



UPCOMING FLORAL SHOWS

- Through September 12
Love Your Parks
- September 25—
November 7
Mushrooms, Mosses, and Mums
- November 20 —January 3, 2022
Holiday Floral Show

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MITCHELL PARK HORTICULTURAL CONSERVATORY

New Permanent FOD Member Cards for Domes Admission and Reciprocity

The Friends of the Domes always looks for ways to grow greener as an organization and to use our funds to best benefit the Domes. We are no longer printing membership expiration dates on membership cards. This change will eliminate the need to print new cards for every member each year. When your card is scanned at the admissions booth, your expiration date will show up on the computer.



When you use your membership card to visit other gardens, there are two ways to show their staff that your membership is up-to-date:

- The easiest way! If you have a mobile device with access to the internet: When you are at the admissions desk of the facility you are visiting **have your device and your membership card ready**. Open the FOD website www.milwaukeedomes.org on your device and click MEMBERSHIP BOOTH on the home page (or just click the blue link here [MEMBERSHIP BOOTH](#)). Enter the member number in the top right of your FOD membership card and your last name, then click VIEW EXPIRATION DATE. Your current membership expiration date will display. Show this to the admissions staff.
- If you do not have a mobile device or prefer not to use the Membership Booth, please save the paper renewal letter that you receive in the mail each year that shows your membership expiration date. Keep this letter with your membership card.

Be Prepared—When you are planning your trip to a reciprocal garden, access the FOD website’s Membership Booth to confirm your membership is active and has not lapsed **before you leave home**.

For information about reciprocity, visit the Friends of the Domes website, click Get Involved, then select Membership. [Click “Reciprocal Admissions Program Document.”](#)

Education Center Renovation In Progress



Thank you to all who have already donated to the Education Center from our Amazon Wish List! Several items are still needed for educational hands-on exhibits and activities. If you'd like to donate, just click the link below. You may need to sign in to Amazon after you click [Amazon Wishlist Link](#).

Please ship items to: Friends of the Domes 524 S. Layton Blvd, Milwaukee, WI 53215. Next time you come to the Domes, visit our inspiring, fresh new learning space!



Gifts Under Glass Brings Magic and Whimsy to your Garden or Patio

The Domes gift shop has mushrooms, fairies, and all of the perfect touches your fairy garden needs! What’s that? You don’t have a fairy garden? We can fix that! Fairy gardens are perfect in flower pots for patios and decks. They are also a great way to get kids planting. Every gift shop purchase helps support the Domes. Plus FOD members always receive an enchanted 10% discount!



Fall Floral Show in the Show Dome

September 25—November 7

Welcome to the fall floral show Mushrooms, Mosses, & Mums! While you stroll through our woodland enjoying our fall seasonal display of mums, take a moment to learn about the mysterious world of mosses and mushrooms. Discover a new fascination in the plant and fungi kingdoms. Enjoy this incredible ecosystem designed by the Domes Horticultural staff and installed with the help of the Milwaukee County Forestry Department.



You will see a wide variety of colorful chrysanthemums, coleus, verbena, and even ornamental peppers! Mosses will include Spanish moss, marimo moss, and harvested true moss from Milwaukee County Parks.

Thank you to the **Wisconsin Mycological Society** and **Concordia University Art Department** for providing their consulting expertise and for creating a mural, signage, and large sculptures of mushrooms.



