

**SPECIAL EVENT PLANT SALES
AT PUBLIC GARDENS**

by

Kevin Philip Williams

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Public Horticulture

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mentor, colleague, and friend, Johnny Linville, who encouraged me to be a leader.

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ABSTRACT

Special event plant sales can be considered ubiquitous within the world of public horticulture. Commonly recognized as spring or fall events, special event plant sales can be powerful institutional tools for fundraising, friend-raising, education, public awareness, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. They can provide a unique, tax-free, revenue-generating opportunity for public gardens, and if properly designed, can be used to communicate and connect the public to an institution's mission.

Using surveys, this research aimed to establish baseline quantitative data on the metrics of special event plant sales including analysis of trends in gross and net revenues, plant sourcing, selection, location, duration, organization and leadership, and volunteer involvement.

Furthermore, qualitative research through case studies and expert interviews, examined successful, novel, and exceptional practices of plant sales. Differing institutional intentions were analyzed, including the limitations of the predominant goal of fundraising, and the widely recognized, but under-embraced goal of community engagement. The perceived institutional value of holding plant sales was also explored, revealing a contradictory culture; there is a recognized importance in holding plant sales, but a lack of cultivation of a staff environment that internalizes this importance.

This research led to the development of a set of recommendations for public gardens that will help guide the planning and execution of plant sales, the principles of which have further applications in relevant outreach activities and special events. For example, qualitative and quantitative data revealed the importance of incentivizing plant sales for institutional members; 77% of survey participants reported that their plant sales increased or sustained membership, and many reported large percentages of gross revenues generated on members' only sale days. Encouragingly, 72% of respondents offer some form of presale to members, patrons, or donors of their institutions. However, only 58% of institutions offer discounts for their members, limiting the potential for member attendance beyond the presale. This research also suggested that institutions benefited when they developed sponsorships and partnerships with outside organizations for their plant sales. Despite that, 75% of respondents reported that they do not partner with any other organizations for their plant sales, and 70% reported that they do not have any sponsors for their plant sales.

Fundamentally, this research examined the current state of special event plant sales in public gardens and outlines the successful practices of industry leaders. Through institutional alignment and intentionality, plant sales have the potential to be, at best, a profitable, coalescent demonstration of a public garden's mission and values.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The practice of holding fundraising plant sales can be considered ubiquitous throughout the world of public horticulture (Daley, 2011). Often held at the beginning or end of the growing season as spring or fall events, plant sales have the potential to raise significant funds, support a garden's mission and educational mandates, drive membership, and raise overall awareness about a garden as a horticulture authority (Sifton, 2010). They can also pose significant challenges to an institution by monopolizing staff and volunteer time, limiting visitor access to grounds and facilities, and adding utility expenses (Daley, 2011; Sifton, 2010).

Although plant sales “have become an important and expected venue for raising funds” (Sifton, 2010), there is a paucity of written information addressing the practice of holding fundraising plant sales, and very little published regarding the varying economics and motivations behind the sales. The most comprehensive article to date is “Garden Plant Sales Go Deeper Than the Bottom Line,” by Melanie Sifton (2010). This article discussed the capacity of a plant sale to promote an organization's mission by comparing several aspects of the plant sales of the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Morton Arboretum, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Huntington Botanical Garden. The article also addressed aspects of running successful plant sales, volunteer involvement, and sale timing.

Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) refers to botanic gardens holding plant sales as a way to, “raise funds for running costs, for a specific project, to

satisfy visitor expectations, to introduce species to ornamental horticulture or to promote sustainable use” (BGCI, “Plant Sales”). BGCI goes on to elaborate that the plant material may be from the garden’s collection or bought-in stock, and may be native or not. BGCI also offers several short case studies on selling plants in botanic gardens including the Chelsea Physic Garden’s practice of selling uncommon, cultivated varieties of seeds (BGCI, “Chelsea Physic Garden”), and the annual plant auction at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (BGCI, “Kew”). BGCI stresses that if a garden is pursuing a goal of sustainability or conservation, then it should also be carried through in the sale of plants, or any other commercial activity (BGCI, “Commercial Activity”).

The objective of this research was to examine special event plant sales specifically at public gardens. Special event plant sales by garden clubs, horticultural societies, or agricultural operations were not considered for this study. Garden shops, Internet sales, or corresponding, ongoing retail operations were not the focus of this study unless that operation functions in direct connection with the plant sale. Thus, the use of the term “plant sale” as used in this study will refer directly to such events.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economic Impact, Earned Income, and Fundraising in Nonprofits

Arts and cultural institutions serve their surrounding communities with more than just culture and education; they are significant economic machines contributing to local employment, tourism dollars, and a sense of regional identity (Trainer, 2010). In 2010, public charities classified as 501(c)(3) organizations, the division of nonprofits that includes tax-exempt cultural institutions, represented 60% of all registered nonprofits and contributed almost 75% of the revenue and expenses of nonprofits (Blackwood, Pettijohn, & Roeger, 2012). The national economic contribution of nonprofits was measured at 5.5% of the GDP in 2012, tallying to about \$1.65 trillion in total revenues (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2013). Six percent, or approximately \$99 billion of the \$1.65 trillion in total revenue came from sources that included rental income, special event income, and the sale of goods (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2013).

Despite the encouraging numbers, revenue generation in cultural institutions is still considered challenging, and fundraising is an important activity of most nonprofits (Bowers & Fulcher, 2010).

Tax-exempt nonprofits that engage in fundraising through earned income activities must adhere to specific restrictions set forth by the Internal Revenue Service in order to keep their earnings untaxed and maintain their tax-exempt status. Taxable income is referred to as unrelated business income, and defined, as any income

generated by a business activity that is regularly carried on, and that does not significantly relate to an institution's mission (U.S. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service, 2012). Certain exclusions from unrelated business income tax also include any income generated primarily through volunteer labor or carried out for the convenience of its members, students, or employees (U.S. Department of the Treasury. Internal Revenue Service, 2014). It must also be noted that said activities are deemed taxable not on where the revenue is used, but on how the revenue is generated (Chan, 2011). Financially speaking, plant sales provide a unique fundraising opportunity for public gardens that allow the generation of non-taxable income through a large-scale, not-regularly carried on sale, the source of which can usually be substantially related to the purpose of the horticultural institution.

Mission Alignment and Social Marketing

Durel (2010) discusses the idea of institutional sustainability, linking it inextricably to what he calls viability. Durel bases viability on the strength of the product that the institution is offering to its community. If the product offered is in line with the purpose and mission of the institution then it will receive sufficient financial support to continue.

Through design and display, gardens inherently contribute to an awareness of their own values and should use those values to appropriately generate income for the stewardship of their sites. A sustainable marketing plan for historic garden sites ensures the enhancement of the garden and in no way detracts from the experience. Brandt and Rohde point out that it is the income generating activities that many times allow gardens to relevantly reach new audiences and create a cultural public brand (2007).

Mukerjee states that a public brand is the engineered perception of the personality of an institution dependent upon products, services, and inherent attributes (as cited in Scott, 2000, p.36). Cultural institutions offer what Scott refers to as a values brand, a public brand with an enduring core purpose that connects deeply with its constituents. Scott identifies two central elements in a values brand. The first is the perpetuity of an institution based on customer allegiance to the brand's values. The second is the ability of the institution to remain flexible, to expand and explore new ideas, as long as the core values are respected. Therefore, values branding allows a cultural institution to position itself as both timeless and progressive.

The practice of social marketing is the application of marketing techniques to social movements to enact collective change (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Social marketing allows cultural institutions to disseminate their values practically and effectively through the distribution of products, be they physical or immaterial (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Social marketing stresses the wants and needs of the consumer, and the public perception of a genuine problem in need of a solution (Weinreich, 2010). Therefore, products are offered as a direct solution to a problem, or to fill a present void. By positioning the lack of their relative institutional values in a surrounding community or neighboring region, cultural institutions have the ability to enact direct change.

Plant sales could be considered a strategy for gardens to be both cultural and informational authorities, and progressive gurus. Public horticulture institutions have the opportunity to use plant sales as vehicles for social marketing by recognizing their position as values brands, and by charging themselves with meaningful, institutionally holistic, revenue generation.

Internally speaking, Bowers and Fulcher (2010) recognize that institutions are shifting away from departmental silos towards working cultures that promote synergy and cooperation especially in areas of shared revenue responsibility. “Learning how to share their untapped potential, unrealized by many at their institutions (and often by themselves), can only serve to strengthen their institutions and the profession in new and invigorating ways.” (Bowers & Fulcher, 2010)

Biosecurity and Plant Sales

It is widely recognized that certain horticultural introductions to gardens have the capacity to become invasive pests (Baskin, 2002). Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG) addressed their own stake in plant sales and biosecurity with a policy regarding the sale of plant material. FTBG only sells plants and plant material in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (FTBG, 2005). During the creation of The St. Louis Declaration on Invasive Plant Species, Dr. Peter Raven questioned the role of display and messaging in gardens that use known invasive species in their collections. Might this just be advertising for the perpetuation of pest species (Baskin, 2002)?

Hulme states that as the global trade of plants increases, plant biosecurity needs to increase as well, (Colunga-Garcia, Fieselmann & Magarey, 2009) and Eyre, Giltrap, & Reed (2009) bring to attention the lack of regulation governing plant sharing websites. Interestingly, Liu and Pemberton (2009) have also shown a direct relationship between plant naturalization and the marketing period for that plant, as well as a correlation between a higher likelihood of naturalization for more recently introduced plants.

Plant sales could exacerbate these problems or offer comprehensive solutions through innovation, self-discipline, and the social marketing of regionally appropriate plants. Still, the challenge to the success of a comprehensive solution lies in thoroughly educating both professional and hobbyist gardeners. “The difficult and time-consuming task of educating everyone, from rank-and-file nursery owners to weekend gardeners, will be vital to the success of any comprehensive solution to the invasion problem.” (Baskin, 2002)

Chapter 3

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This research used the mixed methods approach to data collection by utilizing quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2009). Research included two surveys, two on-site case studies, and seven expert interviews conducted both in person and remotely via telephone.

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

All research methods followed the guidelines and regulations set forth by the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The researcher completed the required online training, "Human Subjects Protections for Graduate Students," from the Collaborative Institutional Training Institute (CITI) Program on August 25, 2013 (Appendix A). All questions for surveys and case studies were reviewed in advance by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board and given exempt status (Appendix A).

Quantitative Data

Three surveys directed at staff members of public horticulture institutions were created and administered using Qualtrics™, an online survey software platform licensed by the University of Delaware. The Graduate Committee and the University

of Delaware Institutional Review Board reviewed all survey questions before distribution.

Survey 1: Public Gardens Plant Sale Preliminary Survey

Distributed to a participant list of 245 email addresses assembled from the American Public Garden Association (APGA) member database. Participants were selected from institutions that were determined to have active annual or biannual plant sales through Internet research. Emails containing links to the survey were distributed via email and the survey was open to participants from December 4, 2013 to December 11, 2013. As responding to questions was optional respondent numbers varied slightly from question-to-question with a maximum number of 61 respondents and a minimum number of 50 respondents.

The 17-question survey was sent primarily to managerial professionals at public gardens, with the instructions to distribute to the most appropriate person(s) in the institution, if necessary.

Survey 1 aimed to establish basic statistical metrics on plant sales at public gardens and addressed information gathering questions regarding gross and net revenues, staff participation, inventory determination, plant sourcing, plant sale location, partnerships, sponsorships, sale duration, an opinion based Likert scale, and a fill-in-the-blank for exceptional aspects of a respondents plant sale.

Survey 2: Public Gardens Plant Sale Secondary Survey

Distributed to a participant list of 270 email addresses consisting of the original 245 email addresses used in Survey 1 and expanded by Botanic Gardens Conservation International's (BGCI) BGCI GardenSearch database. This distribution

base purposefully expanded the range of survey participants beyond those predetermined to have active annual or biannual plant sales with the hope of establishing information regarding the number of public horticulture institutions that participate in plant sales versus those who do not. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics™ and was open to participants from August 13, 2014 to September 2, 2014. As responding to questions was optional, respondent numbers varied slightly from question-to-question, with a maximum number of 72 respondents and a minimum number of 4 respondents.

Survey 2 consisted of a potential 56 questions, focused on informational depth, and expanded upon topics introduced in Survey 1. Topics included plant sale timing and significance, institutional goals of holding plant sales, revenues allocation, and effects on membership.

Survey participants were given the option to identify themselves for the purpose of further research or to receive results from this research following the closure of Survey 2.

Survey 3: Public Gardens Plant Sales Follow-Up Survey

Distributed to a participant list of 48 email addresses consisting of public garden professionals who indicated on Question 57 of Survey 2 that they were willing to be contacted for further research on the subject of plant sales at public gardens. As responding to questions was optional, respondent numbers varied slightly from question-to-question, with a maximum number of 37 respondents and a minimum number of 36 respondents.

Survey 3 consisted of only two questions concerning frequency and significance of plant sales. These two questions were originally included in Survey 2, but due to a programming error, failed to display to Survey 2 participants.

Qualitative Data

Research included two onsite case studies and 7 expert interviews. Onsite case studies and expert interviews were conducted between April 2014 and October 2015.

Onsite Case Study Site Selection

Onsite case study sites were selected from the pool of public gardens identified in the preliminary survey as having financially successful plant sales, from institutions recommended by thesis committee members, and by whether or not an onsite visit could be made during an actively occurring plant sale.

A phone interview was conducted with a key professional involved with the institution's plant sale prior to the onsite visit. Interview questions were based on question responses from Survey 1 and Survey 2.

Case Study Protocol

Onsite case studies of selected institutions took place over a period of days that included at least a partial period of the institution's actively occurring plant sale. Interviews with members of the staff, volunteers, and members of the institution were conducted in person, and data from interviews were collected via hand written notes and digital audio recordings. Interviewees were vetted for permission via the Oral Consent Form approved by the University of Delaware IRB (Appendix A). Additional data were collected in the form of digital photographs, field observations by the researcher, and relevant documents provided by the organizations. The researcher

spent at least a partial period of the onsite case studies volunteering for each respective institution's plant sale in order to gain an insider's perspective on the operation and organization of the plant sale.

Expert Interviews

Expert interviews were conducted with key professionals purposefully selected from public gardens identified in the preliminary survey as having financially successful plant sales, and from institutions recommended by thesis committee members. A list of expert interviews is listed below in alphabetical order of their associated institution:

- Birmingham Botanical Gardens – Mr. Fred Spicer (dates contacted: October 9, 2014)
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden – Ms. Lois Carswell and Ms. Melanie Sifton (dates contacted: June 6, 2014)
- Chicago Botanic Garden – Ms. Stephanie Lindemann (dates contacted: July 29, 2014)
- Desert Botanical Garden – Mr. Kenny Zelov (dates contacted: August 14, 2014)
- Olbrich Botanical Gardens – Ms. Missy Jeane (dates contacted: October 9, 2014)
- Rutgers Gardens – Mr. Bruce Crawford (date contacted: July 10, 2014)
- The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College – Ms. Claire Sawyers (date contacted: August 28, 2014)

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Survey 1: Public Garden Plant Sales Preliminary Survey

All respondents indicated the operating budget of their institutions. The majority of respondents reported an annual operating budget less than \$1 million dollars with the second highest group reporting \$2.5 million to \$9.9 million (Table 1).

Table 1 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “What is the annual operating budget of your institution?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Less than \$1 Million	30	56%
\$1 Million to \$2.4 Million	4	7%
\$2.5 Million to \$9.9 Million	17	31%
Greater than \$10 Million	3	6%
Total	54	100%

The majority of respondents reported that their plant sales grossed \$10,001 to \$25,000. A higher number of respondents reported gross earnings greater than the mean than those that reported gross earnings less than the mean (Table 2). The responses for net sales displayed a dual mean with an equal number of respondents indicating that average annual net revenues from plant sales was \$5,001 to \$10,000 and \$10,001 and \$25,000 (Table 3).

Table 2 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “In your estimation, what is the average annual gross revenues from your plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Less than \$1,000	2	4%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	4	7%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	7	13%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	16	29%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	9	16%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	6	11%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	6	11%
Greater than \$100,000	5	9%
Total	55	100%

Table 3 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “In your estimation, what is the average annual net revenues from your plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Less than \$1,000	2	4%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	8	15%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	14	26%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	14	26%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	8	15%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	3	6%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	2	4%
Greater than \$100,000	3	6%
Total	54	100%

Respondents identified that horticulture staff (65%), volunteers/friends groups (46%), and all staff (31%) are most responsible for organizing their plant sales (Table 4); the selection of plant sale inventories is most frequently done by horticulture staff (55%), the Director of Horticulture (34%), and volunteers (19%) (Table 5); and sale plants are most frequently grown onsite (83%) and bought from wholesale growers (76%) (Table 6). Finally, the majority of plant sales (93%) are reported as being held onsite, at the institution (Table 7).

Table 4 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Who is responsible for organizing your plant sales?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
All Staff	17	31%
Horticulture Staff	35	65%
Students	3	6%
Volunteers/Friends Groups	25	46%
Special Events Staff	8	15%
A contracted, outside organization	0	0%
Other	8	15%

Table 5 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Who determines the plant sale inventories?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Horticulture Staff	29	55%
Director of Horticulture	18	34%
Volunteers	10	19%
Board of Advisors / Board of Directors	0	0%
Volunteers/Friends Groups	6	11%
Other	9	17%

Table 6 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Where do your sale plants come from?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Grow Your Own	45	83%
Wholesale Nursery	41	76%
Retailers (Nursery / Garden Center)	8	15%
Consignment	10	19%
Donated Stock	18	33%
Other	6	11%
Other		
Wholesale nursery plants are surplus after plantings ~12 partner wholesale nurseries that sell on site, along with our own plants		
University partners		
students		
from special exhibit shows		
nursery vendors at evt [sic]		

Table 7 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Where do you hold your plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Onsite	50	93%
Offsite	1	2%
Multiple Sites	3	6%
Total	54	100%

Most respondents (75%) reported that they do not partner with any other organizations for their plant sales. Those that do (23%) reported working with horticulture and plant societies, educational organizations, and food and entertainment partners (Table 8). Most respondents (70%) reported that they do not have sponsors for their plant sales but those that do (28%) receive mostly monetary corporate sponsorships and in-kind donations of food, advertising, plants, and sales space (Table 9).

Table 8 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “For your plant sales, do you partner with any other organizations?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)	12	23%
No	40	75%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	53	100%
Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)		
For food, entertainment, local environmental group, children's activities, etc.		
We partner with ~12 wholesale specialty nurseries		
Colorado State University, Front Range Community College		
all the different plant societies run their own booth		
Work with local hort society		
sister hort societies		
Native Plant Society		
Plant Societies		
local retail nurseries participate as vendors		
The local Master Gardeneres [sic]		
Master Gardeners		

Table 9 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “For your plant sales, do you have any sponsors?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)	15	28%
No	37	70%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	53	100%

Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)
Donation
Corporate, grants and private giving
\$5,000 level corporate sponsor... a local bank.
The main sponsor is usually the company that gives us the off-site space to hold our spring sale. In the past seven years, we have used abandoned supermarkets mostly, but last year it was a former JC Penney's in an abandoned mall.
mostly in-kind gifts
wholesale growers
A local lumberyard has been a sponsor for our Spring Plant Sale for the last 3-4 years
we ask a garden center to sponsor T-shirts for the salespeople to wear
local newspaper, and occasionally [sic] others
minimal
Monrovia Growers
9 years Turner, stopped last year
The wholesale nursery sales [sic] the plants to us at cost.
wine is donated

The fate of unsold plants was determined by respondents from a list provided within the survey question. Plants were mostly kept for later sales (70%) or installed in the garden (52%). However, the trend of philanthropy indicated that plants were also distributed to volunteers and staff members (26%), community causes/projects (28%), or other gardens (13%) (Table 10).

Table 10 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “What happens to the unsold plants?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Keep unsold plants in inventory for later sales.	38	70%
Install unsold plants in the garden.	28	52%
Distribute unsold plants to volunteers and staff members.	14	26%
Donate unsold plants to a community cause / project.	15	28%
Donate unsold plants to another park or garden.	7	13%
Other	15	28%
Other		
Plant vendors take stock back home with them		
Vendor plants return with the vendors		
give to staff or other garden		
what unsold plants? Left-overs are minimal		
Hold several members' only sales for reduced cost, and liquidate stock to produce stands.		
We sell most of the unsold plants through our Gift Shop at a discount		
return consignment		
sent back to nurseries		
Sold through our gift shop		
Use for community street trees		
return to wholesaler		
Donate to our our [sic] community gardens/urban agriculture [sic] sites		
Give back to consignment nursery		
the plants from the wholesale nursery they take back, but the plants from our garden either get distributed to volunteers or held over for next year		
All are sold		

Respondents indicated to what degree they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding institutional perceptions of their plant sales. These responses help to establish general institutional sentiment regarding the practice of holding plant sales. Respondents did not believe that a plant sale was too much work for the return on investment and generally thought that plant sales were vital to their operational budgets. Respondents also generally agreed that the plant sale is essential for public relations, membership, and that it is a tradition that the staff enjoys (Table 11).

Table 11 This table represents the degree to which respondents agreed or disagreed with specific statements regarding the perception of plant sales at their institutions.

Response	Number of Respondents					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Number of Responses
The plant sale is too much work for the return on investment.	17	25	5	6	1	54
The plant sale is an essential effort for public relations and to generate and reward membership in our institution.	4	1	5	26	18	54
Our institution would do fine without the plant sale. If it were up to me we wouldn't do it.	22	20	7	3	2	54
The plant sale is a tradition that staff enjoys and looks forward to.	1	9	15	23	6	54

Survey 2: Public Garden Plant Sales Secondary Survey

Respondents indicated that fundraising (94%), community engagement (87%), support of institutional mission (61%), and education (60%) were the predominant goals of their institutions' special event plant sales (Table 12).

Table 12 The number of respondents answering the survey question, "What are the goals of your plant sales?" This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Fundraising	58	94%
Community Engagement	54	87%
Support of institutional mission	38	61%
Education	37	60%
Increasing institutional membership	34	55%
Promotion of specific plants affiliated with the institution	19	31%

The majority of revenues generated from their plant sales is allocated to a general discretionary budget (44%), followed by the horticulture department (31%) (Table 13).

For the majority of respondents (47%), sale plants come from wholesale nurseries followed by onsite production (35%) (Table 14).

Table 13 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Where do you allocate the majority of revenues generated from your plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Horticulture	19	31%
Education	0	0%
Programming	3	5%
Marketing	0	0%
Performances	0	0%
A general discretionary budget	27	44%
Other (Fill In The Blank)	12	20%
Total	61	100%

Other (Fill In The Blank)
General operation including most of the above.
revenue from plant sales supports the budget which includes all of the above - it is not designated to a specific purpose
operations
Special event fundraising goes into operations budget
The revenues are part of our general operating budget
Salaries of the summer student interns and the staff superintendent who oversees the students.
General Operations
For past several [sic] years to a building fundraising effort; other years for special projects, mostly garden or facility related
All funds are unrestricted and not specifically allocated. However, with a admin to program ratio of 1:4, we feel very safe in saying (marketing/promoting) that all the proceeds benefit our mission-based [sic] programs, including education.
To buy more plants for the gardens!
student scholarships and operating costs as well as special projects
general operating budget

Table 14 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Where do the majority of your sale plants come from?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Grow Your Own	21	35%
Wholesale Nursery	28	47%
Retailers (Nursery / Garden Center)	1	2%
Consignment	1	2%
Donations	0	0%
Other	9	15%
Total	60	100%

Forty-three (70%) respondents reported that they do not track the paid staff time that goes into the plant sales (Table 15). Those who did track paid staff time that goes into the plant sales had the option of reporting total hours (Table 16).

Table 15 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you track the paid staff time that goes into the plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	16	26%
No	43	70%
Unsure	2	3%
Total	61	100%

Table 16 Responses to the survey question, “Knowing that this survey is anonymous, how much paid staff time goes into organizing the plant sales? (Include time spent organizing, making preparations, growing/arranging/prepping plants, breakdown and cleanup efforts, educational and special events associated with the plant sales.)?”

Response
In total about one position half time on an annual basis.
3 staff at 13 hours/week
1100
\$5,697 (2013)
The plant sales are not tracked seperately [sic]
2,960 hours
I don't know offhand but easily 1500 hours.
200 to 250
40 hours
We have a nursery manager, an assistant manager (PT, seasonal), and parttime [sic] sales person (PT, seasonal)
too time consuming to retrieve at this time.
250 hours
160 hrs

Thirty-eight (62%) respondents reported that they track the number of volunteer hours that go into the plant sales (Table 17). Those respondents had the option of reporting total hours (Table 18).

Table 17 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you track how many volunteer hours go into the plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	38	62%
No	20	33%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	61	100%

Table 18 Responses to the survey question, “How many volunteer hours go into the plant sales? (Include time spent organizing, making preparations, growing/arranging/prepping plants, breakdown and cleanup efforts, educational and special events associated with the plant sales.)?”

Response
750 hrs
5 volunteers at 3 hours/week (increases around major discount sales; plateaus for the day to day plant sales)
950
about 300 hours
at least 60
2000 hours more or less
more than 500
hard to say
1000 Hours
800
500
450
our sale is every other year in odd years so: hours in 2013=3,329; '12=182; '11=3,716; '10=312
72
Roughly, over 4,500 hours per year.
400 to 500
20
over 7,600 in a year (includes plant sales themselves plus time spent in propagation)
100
Approximately, 250 hours
4200 hrs annually
over 1000 hours to prepare, package and run the sale
2500
1,000
est 150 hrs
300
We have only recently started to try to track, but we don't have good estimates right now. We are aiming to find out more.

A slight majority of respondents (53%) reported that plant sales are considered a regular staff responsibility. Respondents indicating that plant sales are not considered a regular responsibility reported almost equally that the staff is able to accomplish both their regular responsibilities and accommodate the plant sale (22%) and that regular duties must be put on hold until after the plant sales (25%)(Table 19).

