibits and collections.
- Smithsonian leadership and staff.
- Professional partners and peers.
- Members of Congress.

GOALS

Goal 1: An Accredited Public Garden of Museum Quality
Goal 2: A Public Garden of National Recognition
Goal 3: A Dynamic Organization Dedicated to Professional Excellence

An Urban Escape

Smithsonian Gardens plays an important role in the well-being of the environment by employing sustainable practices like Integrated Pest Management and recycling.
GOAL 1: AN ACCREDITED PUBLIC GARDEN OF MUSEUM QUALITY

OBJECTIVE 1.1 ➔ Assess organizational needs required to complete American Association of Museums (AAM) Accreditation program application.

Strategy 1: Finalize and approve Strategic Plan.
Strategy 2: Begin accessioning permanent plant collections into CIS (BG-BASE).
Strategy 3: Update and approve Collections Management Policy to include plant collections.
Strategy 5: Create and print general Smithsonian Gardens brochure reflecting organizational name change.
Strategy 6: Create program/exhibit/events calendar for the public.
Strategy 7: Obtain and assemble required supporting document for AAM Accreditation Program application.
Strategy 8: Complete and submit application by July 30, 2010.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 ➔ Assess organizational needs required to complete AAM Accreditation Self-Study Questionnaire.

Strategy 1: Assign tasks for Accreditation Self-Study Questionnaire completion to staff.
Strategy 2: Create and approve organizational Code of Ethics.
Strategy 3: Create and approve Communications and Marketing Plan. See Goal 1, Objective 3.4.
Strategy 4: Create and approve Conservation Plan for all collections. See Goal 2, Objective 2.2, Strategy 4.
Strategy 5: Create policy guidelines and outreach materials for donor and corporate support. See Goal 3, Objective 3.3, Strategy 2.
Strategy 6: Obtain and assemble required supporting documents for AAM Accreditation Self-Study Questionnaire.
Strategy 7: Complete and submit AAM Accreditation Self-Study Questionnaire by October 31, 2011.

OBJECTIVE 1.3 ➔ Assess organizational needs required to complete AAM Accreditation Review site visit.

Strategy 1: Review and approve visiting AAM Accreditation Review committee members.
Strategy 2: Assign individuals to serve as Visiting Committee Team contacts.
Strategy 3: Arrange and oversee AAM Accreditation Review Committee site visit.

The Moongate Garden
Smithsonian Gardens is an ‘outdoor museum’ enjoyed by close to 30 million visitors each year. Varied plantings offer visual interest during all four seasons.
OBJECTIVE 2.1: Gain national recognition for excellence, creativity and quality in horticultural display and practices.

Strategy 1: Continue to offer creative, well-maintained gardens and interior displays that delight, inspire, and educate the public and industry professionals while enhancing the Smithsonian museum experience. Reach consistently high display and maintenance quality for all Smithsonian Gardens areas.

Strategy 2: Develop, implement and share best practices and state-of-the-art operations for horticultural production, maintenance, management, and display.

Strategy 3: Establish industry leadership in relevant areas of expertise through targeted research that improves horticultural practices and display.

Strategy 4: Participate in planning for SI museum building projects to ensure that horticultural display and maintenance needs are met and to proactively mitigate impact on landscapes.

Strategy 5: Investigate establishing Smithsonian Gardens as an urban tree campus recognized for its tree care, collections management, and educational programs.

Strategy 6: Develop and implement collection management plans and policies for permanent plant collections including plant inventories, mapping, labeling, evaluation, and record keeping.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: The leading repository for the history of American Gardens.

Strategy 1: Enhance access to the Archives of American Gardens (AAG) and the Garden Furnishings and Horticultural Artifacts Collection by enriching data available on SIRIS. Utilize new media to connect to communities within and outside the Smithsonian.

Strategy 2: Raise the visibility of the collections to the public and scholars through online displays, traveling exhibits, articles, educational programming, product licensing and development, collaboration, and networking.

Strategy 3: Allocate an annual operating budget to assure adequate management, maintenance, preservation and educational outreach for the collections.

Strategy 4: Develop Conservation Plan for AAG and Garden Furnishings Collection in order to meet AAM accreditation requirements.

Strategy 5: Improve strategies, policies and procedures for collection acquisition to diversify the range of garden types documented in the Archives of American Gardens.

Strategy 6: Work with SI development staff to endow a position for a fellow-in-residence to research the Archives of American Gardens collections and seek new opportunities for scholarship and exhibitions.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Innovation and excellence in educational programming.

Strategy 1: Hire Education Specialist.

Strategy 2: Regularly assess effectiveness of learning activities.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive Education Master Plan.

Strategy 4: Create a culture of initiating and sharing ideas, projects, and procedures for making these ideas actionable.

Strategy 5: Develop interpretive learning content and the tools to effectively communicate content to staff, peers and the public.

Strategy 6: Develop docent program to enhance SG’s education programs.

