



## UPCOMING FLORAL SHOWS

- June 1 — September 8  
Fathoms Below Undersea  
Garden Show
- September 21 —  
November 10 Welcome  
to 100 Acre Woods
- November 23—January 5  
Classical Christmas Show  
Holiday Show

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About Protecting  
Soil?

# Inside the Domes

MITCHELL PARK HORTICULTURAL CONSERVATORY

## SPECIAL SUMMER EDITION

### INSIDER INFORMATION for FOD Members

Who's **LIVING** in the Domes?? *See page 4*

Who's **WORKING** in the Domes?? *See page 2*

The interviews you won't want to miss!

## Pollinators Under Pressure The Education Center's Pollinator Week

National Pollinator Week is a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what can be done to protect them. Visit the Mitchell Park Domes Education Center during Pollinator Week, daily Monday, June 17 through Friday, June 23, 2019. Choose one of the following two-hour sessions—either 10:00 AM to Noon OR Noon to 2:00 PM. (The same session is repeated two times each day, topics vary each day of the week.)

This year's theme is "Pollinators Under Pressure." Vital, informative topics will be covered each day including:

- Loss of year-round food and forage supply
- Loss, destruction, and fracturing of habitats
- Mismanagement and stressing of honey bees
- Ignorance about pollinators in general
- Pollution in general, including chemicals in air, water, and soil
- Use and misuse of pesticides (neonicotinoids), herbicides (like Round-Up), and fungicides

Our pollinators can't afford you missing this week! Each day you attend, you will receive a plant and resources to take home. You will be invited to view short films (one narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio and another narrated by Meryl Streep) and learn lots of information about pollinators. There will be a variety of activities for everyone in the family, from building a pollinator castle for our pollinating friends to becoming a pollinator.

**When:** Daily Monday, June 17 through Friday, June 23. Choose one of the following two-hour sessions (as both sessions cover the same material) 10:00 AM to Noon OR Noon to 2:00 PM

**Cost:** Free for FOD members; non-members, regular admission prices apply.



## From the Director's Chair...

By Sandy Folaron, Director of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory

It is with mixed feelings that I have made the decision to retire this summer. Mixed, because there is so much work left to do, but just like my tenure here came at a time when the Domes was in a state of transition, so now it is time for a new chapter and new leadership to move the Conservatory forward and serve the next generation of visitors.

I feel good about our accomplishments: facilitating popular and well-attended events from Music Under Glass to ethnic festivals, several years of Winter Farmer's Markets, and even days for Steampunks, Princesses, and Fairies; major upgrades to both the interior and exterior of the facility; the building of new County Greenhouses; addition of LED lighting installations and shows; increased attendance and all the accommodations that came with it; expanded media coverage and promotions that put us back in the spotlight; and the creation of new programs and initiatives by our staff as well as the Friends. The only constant here in the last decade was continual "change"!

I have not travelled this path alone...through all of our accomplishments and the challenges that came with them (closings, inspections, invasive construction projects, etc.) there has been one unvarying factor—that the Friends of the Domes Board and its members have always had my back! They embraced my ideas, supported my work, not just with funding, but with a positive attitude, and willingness to change things up and take risks! Equally as important, a sense of humor that got us all through the tough times! The Conservatory has grown not only in members and attendance but in the value it serves to the community, both local and far reaching.

So now the page is turning, and a new chapter must be written for the future of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory. I'll still be around, but just "smelling the roses" a bit more. It's been a grand ride! Thank you for these amazing memories and the opportunity to turn the page in my own way..... Adieu!

Sandy



## Coming to the Show Dome...

June 1 through September 8 in the Show Dome—Explore a summer garden inspired by the depths of the ocean floor! Colorful fish sculptures will swirl around plants that resemble those one might find 'Under the Sea.' The scene will be complete with variety of bright succulents and vivid 'Under the Sea Series' coleus, a decorative coral reef, and a mysterious sunken ship.



Plants in the greenhouse, almost ready to move to the Show Dome!



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## Letter from the Executive Director

By Sally Sullivan, Friends of the Domes Executive Director

Dear Members,

Happy spring and welcome summer! Doesn't it feel good to say that? As we look back on this past fiscal year, the FOD is very happy to report that our fundraising events have been better than ever, with several selling out ahead of time, providing alternate and creative ways to visit the Domes to thousands of Milwaukee-area residents and raising funds to aid us in our mission to support this beautiful conservatory.