Table 19 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you feel that your staff/organization has the flexibility to accommodate the plant sales, or do you feel that regular staff responsibilities are redirected to accommodate the sale?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Our staff is able to accomplish their regular responsibilities and accommodate the extra responsibilities of the plant sales.	13	22%
Our staff must put their regular responsibilities on hold until after the plant sales.	15	25%
The plant sales are considered a regular responsibility of our staff.	31	53%
Total	59	100%

Horticulture staff was reported as having significant involvement with setting up and breaking down the plant sales (80%), selling plants (75%), growing plants (75%), selecting and managing inventory (71%), and customer service for the plant sales (70%). There was less involvement from horticulture staff reported for

educational events for the plant sales (38%), and marketing of the plant sales (18%) (Table 20).

Table 20 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “In what capacity are the horticulture staff involved in the plant sales?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Setting up/Breaking down the plant sales.	45	80%
Selling plants at the plant sales.	42	75%
Growing the plants for plant sales.	42	75%
Selecting and managing the inventory of the plant sales.	40	71%
Various aspects of customer service at the plant sales (working checkout, transporting/loading plants for customers).	39	70%
Preparing and executing educational events for the plant sales.	21	38%
Marketing the plant sales.	10	18%

The vast majority of respondents (94%) answered “No” when asked if their institution held online or mail order pre-sales for plant sales (Table 21). Also, most respondents indicated that their plant sales do not have an associated plant auction (85%)(Table 22).

Table 21 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you hold online or mail order pre-sales for your plant sales?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	6	10%
No	52	88%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	59	100%

Table 22 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do your plant sales have an associated plant auction?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	7	12%
No	51	85%
Unsure	2	3%
Total	60	100%

Respondents who indicated that discounts are offered at plant sales for members of their institutions (Table 23) were then asked whether discounts were offered across the entire sale, or if discounts were specific to certain days. The majority of respondents indicated that members are offered a standard discount throughout the entire sale (80%)(Table 24). Also, the majority of institutions (72%) offer pre-sales for members, patrons, or donors (Table 25). The majority of respondents reported a relationship between plant sales and membership through both increasing membership (40%) and sustaining membership (37%). The remaining respondents (23%) reported that the plant sale does not affect membership (Table 26).

Table 23 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you offer discounts for members of your institution?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	35	58%
No	25	42%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	60	100%

Table 24 The number of respondents who answered “Yes” on Table 21 answering the survey question, “Are members offered discounts across the entire sale, or are discounts specific to certain days?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Members are offered a standard discount throughout the entire sale.	28	80%
Members are only offered discounts during certain days.	7	20%
Total	35	100%

Table 25 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you offer pre-sales for members/patrons/donors of your institution?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	43	72%
No	14	23%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	60	100%

Table 26 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Which statement best describes the impact of plant sales on membership?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
The plant sale increases membership.	24	40%
The plant sale sustains membership.	22	37%
The plant sale does not affect membership.	14	23%
Total	60	100%

All respondents accepted cash for payment at plant sales, with the majority also accepting personal checks (95%), and credit/debit cards (90%) (Table 27). Credit/debit cards were the most popular form of payment (61%) (Table 28), and 29 (55%) respondents reported utilizing WiFi and wireless payment options for credit/debit cards (Table 29).

Respondents reported a low utilization of bar code technology in plant sales (20%)(Table 30).

Table 27 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Which of the following payment forms do you accept at your plant sales?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Cash	60	100%
Credit/Debit Card	54	90%
Personal Check	57	95%
Bitcoin	0	0%

Table 28 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you know which payment form is used most often?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Cash	8	13%
Credit/Debit Card	37	61%
Personal Check	2	3%
Bitcoin	0	0%
Unsure	14	23%
Total	61	100%

Table 29 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you utilize WiFi/wireless payment options (tablet/smartphone credit/debit card readers)?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	29	55%
No	24	45%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	53	100%

Table 30 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you barcode the plant sale inventory?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	12	20%
No	49	80%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	61	100%

Respondents indicated how they market their plant sales: social media (95%), mass emailing (89%), website advertisements (80%), and print advertisements (70%) was reported as the most common (Table 31). Respondents reported mass emailing (48%), and social media (24%) marketing strategies to be the most effective (Table 32).

Table 31 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “How do you market your plant sales?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Social Media	58	95%
Mass Emailing	54	89%
Website Advertisements	49	80%
Newspaper/Magazine Advertisements	43	70%
Radio Advertisements	25	41%
Television Advertisements	4	7%

Table 32 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Which do you find to be the most effective method of marketing your plant sales?”

Answer	Response	%
Newspaper/Magazine Advertisements	9	16%
Radio Advertisements	1	2%
Television Advertisements	1	2%
Website Advertisements	5	9%
Social Media	14	24%
Mass Emailing	28	48%
Total	58	100%

Horticulture staff (68%) primarily determine plant sale inventories, followed by the director of horticulture (34%), and volunteers/friends groups (28%)(Table 33). Forty-two respondents (69%) reported that they keep a record of their best selling plants (Table 34), and for most of these respondents (88%), that information factors highly into inventory selection for subsequent plant sales (Table 35).

Respondents answered in almost equal proportions that their institutional collections policies do (42%) and do not (44%) influence their plant sale inventories (Table 36). Also, about half of the respondents (52%) reported that they utilize statewide invasive plant lists when selecting inventory (Table 37).

Table 33 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Who determines your plant sale inventories?” This survey question instructed participants to select all responses that apply to their institution.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Horticulture Staff	37	61%
Director of Horticulture	21	34%
Volunteers/Friends Groups	17	28%
Other	12	20%
Board of Advisors / Board of Directors	3	5%
Other		
Collaborating institution		
Palm Society		
based on previous year's sales		
partners		
Education Coordinator/ Special Event Manager		
Store Manager		
Garden store manager		
Gift Shop		
Greenhouse Manager		
Chief Program Ofiicer [sic]		
Nursery Manager		
President		

Table 34 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you keep a record of which plants were the best/fastest sellers?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	42	69%
No	16	26%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	61	100%

Table 35 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “In your opinion, does this information factor highly into inventory selection for the next plant sale?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	37	88%
No	5	12%
Total	42	100%

Table 36 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do your plant sale inventories reflect your institution’s collections policies?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes, our collections policy dictates what plants we offer during the plant sales.	25	42%
No, our collections policy is not considered when selecting plants for the plant sales.	26	44%
Unsure	8	14%
Total	59	100%

Table 37 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Do you utilize statewide invasive plant lists when selecting plants for your plant sale?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Yes	32	52%
No	18	30%
Unsure	11	18%
Total	61	100%

Survey 3: Public Garden Plant Sales Follow-Up Survey

Most survey respondents hold both spring and fall plant sales (42%), followed by those holding only a spring plant sale (28%). Nine (25%) respondents hold multiple plant sales throughout the year (Table 38). The majority of respondents (57%) consider the spring sale to be the most significant for their institution (Table 39).

Table 38 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “How many plant sales does your institution hold a year?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Spring plant sale	10	28%
Fall plant sale	2	6%
Spring and Fall plant sales	15	42%
Multiple/Continuous plant sales throughout the year	9	25%
Total	36	100%

Table 39 The number of respondents answering the survey question, “Which plant sale do you consider most significant for your institution?”

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent Equivalent
Spring plant sale	21	57%
Fall plant sale	5	14%
They are all equally important	2	5%
Unsure	0	0%
Other	9	24%
Total	37	100%

Other
We also have small niche plant sales that accompany public symposia eg [sic] medicinal plant symposium, native plant symposium etc
Spring has more sales but fall is better planting weather for establishing bigger plants
We tried fall for a few years - didn't sell well
Mother's Day weekend annual sale
(Descanso Gardens) We have suspended "plant sales" indefinitely, preferring to sell plants year-round out of our gift shop and twice per year partnering with Mount San Antonio College's horticulture program, who do plant sales from their own nurseries and inventories on the Descanso site.
Fall sale (native plants) is important because it communicates our mission; spring sales generate more revenue
Every other year we hold the fall plant sale
We have a poorly defined plant sale schedule. The Spring sale is the major event, but we sell periodically at the Gift Shop and upon request from visiting groups.
Fall sale is a Big Deal - spring sale is a little more sporadic - we just put out what looks good at that moment. Also, this is all still new to us. But, thanks to our great volunteers, our recent fall plant sale was the most successful fundraising event we've ever had!

Case Studies

Denver Botanic Gardens

Background

The mission of Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG) is to connect people with plants from the Rocky Mountain region and from similar regions around the world (DBG, “Mission & Core Values”). DBG has three unique garden sites representing three different regional ecosystems. The oldest site, Denver Botanic Gardens at York Street opened in 1959 (DBG, “History”).

DBG holds two special event plant sales a year at its flagship property at York Street: The Spring Plant Sale and the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale.

Spring Plant Sale

History and Philosophy

“The history of the Botanic Gardens has been paid staff taking over what the volunteers have created. The sale is no exception” (Kelaidis, 2014). The Spring Plant Sale was started in the 1960s as a “parking lot sale” by volunteers, and gradually, over the years, paid staff has taken over what volunteers started, taking on much more responsibility than they had previously (Kelaidis, 2014).

The Spring Plant Sale supports the Gardens’ mission to connect people with plants, focusing on plants that are both appropriate for the Colorado region and

promote water conservation (Kiehl, 2014). Staff believes that part of the success of the plant sale is tied into the public perception that Colorado is a hard place to garden, and that DBG is seen as the regional authority and a place to get help (Kelaidis, 2014). DBG is also seen as pushing the envelope with its offerings for the Colorado region, often trialing new plants for the varied and extreme microclimates of the area (Tatroe, 2014).

Sale Organization

The Spring Plant Sale is a two-and-a-half-day event that draws over 8,000 people and sells over 80,000 plants annually (Kiehl, 2014). The event starts with the Plant Sale Preview Party, a four-hour event on Thursday evenings. A limited number of tickets to the Plant Sale Preview Party are available for purchase by the general public. The free entry, public sale days continue from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. During this event, the public has free entry to DBG as well as the Spring Plant Sale (Denver Botanic Gardens, “Spring Plant Sale”).

The Spring Plant Sale is organized around the exterior of the Boettcher Memorial Center, Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory, and Greenhouse Complex, forming a loop from the main entrance to an auxiliary exit on the northern end of the Gardens property. Historically, the Spring Plant Sale was located throughout the Gardens grounds, placing plant divisions with their corresponding gardens. In the former arrangement, staff encountered challenges of space restrictions, narrow paths, and various forms of visitor impact on the plants and grounds (Kelaidis, 2014). The new arrangement gives visitors access to wide, cement paths, and an easy to navigate layout.

Sale plants are separated into distinct division areas. Divisions and plant offerings may slightly vary from year-to-year. In 2014, there were fifteen plant divisions: Roses, Grown at the Gardens, Fruits, Berries & Veggies, Container Planting, Annuals, Perennials, Herbs, Aquatics, Plant Select, Mixed Succulents, Water-Smart, Rock Alpine, Hanging Baskets, and InColor. The plant divisions offered on the northern side of the building complex including Plant Select, Mixed Succulents & Water-Smart, and Rock Alpine are considered more specialized divisions that have been cultivated in popularity over the years (Edwards, 2014). During the Spring Plant Sale staff members and volunteers are present in each plant division as salespeople, to answer questions and assist visitors.

Inventory Selection

Each plant division is responsible for selecting and ordering their own stock for the Spring Plant Sale within an allocated budget. Plant divisions are co-chaired by a DBG staff member and a DBG volunteer and may contain any additional number of DBG staff members or volunteers. A Spring Plant Sale committee has monthly meetings led by Denver Botanic Gardens' Associate Director of Events to coordinate plant list finalization, ordering, price label requests, volunteer requests, and signage creation.

As plant lists are finalized, each division chair must submit a spreadsheet containing information on whether or not the plant is a new selection for Spring Plant Sale, the common name, the scientific name, proposed quantity to order, cost, suggested sale price, and expected revenue. This must be approved by the Director of Horticulture and the Director of Research, who check the lists for invasive, restricted, or plants that would be undesirable for DBG to sell. The Accounting Department will

then review the plant lists and price label requests to evaluate individual plant division pricing strategies (Kiehl, 2014).

Checkout Strategy

The checkout area is managed by Accounting and Special Events staff, but is mostly run by volunteers. DBG accepts cash and credit/debit cards via an iPad Square POS system. Each of the sixteen cashier stations is staffed with two volunteers responsible for tallying purchases and accepting payment. Members, Spring Plant Sale volunteers, and DBG employees receive a 10% discount on purchases across all two-and-a-half days of the sale. Inventory is not barcoded, instead, a POS program on the iPad allows for the cashier to select a division name and enter a price for each plant purchased, the information for which is located on a corresponding plant label. Through this system the Accounting Department is able to monitor total and division sales in real-time.

Post-checkout, visitors are directed to the northern gate where they have the option of a complimentary service DBG calls “plant valet” (Kiehl, 2014). Plant valet services will hold a visitors plant sale purchases while a visitor fetches their own vehicle, and will then load the plants for the visitor.

Volunteer Involvement

The Spring Plant Sale relies heavily on volunteer participation. There are over 600 volunteer shifts, including roles of cashiers, greeters, information booth specialists, plant division volunteers, and plant valets (Fedyski, 2014). The Volunteer Services Department works onsite checking volunteers in and out, assigning positions and shifts, and providing refreshments. Volunteer services recruits heavily online,

especially for corporate volunteers of which there were 4 corporate groups represented at the 2014 Spring Plant Sale including Xcel Energy and Enterprise Rent-A-Car (Fedyski, 2014). Americorps and college groups are also targeted as potential volunteers for the event. Volunteers receive schedule reminders and position descriptions emailed to them before the event.

Sponsors and Partnerships

Denver Botanic Gardens' Development Office solicits sponsorship dollars and in-kind donations from corporations and local business for the plant sales. DBG considers sponsorship dollars to be a significant contribution to their overall plant sale revenues (Kiehl, 2014). Associate sponsors contributing sponsorship dollars at a certain level are given the opportunity to represent themselves in a 10'x10' onsite booth or through other novel means. Chipotle Mexican Grill donated the volunteer lunches and was allowed to hand out coupons and seed packets with every visitor plant purchase. Swingle, a local tree care company sets up an old fashioned truck featuring their logo. Target donates 100 shopping carts for use during the Spring Plant Sale. All associate and in-kind donation sponsors are represented on the Denver Botanic Gardens' Spring Plant Sale Website.

Plant Select

Plant Select is a not-for-profit partnership between Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado State University, and Colorado's green industry focused on recommending, introducing, and releasing plants suited to the Colorado region (Denver Botanic Gardens, "Darlene Radichel Plant Select Garden") (Plant Select, "About Us"). The Darlene Radichel Plant Select Garden at DBG features only plants released through

Plant Select. Plant Select trials and releases about 10 plants a year, many of which are planted in the Darlene Radichel Plant Select Garden and are available for purchase at the Spring Plant Sale.

Fall Plant and Bulb Sale

The Denver Botanic Gardens Fall Plant and Bulb Sale is a two-day event, held on a Friday and Saturday in September, currently serving about 1300 visitors annually. The sale was started in 2006 with the intention of selling bulbs, woody plants, and Grown at The Gardens plants (Broermann, 2014). The sale is held at an auxiliary entrance and nursery area at the north end of DBG. Entrance to the sale is free, however, depending on featured exhibits there may still be an entrance fee to DBG. All visitors with a paid admission will receive 10% off at the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale. Members, volunteers at the sale, and employees also receive 10% off at the sale. Rare and specialty bulbs are also offered through a presale and made available for pickup at the DBG gift shop (Broermann, 2014).

Inventory selection for the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale is done between Ms. Lindsay Broermann, Public Events Coordinator and bulb experts from the Horticulture Department. There is not a formalized committee structure as there is with the Spring Plant Sale.

Public Events Coordinator Ms. Lindsay Broermann perceives a public aversion to bulbs and designs educational events to encourage and introduce gardeners to the idea of working with bulbs (Broermann, 2014). The Fall Plant and Bulb Sale features expert demonstrations and bulb specialists, bulb related exhibits, and a video series featured on the DBG website.

UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden

Background

UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden was founded as UC Davis Arboretum in 1936 (UC Davis, “About Us”). Until 2012 the mission of the Arboretum was “To be a living museum connecting people with the beauty and value of plants” (UC Davis, “UC Davis Arboretum Ten-Year Plan 2002-2012).

In 2011, The Arboretum’s administrative units were merged with Grounds and Landscape Services, the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve, and Civil and Industrial Services to create a public garden team charged with “leading the campus to a new level of sophistication and collaboration in its approach to stewarding the campus landscape” (UC Davis, “UC Davis Gateways Project Progress Update). This synthesis led to the master-planning framework of the UC Davis GATEways Project (Garden, Arts, and The Environment), which envisions the campus landscape as a nexus between the university, the students, and the community.

Through the GATEways Project, “Plant Sales” and “Special Plant Sales” are highlighted as being events that provide income, outreach, and attract specialty groups to the campus through a common purpose (UC Davis, “UC Davis Gateways Project Progress Update). The Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum holds six special event plant sales a year at the UC Davis Arboretum Teaching Nursery: Four in the spring, and two in the fall.

History and Philosophy

In 1971 funding to The Arboretum was cut and the Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum started the first plant sale in order to generate revenue to sustain the existing plantings. Since the addition of the Arboretum Teaching Nursery in 2009, a

dedicated space for growing and hosting plants for The Arboretum and the plant sales, The Arboretum has hosted multiple sales a year (Cruz, 2014).

“The plant sales are important to drive membership, fundraising, mission, and engagement” (Socolofsky, 2014). Although the plant sales are a major source of fundraising for The Arboretum there is a strong focus on education and outreach (Lewis, 2014). The yearly plant sale offerings are tied to a theme (2014s theme was The New Front Yard) that seeks to educate the public on issues both horticultural and environmental (Cruz, 2014). To support the regionally specific themes, the plant sales specialize in offering California natives and other regionally appropriate plants not generally available at other nurseries (Lewis, 2014).

The Arboretum also considers the plant sales an interface between themselves, the student volunteers and the community (Socolofsky, 2014). The Teaching Nursery offers student interns and community volunteers the opportunity to learn nursery work (Lewis, 2014). The plant sales also host local horticultural and environmental groups in a section of the Teaching Nursery dubbed Outreach Alley (Cruz, 2014).

Sale Organization

Annually, the plant sales draw about 5,400 attendees and sell about 20,000 plants (Lewis, 2014). Each sale is traditionally held on a Saturday morning from 9am to 1pm. The first sale of the spring season is reserved as a members’ only sale for Friends of the Arboretum (UC Davis, “Plant Sales at the Arboretum Teaching Nursery). Members receive a 10% discount on purchases across all six plant sales.

The plant sales are held in the Teaching Nursery, although prior to its construction the sales were held outside of the Arboretum offices (Cruz, 2014). The teaching nursery is divided into long rows of plants with wide aisles for easy

movement. The sale plants are concentrated on the west-end of the Teaching Nursery, with several rows of immature plants on the east-end cordoned off from public access. The plants are arranged into “simple categories organized in a predictable pattern” (Lewis, 2014) and placed both on raised tables and directly on the ground. The plant categories are offered as: California Natives, Shrubs, Perennials, Shade, California Shade, Trees, Vines, Bulbs, Grasses.

An area of pop-up tents, referred to as Outreach Alley, is organized in the middle of one of the main north-south walking paths. Each tent can host up to four exhibitors. The exhibitors include local environmental and horticultural associations, student groups, local nurseries, and other businesses affiliated with the Arboretum such as the Davis Master Gardeners and the California Native Grasslands Association. These exhibitors promote their organizations, offer literature and consultations, and hold demonstrations, but do not sell merchandise or generate revenue from tabling. The Arboretum also sells branded t-shirts, tote bags, and jewelry (Cruz, 2014).

A small section of tables at the south end of the sale represent plant offerings from the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory, an unaffiliated on-campus facility. The Botanical Conservatory offers mostly rare, tropical and subtropical outdoor plants that compliment the plants sold by the Arboretum. The Arboretum receives one-third of all sales of Botanical Conservatory plants (Sandoval, 2014).

Inventory Selection

The Arboretum grows about 80% of the stock for plant sales in-house, and spends about \$40,000 a year on bought-in plants from other nurseries (Lewis, 2014). Plants are selected based on the general theme for the plant sales that year, and through monitoring customer buying trends (Fowler, 2014). California natives are

emphasized, and since the arrival of Nursery Manager, Mr. Taylor Lewis, California native stock has increased by 30%-35% (Lewis, 2014).

Arboretum All-Stars

The Arboretum All-Stars program is a joint collaboration between the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden and the California Center for Urban Horticulture that has created a guide recommending 100 plants exceptionally suited for use in California's Central Valley. The Arboretum All-Stars features both California native plants and those well adapted to growing in a Mediterranean climate (UC Davis, "Arboretum All-Stars Book 2014-2015 Edition"). The Arboretum All-Stars are featured plants in the Arboretum collection, and in specialized demonstration beds surrounding the Teaching Nursery. The Arboretum All-Stars are available for purchase at California nurseries (UC Davis, "Arboretum All-Stars"). About 75% of the Arboretum All-Stars are offered at the plant sales each year (Fowler, 2014).

The UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden website features a database of all 100 Arboretum All-Stars, as well as an official brochure, planting plan, an audio slide show, and irrigation and climate zone trials of the plants (UC Davis, "Arboretum All-Stars").

Volunteer Involvement

The Arboretum relies heavily on volunteer involvement to prepare for and operate the plant sales. For the second fall plant sale on October 25, 2014 there were 90 volunteers (40 student volunteers, 50 community volunteers), of which 25 were new volunteers. Volunteers for plant sales are often recruited from groups requiring community service hours, including fraternities and sororities (Cruz, 2014). Volunteer

roles include cashiers and cashier assistants (plant counters), volunteer hospitality, attendance counters, sales floor assistants, customer assistants for carrying merchandise to cars, parking attendants, plant cart organizers, and plant cart availability announcers.

The Arboretum Teaching Nursery also utilizes volunteers and interns throughout the year to assist with the propagation and care of plants for plant sales (Cruz, 2014).

Sponsors and Partnerships

The Arboretum receives mostly in-kind donations from local businesses. Whole Foods donates a gift card for use towards complimentary volunteer lunches, as well as in-kind donations of drinks and food items. Whole Foods also sets up a donation-based “spin-the-wheel” at the plant sales, offering Whole Foods items and merchandise in exchange for a donation to the Arboretum. The business H2O To Go provides the majority of water for volunteers (Cruz, 2014).

The Arboretum also has established partnerships with nurseries and local business, such as the Davis Ace Hardware, who offer an in-store discount to members of the Arboretum (Cruz, 2014).

Ms. Ellen Zagory, Director of Horticulture at the Arboretum, has an established relationship writing articles on horticulture and the environment for the local newspaper The Sacramento Bee. Through this partnership the Arboretum is able to cross-market the Arboretum and the plant sales through educational content (Socolofsky, 2014).

Expert Interviews

Interview with Mr. Fred Spicer, Executive Director and CEO at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham, Alabama, October 9, 2014

Mr. Fred Spicer has served as the first official Executive Director and CEO of Birmingham Botanical Gardens since 2001. Birmingham Botanical Gardens is run as a partnership between the City of Birmingham, Alabama and the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

The Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens holds two plant sales a year. The spring plant sale consists of three public days, preceded by a preview party and very significant two-hour members' only sale, which, being a garden with free admission and parking, Mr. Spicer highlights as "one of our biggest, most valuable member benefits" (Spicer, 2014). In 2014, the spring sale offered about 100,000 plants and grossed roughly \$277,000. The fall sale takes place over two public sale days. Birmingham Botanical Gardens advertises their spring and fall plant sales as supporting, "The Gardens' mission to promote public knowledge and appreciation of plants, gardens and the environment" (Birmingham Botanical Gardens, "Fall Plant Sale").

Since 2005, the spring plant sale has been held offsite. Through a relationship developed with commercial realtors the spring sale has been held in parking lots, vacant supermarkets, abandoned furniture stores, and most consistently, a retail space that was a former J. C. Penney department store. The garden only pays for utilities and for any minor repairs needed to make the space temporarily habitable. Holding the sale offsite in such a facility allows for merchandise security, weatherproofing, ample parking, and the opportunity to set up the sale in an uncongested and easily navigable manner.

Mr. Spicer has seen a large shift of responsibilities from volunteers to paid staff as the staff of the garden has grown. Marketing and public relations, logistics and setup, and the preview party are now all staff responsibilities. The garden has also offered management assistance to volunteer-run, onsite grower groups responsible for providing 20%-25% of plants for the sale.

The plant sale offerings are not officially aligned with the Birmingham Botanical Gardens collections policy, however, Mr. Spicer believes that through the plant sale, the gardens can better express their horticultural and ecological values than they currently can through the garden site. For example, the garden site features plants that have been earmarked as “plants of concern,” which are not offered to the public through the sale (Spicer, 2014). However, the plant sale still features significant species of the living collections, such as camellias, ferns, Japanese maples, and native herbaceous plants.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens has the goal to sell all stock by the end of each sale, but will holdover valuable plants for the following sale. Discounts on stock are offered sporadically throughout the last day of the sale at the discretion of the staff.

Interview with Ms. Lois Carswell, Brooklyn Botanic Garden Auxiliary, BBG Chairman Emeritus, and Ms. Melanie Sifton, Vice President of Horticulture and Facilities, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn, New York, June 6, 2014

Ms. Lois Carswell served the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG) for over 50 years, beginning with the BBG Women’s Auxiliary in the late 1960s, she was elected a trustee in 1985, and was the Chairman of Gifts and Grants. She was involved with running the BBG Auxiliary Plant Sale for over 40 years with the plant sale founder, Lucille Plotz. Ms. Lois Carswell passed away on October 8, 2014.

