



DUKE GARDENS STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2029

MISSION

We are a botanic garden in the heart of Duke University that inspires transformative learning, promotes wellness and builds community.



VISION

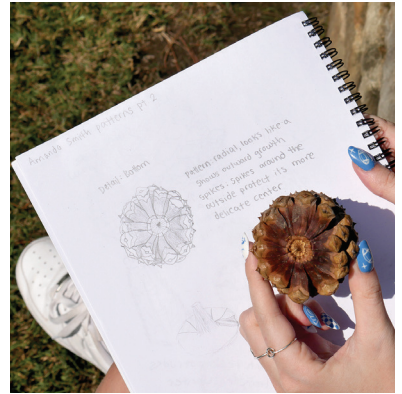
We invite a deeper connection to the natural world through horticultural artistry, plant conservation, sustainable practices and innovative programs. We play a vital role in the health and well-being of the Duke and Durham communities and beyond.



KEY OBJECTIVES

- I. Enhance the Duke experience for students and the wider university community
- II. Create a welcoming environment that promotes well-being for all visitors
- III. Cultivate a beautiful botanic garden that supports biodiversity and models environmental sustainability
- IV. Develop resources and relationships for long-term stability
- V. Engage people with transformative, equitable and accessible experiences





OBJECTIVE I

Enhance the Duke experience for students and the wider university community

Goal A. Create a supportive environment for learning in the natural world

Strategies

- 1. Be active in Duke's Climate Commitment
- 2. Support the university's framework for developing climate fluency
- 3. Extend collaborations with faculty and staff for *Duke in the Gardens* programming

Goal B. Deepen partnerships across Duke to leverage shared strengths

Strategies

- 1. Connect with students to build their relationship with Duke Gardens as a place of meaning in their lives
- 2. Focus on intentional partnerships that advance our mission (e.g. arts, wellness and environment)
- 3. Contribute meaningfully to the goals of the Office of Climate and Sustainability

Goal C. Increase awareness of Duke Gardens in the university community and the opportunities it provides

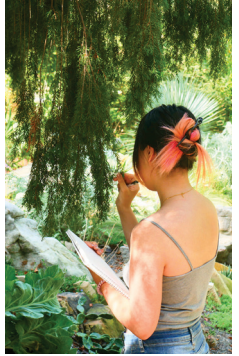
Strategies

- 1. Leverage Duke Gardens' location in the heart of campus
- 2. Improve the physical connections between Duke Gardens, Duke campus and Duke Health
- 3. Improve the Gardens' horticultural identity along its perimeter
- 4. Raise our profile in the university's storytelling

Goal D. Be a place of respite for the university community

Strategies

- 1. Encourage visitation by Duke Health staff
- 2. Promote the healing benefits of nature



OBJECTIVE II

Create a welcoming environment that promotes well-being for all visitors

Goal A. Build the Garden Gateway and prepare for what follows

Strategies

1. Create a positive visitor experience during Garden Gateway construction
2. Build a comprehensive interpretive framework
3. Offer an improved entry experience for the public after reopening



Goal B. Better serve health system patients and families to support their well-being

Strategies

1. Provide better wayfinding from the health campus to the Gardens
2. Share Duke Gardens resources and information with Duke Health



Goal C. Create positive visitor experiences

Strategies

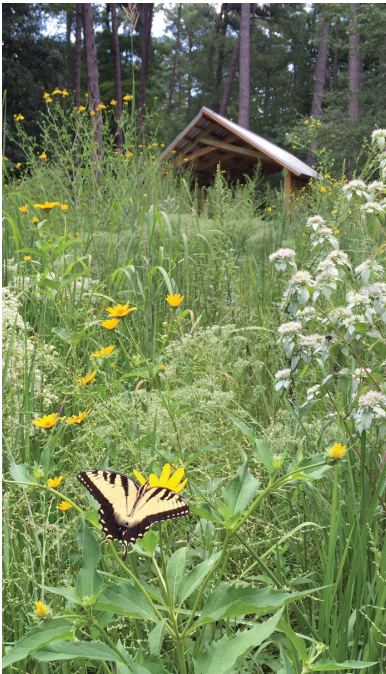
1. Provide an inclusive gardens experience that fosters a sense of belonging
2. Manage visitor expectations (capacity, parking, policies, etc.)
3. Create welcoming and visible entrances to the Gardens
4. Strengthen the volunteer program (recruitment, training, delivery)
5. Recognize that people come for different reasons and work toward a shared understanding of how best to shape their experiences
6. Broaden accessibility of garden spaces and activities