We are sad to say goodbye to Kelsey Simon, our first FOD Education Director, who has moved on to another position. We wish her all the best as she moves on in her career. Kelsey has created and established the groundwork for our new FOD Education programming. She leaves us in good hands to continue her work under a new FOD Education Director (to be announced soon!)

Progress on the future of the Domes is slow but steady. Active efforts for the glazing study and concrete testing work are underway which will provide solid information to support options being recommended. County funding has been allocated to proceed with Phase Three of the Task Force Study.

Another farewell is in order. We congratulate Sandy Folaron, the Director of the Domes for the past 13 years, on her retirement at the end of June. Sandy helped to breathe new life into the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, creatively encouraging use of this facility for things like ethnic festivals, Music Under Glass, Gardens & Gears, Very Fairy Princess Day. She has assembled an incredibly talented Horticultural staff to maintain the conservatory's world class plant collection. She has also been a champion for the Friends of the Domes in all the activities we have run over the years. Sandy has truly left her mark on the Conservatory and leaves a legacy of innovation and inspiration. The Conservatory is a better place for having her in the lead for the past 13 years!

We hope to see you all over the summer!

Sally Sullivan



*We wish Sandy Folaron, Director of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, all the best in retirement!*

**Thank you** to our advertisers! By purchasing ads in this newsletter, they have helped to underwrite its production costs. This frees up more resources for us to support the Domes!

## Birds of a Feather... Get Well Together

By Marian French

Desert Dome Horticulturist

At the start of this spring in the Desert Dome, things were looking up. The sun came out for a few days, the temperature was warming nicely to accommodate blooming and growing succulents, and our two newest rosy Bourke's parrots, Ruby and Rodney, were introduced into the dome.

However, they had only been in the Desert Dome for a few days when something was obviously wrong. They weren't happy and energetic anymore. They had started to slow down. Ruby, in particular, was looking downright sick. They allowed themselves to be captured and then a vet examined each of them. Ruby and Rodney had caught bad respiratory infections and for the two weeks that followed, they were kept in their cage and administered antibiotics twice a day.

The happy news is that they are off of their medication now and looking healthy, but the sad news is they may never be fully released into the dome again. Due to the aging, inefficient systems that control the climates in the domes, we now know that there is a great risk of these fragile birds getting sick again if they fly freely. Despite every attempt to keep the Desert Dome at a higher spring-time temperature, leaking air vents and structural leaks letting in the rain have contributed to unusually cold, wet conditions. The ring-neck doves are still doing well, as they are a hardier species that can naturally handle greater temperature changes. But for Ruby and Rodney, we are looking into options that still involve interaction with the public but keep them safe and healthy.

You might imagine that the bills for such attentive care would be costly, and you would be right. Each animal that we keep here in the Domes is a treasured mem-



ber of our team, an integral part of the whole garden experience for our visitors. Because of Friends of the Domes members like you we are able to complete the "ecosystem" that is presented in the Tropical Dome and the Desert Dome.

**Please** consider adding (or continuing!) your support through an Animal Sponsorship (see page 6 and 7). Your donations will help ensure that these beautiful, interesting, adorable, and educational creatures remain a part of everyone's future visits to the Domes.

## Meet the Amazing Horticulturists Who Care for our World Class Plant Collection

Introducing the horticulturists who care for the plants and animals in the Domes every day, prepare for the amazing seasonal shows in the show Dome, and work tirelessly to keep the Conservatory healthy and beautiful.

### Clay

Clay is a native of Appleton, WI who has worked as one of the Greenhouse Horticulturists for about five and a half years. When he was younger, he was interested in computers and initially began college pursuing global studies. As a sophomore at the University of Minnesota on a track and field scholarship, he discovered a plant propagation course. He knew at that point he had discovered the direction he wanted his career to go, so he transferred to Horticulture.

Before starting at the Domes, he held many horticulture related jobs, including research and teaching positions. Even when he worked at a restaurant, he designed the outdoor gardens in the patio area.

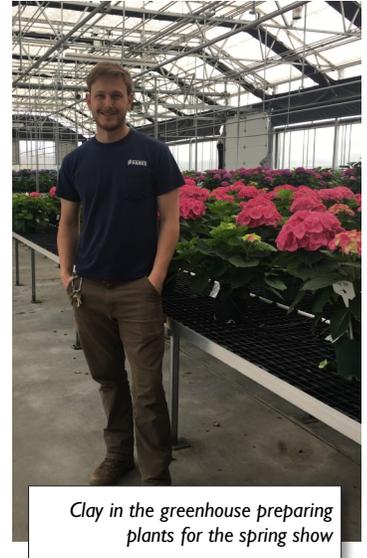
His favorite plant at the Domes is the *Hybanthus prunifolius* located in the Tropical Dome. It only blooms one to two weeks each year, but when it is in bloom, it is very fragrant and smells like root beer! He particularly enjoys growing fragrant plants such as the variety of scented geraniums now in the Show Dome perimeter. Another favorite is the Kings Mums grown for the Fall Show as they can be made to cascade in a display. His goal is to grow more rare and unique plants such as the different species of mescal or saffron.