Ms. Melanie Sifton has been the Vice President of Horticulture and Facilities at BBG since 2012 and was formerly the Director of the Humber Arboretum & Centre for Urban Ecology at Humber College.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden Plant Sale has been happening for over 60 years, and currently offers more than 20,000 plants over the course of a two-day public sale, and a three-and-a-half-hour members-only preview sale that takes place the night before the two-day public sale begins. The sale also features talks and clinics by BBG curators and staff on public sale days (BBG, “BBG’s Annual Plant Sale...”).

The volunteers from the Women’s Auxiliary of Brooklyn Botanic Garden started the BBG Auxiliary Plant Sale in the 1950s. Historically, the Auxiliary would receive excess plants from the horticulture department for the sale, but in the late 1960s, the garden was no longer in a position to donate plants and the Auxiliary made the decision to purchase plants in large volumes, expanding the sale. The early years of the sale focused on annuals, houseplants, and bonsai, a BBG specialty. In 1990, Judy Zuk, President of BBG, introduced the idea of a members’ only night, a huge success that still generates about two-thirds of the sale’s gross revenues in a three-and-a-half-hour period (Carswell & Sifton, 2014).

The sale offerings are extensive. Carswell states, “Our philosophy is, we try to have everything, one stop shopping, as many varieties of everything as we can possibly have” (Carswell & Sifton, 2014). Carswell recognizes that their offerings of perennials and shrubs has expanded tremendously over the years, and bicoastal relationships with growers have been established in order to offer perennial plants from west coast nurseries that may look more attractive at an earlier time of the year than those ordered from east coast nurseries. Also, existing in a truly urban

environment, BBG must offer plant sizes in accordance with the planting space and transportation challenges of its community as many New Yorkers do not own vehicles and may be walking to and from the plant sale. Most perennials are quart-sized, and even a 5-gallon pot is rare. A separate component of the plant offerings is the Children's Plant Sale, run in conjunction between the BBG Auxiliary and the Education Department. The Children's Plant Sale offers pre-sold plants for a dollar-a-piece, and sells about 5,000 plants a year.

The philosophy of the BBG Auxiliary is that "the garden has first choice on everything," and the plant sale is highlighted as an exceptional effort of cooperation between volunteers and staff (Carswell & Sifton, 2014). Although fundraising is a major goal of the sale, Carswell stresses that the Auxiliary is working not for themselves, or to make money, but rather working for the garden. Plants are only discounted for staff and volunteers after the event, and anything unsold is donated to community gardens through BBG's Green Bridge community horticulture program. An analysis of inventory is done directly after the sale to help determine plant fashions and buying strategies for the following year, but over-ordering is not considered detrimental because of the commitment to distributing unsold plant material to the community.

Interview with Ms. Stephanie Lindemann, Manager of Horticultural Events, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe, Illinois, July 29, 2014

Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) historically held two special event plant sales, one in spring called The Bloomin' Sale, which was later transformed into The Bloomin' Festival, and a fall sale called the Fall Bulb Festival. The Bloomin' Sale has been on hiatus since 2013, whereas the Fall Bulb Festival continues. According to Ms.

Stephanie Lindemann, the goals of the festivals were to “fundraise, and to educate the public about plant material and what survives and does the best in our area, and to offer the best quality plants (Lindemann, 2014).” The spring sales were, and fall sales continue to be, coordinated by The Woman’s Board of the Chicago Horticultural Society, a friends group, and CBG staff.

The first spring plant sale was held in 1966 by the Woman’s Board to generate funds for the opening of the Chicago Botanic Garden (Chicago Botanic Garden, “Woman’s Board...”). Plants for the sale were divided into sections (annuals, perennials, grasses, etc.), and committee chairs from the Woman’s Board determined the desired inventory and sourced the plants with help from the CBG staff. The Bloomin’ Sale consisted of a two-day public sale, preceded by a 4-hour members’ only sale, and a ticketed preview party. In its final year, the sale offered over 25,000 plants.

Plants offered at the sale included material developed by Chicagoland Grows, a partnership formed in 1986 among CBG, The Morton Arboretum, and the Ornamental Growers Association of Northern Illinois. Chicagoland Grows features plants, selected and developed, to be suited to a Midwestern US landscape (Chicago Botanic Garden, “2012 Bloomin’ Festival...”). Plants developed specifically by CBG were highlighted at the sale and were often the fastest sellers (Lindemann, 2014).

The Bloomin’ Sale saw a decrease in net revenue from 2005 to 2012 from \$90,000 to \$12,000 (Lindemann, 2014). Lindemann attributes the loss of revenue to competition from local nurseries, and the savvy offerings of big box stores on the north shore of Chicago. Also, a shift from buying-in plants to a vendor-only model at the sale limited potential income.

In its final year, the Bloomin' Sale was rebranded as the Bloomin' Festival in an attempt to emulate the festival model that had helped to grow the fall bulb sale. However, this only served to increase the investment by CBG, and distract from the plant sale without increasing overall sales.

The Fall Bulb Sale, active since the early 2000s, was combined with a fall festival in the late 2000s, to become the Fall Bulb Festival. The festival atmosphere, which includes live music, a harvest market, and kids' activities, helped to diversify offerings to guests, and attract visitors who might not normally attend a plant sale. The bulb sale is held inside in order to weatherproof the event (Chicago Botanic Garden, "Fall Bulb Festival").

The Fall Bulb Festival offers over 225 varieties of bulbs and generates about \$30,000 in revenue (Lindemann 2014). Bulbs are ordered in bulk and repackaged into smaller quantity bags with custom informational labels. An online catalog is available, and members are able to order bulbs through CBG in bulk quantities prior to the sale.

Through a partnership between CBG and certain bulb suppliers, some unsold bulbs can be returned for a refund.

Interview with Mr. Kenny Zelov, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Desert Botanical Garden, Phoenix, Arizona, August 14, 2014

The mission of the Desert Botanical Garden views the advancing of research, exhibition, and education of desert plants, especially desert plants of the Southwestern United States, as a commitment to the communities that they serve (Desert Botanical Garden, "About The Garden"). Thus, the Desert Botanical Garden's bi-annual plant sale, which has taken place for about 25 years, offers regionally native, climate-appropriate, and desert-adaptable plant species to the Phoenix community.

The bi-annual plant sale features a spring sale and a fall sale, which due to climatic conditions, hold almost equal significance in terms of size and revenue. Both sales consist of a two-day public sale, preceded by a members' only sale day, which accounts for 40% to 50% of sales, and an invite-only preview party for patron circle members; members donating \$1,250 or more annually. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases.

The Desert Botanical Garden plant sales seek to “represent a one-stop shopping experience,” offering common and rare desert plant material in a breadth of sizes and maturities (Zelov, 2014). Over 30,000 plants are offered at each sale, about 5% of which is grown or propagated at the garden. Through relationships developed with growers almost all plants for the sale are ordered on consignment, significantly lowering the risks of over-purchasing and under-selling. Desert Botanical Garden also requires that plants from suppliers come pre-labeled with botanical names, common names, and custom prices.

The sales are setup on the hardscape of the garden's parking lot area, allowing for easy access and minimizing the physical impact on the garden. Plants are divided into sections, which are often dictated by water requirements. The sales also feature independent retail vendors selling garden containers and accessories. Desert Botanical takes 20% of the revenue generated by the retail vendors (Zelov, 2014).

As an incentive to customers, Desert Botanical Garden offers complimentary delivery services for sales of plant material in excess of \$1,000. The plants are delivered by an outside company, but paid for by Desert Botanical Garden. The garden also provides recommendations for delivery and installation services of large plant material purchased at the sale.

Interview with Ms. Missy Jeane, Special Events Manager, Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Madison, Wisconsin, October 9, 2014

Olbrich Botanical Gardens, in Madison, Wisconsin, holds an annual, two-day spring plant sale around Mother's Day weekend. Members' donating \$250 or more annually are offered the benefit of attending the first day of the sale two-hours before the general public. For a fee of \$20 a person, public shoppers can also attend the "Early Bird Shopping opportunity" (Olbrich Botanical Gardens, "Plant Sale with the Pros").

In the mid-2000s, the plant sale was rebranded as Plant Sale with the Pros in an effort to emphasize the unique offerings of a botanical garden plant sale over a big-box store (Jeane, 2014). Along with garden staff, Olbrich Botanical Gardens recruits 12 to 18 landscape designers, nursery owners, and local horticulturists to volunteer at the sale every year. They not only volunteer their time giving advice, but also through working at professional potting stations, and giving 20-minute landscape design consultations.

Olbrich Botanical Gardens has developed a relationship with Fiskars Brands, a manufacturer of tools and garden implements, headquartered in Madison. Fiskars Brands donates 1,000 tools to Olbrich annually, which Olbrich distributes as a members' benefit when members attend the plant sale. Olbrich maintains its relationship with Fiskars year-round; horticulturists at Olbrich test new tools for Fiskars and report on their effectiveness.

Interview with Mr. Bruce Crawford, Director, Rutgers Gardens, New Brunswick,
New Jersey, July 10, 2014

Rutgers Gardens has held an annual spring plant sale since the mid-1990s. Currently marketed as the Spring Flower Fair, the plant sale offers over 7,000 plants and serves about 2,500 customers.

Rutgers Gardens is affiliated with, but not fully financially supported by Rutgers University, and depends on generated revenue streams for funding. Proceeds from the plant sale go to support the Rutgers Gardens Student Internship Program.

The sale takes place over four days, usually a Thursday through Sunday. Three public sale days are preceded by a complimentary members' only preview sale and reception, which also features an auction of donated plant material. Members are also allowed a pre-sale order of pre-selected rare and unique plants, which can be picked up during the preview sale.

A major goal of the sale is to educate the consumer about plants. Director Bruce Crawford holds an educational event marketed as the "Plant Sale Highlights Class," about two-weeks before the sale to answer gardening questions and introduce the public to featured plant sale plants (Rutgers Gardens, "Spring Flower Fair 2015).

The plant sale inventory is determined by the Director, who selects perennials and woody material; and the Horticulture Manager, who chooses annuals and vegetables. The Horticulture Manager, horticulture staff, and volunteers are responsible for growing the vegetables and some annuals in-house, which accounts for almost 50% of the total plant sale stock.

Shopping is encouraged through the feature of a merchandise holding area. Customers of the plant sale can utilize a temporary holding area to store plants while

actively shopping. Customers who use this feature can have their sales totals tallied in the holding area to avoid transporting all of their purchases through the checkout area.

Repeat customers are incentivized through a 20% off coupon valid on the last day of the plant sale. The coupon is offered both earlier in the plant sale, and earlier in the year at Rutgers Day, a University event. Volunteers of the plant sale are incentivized to shop with a 40% discount offered after 3PM on the final day of the sale.

Unsold plant material is sold at the gift shop, a weekly farmer's market held at the garden, and at miscellaneous events over the course of the year. In October the garden holds a pallet sale, charging a flat fee for any amount of remaining plants that a customer can fit on a shipping pallet. In 2014, Rutgers Gardens charged \$75 for a pallet of plants.

Interview with Ms. Claire Sawyers, Director, The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, August 18, 2014

The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College holds two major special event plant sales: The Scott Arboretum Associates' Plant Sale, a fall sale held biennially, and The Unusual Tropicals and Annuals Sale, a spring sale held annually.

The plant sale offerings are based on the mission of the Arboretum, which seeks to inspire regional peoples of "average means," with the possibilities of what they could grow in their own gardens (Scott Arboretum, "Mission").

The plant sales are seen equally as both educational and fundraising events, and as Ms. Claire Sawyers, Director, observed, a desirable outcome of the event is friend-raising, although it is not specifically designed for that purpose (Sawyers, 2014). The educational aspects of the plant sales are emphasized, with offerings of

educational walks through the Arboretum, advanced lectures featuring plant sale highlights, special signage on plants in the Arboretum's collection indicating plant sale plants, plant sale handbooks, and volunteer plant experts at the sales. The Arboretum also considers holding the sale in the fall as part of its educational mission. The 2013 plant sale theme, "It's not finished with fall," was meant to remind the public that fall is an under recognized, but optimal planting time in the region.

The Scott Arboretum Associates' Plant Sale was started as a friends group fundraising endeavor in 1979, and has been held every other fall since (Scott Arboretum, "Special Friends"). The sale was initially held biennially as part of an agreement with Tyler Arboretum, who also held a fall sale. The sales would alternate years as to not compete. The sale continues to be held biennially and in the fall for a number of reasons: to not compete with a high number of regional spring plant sales, to avoid staff fatigue, a lack of interest from volunteers in holding an annual sale, and to preserve the institutional momentum of holding a fall sale.

Traditionally held in the second week of September, the fall sale generates about \$35,000 in net revenue, and serves around 1,000 attendees. The sale consists of a one-night preview party, called the Special Friends' Preview, followed by two public sale days. The first public sale day contains a two-hour members' only shopping period prior to the public opening. Attendance to the preview party is incentive driven. Donating a pre-determined amount buys a certain number of tickets to the event. Along with the members' only shopping period, membership is incentivized through a \$10-off coupon for new memberships or renewals leading up to the sale.

Committee leaders, usually Arboretum staff, determine the plant sale inventory, which is then approved by a mixed committee of staff and volunteers. The

sale offers over 3,000 plants, mostly woody plants and perennials. Inventory is selected from established growers' availability lists to lower sourcing costs, and ensure that stock is available. Smaller plant sizes are ordered, to reduce the footprint of the sale, and because Ms. Sawyers has noticed a better profit margin with smaller plants. Unsold plants are used in on-campus plantings, sold throughout the year during various conferences. If a significant amount of stock is leftover, small follow-up plant sales have been held, or plants are offered wholesale to area institutions. Discounts are not offered on leftover stock, but volunteers are often rewarded with a thank you voucher at the end of the sale to purchase unsold plants. The voucher does not have a set amount prior to the end of the sale, and is not offered consistently. It is important to Ms. Sawyers that this voucher is seen as a reward for service and not an incentive to volunteer (Sawyers, 2014).

The Unusual Tropicals and Annuals Sale was started in 2012 and currently serves around 200 attendees, generating about \$3,500 in net revenue.

The Unusual Tropicals and Annuals Sale is seen as an extension of the Arboretum's mission to provide regionally appropriate horticultural inspiration for persons of "average means." The Scott Arboretum's interpretation is that a person of "average means" in 2014 does have access to tropical and annual plants, and that the popularity of indoor, container, and patio gardens makes the effort appropriate (Sawyers, 2014). Holding a spring sale annually allows the Arboretum to offer certain plants that do not sell well in the fall, and helps to even out the biennial fundraising cycle of the fall sale.

The spring sale consists of one public day, which contains a two-hour members' only shopping period, preceded by a two-hour preview party the night before.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The Goals of Special Event Plant Sales

The nature of plant sales, being primarily aligned with the purposes of horticultural institutions, is a major reason why they are financially feasible as fundraising events. But should the primary goal of special event plant sales be fundraising? How can a plant sale further an institutional mission and strengthen an organization?

Many institutions do consider the primary goal of their plant sales to be fundraising, especially those organizations not receiving outside funding, or operating from an endowment. Desert Botanical Garden considers fundraising to be the main goal of their plant sales, “We are a public garden, not receiving funding from any municipality and therefore it’s one of the ways that we drive that revenue” (Zelov, 2014).

Only 26% of the respondents of Survey 2 track the paid staff time that goes into plant sales, but 62% track volunteer time. This might suggest that institutions do not closely tracking staff time. However, it could also be a natural outcome of tracking volunteer hours for purposes related to community engagement goals, grant proposal requirements, in-kind valuations, or the role of volunteer work in maintaining the tax-exempt status of special events revenue. It might also suggest that there is a reluctance or inability to investigate the true costs of the sales. One survey participant remarked, “When all staff and volunteer time is included in calculating the profitability of plant

sales, they are not very profitable and hardly worth doing from that perspective. They are a wonderful member benefit and friend raising tool, however.”

The plant sale goals at The Scott Arboretum are fundraising, education, and friend-raising. The plant sale is one of their signature programs because of its, “direct influence on local gardens, getting good plants into the hands of local gardeners, and educating them about it... it is as closely allied with our mission as anything that we do” (Sawyers, 2014). However, the fundraising aspect of the plant sale is not always emphasized.

We tend not to establish firm financial goals. We have, we’ve put a budget together and we theoretically have goals, but I would say we downplay that and from my perspective the reason is, in part, because even if we don’t make any money, I don’t want people to think it’s a failure because it is an educational event and there’s a tendency for volunteers to feel defeated or that they were unsuccessful if we establish what we think is going to be a motivating stretched goal, if we don’t get it then it feels like failure as opposed to success (Sawyers, 2014).

The Scott Arboretum also views the tracking of staff hours as antagonistic to nurturing the proper psychology of the plant sale.

It was holding this up to a scrutiny that we don’t do in other ways... we kind of deemphasize that to say, look, it’s a program we all love, we get excited by it, it creates a lot of enthusiasm and good will and it brings people here and all that good stuff and so do we really want to focus on it being a lot of work (Sawyers, 2014)?

Other institutions clearly indicated that fundraising is not the first goal of their plant sales. One survey participant remarked, “Our plant sale is not intended to be a major revenue source. It is primarily a membership perk.” Another participant in Survey 2 indicated that the goals of the plant sale are fluid based upon annual performance.

We sometimes consider the entire sale a type of loss leader that, depending on how sales are that year, are done as a community service, an educational initiative, a membership driver, and a way to promote the garden. Fundraising is not always the primary goal, though it is often a benefit of the sale.

Mr. Ernesto Sandoval, Director of the UC Davis Botanical Conservatory, articulated plant sales as “a sustainable way of expanding your mission (2014).” He sees plant sales as a self-sustaining loop. “It’s outreach that people pay for, and they expect to pay for what they get. The plant sale pays for us to do more outreach, and reaching out is how we sustain ourselves.”

Mr. Bruce Crawford, Director of Rutgers Gardens, remarked, “If it’s a plant sale that’s centric to the mission of that particular garden, then I think it has tremendous merit for educating the public” (2014). Rutgers Gardens relies on their plant sale as a fundraiser, but still puts tremendous value on its educational aspects. “We’re all in it to educate them about gardens, or plants in the gardens, or ecology, or whatever it is that your mission is... It’s a way to get one-on-one with the community and educate them about the plants” (Crawford, 2014).

Mr. Fred Spicer of Birmingham Botanical Gardens sees the interactions between staff, volunteers, and customers as “a million little tidbits of education going on all the time” (2014). The sentiment that purchasing plants from a public garden, instead of a nursery or home improvement store, will confer more complete knowledge, and thus higher success rates in growing those plants was a common theme among interviewees. Mr. Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver Botanic Gardens attributes much of the success of their spring plant sale to the educational advantage of purchasing plants from a horticultural authority.

I think that part of the reason why the plant sale is so successful is that people feel, here in Denver, that Colorado is a very hard place to

garden and that you better get help. Since our climate is challenging they perceive the botanic garden as being particularly valuable at performing the service of being educated on how to garden and what to purchase here (2014).

Brooklyn Botanic Garden uses its plant sale as a way to fulfill mission-based outreach and engagement, both internally and externally. “The staff always has first choice. When the plants come in, if a gardener sees something they want for the collection, we just give it to them. We’re working for the garden here... our philosophy is that the garden has first choice on everything” (Carswell, 2014). Staff members are also offered discounts on the first day of the sale, and during a post-sale in order to “engender positive feelings from the staff about the plant sale, which demands their time and support in order to run smoothly” (Sifton, 2015).

Externally, Brooklyn Botanic Garden donates unsold plants to community gardens through its Green Bridge program. “It all goes to beautify Brooklyn, basically. It’s a community-benefiting event. That’s the priority in our minds, rather than just dollars” (Carswell, 2014).

Denver Botanic Gardens sees their spring plant sale as an excellent opportunity to remind Denver that they exist.

I think that there’s a built-in community both in the garden and in the community at large that expects it... this is the biggest time of the year, March and April, that everybody is attuned to plants in Colorado and the Plant Sale is a huge promotional event. All the newspapers cover it, all the television stations cover it and we usually have a tremendous amount of exposure because we are viewed as being the face of horticulture (Kelaidis, 2014).

Professionalization of Special Event Plant Sales

Many plant sales were started as fundraising efforts by volunteers and friends groups, and some are still run almost entirely by volunteers. As one survey participant reported, “our program is completely run by volunteers.”

However, institutions that have professionalized their plant sales by increasing staff management and involvement have reported improvements in management and organization. Another survey participant noted, “Treating the plant sale as a retail operation rather than an event had a very positive impact to our staff resources and allowed[sic] our internal 'experts' to be in management control has been helpful.”

Denver Botanic Gardens’ (DBG) Spring Plant Sale was started by volunteers, as were the gardens themselves. Since the mid-2000s DBG has phased out volunteer chair-people of plant sale committees, and instead has instituted a structure of plant sale committees co-chaired by staff members and volunteers. DBG has also implemented staff organizers of the Spring Plant Sale and Fall Plant and Bulb Sale. Mr. Panayoti Kelaidis of DBG commented, “We have had the same staff person running the sale for many years now and I think that makes a big difference. Having consistency helps” (2014).

Since Mr. Fred Spicer became the first Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Birmingham Botanical Gardens in 2001, the staff has expanded, and correspondingly, assumed plant sale responsibilities that were formerly held by volunteers. “Marketing and PR (Public Relations) is now completely a staff function, as it should be. Logistics and the move-in is completely a staff function” (Spicer, 2014).

Volunteer Support and Plant Sales

Plant sales offer opportunities to engage volunteers across all levels of commitments and responsibilities, and many institutions depend heavily, if not entirely on volunteers to support special events. Mr. Kenny Zelov of the Desert Botanical Garden states their plant sale is, “Really a scenario where without them it would be real difficult to do what we do” (2014).

Volunteers may support the process of planning plant sales and may provide labor for the event itself. In Survey 1, 46% of institutions reported that volunteer and friends groups are partially responsible for organizing their sales.

Volunteer roles during the plant sale are varied, but mostly support the customer experience. A survey participant reported that, “during the actual Plant Sale Event, it is mostly run by volunteers - including using volunteer cashiers.”

The Birmingham Botanical Gardens uses their plant sale as a way to reach out to large and diverse groups of volunteers. “A lot of the volunteer opportunities that are available in the garden themselves are on a day-to-day basis. Three people for a couple of hours is good... The plant sale gives us an opportunity where we can say, ‘Hey, you know, we do have something for 30 people to do for 3 hours’” (Spicer, 2014). Birmingham Botanical Gardens has also reached out to groups such as iCERV, an Ismaili Muslim volunteer organization, that provides mostly young members for customer service oriented tasks (Spicer, 2014).

Memberships and Plant Sales

This research indicated a strong connection between institutional memberships and special event plant sales. Seventy-seven percent of the participants in Survey 2 reported that their plant sales increased or sustained membership. Of the 14 (23%)

participants who answered, “The plant sales does not affect membership,” only 10 (17%) offer institutional memberships. Desert Botanical Garden reported that approximately 500 new memberships are generated annually from the plant sales (Zelov, 2014).

Survey respondents were almost 8.8 times as likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement “The plant sale is an essential effort for public relations and to generate and reward membership in our institution,” than those who did not. Incentives and rewards often include cash or percentage discounts, special gifts of plants or tools, and members’ only shopping periods. The majority of gardens surveyed offer discounts to their members (58%), and 80% of those discounts are offered consistently across the entire sale. Membership at the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens includes access to gardens throughout California, a discount on total purchases at the plant sales, and discounts at local businesses. UC Davis reports a “super high increase in Arboretum memberships on the days of the plant sale” (Cruz, 2014).

Often, members are offered an exclusive presale ranging from a few hours to a full day in length. Institutions may also offer a preview sale or preview party for members, donors, patrons, or paying members of the general public. Although in some cases the members’ only sale is combined with the preview party, they can be separate events. 72% of respondents indicated that they offer some form of presale to members, patrons, or donors of their institution.

A members’ only presale can be a huge incentive for an admission-free institution. Birmingham Botanical Gardens considers members’ night to be “one of our biggest, most valuable membership benefits. People will become a member just to

get that first hour-and-a-half, that first evening, that first crack at the plants” (Spicer, 2014). Rutgers Gardens, another admission-free institution, reported a drawback of incentive-based membership. Although the plant sale does positively impact membership, investigation of the membership renewal cycle revealed that almost 13% of members did not renew after receiving the plant sale discount. “We went from 460, down to just a touch over 400, maybe they’ll re-up in early May next year, but clearly many people are joining just for the plant sale and not to specifically help the gardens” (Crawford, 2014).

Through this research’s case studies and interviews there is evidence that members’ only presales contribute significantly to plant sale revenues. One survey participant shared that the “presale for members (the evening before the Saturday sale) has become as big if not bigger than the open Saturday morning sale.” Brooklyn Botanic Garden reported “Two-thirds of our business in the entire sale is done between 4:30PM and 8PM on a Tuesday night (Members’ Plant Sale Preview)... It’s become an institution and the members are crazed, they absolutely have to come for the first-serve kind of thing” (Carswell, 2014). Forty-six percent of the revenue for Chicago Botanic Garden’s, now-defunct, Bloomin’ Sale was generated during the members’ only event (Lindemann, 2014).

Sponsorships and Partnerships

The research suggested that institutions benefited when they developed sponsorships and partnerships with outside organizations for their plant sales. Despite that, 75% of respondents from Survey 1 reported that they do not partner with any other organizations for their plant sales, and 70% reported that they do not have any sponsors for their plant sales. Whether or not the primary function of a special event

plant sale is fundraising, it is still a locus point for different audiences looking to support or interact with an institution.

Plant sale costs can include expenses such as plant purchases, staff overtime, structural rentals, maintenance and custodial fees, cashier equipment, advertising fees, sign fabrication, and purchases for staff and volunteer amenities. Monetary sponsorship donations can offset plant sale operation costs, and can be a tool for donor cultivation, helping to establish relationships with donors through an expected event cycle. The same is true of in-kind donations. Spicer (2014) commented that a restaurant that sponsors food for their plant sale preview party has been working with their garden for 6 years, but has no other relationship with the garden besides sponsoring the plant sale. In-kind donations help to offset smaller costs of an event, like advertising, food and beverages for volunteers or preview events, t-shirts for volunteers, shopping carts for customer use during the sale, and in the case of Birmingham Botanical Gardens, a physical space to hold their sale.