OBJECTIVE III

Cultivate a beautiful botanic garden that supports biodiversity and models environmental sustainability



Goal A. Provide garden spaces and amenities consistent with Duke's reputation for excellence

Strategies

- 1. Create beauty, wonder and artistry in all we do
- 2. Maintain and enhance botanically significant core collections
- 3. Offer a variety of spaces for different types of visitor experiences

Goal B. Model environmental sustainability to support campus-wide Climate Commitment

Strategies

- 1. Display plant collections that demonstrate climate-resilient and innovative designs
- 2. Make strategic use of natural resources to reduce environmental impact (e.g., water use, fossil fuels, plastics)
- 3. Contribute to people's understanding of the role of public gardens in plant conservation and the value of biodiversity

Goal C. Foster a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of people and plants

Strategies

- 1. Celebrate cultural diversity as an integral part of biodiversity
- 2. Raise awareness of biodiversity as an essential part of climate resilience

OBJECTIVE IV

Develop resources and relationships for long-term stability



Goal A. Maintain strong university partnerships

Strategies

1. Monitor the progress of the university's strategic plan and maintain alignment with the priorities
2. Build awareness of the value and opportunities inherent in Duke Gardens' role as a primary public-facing asset of the university
3. Work with senior leadership to address the challenges of rapidly increasing visitation
4. Determine and plan for future operational needs of the Gardens, including personnel, succession planning, space, materials and equipment

Goal B. Be an active partner in the university's comprehensive fundraising campaign

Strategies

1. Build a compelling case for support
2. Identify and pursue achievable goals that advance Duke Gardens' mission
3. Focus on opportunities for major gifts and planned giving

Goal C. Increase earned and contributed income

Strategies

1. Optimize the impact of the Garden Gateway on earned income
2. Build resources to develop new projects and programs, and to fund garden maintenance
3. Cultivate relationships with alumni and students' families
4. Build membership, annual fund and Memorial Garden giving

Goal D. Communicate our good work to key constituents

Strategies

1. Develop communications strategy
2. Promote inspiring stories

Goal E. Create a supportive, collaborative and vibrant work culture

Strategies

1. Provide professional development opportunities for volunteers, staff, students and interns
2. Create a community of learning and collaboration among staff
3. Encourage diverse perspectives and contributions



OBJECTIVE V

Engage people with transformative, equitable and accessible experiences

Goal A. Continue to invest in robust and diverse community programming that connects Duke Gardens with people's lives

Strategies

1. Prioritize free programs for Title I Durham Public Schools
2. Offer a range of programs led by staff and community content experts
3. Provide unique opportunities for children and families
4. Offer members special opportunities to deepen their engagement
5. Strengthen outreach to underrepresented audiences



Goal B. Create a rich, inclusive educational environment

Strategies

1. Create more self-guided opportunities for learning
2. Provide learning experiences that do not require physical presence, offering effective ways to engage a broader audience (e.g., virtual, off site, alumni)
3. Encourage shared experiences that broaden perspectives, activate imagination and create strong social networks (e.g., art, gathering spaces, events, displays)
4. Incorporate best practices on accessibility in programs, spaces and communications



Goal C. Inspire deeper emotional connection to place

Strategies

1. Offer community spaces for making enduring memories
2. Prioritize mission-aligned and purposeful events and activities

CORE VALUES



BEAUTY

Duke Gardens is an artful expression inspired by nature.

WONDER

Duke Gardens invites all to discover the rejuvenating benefits of nature, follow their curiosity, and connect with the natural world around them.

SUSTAINABILITY

We demonstrate and promote best practices for environmental, fiscal and social responsibility to ensure a healthy future for generations to come.

COMMUNITY

We embrace the knowledge that people and plants are diverse and interdependent, and we seek ways to understand, share and celebrate the full spectrum of human experience.