When asked what he would like people to know about the Domes, Clay replied “that it’s an ever-changing place. To really appreciate it you have to pay attention to the details and come through each season to view the changes over time.”

One of the more stressful aspects of his job is timing the plants for the Show Dome—from growing hydrangea (which only shows color for about 4 weeks) to ensuring the tulips bloom for the opening of the Spring Show with varying dates every year.

Pest control is another difficult part of the job. The horts have to balance managing pests with maintaining a safe ecological environment. They meet each challenge with continuing education, like the biological controls workshop he attended at the American Hort Cultivate Conference in 2018.

At home, Clay loves growing vegetables, canning, preserving, and fermenting. He and a group of friends are in the early stage of starting a 14 acre co-op organic farm in Oak Creek. This summer, he is also planning a road-trip vacation up the west coast and plans to visit as many botanical gardens as he can along the way.



*Clay in the greenhouse preparing plants for the spring show*

### Marian

Marian, the horticulturist in charge of the Desert Dome, is a native of Kenosha, WI. She has many fond memories of visiting the Domes with family every winter to “breathe some oxygen.” These visits were magical. Her father was an avid gardener and had a major influence on her love of plants. In fact, you might come across her father’s boots serving as a planter for a silver jade plant in the Desert Dome.

Marian earned a biology degree from UW Stevens Point and served as an intern at Olbrich Gardens in Madison. She worked at various nurseries during and after college until she landed her dream job at the Domes. She began as a floater between the three Domes and eventually was put in charge of the Desert Dome. Although this is now her main responsibility, she enthusiastically maintains “I love all plants!”

Marian worries that the issues facing the Domes could jeopardize the sustainability of some of the really old plants in the Domes. Many plants in the Desert Dome are original to the Domes making them over 50 years old. Some could be 70 years or older.

Marian takes very special care of the birds in the Desert Dome as well as Steve, the bearded dragon. One of her favorite plants in this Dome is the Boojum tree.

At home Marian grows vegetables and flowers—she told us she grows everything! She has a prairie garden in her front yard and woodlands in her back yard.

One of the things she is most proud of is introducing the Day of the Dead (Dia de los Muertos) celebration at the Domes. This began as a small exhibit she created in the Desert Dome, a display perfectly suited for the desert environment. The high interest and reverence patrons showed to the display led Dia de los Muertos to become a full-out cultural celebration at the Conservatory. This Mexican holiday is celebrated at the Domes at the end of October and is attended by people from all over the Milwaukee area. Thank you for bringing this celebration to the Domes, Marian!



*Marian in the Desert Dome with Steve, our Bearded Dragon*

## Maria

Maria, the Show Dome Horticulturist, brings both passion and an international background to the team. Although she was born in nearby Kenosha, her father is Greek, and her family moved to Greece when she was four. She returned to the US when she was 18 but she still has family there. Growing up in Greece, she developed a passion for and incredible knowledge of Mediterranean sub-tropical plants. "That is where my heart is in the gardening world." One of her favorite gardens in the US is Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, known for its Mediterranean garden collection.

You will see this Mediterranean influence reflected in the perimeter plants in the Show Dome where she has introduced olive, fig, and lemon trees. To compliment these, scented geraniums, eucalyptus, rosemary, and lavender line the pathways.

Maria grew up loving to garden and has always been happiest "when covered in really good dirt." She earned her degree in Conservation Biology from UWM but spent some time searching for a career path. She worked at a greenhouse and floral market where she learned about annuals and perennials and did floral design. Her life changed when she met a visiting farmer from Finland. Because of her dual citizenship, she is technically a EU citizen which allowed her to visit and work on his farm during the growing season. As you can imagine, being so far north, the growing season in Finland is short and intense. She worked about 80 hours a week, getting involved in every aspect of the farm from seeding, planting, plant care, harvesting, packaging, and selling. After she returned to the United States, seeking job security and benefits, she worked in a chemical lab. This work left her feeling caged, so she took a risk and worked a season at Boerner Botanical Gardens which led her to the horticultural position at the Domes.