Partnerships can be used to attract members to an institution and a plant sale. UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens has established partnerships with local businesses and nurseries that offer discounts to members of the Arboretum. In turn, the businesses are allowed to setup display booths at the Arboretum plant sales, advertising their services to a focused customer base (Cruz, 2014). Through a partnership with Fiskars Brands, Olbrich Botanical Gardens receives in-kind tool donations, which are offered to members as an incentive to attend their plant sale (Jeane, 2014).

Partnerships can also be used to bolster or foster relationships with other groups and institutions. One survey participant reported being one of several sites that

supports a local college's horticultural curriculum by allowing them to hold plant sales at their institution. Another survey participant works with a regional plant society offering sales space, marketing, entertainment and educational events for a percentage of the overall sales. The UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens sets up a row of tents referred to as Outreach Alley and invites plant societies, environmental groups, and student organizations space to interact with the public.

Plant Collections Policies and Plant Sales

An institutional plant collections policy may, or may not, also be applicable to the sale of plant material. Through plant sales, institutions can convey their values to consumers, and plant collections policies may indicate plant material that is of importance to an institution or region.

Forty-four percent of respondents indicated that their institutional collections policies are not considered when selecting plants for plant sales (Survey 2). One survey respondent indicated that the lack of a guiding policy for inventory selection leads to a sense of aimlessness, "I feel that we are not successful if we are all things to all people." Another respondent reported that their institution is in the process of revising a weak collections policy to include plant sales inventory management.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens stated that in some cases their plant sale offerings are actually more aligned with their collections policies than their collections.

I'll give you a good example, *Nandina*, we're not planting any more *Nandina*, where we can we're removing *Nandina* from the property, where we can we're clipping the fruit off before it ripens and the birds eat it, or it falls and makes more *Nandina*. In our collections policy we officially state it's a plant of concern for us. We don't sell it at the plant sale. I think in that case they're not aligned, and I think in the case of

the plant sale we're probably where I wish we were at with regard to management of our site. (Spicer, 2014).

Signature Plant Selections

Plant selections specifically developed for, or marketed by, institutions can bolster plant sale offerings by acting as an extension of the institution's values brand.

Denver Botanic Gardens offers Plant Select, featuring plants specifically suited for Colorado. This program is consistently one of the top-earning plant divisions of their spring plant sale. DBG also offers a division marketed as Grown at The Gardens, offering a wide variety of plants propagated by DBG staff. "The other divisions do well, but the guests enjoy Grown at The Gardens just because they're getting something that we've grown and so it's kind of a cool factor for them" (Kiehl, 2014).

UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens has the Arboretum All-Stars, a collection of 100 plants, native and exotic, that are suited for central California. The Arboretum offers about 75% of the Arboretum All-Stars in their plant sales and features the plants prominently in display beds throughout the Teaching Nursery sales areas (Fowler, 2014).

Chicago Botanic Garden's defunct Bloomin' Festival highlighted Chicagoland Grows plants, which often included material that CBG plant breeders had developed. Ms. Stephanie Lindemann recounted that Chicagoland Grows plants, "were often the first things to fly out the door" (2014).

Discontinued Special Event Plant Sales

The research indicated that special events plant sales were discontinued for both social and financial reasons at some institutions. Four percent of participants in Survey 2 indicated that their institutions had cancelled special events plant sales.

These institutions are in urban locations and have operating budgets ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million.

Financial reasons for canceling plant sales centered on net revenues not equaling, or not significantly exceeding, plant sale expenses. Social factors for canceling plant sales included staff strain, local nursery displeasure and competition, weather variability, and neglect of grounds and horticultural collections during plant sale operations.

Other organizations reported that they cancelled their special event plant sales in order to focus on alternative plant sale related activities. One survey participant indicated that their biannual, all-volunteer plant sales “were doing no better than breaking even financially, and probably on a full-cost allocation basis, losing money.” The participant indicated that these efforts “aimed primarily at fund-raising,” were draining staff resources and losing volunteers through aging-out and disinterest. Instead, the institution chose to work with a local college’s greenhouse and horticulture program, hosting their plant sales onsite, thus fostering stronger community relations. The institution then chose to highlight gift shop plant sales through “plants-for-sale displays” to support the visitor experience.

Other survey participants indicated that they discontinued their fall plant sales because of financial reasons, but continued the spring plant sale.

The Future of Plant Sales

Environmental Responsibility

Plant sales foster the promotion and distribution of plant material. Although primarily distributed in the communities surrounding the garden, plant material could

naturalize beyond these boundaries. In the face of globalization, ecosystem loss, and concern for the invasive plant impact, public gardens should be responsible leaders in plant and habitat conservation and ecological restoration.

52% of respondents utilize statewide invasive lists when selecting inventory for plant sales (Survey 2). Institutions are also using their plant sales as social marketing tools to educate consumers. One survey participant remarked, “As a garden that focuses on native plants, we also use the plant sale to 'spread the word' about native vs. invasive.” Birmingham Botanical Gardens offers more native species than native cultivars, “Native plants are never going to be invasive exotics. We feel like we’re safe there, and that’s what is meaningful to plant long-term for our areas” (Spicer, 2014).

Ms. Melanie Sifton of Brooklyn Botanic Garden recognizes the trend of native plants and the difficulty in sourcing and obtaining material.

I get a lot of questions from people asking where they can buy well-grown and locally sourced native plant material, and that’s coming on the heels of our new Native Flora Garden Project which actually touts documented locally-sourced plant material as an important part of our native flora gardening and design process. This was very challenging for us to do as a botanic garden, so it is even harder for homeowners to find certified local native plants on their own.” (2014).

Plant sales offer institutions the opportunity to respond to that niche market while being environmental leaders in their communities.

Frequency and Duration

Plant sales are often held as large events in the spring or fall, centered near a regional last frost date or an optimal planting time. The majority of respondents (42%) hold both spring and fall plant sales, followed by those who only hold spring sales

(28%). However, 25% of respondents hold multiple or continuous plant sales throughout the year. This may indicate a trend away from the large special event structure (Survey 3). One survey participant noted that holding a one-weekend plant sale was a great risk for their institution, and by spreading the sale to a whole month, impact was lowered but revenue was maintained. Another survey participant remarked on the positive shift in their plant sale structure.

We used to have a single very large plant sale that took over our entire operation for three days. The sale took place under a big tent. Although we were known for it, it did not draw people into the Gardens and the marginal revenue was small. We've replaced the large plant sale with 4-5 smaller themed plant sales that can be integrated into our store operations and that connect more clearly to our collections. Our gross plant sale revenue has declined but net proceeds have increased significantly and the burden on staff has declined/disappeared (Survey 2).

Denver Botanic Gardens and Birmingham Botanical Gardens both noted that their plant sales are physically at their limits for additional growth. Denver Botanic Gardens does not see a huge opportunity for adding plant divisions to grow of their spring plant sale because of limits to space (Kiehl, 2014). Birmingham Botanical Gardens stated that one of their biggest complaints regarding plant sale is that it's too crowded. "One year it was really tight, and that's why we saw the sales actually drop off when we had the plant sales here at the gardens. Over 2002, 2003, and 2004, people were avoiding the sale because it was a hassle to park, it was way too tight to navigate it" (Spicer, 2014). They have since addressed that complaint by moving to an off-site location, but are still very aware of the issue.

Streamline and Simplify

Offering a limited, focused, and intentional plant sale inventory can eliminate mission and policy drift, lower overhead, and help to define and educate a customer-base. Ms. Stephanie Lindemann of Chicago Botanic Garden commented on the failure of the vendor-based model for their defunct Bloomin' Festival.

I think that it became too many things for all people, meaning the plant array was too large. I would simplify, focus on something that's harder to find, for instance, maybe Midwest natives, and do the top hot 100. The things that our scientists and hort staff really love and I think that those would be best sellers and sell out (Lindemann, 2014).

The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College is currently undergoing a major restructuring of their plant sale based on a decision to transfer many key responsibilities from volunteers to staff members. One of the efforts to streamline and simplify includes an elimination of plant offerings that are not seen as key to the sale. "We're wrestling with that now in our planning process to take a look at our mission and evaluate what feels like it's off-mission as opposed to simply responding to current day trends and changes in society" (Sawyers, 2014).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research indicated a wide range of public gardens hosting special event plant sales. Institutions varied in location, size, operating budgets, organizational strategies, revenues, and goals.

Among the best practices shown to be valuable were:

- Marketing plant sales to members through exclusive members' only events, discounts, and plant offerings
- Hosting member, donor, or paid-entry preview event sales
- Cultivating monetary and in-kind sponsorships

- Cultivating and engaging in partnerships with businesses, organizations, volunteers, and community groups
- Offering native, and regionally appropriate, non-aggressive exotic plants
- Marketing a plant sale signature collection attached to your institution
- Defining and aligning the goals of a plant sale with those of your institution
- Exploring lower risk sales practices, such as weather-proofing, buying on consignment, requiring pre-labeling, simplifying and limiting plant sale stock, and working with local and regional nurseries and growers
- Professionalization of the plant sale through increased staff involvement in major decision making and organization

Probably most important to the success of a special event plant sale is institutional alignment and support. Fifty-three percent of respondents in Survey 2 answered that their plant sales are considered a regular responsibility of their staff, leaving 47% of institutions considering the plant sale an extra or supplementary responsibility of the staff. A similar percentage, 54%, agreed with the statement, “The plant sale is a tradition that staff enjoys and looks forward to” (Survey 1). Still, that leaves 46% of institutions’ staff not looking forward to or feeling indifferent about their plant sales. It’s crucial to cultivate and nurture an atmosphere of institutional support, since these events often require a huge time and energy investment from staff and volunteers. In recognizing the successful state of their plant sale, Spicer expresses a sentiment of gratitude and responsibility,

I wish I could say that I have created this thing, but it’s generations of people, and we feel like we’re carrying the torch now of something that some really terrific volunteers started, and we couldn’t do it without the

volunteers that we have, and we're continuing. We feel like we're stewards at this point (2014).

Plant sales provide a venue for the conscious interaction of the public with an institutionally-focused interdepartmental effort. This nexus allows for a powerful display of institutional branding. Intentionality, in this case, strengthens feelings of loyalty and institutionalism.

It's what we do... One of the wonderful things about this particular institution and about botanic gardens because they are institutions, is that we do things, just because we do them. It's hard to change an institution, and we just keep honing in, and evolving it, and changing it, and improving it, really (Kelaidis, 2014).

The special event plant sale has the potential to be the perfect vehicle for the expression of mission, outreach, engagement, education, and even conservation. To that end, plant sales seem crucial, desirable, and inevitable for public garden institutions.

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Appendix A

HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Certification of CITI Training

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI) COURSE IN THE PROTECTION HUMAN SUBJECTS CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT

Printed on 08/16/2014

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EXPIRATION DATE 08/25/2016

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

COURSE/STAGE: Basic Course/1
PASSED ON: 08/25/2013
REFERENCE ID: 11066788

REQUIRED MODULES	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	08/25/13	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research	08/25/13	5/10 (50%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	08/25/13	3/5 (60%)
The Regulations - SBE	08/25/13	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
Internet Research - SBE	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
University of Delaware	08/25/13	5/5 (100%)
ELECTIVE MODULES	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
International Research - SBE	08/25/13	3/3 (100%)

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Program Course Coordinator

Collaborative Institutional
Training Initiative
at the University of Miami

Exemption Letter: Survey 1



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: December 4, 2013

TO: Kevin Williams, BA
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [544140-1] Fundraising Plant Sales - Preliminary Survey

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: December 4, 2013

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

cc:

Exemption Letter: Survey 2



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 HULLIHEN HALL
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NEWARK, DELAWARE 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 8, 2014

TO: Kevin Williams
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [595397-1] Fundraising Plant Sales: Secondary Survey

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: April 8, 2014

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

cc:

Exemption Letter: Survey 2 Amendment



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 HULLIHEN HALL
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
NEWARK, DELAWARE 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: August 4, 2014

TO: Kevin Williams
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [595397-2] Fundraising Plant Sales: Secondary Survey

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: August 4, 2014

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # (2)

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Appendix B
ORAL CONSENT SCRIPT

Oral Consent Script

[ORAL CONSENT / SCREENING / TELEPHONE INTERVIEW] SCRIPT

Fundraising Plant Sales in Public Gardens

Hi, my name is Kevin Philip Williams I'm currently studying fundraising plant sales in public gardens as part of my thesis for The Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture at The University of Delaware. Do you have a few minutes to discuss fundraising plant sales as your institution?

- If yes, continue below.
- If no, but the potential subject is interested in participating, determine a better time to call back to discuss the study.
- If no, thank them for their time.

I am inviting you to take part in this study because of your familiarity with fundraising plant sales at your institution. The purpose of this study is to determine the risks and benefits of fundraising plant sales as experienced by public horticulture institutions, identify exceptional successes in holding fundraising plant sales, and assemble and publish baseline data about fundraising plant sales.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to relate your experience with fundraising plant sales, or speak on behalf of your institution regarding their experience with fundraising plant sales. I will provide a list of questions to work off of as a template. You are allowed to discuss or ignore any questions on the survey.

We estimate that approximately twenty will take part in this study. Your participation will last about one hour.

You will not be paid for participating in this study. There will be no cost to you to participate in this study.

Does this sound like something you'd be willing to participate in?

- If yes, continue below.
- If no, thank them for their time.

Before you agree to participate, there are some additional things you should know about the study.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free not to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. No matter what decision you make, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled.

Appendix C

BGCI GARDENSEARCH DATABASE: DATA SUPPLY AGREEMENT

BGCI GardenSearch Database: Data Supply Agreement

BGCI GardenSearch Database: Data Supply Agreement

1. This letter sets out the terms and conditions under which BGCI will supply you with a copy of the file containing details for **spreadsheet with email addresses for BGCI gardens in the United States.**
2. The data has been given to you on the understanding that it will be used for **distribution of a survey concerning plant sales in public gardens for a master's thesis through The Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture.**
3. The data is supplied with the Garden record IDs. If you have undertaken any standardisation of the data supplied, BGCI requests that you return the standardised data, complete with the supplied IDs, so that BGCI may update its records. Your contribution to the GardenSearch database will be acknowledged.
4. You may use the data on condition that:
 - a) The data is used solely for the purpose specified above, (which is considered a scholarly, educational or research purpose);
 - b) The data is not used for commercial purposes;
 - c) The data is not published, except as part of **“Fundraising Plant Sales in Public Gardens” master’s thesis** and small extracts provided for illustrative purposes and duly acknowledged by the words **‘BGCI GardenSearch database’**
 - d) You do not copy or pass the data on to any other individual outside **The Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture**, any other organisation, either academic or commercial.
5. By signing this letter, you agree to these terms and acknowledge the copyright of BGCI's GardenSearch database.

Kevin Philip Williams

7/10/14

Signature (typed name is acceptable)

Date

Name: Kevin Philip Williams
Job Title: Graduate Fellow
Organisation: Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture
Address: 5 Wire Road, Germantown, NY 12526
E-mail: kevinphilipwilliams@gmail.com
Tel: 518-312-2484

Appendix D
SURVEY 1 RESULTS

1. Does your organization have a fundraising plant sale?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	59	97%
No	2	3%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	61	100%

2. What is the annual operating budget of your institution?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$1 Million	30	56%
\$1 Million to \$2.4 Million	4	7%
\$2.5 Million to \$9.9 Million	17	31%
Greater than \$10 Million	3	6%
Total	54	100%

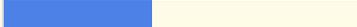
3. In your estimation, what is the average annual gross revenues from your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$1,000	2	4%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	4	7%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	7	13%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	16	29%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	9	16%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	6	11%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	6	11%
Greater than \$100,000	5	9%
Total	55	100%

4. In your estimation, what is the average annual net revenues from your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$1,000	2	4%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	8	15%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	14	26%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	14	26%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	8	15%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	3	6%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	2	4%
Greater than \$100,000	3	6%
Total	54	100%

5. Who is responsible for organizing your plant sales? (Please Select All That Apply)

Answer		Response	%
All Staff		17	31%
Horticulture Staff		35	65%
Students		3	6%
Volunteers/Friends Groups		25	46%
Special Events Staff		8	15%
A contracted, outside organization		0	0%
Other		8	15%

Other
Shop Manager
University partners
shop manager
Store staff
Marketing Staff
Facilities & Security
Gift shop staff
Director of Horticulture

6. Who determines the plant sale inventories? (Please Select All That Apply)

Answer		Response	%
Horticulture Staff		29	55%
Director of Horticulture		18	34%
Volunteers		10	19%
Board of Advisors / Board of Directors		0	0%
Volunteers/Friends Groups		6	11%
Other		9	17%

Other
Volunteer Plant Propagation Coordinator
Director of Events
Participating partner vendors
nursery manager
Co-ED
executive director
Woman's Board and Event Staff Organizer
Curatorial staff
Evt staff w/vendors

7. Where do your sale plants come from? (Please Select All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Grow Your Own	45	83%
Wholesale Nursery	41	76%
Retailers (Nursery / Garden Center)	8	15%
Consignment	10	19%
Donated Stock	18	33%
Other	6	11%

Other

Wholesale nursery plants are surplus after plantings
 ~12 partner wholesale nurseries that sell on site, along with our own plants
 University partners
 students
 from special exhibit shows
 nursery vendors at evt

8. Where do you hold your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Onsite	50	93%
Offsite	1	2%
Multiple Sites	3	6%
Total	54	100%

9. For your plant sales, do you partner with any other organizations?

Answer	Response	%
Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)	12	23%
No	40	75%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	53	100%

Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)

For food, entertainment, local environmental group, children's activities, etc.
 We partner with ~12 wholesale specialty nurseries
 Colorado State University, Front Range Community College
 all the different plant societies run their own booth
 Work with local hort society
 sister hort societies
 Native Plant Society
 Plant Societies
 local retail nurseries participate as vendors
 The local Master Gardeners
 Master Gardeners

10. For your plant sales, do you have any sponsors?

Answer	Response	%
Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)	15	28%
No	37	70%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	53	100%

Yes (Please elaborate in the box below)

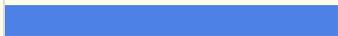
Donation
 Corporate, grants and private giving
 \$5,000 level corporate sponsor... a local bank.
 The main sponsor is usually the company that gives us the off-site space to hold our spring sale. In the past seven years, we have used abandoned supermarkets mostly, but last year it was a former JC Penney's in an abandoned mall.
 mostly in-kind gifts
 wholesale growers
 A local lumberyard has been a sponsor for our Spring Plant Sale for the last 3-4 years
 we ask a garden center to sponsor T-shirts for the salespeople to wear
 local newspaper, and occasionally others
 minimal
 Monrovia Growers
 9 years Turner, stopped last year
 The wholesale nursery sales the plants to us at cost.
 wine is donated

11. With the understanding that a day equals 8 hours, what is the duration of your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Less than 1-day	9	17%
1-day	7	13%
2-days	15	28%
3-days	10	19%
Ongoing (Please elaborate in the box below)	13	24%
Total	54	100%

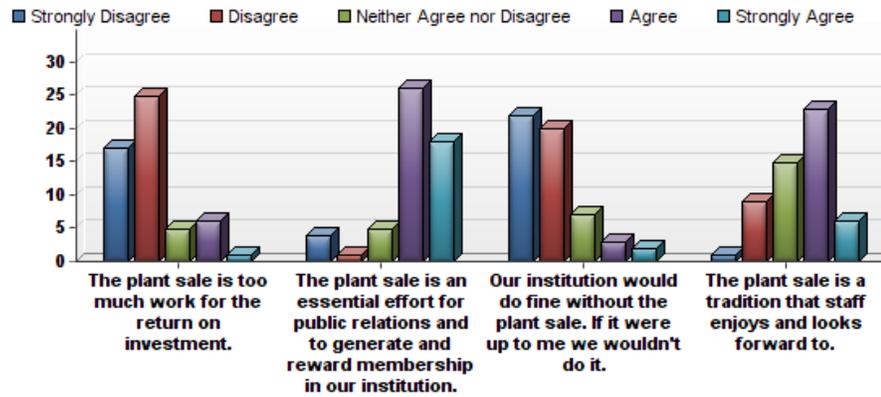
Ongoing (Please elaborate in the box below)

2 Major sales & daily sales
 Major sale for Mother's Day, plants available year-round
 We have special plant sales and on going plant sales primarily mail order
 We have two sales: Spring Plant Sale: Thursday evening ticketed Preview Party and Member's Night 5:30-9:00pm; Friday 9:00am-7:30pm; Sat: 9:00am-5:00pm; Sunday: noon-4:00pm. Fall Plant Sale: Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm; Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm.
 member sale on Thurs. night, public sale on Fri, Sat and Sun
 3 months
 We have a designated plant sale area. In 2014 we will advertise a plant sale for a morning in April.
 One major fundraising sale which is one day, then ongoing onsite sales daily.
 1 in spring/ 1 in fall
 We sell the plants from the wholesale nursery for about 3 weeks in spring and 3 weeks in fall. We also have plants that we divide from the garden that are sold continuously on an honor system
 It is a 2 day sale but plants can be purchased after the sale date
 plants available at gift shop/gallery

12. What happens to the unsold plants? (Please Select All That Apply)				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Keep unsold plants in inventory for later sales.		38	70%
2	Install unsold plants in the garden.		28	52%
3	Distribute unsold plants to volunteers and staff members.		14	26%
4	Donate unsold plants to a community cause / project.		15	28%
5	Donate unsold plants to another park or garden.		7	13%
6	Other		15	28%

Other
Plant vendors take stock back home with them
Vendor plants return with the vendors
give to staff or other garden
what unsold plants? Left-overs are minimal
Hold several members' only sales for reduced cost, and liquidate stock to produce stands.
We sell most of the unsold plants through our Gift Shop at a discount
return consignment
sent back to nurseries
Sold through our gift shop
Use for community street trees
return to wholesaler
Donate to our our community gardens/urban agriculture sites
Give back to consignment nursery
the plants from the wholesale nursery they take back, but the plants from our garden either get distributed to volunteers or held over for next year
All are sold

13. In your opinion, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The plant sale is too much work for the return on investment.	17	25	5	6	1	54	2.06
2	The plant sale is an essential effort for public relations and to generate and reward membership in our institution.	4	1	5	26	18	54	3.98
3	Our institution would do fine without the plant sale. If it were up to me we wouldn't do it.	22	20	7	3	2	54	1.94
4	The plant sale is a tradition that staff enjoys and looks forward to.	1	9	15	23	6	54	3.44

14. Is there an aspect of your plant sale that you think is unique or notable?				
#	Answer		Response	%
1	There is no unique aspect to our plant sale.		20	40%
2	There is a unique aspect to our plant sale.		30	60%
	Total		50	100%

There is a unique aspect to our plant sale. (cont.)

we have both pass along plants and sell booth space to plant and craft vendors
It is also a German festival with food, entertainment, children's activities, music, a silent auction and more!

Partnership with wholesale specialty nurseries that the public can't normally access
Advertising that proceeds benefit the three horticulture education institutions is well received by the community

plants that are unavailable elsewhere
We think the size of it is pretty cool.

we sell unique clematis not found commonly in the trade
Our large Spring PS is organized by habitat. The plants (perennials and woody plants together) are grouped by the type of habitat the plants thrive in. - such as Woodland or Woodland Edge or Open Sun, etc.

Students from program are there to assist customers and sign up for installation of plans for their own fund raiser
We try and offer plants not commonly available in the local retail trade

no hybrids/cultivars sold
Connoisseur plants donated by industry

we promote unique and unusual plants - it is a plant wenee sale
The majority of the plants are propogated from our Garden.

sell native plants
we have a member preview sale
New plants unique plants
we sell only plants adapted to our local environment.

Very large, very diverse, brings out a real cross-section of our community, it has been organized by the same auxiliary member for over 60 years -and she started our plant sale!
Try to have some unusual plants.

FOcus on trees and native plants
we hold it in conjunction with special exhibits and activities in our children's garden so we attract more families to the sale too

We had a general plants sale - discontinued it in 2013; focus now on our fall bulb sale only
mostly tropicals

Design Station
While not very unique, we serve lunch with our plant sale
We focus on plants that grow in Iowa and are unique
It is an auction of exceptional plants

Made up of area nurseries who man own booths and sell; we do marketing and set-up to get commission.
new & unusual plants

Appendix E
SURVEY 2 RESULTS

1. Does your institution have plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	66	92%
No	5	7%
Unsure	1	1%
Total	72	100%

2. Did your organization ever have plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%
Total	4	100%

3. How many plant sales does your institution hold a year?

Answer	Response	%
Spring plant sale	0	0%
Fall plant sale	0	0%
Spring and Fall plant sales	0	0%
Multiple plant sales throughout the year	0	0%
Total	0	0%

4. Which plant sale do you consider most significant for your institution?

Answer	Response	%
Spring plant sale	0	0%
Fall plant sale	0	0%
They all are equally important	0	0%
Unsure	0	0%
Other (Fill In The Blank)	0	0%
Total	0	0%

Other (Fill In The Blank)

5. What are the goals of your plant sales? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Fundraising	58	94%
Community Engagement	54	87%
Support of institutional mission	38	61%
Education	37	60%
Increasing institutional membership	34	55%
Promotion of specific plants affiliated with the institution	19	31%

6. What is the annual operating budget of your institution?

Answer	Response	%
\$0 to \$100,000	8	13%
\$1 Million to \$2.4 Million	17	28%
\$2.5 Million to \$9.9 Million	15	25%
Greater than \$10 Million	4	7%
\$100,000 to \$250,000	6	10%
\$250,000 to \$500,000	5	8%
\$500,000 to \$750,000	5	8%
\$750,000 to \$1 Million	1	2%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	61	100%

7. In your estimation, what is the average annual gross revenues from your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$1,000	2	3%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	5	8%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	6	10%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	17	27%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	11	18%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	7	11%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	7	11%
Greater than \$100,000	7	11%
Total	62	100%

8. In your estimation, what is the average annual net revenues from your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Less than \$1,000	3	5%
\$1,001 to \$5,000	12	19%
\$5,001 to \$10,000	10	16%
\$10,001 to \$25,000	14	23%
\$25,001 to \$50,000	16	26%
\$50,001 to \$75,000	1	2%
\$75,001 to \$100,000	3	5%
Greater than \$100,000	3	5%
Total	62	100%

9. Where do you allocate the majority of revenues generated from your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Horticulture	19	31%
Education	0	0%
Programming	3	5%
Marketing	0	0%
Performances	0	0%
A general discretionary budget	27	44%
Other (Fill In The Blank)	12	20%
Total	61	100%

Where do you allocate the majority of revenues generated from your plant sales? (cont.)

