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Inside the Domes

Upcoming Events
June 6 Through Sep. 13...Practically Perfect in Every Way (Floral Show)
June 15—19.............................................. Pollinator Week
July 15—26.............................................. Sprucher Traveling Beer Garden at the Domes*
September 19—20 .................................. Orchid Show and Sale

*Beer Garden Hours: Weekdays 4:00 PM - 10:00 PM and weekends: 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM (all nights with a 9:00 PM last call).

Celebrate National Pollinator Week at the Domes

By Paula Zamiatowski
Interpretive Educator

The NAPPC (North America Pollinator Protection Campaign) is a diverse organization of respected scientists, researchers, conservationists, government officials, and dedicated volunteers who seek to protect pollinators, raise pollinator-related issues, and benefit the health of all species. In order to raise awareness of the value of pollinators and the threats they face, they designate a week each year as “Pollinator Week.”

In celebration of national Pollinator Week, the Education Center will offer fun activities each morning throughout the week (June 15—19). Each day will feature a different amazing pollinator group. Join us for stories, games, activities, and food sampling, courtesy of our pollinators.

All families, schools, and camps are welcome to join in the fun. If you plan to bring a group larger than 10, please call ahead at 414-257-5600. Our Conservatory Educator Paula Zamiatowski and the Education Center volunteers will be ready with knowledge, resources, and fun activities.

Daily breakdown of Pollinator Week’s events:

(Continued on page 2)

Mitchell Parks Domes Recognized for Innovation, Sustainability, and Historical Significance

As a member of the Friends of the Domes, you support an award winning organization in Milwaukee. We are proud to share the news that we have recently won four awards:

Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Green Luminary Award—Recognizes true champions who not only manage sustainable stormwater systems, but also continue to innovate with lasting good works that connect people and prosperity to the environment.

Daily Reporter Top Projects Award—Recognition for projects that benefit communities and the advancement they provide to the state’s construction industry. Each is judged on its own merit in adding to the built environment of the communities it serves.

Biz Times IQ Innovation Award—Recognition for innovative businesses and products for southeastern Wisconsin; awarded specifically for the Mitchell Park Domes featured green infrastructure construction project.

Milwaukee County Historical Society Anniversary Accolade Award—Recognition of a significant anniversary for an iconic Milwaukee structure and a facility that acts as an educational institution, serving the public.

Our innovative roof garden features hardy perennials called Stonecrop, shown here in full bloom last summer.
The Milwaukee County Parks’ Traveling Beer Garden is coming to the Domes for 12 days this summer! It will be open daily from July 15th through July 26th and will be located outside on the Domes’ front plaza. The Sprecher Beer Fire Truck will be selling seven types of beer including a special recipe containing hops grown right here at the Domes! They will also sell other Sprecher beverages such as hard cider, hard root beer, hard ginger ale, and wine along with pizza, pretzels, popcorn, ice cream, soda, water, and four types of sausages! Hours of operation are: weekdays 4:00 PM - 10:00 PM and weekends 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM (all nights with a 9:00 PM last call). Bring your family and enjoy the summer in your Milwaukee County Parks—Prost!

When: Wednesday, July 15, 2015 through Sunday, July 26, 2015
Cost: Food and beverage available for purchase; no charge to attend the outside Domes’ plaza

Food and beverage available for purchase; no charge to attend the outside Domes’ plaza

Raise a frosty mug

Monday, June 15th—The Unusual Pollinator Suspects: Explore the world of lemurs, lizards, geckos, skunks, and even, yes, mosquitoes, with a special appearance from 10-11AM by an animal ambassador guest or two to meet in person!

Tuesday, June 16th—Bats Here and There: Although Wisconsin only has insect-eating bats, we will honor our tropical bat pollinators with a bat-pollinated treat while listening to Janell Cannon’s book, Stellaluna. The day will provide a mixed bag of yummy goodness that will continue throughout the morning with hourly readings and sampling!

Wednesday, June 17th—The Champions of Pollinators and their Impersonators: Learn all about the Champions of Pollinators and their impersonations! The day will continue throughout the morning with hourly readings and sampling!

Very Fairy Princess Day

Staff of the Friends of the Domes and the Domes are modest people—sometimes we expect an event to be popular, but we underestimate just how popular! The Very Fairy Princess Day was very well attended and we were gratefully surprised by the decision of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation to make this a sponsored event! It turned out to be one of the most well-attended days in recent history. We thank those of you who braved the crowds. We appreciate your patience and do not anticipate this event being free for non-members in the future.

A Vegetable Oasis in the Desert

By Marian French

Horticulturist—Desert Dome

The days are lengthening, the air is warming, and the “summer rains” (from the hose!) have fallen. In the Desert Dome, it’s time for the seasonal vegetable garden to appear, highlighting Native American heirlooms cultivated hundreds (or even thousands) of years ago. Corn, beans, chili peppers, and devil’s claw are all represented.