Maria was put in charge of the Show Dome with its challenging schedule of seasonal shows. Once a show is open to the public in the Show Dome, work begins immediately to plan and prepare for the next show. It never stops! One of her goals has been to make the perimeter of the Dome (the part that does not change seasonally) equally attractive and interesting for visitors - a job she has skillfully accomplished.

Listening to Maria talk about plants and gardening is like poetry. She eloquently describes a philosophy of life intertwined with her technical knowledge of horticulture. She explained, "when I garden, I feel better emotionally." This sentiment was clear when she described her love of the olive tree. Her goal was to introduce an olive tree into the Show Dome. We now have two! These trees are at most 10 years old but in their native environments the oldest are more than 2,000 years old. "Let that sink in!" The oldest olive tree in Greece is on the island of Crete. She not only appreciates the tree for its fruit, but also the quality of the wood, and the fact that they survive in such poor soil and drought conditions. For these characteristics, they symbolize peace and wisdom. She added, "I never knew I could fall in love with a tree."

At home Maria grows things she can cook with: mint, cilantro, basil (for its fragrance and to repel mosquitoes!) She also enjoys the podcast *We Dig Plants* which explores history and plants. The website aspires to "bring culture to horticulture."



Maria in Greece with an ancient Olive Tree

## Rory

Rory, a native of Merton, WI, has been working as a greenhouse horticulturalist since September 2018. He came to the Domes from Boerner Botanical Gardens where he worked for two seasons in the Annual Garden and the Rain Harvest Garden.

Rory began his studies by earning an associate degree in arts and science with an emphasis on literature. After graduation, he felt limited by the career choices of his degree and spent some time working odd jobs and traveling. The highlight of his travels was spending 6 weeks in India. There he discovered a love of plants and decided to go back to school with a new path in mind. He received his certification from MATC in several areas including Plant Horticulture and Greenhouse Production. While at MATC, he was the only student employee during construction of the MATC greenhouse.

When asked what he would most like people to know about the Domes, he replied that visitors should take their time here. There is so much beyond a quick stroll through the gardens. He recommends thoughtful engagement with the plants as "living, breathing sharers of the world." He advises visitors to "disconnect from technology, slow down, and appreciate the limitlessness of the timeline of plant life."

Although not a plant at the Domes, his favorite plant is the *Comptonia peregrina*, a sweet fern, very fragrant and native to Wisconsin.

Within the Domes, one of his favorites is the Buddhist Pine Tree (see photo) in the Show Dome. "There is something so friendly about them!"

At home Rory, has nearly 80 house plants! Outdoors he grows native pollinator plants and vegetables. His pumpkins and gourds even spill into his neighbor's yard. In addition to plants, he also loves his two dogs but says that it can be a challenge to keep them out of the gardens. To keep harmony, he constructed pathways through the gardens to allow the dogs their designated space while protecting the plants. It's a great ecosystem!

Looking forward, Rory is becoming more and more interested in plant research in the areas of propagation and genetics and is interested in starting breeding programs.



Rory in the Show Dome next to a Buddhist Pine Tree

# Meet the Amazing Animals who Call the Domes their Home and Learn How You Can Help Them!

Introducing the wide variety of animals who live in the Domes, enjoying the stable, beautiful climates just as much as our visitors do, and assisting the horticulturists with keeping our plants pest-free and healthy. In addition, they add to the ambiance that truly transports visitors to another environment. **Our animals rely on sponsorship from people just like you** for the high quality food and care they receive. Please meet them and consider becoming a sponsor. Animal sponsorship also makes a unique, memorable, and easy-to-give gift!

## American Toad

**Native to:** North Eastern United States and South Eastern Canada

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Insects and spiders

**Other Facts:** When cold weather comes, these toads dig backwards and bury themselves in the dirt of their summer homes, or they may choose another site in which to hibernate. They secrete bufotoxin, a poisonous substance meant to make the toad unpalatable to potential predators. Bufotoxin is a mild poison compared to that of other poisonous toads and frogs, but it can irritate human skin and is dangerous to smaller animals (including dogs) when ingested.



## Bearded Dragon— Steve

**Native to:** Australia

**Lives in:** Desert Dome

**Eats:** Insects including crickets and worms; leafy greens

**Other Facts:** Bearded dragons display a hand-waving gesture to show submission and a head-bobbing display to show dominance between dragons. They have the ability to change color during rivalry challenges between males, in response to ambient temperature changes such as turning black to absorb heat, and other stimuli. In addition, the underside of their throats can turn black if they are stressed or see a potential rival.