OBJECTIVE 2.4: Outstanding service and memorable visitor experience.

Strategy 1: Create a visitor- and service-focused organizational culture.

Strategy 2: Consider and anticipate diverse visitor needs and preferences when creating signage, interpretive materials, programs and policies.

Strategy 3: Collaborate with Smithsonian units to attract, educate and serve visitors by providing a seamless experience between the museum and garden visit.

Strategy 4: Provide comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible information about SG in a variety of media, with particular focus on online information.

Strategy 5: Actively seek and respond to visitor feedback.

GOAL 2: A PUBLIC GARDEN OF NATIONAL RECOGNITION

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Gain national recognition for excellence, creativity and quality in horticultural display and practices.

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GOAL 3: A DYNAMIC ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Develop and retain a workforce that meets operational goals.

Strategy 1: Recruit employees who are experts in their fields, motivated, creative, and competent to deliver sustained levels of excellence. Effective and efficient, they strive to employ best practices and embody Smithsonian Gardens’ values.

Strategy 2: Retain a motivated, creative, innovative and challenged Smithsonian Gardens staff by strengthening skills and abilities through training, certification and best management practices.

Strategy 3: Complement staffing levels needed to meet Strategic Plan objectives by advocating for additional staff resources, workforce realignment, and contractual expertise.

Strategy 4: Hire and develop forward-thinking leaders and managers who align resources to priorities, encourage excellence, and reward innovation.

Strategy 5: Strengthen the volunteer program. Recruit and retain volunteers with expertise to advance Smithsonian Gardens’ objectives.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Employ best work practices that inspire excellence and improve operations.

Strategy 1: Build a collaborative and transparent culture that emphasizes communication and accountability.

Strategy 2: Consistently provide excellent service and transparency to key stakeholders.

Strategy 3: Develop, operate and maintain a safe, secure, and healthy physical environment for the public and workforce.

Strategy 4: Employ sustainable practices to the greatest extent possible.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Fiscal responsibility and stability.

Strategy 1: Optimize the use and management of financial resources based on Smithsonian Gardens’ priorities, cost effectiveness, and demonstrated value.

Strategy 2: Generate revenue from diverse private sources to increase non-federal income.

Strategy 3: Increase awareness and appreciation of Smithsonian Gardens to assure continued adequate federal funding.

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Inspire recognition and support with compelling promotion and communication.

Strategy 1: Build public relations, communications and marketing capacity.

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a Communications and Marketing Plan to raise Smithsonian Gardens’ profile, increase visitation, and engender support from key stakeholders.

Strategy 3: Enhance communications and marketing tools and materials.

Integrated Pest Management Specialist, Graham Davis, leading a talk on sustainable turf care. In 2010, Smithsonian Gardens staff gave talks, tours, and interpretive visits to nearly 6000 visitors, professionals, garden enthusiasts, and SI colleagues.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SMITHSONIAN GARDENS’ STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Sarah Hedeen, Chair
Barbara Faust, Associate Director of Smithsonian Gardens
Jeffrey Schneider, Grounds Operations Manager
Vickie DiBella, Greenhouse Nursery Operations Manager
Cynthia Brown, Horticulture Collections Management & Education Manager
Brett McNish, Supervisory Horticulturist
Jeffrey Nagle, Supervisory Horticulturist (former)
Bill Donnelly, Landscape Architect
Joyce Connolly, Museum Specialist
Kelly Crawford, Museum Specialist
Shelley Gaskins, Horticulturist
Christine Price-Abelow, Horticulturist
Iris Gestram, Volunteer Facilitator
Dove Coggeshall, Volunteer Facilitator

PHOTOGRAPHY

(cover) Epidendrum faleatum: James Osen, SI Volunteer
(introductory pages) Freer Courtyard: Eric Long, SI
Mary Livingston Ripley Garden: Ken Rahaim, SI
Joseph Henry statue: Brett McNish, SI
(pg 1) Staff Photo: Eric Long, SI
(pg 2) Kathrine Dulin Folger Rose Garden: Eric Long, SI
(pg 3) Myrmecophila christinae: James Osen, SI Volunteer
(pg 4) Enid A. Haupt Garden: Eric Long, SI
(pg 6) Garden Fest: Eric Long, SI
(pg 7) National Museum of the American Indian: Eric Long, SI
(pg 8) Moon gate Garden: Eric Long, SI
(pg 10) Orchid Exhibit: Eric Long, SI
(pg 12) SI Live! Turf Care demo: Eric Long, SI
(pg 15) Cast iron urn, Kathrine Dulin Folger Rose Garden: Ashley Oaks, SI Intern
(pg 16-17) Composite: Eric Long, Erin Clark, and Brett McNish, SI

Smithsonian Gardens’ Garden Furnishings and Horticultural Artifacts Collection includes over 2,500 pieces ranging from delicate bouquet holders to ornate cast iron urns.