Friends of the Domes

IN-PERSON FIELD TRIPS

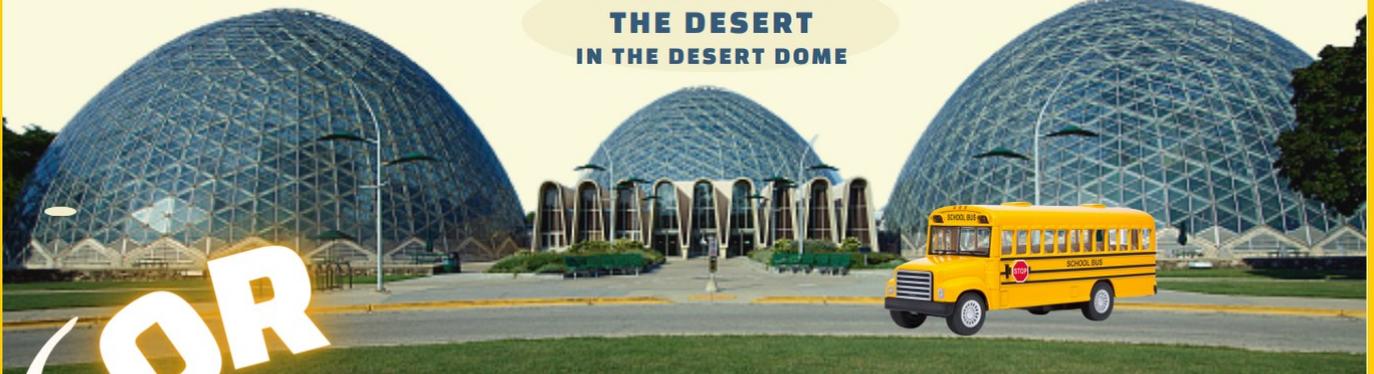
We are waiting patiently until we can safely provide in-person programming again for children's groups! Check out our exciting new topics that meet Wisconsin standards. We cannot wait for your return!

PLANTS & YOU
IN THE SHOW DOME

• **TOPICS** •

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IN THE DESERT DOME

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IN THE TROPICAL DOME



OR

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Keep up-to-date about our offerings & pre-register for a spring date:
milwaukeehomes.com/childrens-programs

Growing with the Thymes

Online Auction December 2 - 5, 2021

In 2020, we held our first "Growing with the Thymes" online auction, and it was a hit! We are excited to bring this fundraising event back, but we will need your help. Check our Virtual Giving Tree at <https://milwaukeedomes.org/online-auction> for ideas about items to donate to the auction. If you own a business, please consider donating a gift card or service.

The auction will be live for bidding December 2 through 5. Mark your calendars now to check the auction site those days. There will be many great items to bid on in time for holiday gift giving. Check back to be sure you are the highest bidder! Your winning bid is a win for the Domes too!

Please watch for FOD emails and visit our website for more details as this event develops.



Día de los Muertos

Virtual Celebration

A vibrant celebration of family and life, from the safety of your home! Once again we will be providing a virtual Día de los Muertos program but with new content for 2021. Take a virtual tour of the Desert Dome decorated for the event and watch a cooking segment from a Mexican chef. Festive musical performances and story time will really bring the celebration into your home!



We will be selling Celebration Kits in the gift shop and online with a variety of Día de los Muertos activities. You will receive a free link to the virtual celebration if you purchase an activity kit. If you would like to view the celebration and do not want to purchase an activity kit, you will be able to purchase a link to view the celebration only.

Visit our website in October for details about the event and how to order your kit.



Letter from the FOD Executive Director

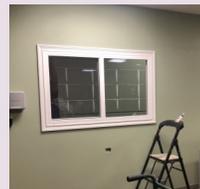
Hello Friends,

Things are gradually returning to a "new normal" at the Domes, while some restrictions will stay in place for a while. We had hoped to return to in-person events this year but we feel it's safer to wait it out a few more months, so we will wind up 2021 with another Virtual Día de los Muertos and Celebration Kits, which were extremely popular last year. The video and kits will have fresh content, so check our website for them in October.

In lieu of our New Year's Eve Family Celebration, we will hold another Growing With The Thymes online auction. The auction last year exceeded our expectations, and we are hard at work putting together an even bigger one this year. If you, as a member, would like to donate to the auction, please keep an eye on your email. A link will be coming soon to a Virtual Giving Tree that will list items

we would love to have donated. If you own a business and would be willing to donate a gift card or service, it would be much appreciated. All proceeds from the auction will support our growing FOD Education Programs.

The Education Center remodel is nearly complete! The new Ed Center should be open to the public in September. Our educators now have offices at the back with a window looking into the Ed Center. It has all been freshly repainted with new flooring installed. We have been showered with donations of supplies and exhibit materials from our Amazon Wish List. The area has expanded space for school groups, a reading nook, and areas dedicated to small children, older children, as well as adults. It will provide another great reason for return trips to the Domes for the whole family. We can't wait



for you to see and experience it.

As of writing this letter, we still don't know the status of in-person field trips for this upcoming school year. We are hoping to welcome students from the schools that choose to return to in-person learning and will continue to offer many virtual options for all schools.

I sincerely hope this letter finds you well and returning to many of your normal activities. As always, we thank you for being a member and for supporting the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory.