## Bishops Weaver

**Native to:** Africa. They now can be found in parts of California, Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico as escaped pets have established nesting populations in these areas.

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Mainly seeds (especially grass seeds) and insects

**Other Facts:** The male Weaver performs a courtship display by slowly flying over his territory with his red and black body plumage fully puffed out. The male builds the nest, a spherical mass of plant stems with the entrance on the side, and the female adds finer material inside to line the nest.



## Bourke's Parrots— Ruby and Rodney

**Native to:** Australia

**Lives in:** Desert Dome

**Eats:** Grasses and seeds

**Other Facts:** The Bourke's parrot has a clutch of 3 to 6 eggs, which are incubated by the female for 18–19 days. Once the chicks hatch both parents feed their young. Offspring become fully independent around 8 to 10 days after fledging. While the female Bourke's parrot is incubating the eggs, she is fed by the male Bourke's parrot.



## Coqui Frog

**Native to:** Puerto Rico

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Spiders, moths, crickets, snails, and small frogs

**Other Facts:** The species is named for the loud call the males make at night. This sound serves two purposes. "CO" serves to repel males and establish territory while the "KEE" serves to attract females. The common coquí is a very important aspect of Puerto Rican culture, and it has become an unofficial symbol of Puerto Rico.



## Green Singing Finch

**Native to:** Africa, south of the Sahara; introduced to Hawaii and now living on three of the islands.

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Insects and seeds

**Other Facts:** Green singing finches, also known as yellow-fronted canaries, fill our Tropical Dome with their beautiful songs. Their chipper chirp sounds like "Zee-zeree-chereeo." In the wild, they often built nests of various plant fibers bound with spider webs. They are a monogamous species.



## Koi

**Native to:** Japan

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Koi are bottom feeders with a mouth configuration adapted for that. When kept, they are omnivores that eat a wide variety of foods, including algae, peas, lettuce, and watermelon.



**Other Facts:** Koi are carp. The Japanese name *nishikigoi* literally means “brocade carp.” Carp were first bred for color mutations in China more than a thousand years ago, where selective breeding of the Prussian carp (*Carassius gibelio*) led to the development of the goldfish. Koi have been reported to achieve ages of 100–200 years.

## Ring Neck Doves— Ishaq, Shafi, Khalil, and Fazil

**Native to:** The Middle East, East and Southern Africa

**Lives in:** Desert Dome

**Eats:** Whole seeds; because they eat seeds whole, they need grit in their diet to digest them.



**Other Facts:** Ring-necked doves are popular pets that have been bred for thousands of years. They are known for their easy-going nature and gentleness. They depend on surface water. In the wild, they gather around lakes and watering holes in large flocks drink and bathe.

## Poison Dart Frog

*Epipedobates tricolor* (aka anthonyi) or the Phantasmal Dart or Ghost Dart Frog

Note: Have no fears! The Poison Dart Frogs in the Tropical Dome are **not** poisonous because they do not eat a diet that would make them toxic.

**Native to:** Tropical Central and South America, specifically Ecuador and Peru

**Lives in:** Tropical Dome

**Eats:** Dart Frog species with higher degrees of toxicity eat diets of ants, mites, and termites; less toxic species eat a wider variety of prey.



**Other Facts:** This is the common name for a large group of frogs. These amphibians are often called "dart frogs" due to the Amerindians' indigenous use of their toxic secretions to poison the tips of blowdarts. However, of over 170 species, only four have been documented as used for this purpose. They like to sit on large leaves and broadcast their bird like call. Some species bright colors indicate higher toxicity, while other brightly colored frogs simply mimic the toxic specie's coloring and are not actually toxic.

Adult frogs lay their eggs in moist places. Once the eggs hatch, the adult carries the tadpoles on their back, one at a time, to suitable water. The tadpoles remain there until they metamorphose, fed by unfertilized eggs laid at regular intervals by the mother.

The new red dart frogs are able to call the Domes their home thanks to a generous donation from board member Peter Smiley. Thank you Peter!

## Sponsor the animals who call the Domes home

Your one-year sponsorship will provide your chosen animal a higher quality of life. It will provide specialty foods, supplements, and veterinary care. Your help is vital to continuing to provide the best care possible for our animals. Sponsorship is just \$20 per animal [one exception - \$30 to sponsor our Bearded Dragon]. You will receive a “Sponsor packet” that includes a natural history profile of your sponsored animal, a color photo, and a certificate of sponsorship. If your sponsorship is a gift for someone special, we will contact you for information about who you would like to receive the Sponsor packet (it makes a cherished gift for both animal lovers and children of all ages!)