Other (Fill In The Blank)

General operation including most of the above.

revenue from plant sales supports the budget which includes all of the above - it is not designated to a specific purpose

operations

Special event fundraising goes into operations budget

The revenues are part of our general operating budget

Salaries of the summer student interns and the staff superintendent who oversees the students.

General Operations

For past several years to a building fundraising effort; other years for special projects, mostly garden or facility related

All funds are unrestricted and not specifically allocated. However, with a admin to program ratio of 1:4, we feel very safe in saying (marketing/promoting) that all the proceeds benefit our mission-based programs, including education.

To buy more plants for the gardens!

student scholarships and operating costs as well as special projects

general operating budget

10. In your best estimation, what is the total number of plants that are sold each year through your plant sales?

Text Response
Lots.
4,500
12,000
500
2000
300-400
6,000 + 3,500 bulbs
4,000
no way to know -- plants are vendors'
Not available. We have vendors that come in to sell as well as plants that we grow
4,000 to 5,000
2,500
1700
800
1,000's
Between 15,000 and 20,000. We sell over 4,000 tomatoes alone!.
500
ROUGHLY 10-12,000
1200
2000
8,000
5000
1200
1,500
3000
6,000 to 7,000
We say (marketing/promotion) "100,000" which, given the number of annuals/herbs/other small plants sold in flats/six-packs, is about right.
15,000
2000
200
a few thousand
6pks 4" and one gal & up / 3000 plus
over 12,000 at actual spring, fall and summer sales; much larger number sold through retail greenhouse open all year
1000
Couldn't guess
1500
170,000
????
3-5000
100,000 bulbs
don't know
3000
5-10k
4,000
12000
1,200

In your best estimation, what is the total number of plants that are sold each year through your plant sales? (cont.)

1000
20,000 (approx.)

11. Where do the majority of your sale plants come from?

Answer	Response	%
Grow Your Own	21	35%
Wholesale Nursery	28	47%
Retailers (Nursery / Garden Center)	1	2%
Consignment	1	2%
Donations	0	0%
Other	9	15%
Total	60	100%

Other

pass along plants from members
Collaboration with local college
combination of grow your own and wholesale nursery
we provide the landsite, vendors, as part of a plant society, bring and sell plants,
See above. Retail and wholesale vendors plus grow some here.
Donations from local nurseries
dig and divides from volunteers and the gardens
Depends on the sale. Peony sale=100% nursery; native plants=mostly grow our own
we 'grow on' most plants 3-4 months

12. Where else do your sale plants come from? (Please Select All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Other	2	4%
Retailers (Nursery / Garden Center)	8	15%
Consignment	13	25%
Wholesale Nursery	19	36%
Donated Stock	21	40%
Grow Your Own	29	55%

Other

Partnership with local community college and univeristy
We used to have quite a bit of donated material - from volunteers - but quality control and incorrect identification were issues. Amount of donated material is now

13. Do you track the paid staff time that goes into the plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	16	26%
No	43	70%
Unsure	2	3%
Total	61	100%

14. Knowing that this survey is anonymous, how much paid staff time goes into organizing the plant sales? (Include time spent organizing, making preparations, growing/arranging/prepping plants, breakdown and cleanup efforts, educational and special events associated with the plant sales.)

Text Response
In total about one position half time on an annual basis.
3 staff at 13 hours/week
1100
\$5,697 (2013)
The plant sales are not tracked seperately
2,960 hours
I don't know offhand but easily 1500 hours.
200 to 250
40 hours
We have a nursery manager, an assistant manager (PT, seasonal), and parttime sales person (PT, seasonal)
too time consuming to retrieve at this time.
250 hours
160 hrs

15. Do you track how many volunteer hours go into the plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	38	62%
No	20	33%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	61	100%

16. How many volunteer hours go into the plant sales? (Include time spent organizing, making preparations, growing/arranging/prepping plants, breakdown and cleanup efforts, educational and special events associated with the plant sales.)

Text Response
750 hrs
5 volunteers at 3 hours/week (increases around major discount sales; plateaus for the day to day plant sales)
950
about 300 hours
at least 60
2000 hours more or less
more than 500
hard to say
1000 Hours
800
500
450
our sale is every other year in odd years so: hours in 2013=3,329; '12=182; '11=3,716; '10=312
72
Roughly, over 4,500 hours per year.
400 to 500
20
over 7,600 in a year (includes plant sales themselves plus time spent in propagation)
100
Approximately, 250 hours
4200 hrs annually
over 1000 hours to prepare, package and run the sale
2500
1,000
est 150 hrs
300
We have only recently started to try to track, but we don't have good estimates right now. We are aiming to find out more.

17. Do you feel that your staff/organization has the flexibility to accommodate the plant sales, or do you feel that regular staff responsibilities are redirected to accommodate the sale?

Answer	Response	%
Our staff is able to accomplish their regular responsibilities and accommodate the extra responsibilities of the plant sales.	13	22%
Our staff must put their regular responsibilities on hold until after the plant sales.	15	25%
The plant sales are considered a regular responsibility of our staff.	31	53%
Total	59	100%

18. In what capacity are the horticulture staff involved in the plant sales? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer		Response	%
Setting up/Breaking down the plant sales.		45	80%
Selling plants at the plant sales.		42	75%
Growing the plants for plant sales.		42	75%
Selecting and managing the inventory of the plant sales.		40	71%
Various aspects of customer service at the plant sales (working checkout, transporting/loading plants for customers).		39	70%
Preparing and executing educational events for the plant sales.		21	38%
Marketing the plant sales.		10	18%

19. With the understanding that a "day" equals 8 hours, what is the duration of your plant sales?

Answer		Response	%
Less than 1-day		8	14%
1-day		6	10%
2-days		12	20%
3-days		13	22%
Ongoing (Please elaborate in the box below)		20	34%
Total		59	100%

**With the understanding that a "day" equals 8 hours, what is the duration of your plant sales?
(cont.)**

Ongoing (Please elaborate in the box below)

We are open each weekend and the nursery is open during those hours. We have 5 large specialty sales during the year. We engage volunteers and make those events special.

Extensive "plant patio" area adjacent to gift shop

The plants that don't sell at the 2-day Plant Sale in the spring will be offered for sale at a discount at our gift shop for 8-10 weeks after the spring Plant Sale. We have two other two-day plant sales at other times of the year. We also have an online bulb sale in summer-fall

Mother's Day Plant Sale plus daily plant cart

3.5 days

Every weekend in April

We have year round retail plant sales

8+ days: We have two sales: Spring Plant Sale: Thursday evening ticketed Preview Party and Member's Night 5:30-9:00pm total; Friday 9:00am-7:30pm; Sat: 9:00am-5:00pm; Sunday: noon-4:00pm. Fall Plant Sale: Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm; Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm.

3 days in Spring; 2 days in fall

two weekends a year

actual plant sales account for 6 days, but retail greenhouse is open all year

with two special days with staff on hand to answer questions

Nursery is open year round.

monthly 2 hour plant sales and 1 2-day event

24 days per year

what is not sold after 3-day sale will remain available in a polyhouse

spring sale - 3 days; fall sale - 2 days; summer sale 2 days

We have plants for sale at the garden throughout the open season.

gift shop plant sales

2 30-day sales

20. Do you hold online or mail order pre-sales for your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	6	10%
No	52	88%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	59	100%

21. Did you ever hold online or mail order pre-sales for your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	3	6%
No	49	94%
Total	52	100%

22. Why were your online or mail order pre-sales discontinued?

Answer	Response	%
Too time consuming for staff to manage.	2	67%
Pre-sales did not generate significant additional revenue.	0	0%
We decided to focus our resources on our on-site plant sales.	0	0%
Lack of interest in pre-sales from public.	0	0%
Other (Fill In The Blank)	1	33%
Total	3	100%

Other (Fill In The Blank)

Actually, our specialty pre-sale generated good interest, but was a lot of work. We feel we will go back and do it again in the future when we have a good package for a special.

23. Did discontinuing pre-sales negatively affect your revenues?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	1	33%
No	1	33%
Unsure	1	33%
Total	3	100%

24. Do your plant sales have an associated plant auction?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	7	12%
No	51	85%
Unsure	2	3%
Total	60	100%

25. Do your plant sales have silent or live auctions?

Answer	Response	%
Silent	3	43%
Live	2	29%
Both	2	29%
Total	7	100%

26. Do you find the plant auction to be a positive addition to the plant sale?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	6	86%
No	1	14%
Total	7	100%

27. Do you sell certain plants as loss leaders to attract customers to your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	7	12%
No	49	82%
Unsure	4	7%
Total	60	100%

28. Do you offer discounts for members of your institution?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	35	58%
No	25	42%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	60	100%

29. Are members offered discounts across the entire sale, or are discounts specific to certain days?

Answer	Response	%
Members are offered a standard discount throughout the entire sale.	28	80%
Members are only offered discounts during certain days.	7	20%
Total	35	100%

30. Do you offer pre-sales for members/patrons/donors of your institution?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	43	72%
No	14	23%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	60	100%

31. Do you discount your plants at some point during your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	29	48%
No	31	52%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	60	100%

32. Which statement best describes the impact of the plant sales on membership?

Answer	Response	%
The plant sale increases membership.	24	40%
The plant sale sustains membership.	22	37%
The plant sale does not affect membership.	14	23%
Total	60	100%

33. Which of the following payment forms do you accept at your plant sales? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Cash	60	100%
Credit/Debit Card	54	90%
Personal Check	57	95%
Bitcoin	0	0%

34. Do you use a traditional, carbon copy credit card machine?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	5	9%
No	49	91%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	54	100%

35. Do you have a hardwired, credit/debit card swipe reader?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	43	80%
No	11	20%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	54	100%

36. Do you utilize WiFi/wireless payment options (tablet/smartphone credit/debit card readers)?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	29	55%
No	24	45%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	53	100%

37. Do you know which payment form is used most often?

Answer	Response	%
Cash	8	13%
Credit/Debit Card	37	61%
Personal Check	2	3%
Bitcoin	0	0%
Unsure	14	23%
Total	61	100%

38. Do you bar code the plant sale inventory?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	12	20%
No	49	80%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	61	100%

39. How do you utilize technology in your plant sales? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Social Media	39	66%
Educational/Informational Website	29	49%
WiFi Payment Systems (tablet/smartphone credit card readers)	24	41%
Bar Codes	11	19%
Other (Fill In The Blank)	7	12%
QR Codes	5	8%

How do you utilize technology in your plant sales? (Choose All That Apply) (cont.)

Other (Fill In The Blank)

We use color coded tags which have associated bar codes.

Discussing use of QR Codes

cell phone tour info one year on the field

The extent of our technology is using our website and Facebook to promote the sale.

sale fliers via USPost

Plant sales are advertised locally and through our E newsletters

Wifi credit/debit card machines

40. Do you print and distribute a paper catalog for your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	14	23%
No	46	75%
Unsure	1	2%
Total	61	100%

41. Do you survey customers of your plant sale, or otherwise receive public feedback for improvement of your sale?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	13	21%
No	45	74%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	61	100%

42. What methods of surveying do you use? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Email Survey	2	22%
Survey Card	6	67%
Mailed Survey via US Mail	0	0%
Phone Survey	1	11%
Survey Website	5	56%

43. How do you market your plant sales? (Choose All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Social Media	58	95%
Mass Emailing	54	89%
Website	49	80%
Advertisements	43	70%
Newspaper/Magazine Advertisements	25	41%
Radio Advertisements	4	7%
Television Advertisements		

44. Which do you find to be the most effective method of marketing your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Newspaper/Magazine Advertisements	9	16%
Radio Advertisements	1	2%
Television Advertisements	1	2%
Website Advertisements	5	9%
Social Media	14	24%
Mass Emailing	28	48%
Total	58	100%

45. Who determines your plant sale inventories? (Please Select All That Apply)

Answer	Response	%
Horticulture Staff	37	61%
Director of Horticulture	21	34%
Volunteers/Friends Groups	17	28%
Other	12	20%
Board of Advisors / Board of Directors	3	5%

Other
Collaborating institution
Palm Society
based on previous year's sales
partners
Education Coordinator/ Special Event Manager
Store Manager
Garden store manager
Gift Shop
Greenhouse Manager
Chief Program Officer
Nursery Manager
President

46. Are you personally involved with selecting your plant sale inventories?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	34	59%
No	24	41%
Total	58	100%

47. Do you utilize statewide invasive plant lists when selecting plants for your plant sale?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	32	52%
No	18	30%
Unsure	11	18%
Total	61	100%

48. In your opinion, do your plant sale inventories vary significantly from year-to-year?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	25	41%
No	29	48%
Unsure	7	11%
Total	61	100%

49. Do you keep a record of which plants were the best/fastest sellers?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	42	69%
No	16	26%
Unsure	3	5%
Total	61	100%

50. In your opinion, does this information factor highly into inventory selection for the next plant sale?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	37	88%
No	5	12%
Total	42	100%

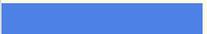
51. Apart from what you might grow on-site, do you work with a partner nursery to contract grow plants for your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes, we contract grow specific plants with partner nurseries.	5	9%
No, we only sell plants that we can purchase from regional nursery inventories.	34	60%
We offer both custom, contract grown plants as well as those purchased from regional nurseries.	12	21%
Unsure	6	11%
Total	57	100%

52. Do you take public requests/suggestions for plants to include in your plant sales?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	41	69%
No	14	24%
Unsure	4	7%
Total	59	100%

53. Do your plant sale inventories reflect your institution's collections policies?

Answer		Response	%
Yes, our collections policy dictates what plants we offer during the plant sales.		25	42%
No, our collections policy is not considered when selecting plants for the plant sales.		26	44%
Unsure		8	14%
Total		59	100%

54. What other factors influence the development of your plant sale inventories? (Fill In The Blank)

Text Response

Availability, price.

We grow our own plants based on what is propagated from the garden and what the horticultural staff think is interesting. We order wholesale native plants that are not cost effective to grow when requested by customers.

Availability

Volunteers and members donate pass along plants. - Successful plants from their own gardens.

Mt. San Antonio College maintains an extensive undergraduate program in horticulture and related fields. Part of their curriculum is growing plants for sale and then selling them. We are one of several sites that collaborates with Mt. SAC.

I try to include new plants that we have grown successfully here at the Garden, plants that are in the press, plants that people ask for, plants that are new and hot.

Try and offer many plants that are not available at local retail nurseries.

We've had a great run working with the South Florida Palm Society on the plant sales. We provide: space, some marketing, tours, education, and musicians, and SFPS coordinates vendors, and handles transactions. We get a % of the sale. Each vendor brings what they prefer, and it is a "collector's sale" with a lot of interesting things you can't get elsewhere.

Greenhouse growing space, previous year's sales, and perception of what we should be offering in our area and to fit our mission

Partners inventories.

Unfortunately, due to lack of guiding policy, inventory selection relies highly upon personal preference of staff and volunteers. We are beginning to collect data on sales by category, but previous inventories have relied upon memory (what we remember sold best) and preference (I like that plant). I'm attempting to align our plant sale with our collections, as I feel that we are not successful if we are all things to all people, but I am facing resistance from a vocal core of constituents.

Nativity, hardiness, appearance in pot in April

We attempt to offer as many of Luther Burbank's plants as possible (most are no longer available.) We also sell the excess from plantings and vegetable garden plants.

Current trends in color and plants promoted by mass media

Deer resistance, most requested sited conditions from the customers (dry shade, hot sun), the unusual flowering annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that local garden centers do not carry.

The general customer appeal. Even if we don't highly use a plan in our garden if we know it will sell well, we use it. our plant sale is operated by our store and includes consignment vendors so the Store manages and controls the inventory.

We have a market garden and sell excess veggie/herb starts.

This is a 100% volunteer operation. Inventories are based on what volunteers can harvest from the public gardens they maintain or their personal gardens.

Availability from nurseries.

Our plant sale consists of native plants.L

what is blooming (always sells better)

Because of Nebraska nursery licensing I can only grow (for the purpose of selling) annuals, not woodies or perennials. So I choose selections to be grown in house with this in mind. I also have extremely limited bench space so I have to choose things that will not impede the regular spring display annual crop. I fill out the sale with perennials purchased from a wholesaler according to their availabilities list a week or so prior to the sale.

This is a small sale at a small project. Most of our inventory comes from thinning or 'editing' in the seven acre site. We will ask some local nurseries to donate plants. We will not purchase any plants for re-sale.

**What other factors influence the development of your plant sale inventories? (Fill In The Blank)
(cont.)**

Supplier inventory and general availability. Annual "Signature Plant" and "Featured Plants" (among different plant types), sometimes with a common theme that changes yearly.

We follow horticultural trends. Also see what our horticulturists find interesting. Also offer plants that do well in the Gardens or that our visitors ask for.

Availibility and price

A few of the nurseries I work with have a buy back policy with me, so if we don't sell it they are happy to take it back.

Perennials, annuals and food crops are the draw for our sales. Plants that grow well in our climate. availability of some plants from commercial and/or local growers ability to propagate enough for sale - particularly of unknown or underutilized natives that we want to introduce to the landscape trade and homeowners

The majority of what we grow for sale are vegetable plants. We offer what is popular with the local gardeners, as well as types that grow well in our area.

We try and grow plants that are well adapted to poor sites - and do not require much in terms of inputs. Our Nursery operates year-round. We have a spring and fall plant sale. Members get a standard discount and staff get a greater discount. Some plants are propagated at the nursery, some are planted up and sold when they mature and most are ordered in and sold. At sales there is a standard discount on all plants, but sale periods are up to a week. There is a preview (and hosted party) for members to get first shot at plants. We feel that the Nursery is an important amenity to offer to visitors and members. It helps to cover our overhead as well.

Seasonal favorites, bird and butterfly plants

Newest cvs. tested plants for our region, natives not often found

Weather can play a key role in how well things sell, thus impacting inventory and the duration plants are in inventory.

We select proven performers and unusual selections to interest the more experienced gardener

Good for wildlife such as pollinators Kino Mission varieties of fruit trees

Weather factors, (dry or very cold) Plants promoted in articles, gardening magazines

We have a collections policy that was not that robust, and so are working as a team to revise it and make it more appropriate for application to all aspects of our plant collections management, and plant sales. We expect that the revised collection policy will be applied to future plant sale inventories. The inventories change, over time, and based on recommendations from our suppliers about trends. We used to sell a lot of bonsai, and now we do not sell any!

55. Why did your institution discontinue the plant sales?

Text Response

NA

not applicable

We do two plant sales annually as special events.

For many, many years, Descanso conducted its own plant sales--two per year. Originally an all-volunteer effort aimed primarily at fund-raising, close analysis revealed that these sales were doing no better than breaking even financially, and probably on a full-cost allocation basis, losing money. They were a tremendous drain on staff time and energy, as the volunteers aged, faded away, turned their attention to other volunteering opportunities. We discontinued these sales three years ago, choosing instead to collaborate with Mt. San Antonio College's program. We felt that the community relations benefits of on-site plant sales could be better realized this way and also through an expansion of the plant-sales activity related to the gift store. We consider plants-for-sale displays and activities to be more supportive of visitor experience than their contribution to the income statement.

1. The revenue vs. expenses declined to where it was costing us to perform the sale. 2. We felt that the VERY LARGE amount of work to put on the sale was not appreciated by the SFPS.

NA

N/A

Too much displeasure from the local nurseries.

They didn't.

We only discontinued plant sales during our fall event, since no one came to buy plants. They came for games and family programming.

We used to have a one weekend plant sale but it was too great of a risk. By spreading it to one month we have maintained the same revenue but reduced our risk and direct impact.

N/A

Takes time away from other employee duties, not profitable.

Not applicable.

We didn't discontinue. We just didn't get around to doing it for a few years.

We did not! Not sure why this box is here!

no

Felt it was competition with area flower retailers.

We discontinued our Fall Plant Sale and kept the Spring Plant Sale due to the net revenue derived from the Fall Sale. After years of a negative net, it was the most responsible decision for the institution.

NA

financial reward was not more that the labor and financial outlay.

N/A

We no long host our spring plant sale due to weather variability, local competition and greater availability than in the past.

We are pretty committed to our plant sale, and would get a huge outcry from our membership if we discontinued it. Up to half our members show up for the members-only plant sale preview, and they usually buy well over 50% of the plants.

56. Please feel free to include any additional comments regarding your plant sales. (Fill In The Blank)

Text Response

The plant sales make up a large portion of our operating budget. However, we would like to be able to expand what we offer but are limited by staff. Increased engagement of volunteers may help us expand our sales potential.

as a north temperate zone garden, weather is a major factor when considering the success of our plant sale;

-we are a zoo with extensive gardens -we have experimented with plant sales over the years with limited success -marketing and non-horticulture support has been a challenge -we have invited local horticulture vendors to sell plants as well

When all staff and volunteer time is included in calculating the profitability of plant sales , they are not very profitable and hardly worth doing from that perspective. They are a wonderful member benefit and friend raising tool, however.

We are starting up the plants sales again with a new partner, the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Assn.

During the actual Plant Sale Event, it is mostly run by volunteers - including using volunteer cashiers Presale for members (the evening before the Saturday sale) has become as big if not bigger than the open saturday morning sale.

Our program is completely run by Volunteers.

Remaining inventory is sold throughout the summer and fall at the Farm Market that we host and at the Gift Shop on weekends.

Treating the plant sale as a retail operation rather than an event had a very positive impact to our staff resources and allowed our internal 'experts' to be in management control has been helpful.

Each volunteer plant society that maintains a public garden in our park can take 100% of the profits to reinvest into their gardens, guest speakers or future events.

We used to have a single very large plant sale that took over our entire operation for three days. The sale took place under a big tent. Although we were known for it, it did not draw people into the Gardens and the marginal revenue was small. We've replaced the large plant sale with 4-5 smaller themed plant sales that can be integrated into our store operations and that connect more clearly to our collections. Our gross plant sale revenue has declined but net proceeds have increased significantly and the burden on staff has declined/disappeared.

Just going through this survey encouraged me to think about our sales from a different perspective

Our plant sale is not intended to be a major revenue source. It is primarily a membership perk. I'm working on growing revenues, but since I do not have nursery space for perennials or enough bench space for annuals I will never be able to rake in the profit that would put the sale on the radar as a major fundraiser. At my previous job at the Norfolk Botanical Garden in Virginia, I led a plant sale that was intended to be a major fundraiser and is in the process of growing steadily from year to year. I highly recommend that you get them to take your survey as well.

Proceeds from the plant sale make a small contribution to the annual budget. As a garden that focuses on native plants, we also use the plant sale to 'spread the word' about native vs invasive. Some supporters of the project like to have a 'heritage plant' from the historic part of the garden.

Our sales have been a part of our Horticulture Club activities for the last 20 years. We are a Community College, and therefore have some class labor applied to the sale crops, but mostly we have Interns adopt a crop and raise it and sell it at the 1 1/2 day sale each semester (Spring/Fall).

Seep above.

we specialized in native plants and plants that are specific to our historic site.

Our plant nursery is relatively new, just over 4 years and is at its largest inventory to date.

Many of your questions were not pertinent to our operation.

**Please feel free to include any additional comments regarding your plant sales. (Fill In The Blank)
(cont.)**

We do not have any specific plants for sale as loss leaders, per se, but we sometimes consider the entire sale a type of loss leader that, depending on how sales are that year, are done as a community service, an educational initiative, a membership driver, and a way to promote the garden. Fundraising is not always the primary goal, though it is often a benefit of the sale. For example, if plants are left over from the sale, they are donated to the garden and to our network of community gardens, and so nothing goes to waste. There is no discount at the plant sale for members, but there is a discount for staff if they buy on the first day of the sale. This is to engender positive feelings from the staff about the plant sale, which demands their time and support in order to run smoothly.

Appendix F
SURVEY 3 RESULTS

1. How many plant sales does your institution hold a year?

Answer		Response	%
Spring plant sale		10	28%
Fall plant sale		2	6%
Spring and Fall plant sales		15	42%
Multiple/Continuous plant sales throughout the year		9	25%
Total		36	100%

2. Which plant sale do you consider most significant for your institution?

Answer		Response	%
Spring plant sale		21	57%
Fall plant sale		5	14%
They are all equally important		2	5%
Unsure		0	0%
Other		9	24%
Total		37	100%

Other
We also have small niche plant sales that accompany public symposia eg medicinal plant symposium, native plant symposium etc
Spring has more sales but fall is better planting weather for establishing bigger plants
We tried fall for a few years - didn't sell well
Mother's Day weekend annual sale
(Descanso Gardens) We have suspended "plant sales" indefinitely, preferring to sell plants year-round out of our gift shop and twice per year partnering with Mount San Antonio College's horticulture program, who do plant sales from their own nurseries and inventories on the Descanso site.
Fall sale (native plants) is important because it communicates our mission; spring sales generate more revenue
Every other year we hold the fall plant sale
We have a poorly defined plant sale schedule. The Spring sale is the major event, but we sell periodically at the Gift Shop and upon request from visiting groups.
Fall sale is a Big Deal - spring sale is a little more sporadic - we just put out what looks good at that moment. Also, this is all still new to us. But, thanks to our great volunteers, our recent fall plant sale was the most successful fundraising event we've ever had!