Sally Sullivan
Executive Director
Friends of the Domes

A CELEBRATION OF MUSHROOMS

INTERVIEW WITH RAE WEST OF WEST MUSHROOMS

By Julie Merck, FOD Newsletter Editor

Delicious and healthy shiitake mushrooms (*lentinula edodes*) are a popular variety of specialty mushroom. Native to East Asia, shiitakes are now cultivated and enjoyed all over the world, including in Southeastern Wisconsin. They are believed to activate the immune system, support heart health, decrease inflammation, and fight a variety of illnesses. To learn more about this fabulous fungus, I spoke with “Mycelium Wrangler” Rae West from West Mushrooms in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

Rae’s interest in sustainability and his value for “the natural way” helped lead him to growing mushrooms. He owned forest land with the intent to one day move on to and “get off of the grid.” Nine years ago, when he was managing that land through the Wisconsin Managed Forestry Program, he trimmed a few beautiful hardwood trees. He realized, “these could be used for firewood, or I could try growing mushrooms on them.” Field and Forest Products (an innovative, highly regarded mushroom spawn lab based out of Peshtigo, WI) supplied him with his mushroom spawn as well as the knowledge and inspiration to get started. He still recommends Field and Forest Products and purchases his mushroom spawn plugs from them. Their website fieldforest.net is loaded with information about mushroom farming and supplies for everyone from beginners to experienced growers like Rae.

Rae still grows his shiitake mushrooms on logs that have been sustainably harvested as part of his forest improvement plan. His forests are managed for watershed protection, wildlife enhancement, and biodiversity, so he considers the entire ecosystem when selecting trees for harvesting. He continues to learn and has participated in several special grant studies to research and understand how yields vary on different types of woods and how timber harvest times impact mushroom quality and yields.

Mushroom farming, like any farming, requires attention, care, and awareness of weather conditions. The logs need about an inch of water a week through the growing season (April through November), either from rain or mist-irrigation. They need to be kept out of the direct sun. A good hardwood log, harvested at just the right time can produce for up to about 8 years. He usually maintains and wrangles about 500 mushroom logs outdoors on his farm. Most of his mushrooms are log-grown shiitake mushrooms, but he’s branching into other varieties like winecaps in woodchip beds, oysters on wheat straw, lions mane on sugar maple logs, and enoki on cherry wood. Growing mushrooms outdoors, on just the right wood, produces a more flavorful, robust mushroom than those grown indoors on sawdust.

“Mycelium” is the almost magical vegetative body for fungi that produce mushrooms. Mycelia are under every bit of a forest helping to decompose. Mycelia act like a living internet, helping the trees to communicate when they need nutrient-help.



“Inoculation” is the process of introducing mushroom spores to a planting area like a log. It will take the mycelium about one year to colonize an inoculated log. After about a year, a healthy log may fruit (produce mushrooms) 2 to 3 times, with about 8 weeks of rest between fruiting. Each fruiting will yield about 1 to 2 pounds of mushrooms. The mushrooms are then hand picked and ready to enjoy. They can also be dried for shipping or storage, then re-hydrated and enjoyed later.



Above: Winecaps; Below: Oysters



Continued on page 5

In addition to selling dried mushrooms online and fresh mushrooms to Madison-area restaurants, West Mushrooms offers people a chance to be a part of the growing process with on-site, hands-on mushroom inoculation. As a small farm, West relies on volunteers to help with the labor-intensive inoculation process. In exchange for their time (usually a few hours in May), volunteers learn first-hand about the stages of log-grown mushroom production while working with a small group of fellow mushroom enthusiasts. After volunteering, they even have the opportunity to purchase an inoculated log to take home to care for and grow their own mushrooms. Volunteers enjoy the serenity of being outside and are usually disappointed when it is time to wrap-up work for lunch!



Above: Volunteers inoculating logs and having fun in the process at West's Stoughton mushroom farm. Below: a log fruiting, ready for harvest.

To learn more about West Mushrooms and how you can volunteer to help with inoculation next spring, visit their website westmushrooms.com or look for West Mushrooms on Facebook, or email Rae directly at paulraewest@chickenhollow.com.

Note: Photos included with this article are all from the West Mushroom website and were used with Rae's permission.