Fill out and mail this form to The Friends of the Domes, 524 S. Layton Boulevard, Milwaukee, WI 53215 with your payment, or sponsor online—just go to our website: [www.milwaukeehomes.org](http://www.milwaukeehomes.org), click Get Involved, and then select Animal Sponsorships

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this sponsorship a gift?:  Yes  No

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment: \$20 Per Animal, Bearded Dragon, \$30. Checks payable to **Friends of the Domes** or provide credit card information. Your purchase is a tax deductible donation under IRS 501(C)3.

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ CSV: \_\_\_\_\_ **Please Check Box(es) to indicate which animals you would like to sponsor:**

### Frogs and Reptiles:

- American Toad \$20
- Coqui Frog \$20
- Green and Red Poison Dart Frog \$20
- Bearded Dragon \$30

### Birds:

- Bishop's Weaver \$20
- Bourke's Parrot \$20
- Green Singing Finch \$20
- Ring-neck Doves \$20

### Fish:

- Koi \$20

**Thank You So Much!**

## A Special Thank you!

By Sandy Folaron, Director of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory

For over two decades, the Conservatory Train Shows have depended on volunteers to share and run their own collectible G-scale model trains daily in the show. This is what makes the Train Show both interesting and different for returning guests. I'd like to recognize all those volunteers who are members of the Wisconsin Garden Railroad Society, Kenosha G-Scalers, Midwest Rails, and the Glacial Railroad Club. Their dedication and reliability in making sure the trains are running efficiently as well as the interactions and knowledge they shared with our visitors is so appreciated. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention their fearless leader, Bob DuFresne! Bob has long been involved with our Train Shows and continues to be an advocate and a support for everything from installation to volunteer staffing to repairs and replacements! Thank You, BOB!



On another note, I'd like to also acknowledge Kent Hadley. Kent is a member of the Friends and generously offered to help whenever there was an opening. He filled in on snowy weekends, last minute requests, and proved not only his proficiency in "running" trains, but his people skills when engaging with the hundreds of students and kids that came in during his time in the Show Dome! With another successful train show now behind us, and attendance reaching over 62,000, we've already begun to plan and look ahead to 2020 when Attack of the Giant Monsters Train Show returns! See you there!



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## Celebrating a Shared History...

In celebration of our recent 50th anniversary, we asked you to send us your favorite pictures and stories of memorable times at the Domes. This story comes to us from FOD member Susan Wilde and the Komp family...

Susan and the Komp family shared memories of Nancy Komp (pictured top right with her daughters Catherine Komp and Janice Bloch and granddaughter Jillian Bloch, in 2008). Nancy enjoyed being in nature and felt that being inside the Domes lifted her spirits, especially in the winter. They have purchased pavers in the Domes as a special memorial to Nancy.

Susan shared that her father, George Wiesehuegel, worked on the HVAC for the Domes when they were built. He worked for Swisher/Hessler Company who installed the Trane Company equipment in the top of the domes. He took great pride in his part of the new conservatory.

The love of the Domes has been passed down to the children in the family. Susan and her husband brought their children to the Domes (pictured lower right, Max Wilde with their son Paul in 1974) and now those grown boys have a love of the outdoors and gardens of their own.

If you would like to share a story with photo(s) for this feature, please email it to Sally Sullivan at [sallysullivan.fod@milwaukeeedomes.org](mailto:sallysullivan.fod@milwaukeeedomes.org)



## Reminder...

**For up-to-date information about our events** Visit <https://milwaukeeedomes.org> and click Events in the top menu

**For up-to-date information about our adult education opportunities** Visit <https://milwaukeeedomes.org> and click to Education in the top menu, then select Adult Education

## Stop and Smell the Hemp?!?

By Sandy Folaron, Director of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory

On April 22nd, the Parks Department provided a report and recommendation to the Parks Committee in response to the Request for Information (RFI) that was issued in December for proposals. This RFI was to obtain information from others outside the County to provide possible options for utilizing all or part of the greenhouse facility in the consideration of growing hemp.

The three responses, in short, that were submitted were:

1. Not to grow hemp and focus on other uses of the greenhouse with a higher public purpose
2. Grow hemp and hire the applicants to manage the operation.
3. A business plan submitted to grow hemp which would require a \$200,000 initial investment for infrastructure and the addition of a solar power system to reduce utilities at an unknown expense.