Appendix G
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Lindsay Broermann, Public Events Coordinator at Denver Botanic Garden September 9, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): How long have you been involved with the sale and the history of it and how it may have evolved in recent years and exactly what it's comprised of and how it's run?

Lindsay Broermann (LB): Our Fall Plant and Bulb Sale's first year was 2006. The first year that I did it was 2011. This will be the fourth year that I was involved. Originally it was designed to do bulbs, garden grown plants (Grown at The Gardens division), and then a selection of trees, shrubs and other woody plants that could either be pulled from the greenhouses that we didn't need, or were being pulled out of the gardens, or that we thought were a specific desire for those. Over the years we have found that really the things that sell are the bulbs and our Grown at The Gardens plants. Trees don't do so well, shrubs don't do so well. We might get a few requests but we usually pass those off to some other specialists or we send them to a greenhouse that we like. Our Fall Plant and Bulb Sale has always been much smaller. Normally, Fall Plant and Bulb Sale will be held at the tent at the top of the amphitheater, just under on tent. It started in the parking garage, this year it's in our north parking lot. We're putting it in a tent where checkout for Spring Plant Sale would have been. It's sort of been moved around, we're still trying to find the best location and trying to figure out the best way to get attention and attract guests. We've also tried with free admission and not free admission. Spring Plant Sale is always free admission to the Gardens and it's always kind of a free day for the people who don't want to shop, maybe they want to come for free and then maybe they want to buy a plant. For Fall Plant and Bulb Sale we've tried it that way which seems to be the most successful but sometimes we have to charge admission because it falls on a day where we just want to try that. Like this year we're charging admission because of Chihuly, if you purchase admission to the gardens you get 10% off at the sale. You can also come into the sale for free you just can't get into the garden. We're still working on those and we're still working on the perfect mix.

Attendance last year, 2013, was 1375. So, it's a lot smaller. This is a very specific group. I find that the Spring Plant Sale people know how to plant, but with bulbs, people are afraid of them. So we either seem to get the die-hard bulb people who want to come for the specialty bulbs they can't find other places and want to talk to our horticulturists direct questions, they'll come first thing in the morning and they'll go home and plant. Or we'll have people who want to try them out, but bulbs don't capture a lot of audience because they're scary to plant, they need a lot of care, and if

you don't plant them right away then they need to be stored properly. So, our horticulturists are working on education programs every year, we're trying to revamp them, to try to educate people on planting bulbs and try to steer them away from being so scared of them. So that's a big hurdle that we have with this sale, that people are afraid of bulbs. The Grown at The Gardens plants do really well, especially the lilacs, people love the lilacs. That's something that we pull out of our gardens directly because she has to trim them back every couple of years, so she'll put a bunch of those out and they do really well. The lilies do well, too.

KPW: Right now, you're only bulbs or Grown at The Gardens. Do you buy anything in?

LB: Yes. We do buy in pansies. That is sort of tradition. We buy a few flats of them because there are a few people who love pansies.

KPW: Have you seen the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale grow over the years?

LB: Yes. When I first took it over it was pretty low attendance. It's not anything incredibly substantial in numbers but revenue wise we've done much better. Attendance in 2011 was about 800 people so it's grown a little bit with people. We're doing much better with revenue. It's an event that we've teetered with keeping or not, but it's so integral to our mission that we don't want to get rid of a plant sale, we'd rather educate people on the importance of bulbs and even though it might be a little bit more challenging it's still worth it. We've pushed more in the last couple years are educational sessions. We actually fly in a bulb expert who is originally from Holland where the bulbs come from... He now works in Texas, I believe, his name is Cornelius. We fly him in and put his name all over things, which helps because people can talk to a real expert.

KPW: So he's at the sale itself?

LB: Yes. We bring him in and we have our experts do little sessions, we do that whole fish tank demonstration where we have a fish tank full of dirt and then you see the different bulbs along the side and see how deep each plant needs to be planted. We try to do things like that to make it very easy to take it home and do-it-yourself.

With this one we also do a summer bulbs division that we sell at Spring Plant Sale. It wasn't there this year (2014) because we had space issues. We do summer bulbs that need to be planted, obviously, earlier in the year and we do a presale of bulbs just because we have a lot of inventory left over and it's hard to use it. We do presale of the more expensive or the rare items that we know a select group of people want, we put that online and sell it in the gift shop and then they pick them up during the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale.

KPW: Is there a lot of extra coordination and staff time associated with that?

LB: It was when I developed the program because we had to figure out how we would collect orders and who would be in charge of that. But now that we've done it, and I believe this is our third year doing it, we have a system down. Collecting payment and ordering is always the hardest things. Our ticketing systems all talk to each other and our ordering system and the gift shop and now we've moved to Square, which you probably saw at the Spring Plant Sale, so getting all of that to coordinate has been the biggest challenge but this year it was a lot smoother. Something that we've kind of talked about if we should keep going or not but I feel strongly that we need keep trying it because I think presale with specialty and rare bulbs is going to continue to grow as people become more interested in those and if we offer it that way there is no cost risk with that. People buy them or they don't but we don't have to order them and risk sitting on the inventory that's not moving.

KPW: What do you do with unsold inventory?

LB: If it's Grown at The Gardens it goes back into their greenhouses. If it's bulbs we sell them at the gift shop at a discount. I also sell them back to the gardeners, we'll just do an expense transfer if some of the horticulturists want them for their individual gardens so they'll just buy them from me at cost. So, if we don't sell them to the hort staff or at the gift shop, then I think hort staff just ends up taking a few home but mostly we get rid of most of them that way.

KPW: Do you still offer the staff/volunteer/employee 10% across the board?

LB: Yes.

KPW: What kind of volunteer presence do you have at the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale?

LB: We don't have any volunteers for the presale. For the sale itself I have cashiers so I usually do a couple shifts a day. It's a two-day sale and I probably do 8 cashiers a day and 8 cashiers assistants a day. We also do plant valet on those days as well, and I think I have 5 people per shift, so ten a day for that.

Implementing the iPads is probably the best thing I've brought to the table on the events team...

KPW: Did you model any part of the Fall Plant and Bulb sale after anything you'd seen at another institution?

LB: No, the Fall Plant and Bulb sale is something that we toyed with the idea of not bringing it back or maybe going strictly to presale because it does take a lot of coordinator time and we don't see a lot of visitors. However, since it is so mission heavy and we only do two plant sales a year, if we took this one away I think it would be very silly for the events team to not work on it. So, my goal is to continue to grow it, which is why we're bringing in more experts, which is why we started the presale. If we can just raise awareness of bulbs, the biggest thing I've learned since starting this is that people are just afraid of them. So if we can just raise awareness of the fact that it takes a little more effort, but they really keep coming back every year, they're really good investments and there are things that you can grow from bulbs that you just can't see anywhere else, and they're very good in our climate in Colorado. So if we just keep raising awareness then we'll see a steady incline.

KPW: How do you market the sale?

LB: We do it the same as the Spring Plant Sale. So, there are ads in magazines, and papers, and online. We put a big banner out on our front street. We do table toppers in the café. Its' on our website. Pretty much anything we do for Spring Plant Sale we do for this sale, on a little bit smaller scale but its all out there.

KPW: For the educational sessions do you hold any bulb talks or garden related plant talks before the sale to generate interest?

LB: No, but we talked about that. Last year we recorded videos of bulb experts, they were two to five minute videos of different experts, and we posted one online a week to lead up to the sale. We're looking into doing conferences or seminars or educational classes, but so far that hasn't come to fruition.

KPW: Do you see any correlation between membership and the Fall Sale?

LB: No, not really.

KPW: Would you consider that the goals of the fall sale aren't strictly fundraising, it's really more about the education component?

LB: Yeah, everything that comes out of our department and everything that I do is to raise money, but in this case this event is still so small that we don't look at it as a large fundraiser we're still looking at it as an educational opportunity.

KPW: How many bulbs and plants do you sell over the two days?

LB: For bulbs I'm not going to have an exact number because we bring in a ton. For Grown at The Gardens, I'm not sure.

KPW: Do you have any sponsors for the Fall Sale?

LB: Yes, those all come through development and usually we have the same sponsors that Spring Plant Sale has. It's a dual sponsorship.

KPW: Do you have coordination with Chatfield? Do you bring excess plants to the pumpkin festival?

LB: Yeah. When my inventory doesn't sell Plan A is to sell it at cost to hort staff, Plan B is the gift shop, and Plan c is to bring it down to Chatfield to the pumpkin festival, because until this year pumpkin fest was part of my department as well, but we've never had to go that route.

KPW: Who chooses which plants you're going to sell?

LB: We have a couple of bulb experts on the hort team that I work with and the three of us will sit down and talk about what we want to offer. It's usually the same but we'll add a few specialty things each year. For Grown At The Gardens it comes from the two people that run the greenhouses and really they put out what they have excess of, so they'll put out anything and everything they have back there. Sometimes they'll put out a random tropical plant that didn't sell in the spring and is taking up too much room, or if we're cutting back things in the garden and the hort staff can repot them they'll do that and put them out there.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Lois Carswell, Brooklyn Botanic Garden Auxiliary, BBG Chairman Emeritus, and Ms. Melanie Sifton, Vice President of Horticulture and Facilities at Brooklyn Botanic Garden June 6, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you give me a history of the BBG plant sale as you have seen it change over the years?

Lois Carswell (LC): I'm going to start with the culture of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, which is, I think quite different from the culture of other institutions that I've had anything to do with, and that is that the volunteers are treated quite differently. They have always been given a little more latitude and treated with a lot more respect as individuals than individuals at a lot of other institutions. The plant sale started, I did not start it, Lucille Plotz, my longtime co-chairman started it, in the 1950s when the Auxiliary (at that time the Women's Auxiliary of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the wives of the trustees and their friends started an auxiliary which was meant to raise money and help the garden in any way. Now it is just The Auxiliary, we added men quite a few years ago. It is no longer a social group, but a working group. They would have a bridge party, every year, once a year, in the spring and the garden would propagate some plants and there would be a couple of bridge tables that were filled with seedlings and excess plants that the garden would propagate and they were sold to Auxiliary members. By the time I joined the Plant Sale, which was the late 1960s it had expanded and at that time was held in the garage area, in the bays of the old garage, there were quite a few tables, maybe 10 tables, and the garden clubs of Brooklyn had been recruited to sell the plants. At that point it was still mostly plants that were excess from the garden, supplemented with a few things that were bought. It was mostly annuals. We're talking about the 60s, early 70s. Lucille had been running the sale with a woman who retired out to Long Island and was casting about looking for someone to help her so Betty Scholtz recruited me to the Auxiliary. The fall before the plant sale we were called into the Director of Horticulture's office who said that the garden was no longer in a position to supply any plants to us because he used everything they had propagated, so if we did it, we would have to buy the plants someplace else. So we decided if we were to do that then we would have to expand the sale exponentially and go for quantity. We wanted to keep the prices low because we didn't want to compete unfairly with nurseries in Brooklyn, but we wanted to offer good quality plants at a good price, so we had to sell in large volumes. At that time we had an Interim Director from Denver, who had very large plant sales even then, so we asked permission to move the plant sale to the Lily Pool Terrace. The sale increased

tremendously and we started buying things, found suppliers, started a perennial department, which was mostly rock garden plants at that time, and there were little half-tent canvas booths all along the Lily Pools. Everyone said that people were going to fall into the Lily Pools, but nobody actually did fall in to the Lily Pools. In those days the bonsai were a big deal, because as you know BBG has one of the finest collection of Bonsai probably in the United States, certainly on the East Coast, and in those days we would sometimes deaccession some bonsai, and had a few women who were very talented and would make bonsai under the supervision of Frank Okamura, who was the curator at that time. That went on all year long. The bonsai was a separate department and was put up in the rotunda on the second floor and would take up the entire rotunda. We sold moss, soil, the bonsai and everything, and that alone brought us in something like 10,000 dollars a year back then. As time went on the sale got bigger and bigger and we started publicizing it and we put a tent up over in Magnolia Plaza around the sundial and that was the houseplant department, which made us 20,000 dollars a year and then the annuals and the perennials were along the pool area. Every year it got bigger and bigger. When I started the sale brought in maybe \$10,000-\$15,000 a year. When Judy Zuk came in about 1990, the first year that she was there we rented the Palm House to, it was Vogue (unconfirmed) I think, for an event. The event was going to be the night before the plant sale and when Vogue found out that we were going to set up the event along the Lily Pool Terrace area, they said, "No, we don't want that. We'll pay for a tent, move it." So, we rented a huge tent and moved to the Cherry Esplanade and we never looked back after that. It was just heaven. Until then, the women would be taking money in their apron pockets, and we would have runners go around and collect money surreptitiously and take it up to the business office. The sales people were pretty dreadful, the garden club ladies knew nothing, they were in it for flower arranging and tea parties, they weren't able to give anybody any meaningful help. At the same time they were trying to build up and put a lot of knowledgeable people into the Auxiliary so that they could be helpful and be able to work. We then recruited staff people to do the same thing so it was helpful to the public as well. The second year that we were doing the sale on the Cherry Esplanade, Judy asked us to try to do a members benefit evening first. At first we were very reluctant, but it turned out to be the very best thing that ever happened to the sale. Two-thirds of our business in the entire sale is done between 4:30PM and 8PM on a Tuesday night. This year was a terrible year because it was raining and awful, and cold and miserable. The year before we sold out and we had a gross of \$180,000. We did \$120,000 of that in those first couple of hours. It is a massive enterprise. This year, which is a testament to the fact that the plant sale has a rabid following, we had the polar vortex the first night, which was absolutely horrible, it was so cold you could die, and it was raining, but we still did about \$110,000 the first night which was astonishing. It's become an institution and the members are crazed, they absolutely have to come for the first-serve kind of thing.

Our philosophy is, we try to have everything, one stop shopping, as many varieties of everything as we can possibly have. We might have 20 varieties of Clematis, 8 varieties of Echinacea, and that's what people come for. If you have the same old things that you can get anywhere... Also, we still do not jack up our prices, we still try to have competitive pricing, we definitely undersell by far all of the good catalog nurseries. We are way underpriced and are giving a way better product for what we're asking... Also we have 20 varieties of tomatoes, where else are you going to find that in New York City? You're not. So this is what we're selling. We're selling quality at a good price, and variety. We have built up a network of suppliers, who we check on quite vigilantly, who are really good growers. We have the best African violet grower on Long Island

Melanie Sifton (MS): It's even bicoastal too, right? You order things from the West Coast?

LC: We do, we've established a very good relationship with Monrovia. Plants have fashion, so at the very beginning we had a huge amount of bonsai and a few rock garden plants, now we don't even have a bonsai department anymore, we have a bonsai clinic that people can go to, but we don't sell any bonsai because we don't have a market for it, but what has expanded tremendously are perennials, shrubs and trees, but mostly perennials. Perennials don't look too good under normal circumstances the first week in May, and even people who are knowledgeable won't buy stuff that doesn't look appetizing, so we've established a relationship with Monrovia because they have nurseries on the West Coast and their plants are at least a month ahead of the East Coast, so we buy all that stuff from Oregon, California, and Georgia so that it really looks good. Now our sale is at least half perennials, trees, and shrubs. Also, we have a special interest in portable plants. It's not like we're in Denver where people can drive right up to the sale and load up big plants, we have to keep our plants small so we have anywhere from quart perennials to 3-gallons at the largest. We have the occasional 5-gallon if it's exceptional. We try to have things that are portable for people who might be riding the subway. We also put in a free plant check room so that people can buy, then check what they have and continue shopping, which usually means that they'll buy more. When we put in credit cards we found that that was incredible. We were mostly a cash and check kind of setup. Our sales are probably 85% credit cards, we find that people buy much more on a credit card. They used to have to write a check and pay cash and they would say "oh well I really don't need this" because it was too much money, but that doesn't happen anymore. They just put it on their credit card.

KPW: What do you see are some of the other goals of the Plant Sale besides the fundraising aspects?

LC: Making money is good. We usually net about a third of the gross in profits, after city sales tax. It's nice to give the money to the garden, but the main thing about the plant sale is not the fundraising aspect, this is a real chestnut, but the friend-raising aspect. It encourages people to grow plants. We have built up a really good sales force of knowledgeable people from the Auxiliary, of volunteers who are garden members, who really know what they're doing. It encourages people to grow plants; it certainly encourages people to join the garden. 20 or 30 people will join every Tuesday morning of the sale in order to be part of the members' preview. I really feel that it is a tremendous joint venture between the garden staff and its volunteers. Everybody works together shoulder-to-shoulder and it is really a well-oiled machine. Rudy in maintenance knows exactly what is going on and what he has to do, and what the process is. We work with the Education Department on the Children's Plant Sale, which is a whole different thing. It's grown into this very large operation where there are about 5000 plants, so I guess there are about 5000 kids on a good day that come and the Education Department has taken over that part of the sale. The plants sales are preregistered and they're sold for a dollar a piece and the education department is absolutely fabulous. They help us oversee the potting and selling of the plants. It's great for school children. We get a lot of things that come in which are handpicked from our suppliers, we look for some unusual things and even if they have only one or two of them we grab them for the sale. The staff always has first choice. When the plants come in, if a gardener sees something they want for the collection, we just give it to them. We're working for the garden here. We're not working for the Auxiliary, we're not working to make money. The difference between giving a plant that is desirable to the collection and making the money so that then they have to go out and find that plant that is desirable to the collection is ridiculous. So, our philosophy is that the garden has first choice on everything.

MS: If I might add too, because we had some nasty weather this year it may have suppressed sales more than prior years a little bit but the garden benefited nonetheless because we got the plants that we needed to fill in a lot of holes that we might have not have otherwise had and the community benefited a lot as well because they got anything that was unsold.

LC: Yes, anything that is unsold at the end of the sale, which is at noon on Thursday, first the gardeners get the pick, then the volunteers and the staff can buy at half price. Then anything that is left is donated to community gardens through Green Bridge so that nothing is wasted or thrown away. It all goes to beautify Brooklyn, basically. It's a community-benefiting event. That's the priority in our minds, rather than just dollars.

KPW: What do you think is indispensable to the Plant Sale?

LC: The cooperation between the staff and the volunteers, plus the attention to detail and the attention to really accumulating fine and unusual plant material.

KPW: Would you speak a bit about the process of determining the plant sale inventory?

LC: We couldn't do it on the scale that we do it now without computers. I don't have to tell you how weather dependent every event at BBG is. Some years you hit it and some years you don't, but you have to go on experience and instinct as to how much you'll buy of each thing. Also you have to follow fashion of course, but over the years we've been buying more and more and more because we've been selling more and more and more. It's a very fine line between buying too little so you have nothing left over for the Thursday sale, which is not what the person who attends the Thursday sale wants, and buying too much so you have a lot left over, although the too much left over is almost a better situation because then the community gardens get something and people who come that day have a better selection and aren't disappointed when they come. We take an inventory of the last day of the sale so we can see what is left and what has flown away. Each department has a couple of captains who are in charge of that department. Herbs for example has a list of what she wants and what she thinks she's going to sell before the sale, as the sale progresses she makes notes and when the sale is over she makes notes again. She goes over her inventory and sees what did and didn't sell and adjust our buying accordingly for the following year. That's what we do for every department; perennials the same, hanging baskets the same. We do a critical analysis as soon as the sale is over, at the very last day of the sale, and then we sit down right away and we go over our list and we make our decisions for the next year.

KPW: Are the captains of the different departments volunteers and Auxiliary or are the staff involved?

LC: All of the captains of the department are all auxiliary. We've made a direct attempt to induct into the Auxiliary anyone who shows up to volunteer and is knowledgeable. The garden helps us by assigning staff and some of the interns to the sale. It's very helpful to our customers, it gives them tremendous confidence when they see those green uniforms that they can ask a question and now that they'll get a decent answer.

KPW: Has there been an effort made to include staff in the planning process?

LC: Yes, Maryanne who orders the roses consults with Sarah as to any new kind of roses she wants or something like that. Mostly, though, by this time I really don't know how to... the staff is really not involved in the buying process except for in an advisory role. For example, we're having a problem with orchids now because our old

supplier retired, so I consult with Dave Horak about orchids, and also in order to try to get more people in on Wednesday which is the public sale, rather than the preview, we started having little talks by the curators in the departments scheduled throughout the day which is starting to catch on. Green Bridge has been doing that for two years now and they are quite satisfied with the response. We would like more publicity. We hardly get any publicity because we are right on the heels of Sakura, and that gets all the publicity. It is very hard to get people to pay attention to things that are directly on their heels... Last year we had good NY Times coverage because of the impatiens plant disease. They were asking us about alternatives. It was front page on the Home and Garden section of the NY Times. We try to get the PR people to get us on lots of stuff. I used to go on the radio the week before that sale on a gardening show that people really listened to. That was really good for us but that's no longer in existence. I do some blog interviews. I think our future, we are trying to get of course younger people to come, all of those people who are homesteading in Brooklyn, and I think that's an Internet process. I don't know if that's working or not but that seems to be the future as far as publicity goes.

KPW: What do you see for the future of the plant sale?

MS: For me, I think, more native plants is a trend. I get a lot of questions from people asking where they can buy well-grown and locally sourced native plant material and that's coming on the heels of our new Native Flora Garden Project which actually touts that as one of the rare qualities in Native Flora Gardens because we sourced the plant material very locally and that was very hard to do for us, so it's even harder for home owners trying to buy locally sourced plant material and there actually aren't a lot of suppliers, so I think that's actually a challenge for us and I know our gift shop struggles with that too because we really can't provide a lot of well-grown and locally sourced native material, and it would also have an issue that Lois brought up about how that plant material looks because it may not look all that appealing at that time of the year.

LC: We have been on the native plant kick now for 4 or 5 years and we do try to buy as many native plants as we possibly can and we identify them at the sale. We'll buy native plants, but we don't usually do the species, because the species basically is not that attractive. People say they'll buy them, but when they see them they don't want them. So we go out of our way to buy as many native plants as possible. We have a special section in the perennial section of native plants, which we've had for probably three years, and we make an orange stick-in label that says native plants and as the plants come in and are delivered we use our computer generated list and as they come in to be marked in price we stick in the native plant tags so we identify them to people. Also as Melanie referred to, and as I said before the plants don't always look so good in May we have a system of signage where we try to make a colored sign with a picture of the plant in bloom plus cultural information. We make one for each variety

that we have. We try to do this when they are delivered, pre-sale. Each plant or group of plants gets a sign and each plant in that group gets a native sign, as well. So it makes it easier and more attractive for people to buy.

KPW: How many plants do you sell each year?

LC: I have no idea. We say 20,000, which is probably close.

KPW: Do you have an estimate of how many different species there are?

LC: No, none. If you look at our perennial list alone, which includes shrubs and trees, but we don't carry a lot of trees because people say they want trees, but then when they see them small they don't want them. The perennial list alone is 32 pages of single spaced type, so I can't begin to tell you how many species. We just have everything...

KPW: Do you have any partners for the plant sale?

LC: Monrovia is the only place that's really ever given us any money or any plants. I have to say that I feel for the growers because it's a really tough, labor intensive, low margin business and I'm really happy to find growers who really will be good to us in the sense that when we deal with somebody, they know it's a two day sale, and they know what our clientele is like, and they know how picky we are and if something is really not looking good then they won't send it to us. So, it's a process of self-selection as well for them even though they could make the money from the extra plants. So that speaks to the relationship with our growers. We do have an individual that works for one of the big collectors and private estates around here who sends us some Rhododendrons, but otherwise Monrovia has given us plant material and money and has been very good to us.

KPW: What kind of discounts do you offer?

LC: None. The discount to members is first choice, that's the Tuesday night, and we do not ever cut our prices at the end of the sale, even if we have a disastrous weather situation. One year we did and we found that it just attracted hoards of bottom feeders who skipped Wednesday and waited for Thursday the next year. We would rather give the discount to staff, volunteers, and give the plants to the community gardens rather than get the reputation of cutting prices at the end of the sale. We are very firm on that.

KPW: Would you or Melanie talk about the different types of payment you accept, how you run the registers, or how technology may have changed the sale?

LC: The sale for the last two years has run more smoothly than it ever did because we got proper WiFi access that runs the cash registers in the sale area. We got cash registers that accept the electronic credit cards electronically and automatically. Until two years ago we were stuck with the old carbon copy swipe. It's made a huge difference.

MS: That is benefiting the garden tremendously as well because it was the plant sale that was our primary reason for putting WiFi in the garden so that we could do more secure credit and debit transactions for the plant sale for the integrity and security of the financing, which is now available to the public as well.

LC: It has made a huge impact for the efficiency of the business office because, when we had the old cards, we didn't have a huge deadbeat population, but that method requires a huge amount of backfilling, and improperly recorded numbers.

KPW: Do you still accept checks, or is it just cash or credit?

LC: We accept checks, cash, credit. On the first night, people don't have to have a lot of ID because they are prescreened members. On the other days they need to take ID's, but that has become almost superfluous.

KPW: Do you have any educational events before the plant sale to promote it, or promote certain plants, or have how-to sessions, or pop-up classes?

LC: No. We are too busy... It seems superfluous. There are plenty of classes that you can take at the garden. I think that having the gardeners on site benefits both the garden as well as the public.

MS: I know the curators like it. They get a forum that they might not otherwise have. There are some curators who are more shy, and we don't force them, but we try to hire people who are communications savvy enough to be able to do these kinds of things anyway because part of their role is to be a voice in the community representing the garden.

LC: I agree, if the curators are working in their gardens then they always answer questions from the public, which is really great because where else are you going to find this openness or interaction? It's part of what the garden does.

KPW: Do you release your catalog or inventory list before the plant sale?

LC: No. We release an FAQ that we release to the garden before the sale. One of the questions is always "Will you have X" and the answer is "We will either have X or something very very similar" and that is actually true. We have thought about giving

the catalog out, but it's 32 single spaced pages of horticultural Latin names. I mean, forget it. And since we don't have that many of any one species, we don't want someone coming for a specific species and being disappointed.

KPW: What would be the impact of not having the sale?

MS: Riots in the streets!