There is evidence of corn being grown as early as 7000 B.C. in southwestern Mexico, the region where it was first brought into cultivation. The Aztecs and the Incas alike relied on it as an important food source. As it was traded across the continents, different varieties of corn were developed to adapt to different climates. The type we planted in our garden was grown by the Hopi tribe in the Desert Southwest without any irrigation.

Beans were among the first domesticated crops in the Americas around 8500 B.C. Together with corn, peppers, and squash, they constituted a large part of the Native American diet. The string beans and tepary beans we are growing this year were originally farmed in the North American desert. Tepary beans in particular are among the most drought and heat tolerant crops in the world and can grow to maturity with water from only one rainstorm.

Chili peppers have been cultivated throughout the Americas for thousands of years, creating many interesting flavors and levels of spice. One specific type known as the Tabasco pepper (which we are growing this year) is the primary ingredient in Tabasco sauce. Also found in the Desert Dome is the chiltepín, or wild chili pepper, which still grows in the deserts of North America.

The Devil’s Claw, which makes beer foamy, bitter, and, when you see beer sold in clear bottles; it’s usually mass produced using a chemically-altered hop compound that doesn’t break down so easily.

Today, hops are still included in most beer recipes. There are numerous cultivars that have varying flavors and levels of bitterness. When you see beer sold in a brown bottle, you can be assured that real hops were used in the process. Brown glass blocks light from reaching the beer, which makes beer foamy, bitter, and, most importantly for those early brewers, last longer in storage. Before hops were discovered to have these properties, many different herbs were used to preserve and flavor beer, including dangerous plants like nightshade.

There is no doubt that these plants made a vital part of everyday life for American Indians. Their usefulness has only increased in the modern day—corn is considered the third most important cereal crop in the entire world and is included in the Domes’ educational program “12 Plants that Changed the World.” As the summer goes on, our Oasis vegetable garden should start to produce flowers and fruits. We might even get some claws out of it!
**Kids’ Corner**

**By Paula Zamiotowski**

**Interpretive Educator**

In the Spring 2015 issue of Inside the Domes, we provided a handy planting guide recommending plants you can start in containers. Whether you planted your own or decide to go to your local nursery and purchase plants that have been started for you, it is time to get your seedlings and seeds outdoors.

- Warm season crops can be planted from May through June.
- Cool season crops can be planted again in July or August for fall harvest.
- Know the sunny and shady areas of your yard for best plant growth and crop yields.
- If you have children, make sure to include them in the growing and eating process!

To ensure the garden will be accessible and safe for children, consider the following:

- Go organic or purchase seedlings grown without pesticides—pesticides are not good for any person or animal.
- Create narrow beds so that children can reach the plants.
- Create wide, obvious paths to walk and to view your garden’s progress from day to day.
- Plan native plant areas to enjoy watching local animals and insects who come to visit.
- Plan your garden near a water source and provide kids child-sized watering cans.
- Offer a place to dig—embrace the fact that all children like to dig!
- Make sure kids have safe places to run, such as designated grassy areas.
- Make sure kids have safe places to enjoy nature play—Sticks, rocks, pinecones, and shady spots offer loads of summer fun!
- What to plant (since we cannot include everything here, we recommend that you Google-search any of the following bolded terms for more information):
  - **Edibles**
    - children can pick: strawberries, beans, peas, greens. Dazzle young gardeners with the beautiful and edible Nasturtium—everyone can pick and eat this plant and pollinators love it too!
  - **Durable child-friendly plants**—trampling and picking will happen.
  - **Wisconsin child-safe pollinator-friendly plants** for everyone.
  - **Companion plantings for Wisconsin**—these are plants that work together and create a healthier growing space and yields.
  - **From the Director’s Chair**

**By Sandy Folaron**

**Horticultural Services Director**

Have we come full circle? In the mid-1950s, the Victorian styled 1898 Mitchell Park Conservatory was deteriorating and public dialogue of replacement had begun. Across the nation, conservatories were recreating themselves with new structures that provided a horticultural experience for the booming population along with new perspectives on the history of the building, zoos, museums, and public institutions that had been built in traditional architectural designs.

The popular wanted something new, something different that would add value not only to the community and their family’s experiences, but to Milwaukee as well, by drawing visitors and tourists to a broader cultural and visual built environment.

The Domes, designed in 1959 and built from 1961 to 1967, reflected that desire and willingness to step outside of the status quo with a bold new idea of what a conservatory could look like!

Once again, we seem to find ourselves at those same cross roads! Recent inspection reports for all three Domes indicate structural problems due to age and humidity. Repairs and remediation have all taken place, but this is only to address safety concerns and to control some of the ongoing deterioration. At some point another more serious discussion will need to take place; the future of the conservatory. The Domes are certainly an iconic and important part of Milwaukee’s cultural landscape, but in their present form, are neither sustainable nor energy efficient. At what point do we begin to open up the dialogue about replacing the Domes with a facility better suited for another generation of use and as competitive in design and futuristic vision as the Domes were 50 years ago? That time is closer than you think!