West Mushrooms
 Shiitake Mushrooms - Log Grown
Rae West
 1053 Taylor Lane Stoughton WI 53589
 608-205-7079
 WestMushrooms.com and on Facebook



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GROWING MUSHROOMS WITH THE FUNGI FARMERS: DRILL, FILL, SEAL, & HAVE PATIENCE!

By Julie Merck, FOD Newsletter Editor

As a mushroom lover and a bit of a DIY'er, I was absolutely tickled to have the chance to learn more about growing mushrooms at home. And I found just the right people to inspire and guide the aspiring home mushroom grower! Kari and Joe Landis from Fungi Farmers shared their mantra "Drill, fill, seal, and have patience" with me, as well as step-by-step growing instructions.



Joe and Kari Landis started cultivating about 20 years ago when they were living in Maine. They became interested in growing their own food, and mushrooms seemed like a great option. They started reading books on the topic and their passion "mushroomed" into a full-time business by 2007. Why did they end up in the Midwest? It turns out the Midwest is good for growing mushrooms. We have lots of hardwood and straw, a good amount of moisture, and a good number of days and nights in the 60 to 70 degree temperature range. Winter won't kill mushroom mycelium. The snow and spring rains give them extra moisture. When conditions are right in the spring, they will fruit. Fruitings are also called "flushes."

They mainly sell their culinary and medicinal mushrooms at farmers markets in the Madison area. They also sell mushroom spawn plugs at farmer's markets and online. To learn more about growing mushrooms and to purchase plugs online, visit their website fungifarmers.com, click Shop from the main menu, then select Grow Your Own Mushrooms. Mushroom spawn plug orders all include instructions. Their website also provides information about which Madison-area farmer's markets Joe and Kari sell products.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

What: Joe and Kari recommend shiitake or oyster mushrooms for beginning mushroom growers. They are good varieties for our southeastern Wisconsin climate and produce delicious, meaty mushrooms. The log or stump you use should be fairly fresh hardwood, less than 3 to 6 months old. Oak, chestnut, elm, and iron wood are good choices. Oysters are more tolerable and can grow on poplar, aspen, beech, and maple. Do not use conifers like evergreen or pine trees. Be sure there is no rot on the wood. A log about 4 to 8 inches in diameter and 3 to 4 feet long will be big enough to provide food for your mycelium but still easy to move when needed.

When: Spring is the best time of year to inoculate logs, when the threat of a hard freeze is over. This will give the mycelium a chance to colonize your log when the temperature and moisture conditions are best. You can also start them in the summer or early fall, but be sure to plant/ plug before temperatures drop below freezing. It will take about 6 to 18 months from inoculation to fruiting.

Where: Mushroom logs are a short-lived perennial and can stay outside year-round. Plan a place to keep your log where it will be out of the sun and not laying on the soil. Water brings mushrooms! Choose a place that will be easy to access to check if it needs water and to water it.

You Will Need:

- Hardwood logs or stump
- A drill with a 5/16" bit
- Mallet or hammer
- Wax (cheese, soy, beeswax or paraffin wax)
- Double boiler to melt the wax
- Paint brush or dauber
- Mushroom plug spawn (about 30 to 40 per log)



Continued on page 7

Our Virtual Ed Programs Earn an A+!

We are thrilled to share how much teachers and students are enjoying and learning from our new virtual learning programs...

Fun and engaging! Mr. Pete has so much energy and he did a fabulous job meeting the needs of my students with disabilities! Also the bee costume is A+! ... We learned so much about pollination. I hope to come back next school year! Ms. Fisher, MPS

It was great! Low-cost or free trips allow all of our students to attend. Thanks so much! Ms. Kinis, MPS Teacher

My kindergarten class LOVED Mr. Pete and his 'Sun to Soil' program! It was fun and engaging for them to learn about plants and photosynthesis through his songs, puppets, visuals and jokes! I am so glad the Domes are offering virtual field trips this year; I highly recommend signing up! Thank you Mr. Pete! MPS Teacher

Save the Date Member-Only Preview of the Holiday Show

Friday November 19 from 6:00 -8:00 PM the Domes will be open for members only for an exclusive preview of the Holiday Show in the Show Dome. Enjoy light refreshments, a light show in the Show Dome, and the unique experience of touring all three domes at night. See the newly remodeled Education Center. The Domes Gift Shop will also be open to start your holiday shopping.