There was much animated dialogue and input discussing the potential value and revenue that might be generated with this endeavor and the potential of that revenue supporting the Parks Department as well as the Conservatory's restoration or repair project. There was a lack of confirmed numbers that reflected the complete scope of the initial investment that would be needed (security, additional staff, grow lights, commodities, other operational infrastructure, and effects on greenhouse water usage and utilities). Much of this is still unknown.

The Parks recommendation was to wait on this initiative and allow the State of Wisconsin time to resolve the issues of legalization and oversight of both hemp and marijuana production in the state. Given that growing hemp is an industrial agricultural operation that requires vast amounts of land to be profitable, and since the Greenhouses do not have additional space to accommodate these growing operations without impacting the growing of crops for both the Domes Floral Shows as well as Boerner Botanical Gardens, it was suggested that more research be conducted before investing in a research program which may be better suited to an academic institution or a full-fledged industrial hemp growing operation.

This information will be shared with the full Board of Supervisors in the near future for their input.



**Commercial Midwestern Hemp farming in a greenhouse, Waseca, Minnesota**

A new event hosted  
by the Friends of the Domes!

Sponsored by  WATERSTONE BANK



Save the date:  
**Saturday, September 21**  
7pm-10pm  
6pm for VIP

A beer tasting event  
featuring local breweries,  
food, & live music!

Join us at the Domes!  
Must be 21

<https://milwaukeedomes.org>

## A Brief Memorial

By Marian French, Desert Dome Horticulturist  
Angus, our blue and pink Bourke's parrot, was recently captured and was being monitored for not only a serious respiratory infection but also a dislocated foot that he was unable to use. Sadly, after a week of painkillers, antibiotics, and attentive feedings, Angus passed away. He will be dearly missed.



## Gifts Under Glass

Summer is here and that means finding creative ways to keep the kids learning and having fun outside! The gift shop has gardening supplies for kids and adults. We also have books, toys, and potted plants for the long rainy days when they need indoor fun! Remember, members always receive a 10% discount.



## Adult Education Program Updates

By Kelsey Simon, Director of FOD Adult Education

What a wonderful Spring of 2019 for the Adult Education Program! We sold out almost every class with great attendance and a fantastic variety of topics covered. We had a great Medicinal Herb Tour series from Kyle Denton at Tippecanoe Herbs, a Starting from Seed lecture from Ange at Wisconsin Garden and Pet, and even a Composting workshop from our own Education Director, Kelsey Wallisch Simon.

Our first annual 12 Plants that Changed the World event was a great hit! We had such a good time learning from each of our engaged vendors and student volunteers based on each plant represented on our Game Changers exhibit in the Tropical Dome. We look forward to seeing you there next year with a new set of plants to celebrate!

This season we are excited to host a 3-part painting series in the Show Dome on June 8, July 13, and August 10 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM with Ashley Annachinno. If you are interested in this class, please check the website for availability as our classes have been filling up quickly! We also have a class partnering with Riveredge Nature Center: Tie-Dying with Nature on June 16 at 12:30 PM. Experience beautiful Riveredge on Father's Day to explore making dyes and creating a unique gift of your own.

We will be adding more classes throughout the summer. Learn about gardening, natural health, and the amazing world of plants. To be the first to learn about new classes, we encourage you to bookmark our website at [milwaukeedomes.org/adult-programs](http://milwaukeedomes.org/adult-programs) and visit often or "like" us on social media to get all of the updates!

### Class and Workshop Calendar\*:

3-day Workshop: June 8, July 13, and August 10	Special 3-Part Painting Series in the Show Dome
June 16	Tye-dying with Nature at Riveredge Nature Center

\*These are just a few of the scheduled classes that have availability at the time the newsletter was created. We are always adding more adult education courses, including more photography and cooking classes. Check out the interactive Events Calendar on our website [www.milwaukeedomes.org](http://www.milwaukeedomes.org) to find more!

## Now that you have read about us, see if you can find us!

Come visit us, the animals who live at the Domes! We are excited to meet the people who learned more about us in this newsletter and especially those who are able to sponsor us (see page 7). We love living in the Domes and are happy to contribute to the health of the plants and the ambiance of the conservatory! See if you can spot us, but remember, don't touch or get too close!

### Tropical Dome:

- American Toad
- Bishop's Weaver
- Blue and Green Poison Dart Frog
- Coqui Frog
- Green Singing Finch
- Koi

### Desert Dome:

- Bearded Dragon
- Bourke's Parrot
- Ring-neck Doves



THE FRIENDS OF THE DOMES

# Green Sheet

Spring 2019



## How Mulch Do you Know About Protecting Your Soil?

By Julie Merck, FOD Newsletter Editor & Kelsey Simon, Dir. of FOD Adult Ed.