LC: We are trying to plan for that. Lucille and I have been doing this for many many years. A couple of years ago we started to think seriously about succession. There is no way for the garden to pay for this to be done on a staff basis... In order to maintain the sale we have brought onboard two other, younger women, Joan and Joan, who we are teaching the system. We've been working with them now for 3 years... They're going to be thrown into a more active role, presale, then they were before and I'm personally going to cut back on some of this and just do what I have to do with the nurseries in the end. They're going to have to add a couple more people at the top to take over part of the sale. There are enough people around to make it work... We'll press on. The will is there, and the will is there on the part of the garden as well as on the part of the Auxiliary. It is the Auxiliary's biggest project and we don't want it to go away, and the garden doesn't want it to go away either. Amazingly enough, the thing's been going on for 60 years, and every year we find a new little tweak that makes it easier.

MS: We leverage the resources we have for it. We have the tent for Sakura, and the cost is split between the Auxiliary and the Garden, and is great for both.

Excerpt of Interview with Mr. Bruce Crawford, Director of Rutgers Gardens July 10, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you give me an overview of the plant sale?

Bruce Crawford (BC): I'm not certain of the exact date that it started. Some people say '94, some people say '96, and of course nobody was documenting things back in the 90s. Depending on who you talk to, in 1989 the land (the garden) was for sale, whether it was seriously for sale, or whether it was just a consideration, we'll never know. Anyways, the gardens became totally self sufficient when that happened. So they started a small plant sale somewhere in the mid-90's in the central core of the garden which is where the annuals are. I came in 2005 and we looked at our log cabin. Our log cabin has a fence around it, just a split rail fence, but at least that gives boundaries. It has an entrance and an exit so it sort of lent itself a bit better for a sales area. We've since broke it down to vegetables, which are in a big tent, annuals in a general area, and we have perennials for sun, perennials for shade, woody plants for sun, woody plants for shade, and vines. It took us several years to figure out that simple format because originally when the plants came off the truck we would lay them out in pretty combinations, but because we had relatively limited help people (customers) would say "oh, I've got a shady spot, where do I look?" so this way it's just easy to point to the big banners and that say what the area is so we can just point to it and say "go over there." I don't know what it was like back in the mid-90s, I never went to it...

KPW: What are the goals of the plant sale?

BC: Two. One, which is becoming increasingly so, is to educate the consumer. Most people don't understand plants, and we're not competing with the big box stores or the garden centers because we try to offer plants that you can't find elsewhere. So if you're looking for something interesting or cool things for your yard you come to us. The other is of course, support. Right now it brings in enough money to support the internship program. That is the main goal for us. Each year it's been growing. Last year we had 16 interns. That was a bit too much for us so this year we backed it down to 11.

KPW: Does it solely support the internships or does some money go into operations?

BC: Some money supports the superintendent's salary who oversees the interns.

KPW: What are the total number of plants that you sell?

BC: In tomatoes alone we have 108 different varieties at about a tray of 32 of each of those. Some we have more of, like Rutgers and Ramapo. For perennials we probably bring in about 3 trailer loads... there's probably 2,000 to 2,500 perennials and woody plants, and another 1000 annuals. We usually have around 200 hanging baskets.

KPW: Where do the majority of the plants come from?

BC: We grow our own vegetables and some of the funky annuals. The other annuals come from Beds & Borders, and Landcraft Environments. Woodies come from Fernbrook Farms, Pleasant Run Nursery, Ivy Farm, and Steven Kristoph Nursery, and we get bamboos from Little Acre Farm...

KPW: How many volunteer hours go into the sale?

BC: Probably in the order of 3,000 hours, but probably more than that because we have the volunteers working in the greenhouse leading up to that. We have 110 volunteers work the sale itself and on average they usually put in at least one day, which is about 10 hours. About 2000 to 3000 hours at the sale itself and lots of volunteer work at the greenhouse every Saturday leading up to the sale. We'll have about 12 volunteers, and we're transplanting plugs and pricking out seedlings. Maybe there's another 250 hours right there. 3,000 is probably a pretty good guess.

KPW: Would you talk about the breakdown of the days of the sale?

BC: The sale runs Thursday to Sunday. Thursday is the only day of the sale that we have a special event. Thursday afternoon we start at 3oclock with members. We used to start at 5pm and we were getting swamped so we opened it up earlier with the hopes that we would get the groups to spread out. The drawback is that we run an auction that night, so we go out around to different nurseries, and friends, and beg plants from them that we'll offer at the auction. Something that is one-of-a-kind. One nursery will give us \$500 retail worth of stuff, and someone else will give us \$200. So it really didn't work because people would come at 4pm, then stick around for the auction, so the cars would mass all over the place anyway. We serve wine and cheese and people stick around and shop for the night and that has done very, very well. It started out making about \$1,000 for the evening and now we're up to \$40,000.

KPW: Do members have to pay to get in?

BC: Members don't have to pay to get in. It's a perk of membership. Membership starts at \$45, and typically it costs us around \$5,500 that night for wine and cheese, so

we make out. It benefits us. Friday and Saturday it's open to the public. On Sunday we give out coupons, so if you came earlier to the plant sale, or if you came to Rutgers Day which is a campus wide event on the last Saturday in April. So if you bring the coupon with you it's 20% off on Sunday. The idea was to see if it actually drove people back. We looked to see if we did x-amount on sales, but lost the 20% from the coupon if we still did better, and we did so that was a success.

KPW: Do you offer any other discounts?

BC: No, that's it. This is a fundraiser, and we don't guarantee anything besides that it's healthy and true-to-name, and still we get people coming back if their plants die... By and large people are very understanding, and they know they're supporting the gardens at the same time.

KPW: Does the plant sale have an impact on membership?

BC: We just noticed that a lot of people didn't renew at the end of May after they got the plant sale discount. The year before they signed up as a member just prior to the sale, so they went through May. Maybe there's nothing we can do about that, but maybe those 60 members that dropped, we went from 460, down to just a touch over 400, maybe they'll re-up in early May next year, but clearly many people are joining just for the plant sale and not to specifically help the gardens.

KPW: Do you hold a fall sale as well?

BC: Fall sales we had years ago and dropped them because no one really buys and then we eat the stuff. Right now the material that's left over we sell at the gift shop and at our farmer's market on Friday afternoon. We slowly recoup, but the longer we go into the summer the less we are making because we have to continue to water them. We don't have city water so we can't put on sprinklers or irrigation. We have well water right now, and the well is not that great so everything is hand watered right now and it's terribly tedious. So, the bottom line is we are trying to get rid of this stuff at the sale that's why the 20% off coupon was helpful because we had less material to hold onto and worry about.

KPW: What happens to the unsold plants?

BC: We sell them off at the gift shop and the farmer's market, then the last Friday in October we offer a truckload sale. Anything you can fit on a palette. It started at \$50, just to clear house, and it was so popular the next year we did \$60, the next year we did \$70, and we've raised it every year. This year it might be \$85 or \$90 but still people come in droves. We are trying to recoup some money, but you're losing, you know that, but at least you're getting rid of the plants and getting something back.

We also have an open house in July, but nobody buys plants in July, it's just too damn hot. I'll probably buy in about \$100 worth of stuff and bring in some leftovers from the Spring Plant Sale and see if we can sell that. On average we probably do about \$500 to \$600 at the open house. This year we're trying to drive membership so we'll have a tent that says Rutgers Gardens to see if we could push that.

KPW: Do you charge admission to the gardens?

BC: No. There's a definite entry and a definite exit, but we just don't have the staff and there's no shed or building to collect admission in yet. There's limited parking, there's no signage in the garden. The garden needs a lot of work. One of the things that Bob (Lyons) and I, and the other members of the advisory board are doing is we're re-master planning the whole thing, new mission, new everything. We actually never had a mission before, so we can't charge admission because there's too much ambiguity as to where to go or what to do.

KPW: How does checkout work?

BC: We have two sales tents, one by the vegetables, and a small pop-up tent that has two registers and a 30-foot tent that is totally separate, and we have a holding area. Smart people bring carts to shop with. We have a few carts, but we don't want to buy so many that they sit unused for the rest of the year, so we only have about 5 carts. Most people bring wagons or wheel barrels. But you usually can't fit everything in a wagon, so we have a holding area with 12x12 squares marked off and each one is labeled 1 through 10. Each customer's plants are clustered in an area, the customer gets a sticker with their name and which block their plants are stored in. The customer gets the rip-off stub and keeps that with them, so that every time they come back they can say, "here's my stub, it's number 5 in bin 6" and they can just keep adding to it. Then, when they're ready to checkout you tally it all up, and they go over to the sales tent and pay for it. They park several hundred feet away in the shade tree collection because it's the only adequate parking that we have that's relatively close. Then they drive their cars down a one-way loop to pick up their plants. We have volunteers that help to load the car, and then off they go.

It's relatively efficient, but sometimes gets confusing in the holding area because it can be hard to tell where one person's plants end and the others start, and when it's really busy we run out of room. Thursday night and Friday between 11am and 2pm it is absolutely nuts... We know that we have to do barcodes or something to speed the thing up.

KPW: So, you don't do barcodes?

BC: We don't barcode, but I'm looking into it... The sales have been going up 6% or 7% over the previous year. We took a tumble with the economic downturn but things are getting better. We almost sold out of tomatoes this year...

KPW: What forms of payment do you accept at the sale?

BC: Cash, credit, and checks. It's almost all credit, a little cash, no checks. We have online credit cards and a wireless credit card machine. The University won't let us use iPads...

KPW: Do you print or distribute a catalog for the sale?

BC: Do not print or distribute a catalog. We have a website up that lists plants for the spring plant sale. We try to update it, but the biggest challenge is that at the last minute, some of the nurseries might cancel part of an order, and people will come asking for those plants and are very disappointed.

KPW: Have you ever surveyed your customers?

BC: No... we could potentially do it on Saturday or Sunday. I've thought of it, but haven't implemented it yet. We do have some people write in.

KPW: How do you market the sale?

BC: Garden clubs, I lecture a lot, and we have 8,000 people on our email list. When I go to garden club events I send around a clipboard and try to collect email addresses. We have the Spring Home Gardener School that the Office of Continuing Professional Education runs. There are seven classes per hour and there are 3 classes in the morning and 2 in the afternoon and the whole day of classes is like \$70, and about 800 people come out to that so we try to grab that audience as much as we can.

KPW: Do you do lectures specifically for the plant sale?

BC: Yes, I do. There are lectures for members about two weeks before the sales. We buy some wine and cheese and water and highlight and praise the merits of the new plants for that year.

KPW: Would you talk a little bit more about the auctions that you have?

BC: We don't do a lot with evergreens so I try to pick up some interesting dwarf conifers. A native American jack-in-the-pulpit sold for \$110 this year. We did hire a professional auctioneer but found out that that didn't really work because he didn't know the plants. This year we had a friend of mine stand on a palette up on a forklift,

and the crowd gathered around, and Bob Lyons joined in and sort of pumped up these plants. We made a little show out of it, but it generated some interest and action and people enjoy that, and it let people see some of the funky things that we had...

We do a preview or pre-sale, which is only online. I try to find something that's different that year that I can get a block of... We usually do about \$2,000 on presale items... I'll usually throw out about 4 or 5 different plants. I've been getting into houseplants for use as outdoor container plants or in shade. I try to promote houseplants for different use... It's another way to educate the public while at the same time making a couple of dollars...

KPW: Do the auctions generate significant revenue?

BC: They've been going up. It was a little over \$2,000 this year, the last year \$1,700... Since it's all donated, it's pure profit.

KPW: How do you determine the inventory for the plant sale?

BC: The annuals and vegetables are chosen and grown by the Horticulture Manager... I buy in all of the perennials and the woodies. I keep track of what we sold the year before so we have records of what was hot and not so hot. It's really based upon previous years. Things that I want to bring in but haven't been selling I really try to pump it up on the web or at the lectures...

KPW: Do you utilize any state invasive lists when selecting inventory?

BC: No, we sell Buddleia, but we don't sell porcelain vine, or false honeysuckle or any of the obvious. People have asked for a native plant section, but it would be too much work to separate them out.

KPW: What are your best sellers?

BC: Our best sellers are anything in flower. You can have a gorgeous lily but if it's not in bud it won't sell. People keep coming and asking for Hibiscus, which aren't even really leafed out in early May, but there's a certain population of people who really want them.

KPW: Do you take public requests?

BC: We don't take public requests; it just takes too much time.

KPW: Do you work with any growers to grow plants specifically for you?

BC: No.

KPW: Do you sell plants on consignment?

BC: No, the trouble with that is they have to put money down, and lots of times I haven't seen the plant yet, so I'm reluctant to say "okay." The only time we do that is if we had the plant on Friday and we sold out and someone says they'll come back next week to get it. So, I'll make a run down to a nursery to pick stuff up, but that'll be it.

KPW: Does the plant sale inventory reflect any collections policies?

BC: We try to sell the Rutgers dogwoods; there is little or no interest in American holly. If the dogwood is in flower we can sell it...

KPW: Do you partner with any organizations or businesses?

BC: We ask for sponsors to pay for t-shirts. All of the volunteers wear the same t-shirts. This year we had enough money to buy the t-shirts and lunch for the volunteers. We also distribute water and have snacks...

KPW: What kind of representation do the sponsors have at the sale?

BC: The sponsors have their name on the t-shirts and Bartlett trees comes and helps sell the trees, they plug Bartlett, but help to sell the trees as well. They also get their name on the website for the year as a sponsor.

KPW: What kind of impact on the grounds does the sale have?

BC: Parking is compacting the soil and rutting it up in the shade tree area. If it rains it turns into a mud pie. Most people walk on an asphalt area. The log cabin doesn't see much abuse. You see some worn areas on the turf but they recover. It's really the impact of the cars and parking in the overflow parking areas. We're still a few years away from getting a better system set up.

KPW: What is the overall staff involvement in the plant sale?

BC: It's the only time that they authorize OT. The Hort Manager has to hire on a couple of people specifically to help grow the plants. We make money on it, but the garden also suffers as a result because the maintenance on the garden declines... The staff has to be there for all the days of the sale starting with set up on Monday. We usually work about 7AM in the morning until 7PM or 8PM at night.

KPW: Do you think it's understood by the staff that it's part of their regular responsibilities?

BC: The staff understands that this is part of their responsibilities, but people get tired and there'll be fights. Not during the plant sale, but sometime afterwards. Usually in May I'm guaranteed a fight. So that's the downside, it does wear and tear on the staff...

KPW: What would be the impact of not having the sale?

BC: It does bring people to the gardens... We have about 2500 people come through in those three-and-a-half days, which is good for us. We put a flashing sign up on the road. We put it up on Monday so it's a few days forewarning. Some people see the sign up and just stop in even if they have no idea that the garden is there. It allows me to connect with people that I maybe only see once a year because they come to the plant sale. It's great for networking with the community especially as we start master planning and looking for more money it helps people to understand the need for it. The whole education value, I still put a lot on that. Regardless of what it is that you're educating the public about. We're all in it to educate them about gardens or plants in the gardens, or ecology, or whatever it is that your mission is I think it fulfills that. It's a way to get one-on-one with the community and educate them about the plants. Unless they really Google it and research it they probably wouldn't get that information anywhere else.

KPW: Do you offer any other formal educational opportunities with the plant sale?

BC: It's just that pre-class, about two weeks before. And then with the website we try to write a little bit about each plant. It's not Michael Dirr, but there's a little description there. When people call and ask questions I refer them to the website because we leave it up year round.

KPW: What do you see as the future of the sale?

BC: I see the greenhouse as becoming a class. There is very little hands-on hort... I would like to see it become more of a structured class. So, instead of it being strictly volunteer-driven, it becomes more undergraduate-driven. Then it would make more sense, because since the garden's going to hell, because we can't maintain it, but at least we're teaching people and we can get a little bit of revenue out of that because if we teach the class we get some revenue stream from it. That way it would be another source of some income, but it would also spread the education out among a bigger group, because right now if we bought the plants in, we could keep the gardens looking more attractive, and would that drive membership if the gardens looked more presentable for that month-and-a-half.

I would consider houseplants. We're putting up a glass pavilion, which is essentially a greenhouse for the farmer's market. I would reexamine holiday sales. Not really cut Christmas trees or poinsettias but other neat plants for that time of year that people don't think about. I don't want to make the sale longer in spring and fall sales have always been horrible. There seems to be more demand among condo owners, students, and apartments dwellers for houseplants, so maybe something that's houseplant centric might be cool.

KPW: What do you think of plant sales in general? What do you see as their purpose?

BC: ... I think if it's a plant sale that's centric to the mission of that particular garden, then I think it has tremendous merit for educating the public on the plant thing.

Even though we are a part of Rutgers University, we are not supported by Rutgers University... It really does help the gardens make those little extra bits of cash that they need to make the small improvements that people appreciate and see. I think it's a good thing. I think it needs to continue. At that time of year there are so many people buying plants, I think that Home Depot, and the box stores, Lowes and so forth, are taking more of a hit from the garden centers than the plant sales ever would. So I don't think we're impacting the garden center industry at all, which is something that I was always worried about, because those are our friends, we don't want to hurt them.

KPW: Have you ever gotten any negative feedback from the garden centers?

BC: No, nothing. Actually, they're the people that give us plants for the sale and in return we give them advertising. Where we are, there are a couple of big-box stores, but no garden centers, so we're not head-to-head with anyone in particular so it works out really well.

KPW: Is there anything that you would like to add?

BC: We offer the volunteers 40% off on Sunday after 3pm. So if they put in a solid 8-hour day they can get a discount. We don't make money off of it, but we break even and get rid of some of the excess stock.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Melissa Cruz, Outreach Coordinator at UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden September 9, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Melissa Cruz (MC): ... Credit card machines and we show them how to tally up the plants, how to make sure that they tally up the right amount of plants. That's the mini-training that they receive just for the sale. Most volunteers get there around 8 o'clock in the morning, and around 8 o'clock in the morning we also have other volunteers, which are community volunteers, which are people who help us out with the sales floor. So they volunteer and they give their plant expertise, and give the customers additional information about the plants, how to take care of the plants, how to water the plants. And so they volunteer in that area. And then we have other student volunteers that help us with, helping people carry their plants to their cars, making sure that people know which aisles they can find the plants, we give them mini-maps that they can use to direct the public. Then we also have other student volunteers that help with parking. They help direct cars and make sure that everyone is parking properly... Also, some of the student volunteers help with plant counting as well so it's not just community volunteers, which are people who are usually retired, but we also have other people who just like to volunteer just for fun. So that's the main infrastructure of how the plant sales work on the day of.

Usually we do set up on Thursday mornings, we spend around 4 hours, from 9 to 12, just putting like the whole layout together... After we set up everything we take a break, and we sit down, and just talk about what we need or what else we should do...

We offer a free lunch to all of our volunteers. We have it catered by Whole Foods. We coordinate with them what type of food items we can have at the plant sale, and we also have snacks available in the morning that are all from Whole Foods. So, they're a great partner that we have, as well.

It's usually an extremely fun event, at least from my point of view, it's usually an extremely fun event because it kind of feels like Disney Land only for plant people, so everyone lines up ahead of time and as soon as 9 o'clock hits everyone just runs at the door and tries to gather up as many plants as possible. So, it's a lot of fun...

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): In your words, what are the goals of your plant sale?

MC: The goals of the plant sale are mainly to make it a positive experience for the customer, making sure that we get our theme across, this season's theme is remove

your lawn. California is in a huge drought. We want to make sure that people have the plants and resources available for them to actually know that they can actually remove their lawn and have these wonderful drought tolerant plants that won't need as much water that they can use in their normal day lives, that they don't necessarily need to have a lawn in order to have their house look pretty. They can have a variety of different plants that are a lot more sustainable especially for California agriculture, and to make sure that they have the information and the plants available for them to actually have that in their lives. I guess that would be like the main goal. Another goal would be promoting the Arboretum. The plant sales themselves are a huge fundraising event for the Arboretum. We also have a lot of outreach groups at the day of the event. Making the Arboretum known, making everyone know that we do sell plants, that this happens a few times a year, and to promote it and make sure that everyone knows about the Arboretum.

KPW: How long have you been involved with the plant sale?

MC: As an official staff member, one year, but I volunteered as an undergrad here in Davis and I volunteered for three years.

KPW: Is there a theme every year?

MC: There is a theme every single year. Remove your front lawn was the theme for the 2013 plant sales but because it was such a great hit and we're in a severe drought right now we decided to extend the theme for the fall. For the springtime we'll come up with another theme.

KPW: Do you know how long the Arboretum has been having a plant sale?

MC: In 1971, because the Arboretum lost its budget we started selling some irises in order to create some revenue for the arboretum...

KPW: Do you know how long there have been multiple sales through the year?

MC: Recently, in the last two or three years. The reason we have so many sales now is because five years ago we developed the teaching nursery in the west end of the Arboretum and that actually gave us space to make the plant sales a lot more frequent. I believe that before, back in the early 2000s and 90s we would only have one plant sale and it would be right outside the office. People would like campout and guard the plants, and in the morning they would sell the plants. But now that we've developed the facility in which to host all of these plants it became a better idea to have them a lot more frequently. So, I would say that within the last three years we've had two in the fall and four in the springtime.

KPW: Which are the most successful or busiest?

MC: The first sale of the fall is the busiest, and that's because it's the greatest time to plant plants here in California. You get the most drought tolerant plants that way. And the first plant sale of the springtime as well. That's also a very busy plant sale.

KPW: Do you grow all of your own plants or do you buy some in?

MC: Both. Some get ordered. The Arboretum itself has existing partnerships with a lot of the local nurseries, so we have some of them ordered and brought, but we also grow a lot of them inside the nursery.

KPW: Could you talk a little bit about the teaching nursery and how it's used?

MC: Our nursery manager has been able to organize each of the plants, depending on if they're perennials or annuals or succulents or herbs, so he has signage that actually separates each of the plants depending on type. He utilizes a lot of the space in that area in order to make sure that we have enough space to host all of the plants. The way he breaks it down is on the left side there are two rows that are used to have the plants that aren't ready to be sold, those plants live there, not ready to be sold, but close to getting to be sold. Then he has the rest of the sales floor that is actually used in the plant sales and that's how we organize them so that way the people can walk around and get their plants during the plant sale.

KPW: Are the plants mostly grown by students or volunteers? Is it part of classes or anything?

MC: I don't think it's part of any classes, but volunteers do volunteer there Monday through Friday. They help out with Taylor and they propagate a lot of the plants. Most of the time they'll go out into the actual Arboretum and take some of the plants that they feel that they can propagate in the nursery. Most of the plants are grown by Taylor, the volunteers, and the student interns.

KPW: Do you track how much staff time goes into the plant sale?

MC: To give you an idea of how we do this... The plant sale planning happens all year round so there's never really a time that we don't think about the plant sale... The plants need care every single day. There's the time that Taylor puts in taking care of the plants, getting ready for the plant sale, making sure the plants have the right amount of growth hormones, he takes care of all of that. The majority of his position, and he's full time, is dedicated solely on making sure that the plants are there and the plants are healthy.

KPW: How many volunteer hours go into the plant sale?

MC: Most people put in around 8 hours on the day of the plant sale... We have certain volunteers that only volunteer at the plant sales and they dedicate around 8 hours that day, but we have other volunteers who work at the plant sale and work once or twice a week at the nursery propagating the plants, making sure the plants are ready for the plant sales. We're always doing this. Even after the October sale we'll be growing plants right after that and getting ready for the spring sale, and after the spring sale we'll be growing plants for the October sale. We're always just growing plants, getting ready, making sure that the nursery is in tip-top shape just for the plant sale. It's hard to gauge. Even my staff hours... I spend half of my time just making sure that everything is up to speed, having meetings with people, making sure that we order the food properly, making sure that we have insurance, meeting with outreach groups, making sure that they have all of the information available... it's not a certain set number of hours, it's the actual months that we're actually recruiting and making sure that the plant sale is up and ready.

KPW: Would you talk about the different partnerships that you have for the plant sale?

MC: We have certain groups that we usually invite to the plant sales and now that I've become staff here we've reached out to a lot of other different groups that we wouldn't normally reach out to. We reach out to the Master Gardeners in Davis. They work for the YOLO County region and the Sacramento County region and these are people who are actively engaged in the Masters Gardeners and they go to weekly meetings or biweekly meetings to talk about how they can promote the growth of certain plants of the California region. They're trained individuals that give mini-tutorials or lessons on how to maintain your lawn, how to remove your lawn, how to put in proper irrigation, how to put in drip irrigation. They're a great asset to the Arboretum because they promote a lot of information that the normal person wouldn't get just by going to the website. We also have the California Native Grasslands Association, they send another individual who comes and talks about the native grasslands and how we should promote them and how important they are to California wildlife. We have certain nurseries that also come out here in Davis at the plants sales... All these nurseries are local and they come out and they promote their nurseries and they also promote the promotions that the members from the Arboretum get if they go and show their member card to these nurseries. I believe Davis Ace gives a 10% off discount if you're a member of the Arboretum. These groups not only promote their organization but they also promote the benefits the members get if they do decide to be a member of the organization.

KPW: Do they sell any of their own stuff at the plant sales or do they just table?

MC: They just table and talk about their organization and talk about different plants that they sell, because the Arboretum doesn't necessarily sell any fruit plants or any vegetables, we sell native grasses or native plants, we just don't sell those types of things here. The nurseries are a great partner because they do sell fruit trees and plants that we don't sell at the Arboretum... The plant sale itself is a great place for our graduate students and our undergraduate students to come and table and talk about their organizations. We invite the graduate entomology groups here in Davis and they talk about pesticide safety. They give a tutorial about what to do if you have aphids, what type of pesticides you can use in your lawn that won't be detrimental to your health. So, this is another group that I love and they are so innovative and they even brought a live camera that is attached to a microscope so people we able to bring in leaves that were filled with aphids put them underneath the live camera and look at their leaves and look at the aphids and whatnot. The common layperson hasn't seen an actual aphid up close before. It's very interactive. It makes the public realize that they can bring their pests that are in their plants and can have the local pesticide safety group tell them what to do with them. We also have the plant doctor clinic. They kind of do the same thing but they focus more on fungi. People will come and bring, let's say someone has leaf rust on their plant, they'll come and bring a sample and the plant doctors will figure out what's wrong with the plant and how they can fix it...