INOCULATE YOUR LOGS

Step 1: Drill

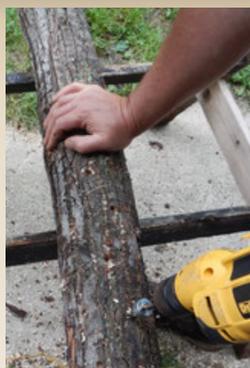
With your 5/16" drill bit, drill holes 1 1/2" deep. Space holes 6" apart, all the way down the log. Start your next row of holes about 1" - 3" away from the first row, staggering a few inches lower to form a diamond pattern of holes. This doesn't need to be exact.

Step 2: Fill

Use room temperature plug spawn. Gently tap a plug into each hole using a mallet or hammer. Tap until the plug is flush with the log.

Step 3: Seal

Carefully melt the wax in a double boiler. Carefully apply the hot wax using a brush to cover each plug-hole. Optional but recommended: Also seal the ends of the logs with wax. This will help the log to retain moisture.



WAIT PATIENTLY AND TEND TO YOUR LOGS

Place your inoculated logs in a sheltered, shady, moist location. Use a rock or board to prop or lean your logs so that they are not laying on the ground. Keep the logs out of direct sunlight. If desired, you can use a shade cloth or breathable material to help retain moisture. It will take about 6-18 months for your logs to start fruiting.

Tip: Once your log has been colonized, you can put the end of the log in a bucket of water to help it fruit. Sometimes slightly moving the log can also trigger them to fruit.

If well cared for, logs will continue to fruit seasonally when conditions are right for several years. Take care of your logs. Remember, water brings mushrooms! Water and water again.

Happy shrooming!



Note: All photos included with this article are from the Fungi Farmers website or were provided by Joe and Kari and were used with their permission.

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Thank you to everyone who designated Friends of the Domes when shopping on Amazon Smile!

Thank You Volunteers

A group of FOD volunteers worked side-by-side with Milwaukee County Park's horticulturists this summer to assist with upkeep of our outdoor spaces and gardens. Four volunteers worked every other week to help maintain the Pollinator garden, the garden near the electronic sign, and the gardens at the main entrance.

We are hoping to continue this program again next summer!

Thank you to all of the volunteers and horticulturists who kept our outdoor spaces beautiful this summer! Pictured, Volunteer Cindy and Horticulturists Heidi and Justine



The Wisconsin Orchid Society Annual Orchid Show Returns! Fall in Love with Orchids, 2021

We are excited to share that the Wisconsin Orchid Society will be presenting their award-winning exhibits of flowering orchid plants, pottery, photographs, and other orchid related exhibits. Orchids, pots, books, and potting medium will be available for purchase at reasonable prices. Orchid society members will be available to answer any questions you may have and will have free culture sheets from the American Orchid Society. More information and links to vendor sites available; go to wisconsinorchidsociety.com then click Orchid Show in the left side menu.

When: Saturday, September, 18 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
and Sunday, September, 19 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Cost: Admission is **Free** for FOD members; non-members - regular admission prices apply



The Joy of In-Person Education at the Domes

By Pete Stobie

FOD Lead Interpretive Educator

After a pleasant walk around Mitchell Park, I gathered my group under a tree and placed signs on the grass. Each sign started with the letter S and provided a tip for birdwatching. I explained the seven S's for Beginning Birding with my wonderful group of adults and children.

This was the first family program at Mitchell Park since the pandemic had started and also my first in-person family program. I started my job on March 16, 2020 as the FOD Lead Interpretive Educator; unfortunately, that same day the Domes closed. During the closure, Education Director Erica Putman and I worked on many projects from home and hosted partner programs when we could. In September 2020, FOD staff was given permission to work from the Domes following County Health Protocol. Erica and I began working on preparing the Education Center for renovation and developing virtual programs that began in February 2021. But I longed to present in-person programs, to teach, and to share my passion for nature.

Finally, this very morning, I was delighted to welcome my group to Beginning Birding! Since our group included several young children (the average age was about 6), we focused on tree swallows, goldfinches, house sparrows, starlings, and one particular robin that had camouflaged nicely against the bark of the branch it was sitting in. We talked about bird songs and other bird calls just as a Grey Catbird sent us a loud MEOW! Three to four Common Terns started soaring about twenty feet over the water. The kids shouted out as one of the Gull-like birds dropped from the sky and plucked a fish from the pond!