Many home gardeners appreciate the clean look of a freshly mulched flower bed. But they may not be aware of the benefits to soil, plants, and even the environment to mulching.

Gardeners can choose between organic mulch and inorganic mulch. In this context, organic mulch is any natural mulch that will decompose including wood chips, pine straw, grass clippings, and crushed leaves. Inorganic mulch materials include crushed stone, pebbles, and plastic or rubber chips.

Although organic mulch needs to be replaced more frequently than inorganic mulches, there are several benefits to choosing it. Organic mulch is generally less expensive. Organic mulch will break down over time and contribute to soil health increasing your soil's fertility. Organic mulch can help insulate the soil around your plants' roots so that the roots do not get too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter. Some types, including cypress, cedar, or pinewood chip may even repel ticks, gnats, and fleas. Those who maintain completely organic gardens (free of all chemicals, pesticides, etc.) will want to look for a natural mulch that does not contain dye.

Inorganic mulches offer a lower-maintenance solution as it can last for many seasons. This can be preferable for large landscaped areas.

Another factor to keep in mind when choosing a mulch is soil pH. An inorganic mulch will not change the soil's pH. Pine straw or peat moss can acidify soil, great for gardeners growing acid-loving plants (such as azaleas, holly, trillium, begonias, and dogwood). On the other end of the pH (and cost) scale is hardwood mulch, which tends to be

the most expensive organic mulch. Hardwood bark mulch tends to make soil more alkaline or "sweet." As it decomposes it turns into that rich, sweet smelling black dirt that so many of us long to dig our fingers and put our plants' roots into!

In general, a simple bark mulch—less expensive than the hardwood mulch—spread about 3 inches thick around the base of all of your trees and plants is a great organic mulch option.

It is also important to know that you can over-mulch, especially trees and shrubs. This can lead to oxygen starvation, inner bark death, and diseases. Keep your mulch to about 3 inches deep. For soil with poor drainage, use even less and opt for a coarser mulch. Never pile it right up



**Left: Good**—The mulch is low right around the trunk of the tree

**Below: Bad**—Mulch is high up the bark on the trunk or "Volcanoed"

against the stems or trunks.

Ideally, you will want to mulch twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall (protect those roots in winter!) A good rule of thumb—when it starts to feel warm, mulch your garden, when it starts to feel chilly, mulch your garden. Remember, potted plants and vegetable gardens need the benefits and protection of mulch too!

In addition to the benefits described above, all mulches—organic and inorganic—help soil to retain moisture. They also provide protection from soil erosion, chemical-free



Mulching around plants and trees to a depth of about 3 inches each spring and fall is recommended

weed control, and physical protection from mechanical tools like weed eaters and lawnmowers. BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!! Several university research studies have shown that using mulch has a notable effect in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Yes! Researchers from the University of British Columbia studying the use of wood mulch in apple orchards and vineyards found that agricultural mulching can cut nitrous oxide emissions up to 28 percent. Nitrous oxide is a greenhouse gas that is 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Nitrous oxide emitted from soil accounts for at least half of agricultural emissions that contribute to climate change. (This research was published in the journal *Agricultural Water Management*). Your planting areas may not be large enough to qualify as "agricultural," but why not reduce where you can?

Another study in Benin (West Africa) found that mulching rice soils with rice straw notably reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while increasing yield.

Exciting studies like these remind us that many of the practices that are good for our gardens, good for our Earth, good for us, are things that have come naturally to gardeners for centuries. If you haven't already done it this spring, go get mulching!

**Note:** Please visit a professional garden center for advice specific to your yard conditions and your gardening objectives.



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## SPECIAL SUMMER EDITION

INSIDER INFORMATION for FOD Members

Who's LIVING in the Domes?? Page 6  
Who's WORKING in the Domes?? Page 4

*Details inside this issue!*

### FRIENDS of the DOMES 2019 BOARD of DIRECTORS

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Noel Marsho	Assistant Events Coordinator
Mary Philipp	Gift Shop Manager/ Buyer
Deb Schiel	Resource Development
Carrie Kelroy	Volunteer Coordinator

### Upcoming Events\*

June 17 –21 .....	Pollination Station
September 14 & 15 .....	Orchid Show & Sale
September 21 .....	Rhythm & Brews

\*Events subject to change. Please visit our website and click Events.