Conservatories have come a long way in the last 50 years with more efficient design elements, green “best practices” that address sustainable water usage, and the expansion of educational programs and opportunities that further the mission of services provided to the community and all visitors. With the construction of the new Mitchell Park Greenhouses outside our back door, it makes even more sense to protect that investment with a state of the art Conservatory.

Let’s begin those discussions and ensure that our children and their children’s children will enjoy all the opportunities and experiences that we have been fortunate to have had ourselves, including a legacy to be proud of.

**Pollinators**

**The stuff that makes me sneeze and makes my eyes itch? Why should I care about pollen?!**

**By Paula Zamiotowski**

**Interpretive Educator**

If you, or anyone close to you has ever cursed pollen for your seasonal allergies, or maybe just never understood the importance of pollen, this article and Pollinator Week are for you (or the pollen-hater in your life). When you look at the pictures of pollen to the right, you’ll see that it is surprisingly beautiful. To be more than just beautiful, a pollinator must move that pollen from one flower to another to produce the next generation of plants. Why should we care if this happens? Here are five reasons…

- Nearly 80% of our world’s crop plants require pollination.
- One out of every 3 bites of food we eat is courtesy of a pollinator that has moved pollen from one flower to another allowing a fruit (seed) to form.
- Birds and other animals are even more dependent upon fruits and seeds than humans.
- Pollinators keep plant communities healthy and able to thrive (reproduce), maintaining a healthy biodiversity.
- Pollinator-supported plant communities bind the soil, helping to prevent erosion that could wash away our healthy soil.

Next time you feel a sneeze coming on, cover your mouth and remember that pollen keeps us fed and keeps the natural world healthy, diverse, and beautiful!
Celebrating A Shared History

As you know, the Domes is celebrating its 50th Birthday this year. To celebrate this milestone, we would love to hear your stories about special memories of times at the Domes – were you married or engaged here? Did you come to the grand opening and meet Lady Bird Johnson at the official ribbon cutting? Send your stories and pictures to friendsofthedomes@gmail.com or mail them to The Friends of the Domes

Act: Sally Sullivan 524 S. Layton Blvd. Milwaukee, WI 53215

The first story we are sharing comes from Friends’ staff...

A few of us at the Friends of the Domes have our own special story beginning at the very conception of the Mitchell Park Domes. In the 1950’s, Milwaukee County held a design competition for a new Mitchell Park Conservatory to replace the original conservatory built in 1898. The winning design was created by Donald Grieb, a Milwaukee architect, who happened to have dated our mother, Betty. Betty’s relationship was short lived, but he later served during WWll in the Pacific theater with our father, Eddie. Don and our dad remained friends over the years and kept in touch even after Don moved to Arizona. Don was thrilled to know that three of Eddie and Betty’s daughters work for the Friends of the Domes with the mission of helping to keep his most special project a valued Milwaukee treasure.

Story and photo contributed by Eddie and Betty’s daughters: Mary Phillips – Domes Gift Shop Manager; Liz Feiring – Domes Event and Volunteer Coordinator; Sally Sullivan – FOD Business Manager and Membership Coordinator

A Special Thank You

A big thank you to Phil Razga for serving the Friends of the Domes as Acting President for the past three years! The Friends of the Domes Board of Directors will be electing new officers at their June Board Meeting. Our new president will be introduced in our next newsletter.

Thank you Phil for your service on our volunteer board. We are all grateful for your leadership.

Sunny Gifts Under Glass

By Jake Merck

Editor

For this issue of Inside the Domes, I had the pleasure of talking to two inspiring women whose products can be purchased at the Domes’ gift shop. They share a passion for their craft and have both found a way to take bits of Milwaukee and turn them into art.

You love plants but work in an office with no light or just don’t have a green thumb, what do you do? The Domes’ Gift Shop has the answer!

Meet Cory O’Brien...

Cory studies jewelry making and metal smithing at UWM. For as long as she can remember, she has been interested in sculpture. It came together for her when she visited the New York MOMA. She had traveled extensively through Europe, but the exhibit brought her to explore the otherworldly—3D art-scapes that made her rethink what she believed about the world and art.

When she had the opportunity to take a breadth from her studies, she realized her passion: letting her imagination go wild. She began creating terrariums and everyone was attracted to them. It was the perfect outlet for her creativity and others’ love for extraordinary art. The terrariums you will see at the gift shop include delicate wearable pendants and landscapes in light bulbs, vases, and other repurposed vessels.

In addition to the nature oriented pieces you will find at the gift shop, Cory also enjoys creating modern and steampunk pieces from reclaimed and recycled materials. She creates many of her pieces from natural materials—wild flowers she forages in the fall (when nature dries them perfect for use), sand she collects from the shores of Lake Michigan, and natural moss.

You may see some of her jewelry at the Domes’ Gift Shop in the future and can also see her work this summer at Bay View Gallery Nights or Art in the Park in Zellman Park in Bay View.