I especially hoped the bird I had seen two days in a row while preparing for the class would make an appearance. We approached a section of trees that opened to the pond. A few fallen tree limbs reached out of the water out like fingers from the shore. Suddenly, I saw it! Ava excitedly pronounced, "I see it!" The bird was a Green Heron. I could not have asked for a better ending to a most enjoyable return to in-person programming. And then when I began wrapping up the children began shouting with excitement! "There it is! It's back! It's back! And there is another one!" You better believe it! The Green Heron came back to the branches and a second one followed. What a beautiful morning!

It is wonderful to be a part of the Friends of the Domes Education Program. I am excited to help connect children and families to the natural world! Please visit our website for future educational programs. Plan a day to check out all the fun and excitement planned in your newly refreshed Education Center! Erica and I await your visit. See you soon!



Growing Orchids at the Domes



By Mary Braunreiter
Tropical Dome Horticulturist

As the horticulturist in charge of the Tropical Dome, it is my responsibility to care for the conservatory's beautiful and diverse orchid collection. Most of the world's 28,000 identified species of orchids grow anchored to trees in the tropics and sub-tropics. The Tropical Dome and our modified greenhouse area hold our collection of about 150 varieties of orchids.

Our greenhouse area keeps the orchids under specific growing conditions when they are not on display in the Tropical Dome. Our orchids are from a variety of different tropical environments, so we need to consider what conditions each variety requires to be successful. In this part of the greenhouse, we keep several fans running all the time. The fans keep the temperature and humidity distributed evenly and prevent leaf diseases. We add humidity to the air with a special misting system that runs for 30 minutes each morning. Since some varieties of orchids prefer less sunlight, we spray some of the south-facing windows with whitewash each spring and hang shade cloth over the tables to block some of the sun for



Orchids in the greenhouses when they are not blooming in the Tropical Dome. Fans and mist-sprayers help Mary provide our orchids with environments similar to their native homes.

THE FRIENDS OF THE DOMES

Green Sheet

Fall 2021



these shade-lovers. The tables are grated to allow the pots to drain well after watering.

When it comes to pots, personally, I prefer terra cotta pots over plastic for orchids because the medium seems to last longer.

We mix our own medium using a combination of fir bark, perlite, and charcoal. Plants are repotted when the medium starts to break down. We fertilize the orchids only once per month from November to February but more frequently during their active growing period from March to October. When the orchids come into bloom they are displayed for the public in the Tropical Dome. After they are finished flowering, we return them to the orchid greenhouse.



Vanilla planifolia

Only a few of our orchids can tolerate the environmental conditions year-round in the Tropical Dome. Being a terrestrial orchid, the *Vanilla planifolia* does very well in the Tropical Dome. We hand pollinate them when they are in bloom and have made vanilla extract from the beans.

Dendrobium anosmum hangs in the trees in sunny spots year-round, blooming happily without any leaf spot occurring.



Dendrobium anosmum



Stanhopeas

Our most popular orchids by far are the *Stanhopeas*. Their powerful minty fragrance and strikingly unusual form amaze our patrons (and us).

Many of the orchids in our collection are at the Domes for all to enjoy thanks to generous donations. If you or someone you know is interested in donating to the collection you can call the Domes at (414) 257-5611 to discuss.

Next time you visit the Tropical Dome, take some extra time to enjoy our beautiful, exotic orchids.



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Virtual Celebration Returns!
See page 3 inside

FRIENDS of the DOMES

FRIENDS OF THE DOMES STAFF MEMBERS

Sally Sullivan	Executive Director
Holly Brockman	Visual Design
Carrie Kelroy	Volunteer Coordinator & Assistant Gift Shop Manager
Noel Marsho	Communications & Marketing
Mary Philipp	Gift Shop Manager/ Buyer
Erica Putman	Education Director
Deb Schiel	Resource Development/ Membership
Pete Stobie	Lead Interpretive Educator
Julie Merck	Newsletter Editor (Non-staff)

Upcoming Events*

- September 18 -19 Wisconsin Orchid Society Orchid Show and Sale*
- October Día de los Muertos celebration kits available
- November 19 Member-only Holiday Show Preview*
- December 2-5 Growing With the Thymes Online Auction



*In-person events subject to change. Please visit our website www.milwaukeedomes.org and click Events to confirm event details before you leave home.