KPW: These are all day of events happening right at the plant sale?

MC: Yeah. We have the outreach alley. We dedicate a section of the plant sale to just be outreach groups so they can come and talk to the customers as they shop for their plants.

KPW: Do you hold any lectures or educational events before the plant sale to draw customers?

MC: Not before, but on the day of the plant sales we give mini-demos as to how to install drip irrigation into your lawn. This was hosted by the Master Gardeners. I contacted them and asked them if they had anyone in their group that knew about drip irrigation if they wouldn't mind actually talking about how to install drip irrigation and how they could actually provide that information to the public.

And we also have other groups such as The Pollinators. They talk about bees, and native bees and how people can build bee houses in order to promote native pollinators in their garden.

Every single plant sale varies, some of these groups are able to make it, some of them are not. Some just tell me ahead of time that they're able to make it just for one plant sale...

There's something else that we're trying to do at this plant sale that we haven't tried to do before. The arboretum also sells jewelry and in the past we had a jewelry table and we sold the jewelry directly in the plants sales, but this year we're taking that idea and kind of making a gift shop in the plant sale so people who aren't necessarily interested in buying the plants will go to the gift shop and buy a tote bag, or shirt, or pair of earrings instead...

KPW: Would you talk a little bit more about the Whole Foods sponsorship and any others that you have set up?

MC: Whole Foods opened in Davis, I believe, two years ago. The whole arboretum extends to the arboretum terrace as well, and since it's part of the arboretum we've let whole foods use that space in order to have their customers sit and enjoy the arboretum. Through this partnership Whole Foods has been very very, extremely generous towards us. They always give us a \$400 gift card to use on any type of purchase. With that gift card, what we do is, we order the food for the volunteers and usually at least for this Plant Sale that's coming up we're ordering some quesadillas, sweet potato quesadillas, mushroom quesadillas, chicken quesadillas, and we use that gift card and apply it to the catering fees and then we just pay the difference if it goes over \$400. And they also donate a lot of our snacks, granola bars, fruit, bananas, cookies, and the water. So they just donate a lot of items for us to actually utilize at the plant sale.

KPW: Do you have any other sponsors?

MC: We have a local business called H2O To Go and they donate the majority of the water for the volunteers, but I wouldn't say any other major donors besides Whole Foods.

Also, Whole Foods also has a table at the plant sale and they have a spin-the-wheel, where they ask people to donate a dollar for the Arboretum for a wheel spin to get a prize. They probably get at least 50 or 60 dollars in spin-the-wheel donations.

KPW: Do you have any discounts for staff or volunteers?

MC: Members get 10% off. Volunteers are mostly members so they get the 10% off discount, but if you're a volunteer for one of the October sales then you get a sneak peak, a volunteer presale. If you're volunteering at the plant sale it's usually really hard for you to get any of the plants because you're busy volunteering so we open it up on an earlier day for the volunteers to come and get their first pick of plants. It's great because it gives the volunteers those perks ahead of time.

KPW: Do you discount the plants at all towards the end of the sale or maybe the last sale of the year?

MC: We don't discount the plants towards the end of the sale because we usually use those plants at a later sale. There is always a time when we can utilize the plants, but the last spring sale is the sale where we have clearance and is the only time where we have discounted plant prices.

KPW: Do you see a correlation between membership and the plant sales?

MC: Yes. The majority of the people join when they see the incentives because they not only get a discount at the Arboretum but they also get free entry to all these other botanical conservatories all over California... We see a super high increase in Arboretum memberships on the days of the plant sale.

KPW: Would you talk about how the cash registers are set up? Which types of payments do you accept? Is it all wireless? Do you still use hand readers?

MC: We use credit card machines and that's how we accept credit cards and debit cards. We do accept checks, we do accept cash. We set up ten tables on the sales floor and each table has one credit card reader and two cashiers per credit card reader and each one takes their time reading the credit cards and making sure that they go through.

KPW: How do you utilize WiFi at the sale?

MC: We just have the WiFi for the credit card readers just to make sure that everything is up to speed...

KPW: How do you market your sales?

MC: There's a variety of ways. The main one that works here in Davis is just old school flyering. Flyering to all of the local stores. Going all over downtown and just giving them a flyer for the plant sale and making sure that they put it up in their business and that's how we usually get the majority of the people, surprisingly. We also post laminated plant sale signs all over the arboretum. I've noticed that people usually take a picture of the sign and just look back at it if they need to remember the date. We use the local newspaper, we publish in the Enterprise and the Sacramento Bee, and we also put it online and ask for the CCOH organization to put the plant sale information online. We ask all of our partners to put up the information or the PDF's so people can access them. We also put up these huge banners in downtown Davis so when people are driving by and look at the banners they know that the plant sales are coming up.

Ellen Zagory, our Director of Horticulture spends a lot of her time going to different conventions and just talking about the plants and promoting the plant sales that way.

We also use social media. We promote it all over Facebook, all over Instagram. That's how we've gotten the students that come out and check out the plant sales, as well.

KPW: Do you know how many people on average attend each plant sale?

MC: At every plant sale we have a person counter. The first plant sale is around 1200 people. The later sales have a little bit less than that. The second sale has about 1,000. The spring sales decrease by a few hundred each time. The first one will have 1200, the second one will have a 1,000, the third one will have about 800, and the fourth will have around 600.

KPW: Have you looked to any other plant sales for inspiration for your own, or have you modeled aspects of your own from other sales?

MC: I know, at least for me, because I've only worked in this division for like a year, I haven't actually gone out and looked at other types of plant sales. But all of the staff that works here, all of the marketing, and the director of horticulture, and even our nursery manager has seen a variety of different plant sales. They've actually explored and gone out, and looked at different types of plant sales and come back to give us some insight on how we can improve our own; what we're doing right, comparing and contrasting their methods and our methods. We have staff that's actually gone out and looked at different plant sales in order to gain information, but as for me personally, I haven't had the opportunity yet to go out and explore other plant sales.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Missy Jeane, Special Events Manager at Olbrich Botanical Gardens October 9, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you tell me a brief history of the sale?

Missy Jeane (MJ): The sale has been happening for a really long time, I can't say how long, but long before I started working at Olbrich. I think it started off with one of the garden societies and then it continued to grow and got taken over by staff. And it's evolved over time. It's gotten bigger and we've gone through some ups and downs. Plant Sale with the Pros was part of our rebranding of the sale to offer something else when some of the other nurseries and the big box stores came on the scene and also started selling garden supplies. There's no way that we can compete with some of those prices, especially because it is a fundraiser there's a certain markup on the plants to make it all worth while because it is extremely time consuming staff wise to put together. So, that's when Plant Sale with the Pros was kind of born and the idea behind it was that we have contacts within the horticulture community, within Dane County, and we have the ability to bring the landscape designers and the nursery owners and all different types of people involved in that industry here, and they're onsite to assist you with your plant purchasing. Two years ago we started offering a station called "The Design Station" where people can sign up for 20-minute consultations with landscape designers and come up with a planting plan for a specific area, based on information brought by the home owner and can actually walk away with a drawing for free of a certain area. That's kind of the reason behind Plant Sale with the Pros, to market our sale as offering something that you can't get if you go to a nursery or a Home Depot to buy your plants.

KPW: How long ago was the rebranding?

MJ: 7 or 8 years ago.

KPW: Have you seen an increase in sales or attendance?

MJ: It's really difficult to say, we haven't seen anything dramatic, but we also haven't seen a decline, which is something we worry about, we've just sort of maintained. The reason that it's difficult to measure sometimes is because the sale is so weather dependent. It happens early in the spring and I've had years where it's been 60 degrees and beautiful and sunny, and by the time our sale is happening, it's early in the spring, and people haven't already gone out and bought plants at other places and it's very

successful. Our sale this year was a huge success, it was probably the best one we've had in the six years I've been here. But if it's cold and it rains the day of the sale it can completely tank the whole thing. Or if spring comes really early and our sale doesn't happen until Mother's Day weekend then people go out and buy their plants in advance from the nurseries that are offering them seven days a week. So it's just really hard to measure that, but like I said we haven't seen a further decline in our sales after rebranding.

KPW: How many pros volunteer for the event?

MJ: It changes. We get a lot more on Friday because they're working on the weekend, a lot of times, with the homeowners. I would say anywhere between 12 to 18 over the course of the two days.

KPW: Would you talk about the incentive to get a Fiskars tool and any other sponsorship or partnership that you might have for the sale?

MJ: If you are a member of Olbrich, and our members are our biggest supporters of the plant sale, they come out rain or shine because they understand that it is a fundraiser, when you come to the sale you receive a Fiskars tool, and that's a donation that we receive through Fiskars. So we don't pay anything for it and it's a benefit that we can offer our members to entice them to come to the sale.

The Fiskars sponsorship has been happening for maybe four or five years. Fiskars is based here so it's easy to get them to collaborate with us. Our horticulture staff also tests out new tools for them, they'll bring them a bunch of new tools and hort staff will prune stuff and use them for other purposes to give them an idea of their ability and their effectiveness. We've had a relationship with them for a while and our Membership Department approached them two years ago about donating about 1,000 tools to the sale, and that usually gets us through the two days of the sale. It's been a really nice gift from a really reputable company and most of our members are gardeners so they're familiar with Fiskars already and they enjoy the benefit.

We don't have any normal sponsorship underwriting for the plant sale. We do have our Madison East Kiwanis Club at the plant sale and they do brauts, and hotdogs, and lunch options for people while they're shopping, and then they donate a certain percentage of their proceeds back to the garden after the sale. It's anywhere between \$600 and \$1,300. It's not a lot, but it's nice to have food available and not have to organize it and then get a kickback from that.

Other than that we really don't have sponsorship or underwriting for the plant sale. We receive discounts from some of our nurseries or growers that we order from. They often offer some sort of a discount, but not any official sponsorship.

KPW: Would you talk about the marketing of the sale?

MJ: The marketing changes from year to year, but we usually have a write up or ad for it in our letter that goes out to all of our members. It's also available in our lobby. We partner with Magic 98 which is a local radio station with Midwest Family Broadcasting radio group and they actually come onsite and do a remote broadcast during the sale. They do 3 minute-and-a-half interviews, and then the broadcast live. They do some online advertising for us, too. We used to mail a separate post card for our members, but then we decided to combine all of our spring gardening initiatives, like our leaf mulch that we offer here, into one postcard, so they get one postcard that says "Get Ready To Garden" that also talks about our smaller sales. We have a pansy sale and a Primula sale. All that information goes out to our members. We also bought some different zip code lists from the post office and target different areas, like new developments, that we thought might have an interest in purchasing plants for landscaping in their yards... We try and get mentioned in the Madison Hardy Plant Society. More targeted audiences, like that, to get them to know about the sale.

KPW: Do you know which method is most effective?

MJ: We do know that our member base is our biggest customer base for the plant sale. We work really hard to get the word out to the general public, but the arboretum here in Madison has a plant sale the same weekend every year so we sort of compete, but they do a very different preorder sale and only native plants. Our sale is very different so that's why we have it at the same time. We don't compete too much.

We hear people say, "Oh, we heard it on the radio this morning." But I would say that most of it comes through the communication with our members.

KPW: Is the early bird shopping feature very popular?

MJ: Yes. That's new, that started like two years ago. We used to open an hour early for our really high level donors, but then we came around to the idea of opening up a little bit early and our high level donors would get in for free, but then we thought why don't we open up the possibility to let people pay to get in early to get a great selection of plants, because as the sale went on you'd see the selection of plants get smaller. You definitely noticed people showing up early to wait in line to have that opportunity to have a bigger selection. It's \$20 to get in early and you get to shop for an hour or two-hours before we open to the public. Some people really take advantage of it. It's a little bit of extra fundraising and it offers another exclusive opportunity. I'd say it's been successful, it continues to grow every year.

Last year, maybe two years ago, we started collaborating with our gift shop to purchase some software for a POS system for processing all of the merchandise for the gift shop, and we figured out a way to do a database drop into GiftLogic so that we could create barcode tags that are read by scanners, that are read at the registers, so that it takes down the inventory as it's being purchased and can automatically produce reports immediately when the event is done. Prior to that we were using old school cash registers and wireless credit card machines... The dollar amount hasn't fluctuated much from this change but the internal workings of the plant sale and the amount of time that staff and volunteers spend to inventory things drastically improved, and our accuracy is actually relatively close to what is happening out there. That was a pretty huge endeavor, and hard to justify, because it was a big expense up front, but it significantly decreased the amount of staff time that was spent organizing the sale... We had them create a separate database. There is a gift shop database and a plant sale database. It runs on the same system, but operates as a totally different store.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Allison Kiehl, Associate Director of Events at Denver Botanic Garden April 8, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Allison Kiehl (AK): ... We do have a large volunteer pool for the event and most of our horticulture staff are present for the sale. So, out of all of our public events, Spring Plant Sale is probably one that includes multiple departments of the organization.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): I've read about the plant sale online, but I'd like to hear from your perspective just a general overview logistically and also culturally. How you run the event, how you think the staff feels about it, and how the public perceives it.

AK: The Spring Plant Sale is one of the events that really focuses on the Gardens' mission which is connecting people with plants. This is the fourth Spring Plant Sale that I've planned. I've worked with a committee of 35 people, which is a combination of volunteers and horticulture staff. I meet with this group once a month but we start our conversations in November. We have our first official meeting in January and they really are the meat of the event. They select all of the plants that we sell. They are onsite selling plants, and giving advice. We have up to 14 divisions every year. We have annuals, perennials, water smart, hanging baskets, plant select, just to name a few of the divisions. We really try to focus on plants that are good for the CO region and promote water conservation.

KPW: Would you backtrack a little and tell me about that group that does all of the selecting and planning?

AK: My committee is about 35 people. Most of the horticulture team is involved, and they have volunteers within the divisions. For example, the annuals division is 3 volunteers plus one staff member. Most everyone comes to my monthly meeting and we talk about getting their plant list together, then the plant lists need to be approved by the horticulture director and research director to make sure that nothing is invasive or just things that we don't want to sell. Then pricing gets approved by the accounting department to make sure that we are projected to hit our goal. The committee really focuses on selecting the plants, submitting the price label requests, determining what signage they need within their areas, they're requesting volunteers. They do a lot of behind the scenes work. I've been doing this for 4 years and I've had the same committees for the last 4 years.

KPW: That's the entire planning committee, but when it comes to the actual plant sale how much of the staff is brought in?

AK: For the week of plant sale, the sale is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, starting on Monday, operations, horticulture, and the events department will start setup, which entails setting up tents, bringing out plywood and sawhorses, extra tables, chairs, setting up each division area. Then on Tuesday morning plant deliveries begin and that's an all day thing.

KPW: In your opinion do you think the staff enjoys participating in plant sale? Does it seem to conflict with their regular responsibilities or is it just understood that it's a regular annual/biannual responsibility of theirs?

AK: It's definitely a responsibility, but since horticulture is "what they do" I think they enjoy it as well.

KPW: Do you grow a lot of your own plants or is it mostly outsourced?

AK: We do have a division called Grown at The Gardens and they do propagate plants for that division and they also do plants for some of the other divisions like Fruits, Berries, Vegetables, they may grow some plants for Annuals, and Perennials. So they do supply some plants for other divisions but they have their own area as well.

KPW: Would you say that's a minority of the plants that you have?

AK: They can always bring out more stock. So the other divisions may only get 10 flats of something, but Grown at The Gardens could have 10 flats out in their tented area but they could have more in the greenhouse. So they're able to produce more plants than other divisions. The other divisions do well, but the guests enjoy Grown at The Gardens just because they're getting something that we've grown and so it's kind of a cool factor for them.

KPW: Are there plants that you sell, or stock that you create from actual plants at the garden, or do you buy seeds or plants and grow them on at the garden?

AK: I'm not 100% on that, but I believe some of the plants are within the gardens.

KPW: Do you have an estimate on the total number of plants sold at the sales?

AK: A good number is about 80,000. That number is based off of the number of price labels that I order, but based on the labels that we print it's about 80,000.

KPW: Do you know where the majority of the revenue that you generate is allocated?

AK: The majority of the revenue is allocated to the general operating budget. Maybe some goes to education, some goes here. It varies by the year.

KPW: Would you talk about other departments involved in plant sale?

AK: The departments that are heavily involved are Operations, their primary function at plant sale are setting up tables and chairs and maintaining the grounds. They'll do anything setup related. Our Volunteer Services Department recruits all of the event volunteers, cashiers, plant valets, helpers. They are onsite checking-in volunteers and checking them out, providing snacks and lunch. Our Development office primarily works with corporate partnership manager to solicit sponsors, some of which have an onsite presence during the plant sale. For example, Excel Energy will have a 10x10 booth. She also provides volunteer lunch on Friday and Saturday by requesting donations from local businesses. Horticulture's primary function is helping the division volunteers with plant selection, organization and working the plant sales because guests really want to talk to them, giving expert advice and telling them how to do certain things. Marketing manages the website, printed ads, and promotional materials.

KPW: Do you hold any educational events before or during the sale, maybe a presale preview or something?

AK: Thursday is the preview party, which is a ticketed event where people pay to get first picks of the plants because Friday and Saturday are free admission. We don't do any educational events prior to the sale. I would think that the education piece is that there is a horticulturist basically at each division. We have found that people don't want to go inside for a lecture or go in for a presentation they want to shop and be in the gardens.

KPW: Do you have any online or mail order presales?

AK: For our Fall Plant and Bulb Sale, which is in September, we do a presale bulb order, so that's happening right now and they can be picked up at the Fall Plant and Bulb Sale.

KPW: Is the presale a big component of the fall sale?

AK: No, it's just a nice, added benefit. We do, for the Spring Plant Sale, we post their plant lists on the website. We do get a lot of people asking if we have this herb or this vegetable plant so we post our list online so people can see what types of plants we'll have to offer.

KPW: Do you do a printed catalog as well or just an online list?

AK: Just the online list. We do print it for our information booth so they have it, but we don't distribute it.

KPW: Do you offer discounts for members?

AK: All garden members receive 10% off your purchase, also if you're an event volunteer that weekend you'll get 10% off of your purchase.

KPW: Is that across the entire sale or only on certain days?

AK: It's for everyday of the sale.

KPW: Do you begin to discount your plants towards the end of plant sale?

AK: Not usually, and that's kind of a day-of decision. If one division has a lot of plants accounting may decide to discount them, but we don't say if you come on Thursday at 3 o'clock everything is 50% off. It's not a decision we make every year.

KPW: Do you find that the plant sale drives membership?

AK: I don't know that answer. We do promote that they get 10% off their purchases (with membership) so we might see a slight increase in membership, but I don't know that.

KPW: Which forms of payment do you accept and how do you collect money from people?

AK: We accept cash and credit card, and we just started using iPads. We used to use registers but we have eliminated that.

KPW: Do you barcode the inventory as well as label?

AK: No. When we used the register every plant did have a barcode, but it wasn't inventoried, it was just a matter of the register being able to scan it and the price was preprogrammed. We started the iPads with our events in the fall, and it has been a lot easier than the registers.

KPW: Do you survey customers of the plant sale or receive feedback from them in any way?

AK: Years ago we used to do a formal survey. We haven't done that in recent years.

But if people are not happy or did not have a good experience then they will contact us. We have done event surveys before we just haven't done them in the last couple of years.

KPW: Were those emailed out or given onsite?

AK: They were given onsite, so it was very random.

KPW: Do you notice if the inventory varies significantly from year-to-year?

AK: Not really, but my committees are looking for what's new and what people are asking for. People come to the Gardens' Spring Plant Sale for horticultural advice, and may not find these plants at your traditional Home Depot or Lowes. It doesn't vary too much, but there's always something new. For example, last year (2013) we introduced a smaller division of mixed succulents. Horticulture got really decorative containers and sold out in the first two days and that's something that we're bringing back this year.

KPW: Do you keep track of which plants sell the best or which sells fastest?

AK: Within the divisions they would be able to tell me which plants sold the fastest. But during checkout we are able to tell which divisions have sold the most. The plant labels have the division name and price. So the cashier would enter the amount and the division so we are able to report back to the committee saying this division made this much money in 2014. That is how we base next years budget on how they did.

KPW: Could you talk a little bit more about the process of approving plants after they are selected?

AK: There's a spreadsheet that each division fills out that they give me. On the plant list we're asking for the common name, quantity ordering, how much it will cost, which division, if it is a new plant, what they suggest to sell it for at the plant sale, expected revenue, and the species as well. So once it's filled out, they'll email it to me and I'll send it to the Director of Horticulture and Director of Research and they review it and they just simply respond and they either say it's approved or they say that XYZ plant needs to be removed. Once the plants have been approved then the same list is passed along to the accounting department. They get all of the division lists and see what the end number would be and if any pricing needs to be adjusted then they would contact the division and say raise your prices, or your prices are too high. Accounting arranges for all of the cash boxes, iPads, and stays onsite to monitor that area.

KPW: Does it come back usually that the price is too high or too low?

AK: There are usually no adjustments.

KPW: Does the selection of the plant sale inventory reflect the Gardens' collection policies in any way?

AK: I do not know the answer to that. I think, for the plant selection, since there is a horticulturist in each division, I don't get too involved with that since that is their specialty and not mine. I make sure all the logistics are coming together, tents are ordered, volunteers are recruited, things like that. Anything plant related I try not to get too involved with because I have no idea what I'm really talking about.

KPW: You mentioned that there will be a separate organization setting up a booth at plant sale...

AK: If they paid sponsorship dollars.

KPW: Do you have sponsors? What is their presence in the sale?

AK: That whole program is managed by our Development office. They have set prices for a presenting sponsor or lunch donations. I just work closely with them and if they've paid a certain amount they will get an onsite booth. An example I can give you is Swingle, they're a local tree care company and they've been a sponsor for Spring Plant Sale for as long as I can remember. They're always onsite, they bring a sort of old fashioned truck that has their logo on it and they're by the checkout area.

KPW: Would you say that sponsorship dollars are a significant contribution to your overall plant sale revenue?

AK: Yes.

KPW: What happens to the unsold plants?

AK: On Saturday, if there are plants left over the horticulturists will take plants that can be used in their own gardens onsite, and if we only have a couple left we may donate them to a local organization looking for plants. Most likely they are incorporated into the gardens here. We try to sell them all.

KPW: Can you tell me anything else about that partnership you may have in giving them to another organization?

AK: That happened a few years ago, and I don't remember the company we donated them to. It was more of a horticulture connection. I just know that it happened.

KPW: It's not a consistent yearly thing that they can count on?

AK: No, it's not.

KPW: Does the organization view this as a fundraising sale or an event around the mission?

AK: Can I say Both? I would say, Spring Plant Sale, for the event department is the first big event of the year, so we really kick off our season with this, but we also are really promoting our vision as well.

KPW: In your opinion, does the institution depend on the plant sale for the revenue that it generates, or do you think that it would be okay without it?

AK: I would like to think that it helps, and I would like to think that the accounting department would say that as well. It's a big responsibility, and I know that the gardens are counting on the sale to do well.

KPW: You also said that it's sort of the kickoff for the event season. Are there any events that lead right off of the tail end that the plant sale helps to promote?

AK: We do have a summer concert series that begins in June and an event season that begins in the summer. We will take the opportunity to promote our events during the plant sale, but they are not plant related.

The other things that I wanted to let you know just so you have an idea. Last year over all three days 9,000 people attended the sale.

Just to give you kind of an idea of the volunteer roles that we have, obviously, cashier is the biggest. We have greeters in the visitor center collecting attendance, we have information booth specialists letting people know where divisions can be found and they will get some plant questions, and the divisions recruit volunteers to help... Plant valet is free service that we offer, so people can bring their carts or wagons to that station. We give them a ticket and we put a ticket in their cart, so they can go get their car and they pull into a cutout and then the volunteer loads up their plants.

KPW: Do you ever hold sales off-site, and what kind of issues do you have with parking?

AK: We do not host sales not on our property. For parking I hire a company that does parking and security for events and they manage our parking garage.

KPW: Do you have any other unique ideas for your plant sale that go along the lines of customer service or guest engagement?

AK: This will be our second year working with Target, who donates 100 shopping carts which isn't enough to accommodate all of the shoppers so we really promote that they need to bring their own wagons or boxes. A couple years ago at our concerts we started to rent chairs and it was a huge hit, so we bought wagons last year and rented those, so I'd say that's the other one.

KPW: So target will drop off shopping carts and you rent those?

AK: No, we pick them up.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Allison Kiehl, Associate Director of Events at Denver Botanic Garden September 9, 2014

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Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you give me a recap of the plant sale and how it went this year? I don't have any specific questions, but from your standpoint how things went when this year.

Allison Kiehl (AK): I have some attendance numbers if that would interest you. Thursday evening, which is the preview party, and then we're open on Friday and Saturday so over those two and a half days we had 8,178 shoppers which is pretty typical for the Spring plant sale.

KPW: How did things pan out as far out as the highest earning days?

AK: What you saw this year was a little bit different layout than years previous. Right by the Orangery where Grown at The Gardens was, to the south was the amphitheater and so that area was under construction. So, normally we would have three divisions underneath that tent but for this year given the pyramid construction I had to condense or shift other divisions around, but that layout seemed to work. It was a little congested in some areas, but overall I think it would work in future years.

People still struggled to find checkout no matter how many signs we put out. They didn't seem to really understand that it's a U-shape, but year after year we try to add more volunteers that are roaming or handing out site maps, which isn't totally green, but this year we did have small maps that we did distribute because people who come year after year get to know where divisions are because the divisions don't really change so we wanted to make sure divisions still saw the same customers that they're used to seeing. So we just had to improvise with construction but I think overall it was fine.

Accounting wise we did very well, so everyone was pleased, even with the challenges we were up against. We did have some cooler weather, but I think that sometimes helps though because people aren't in the blazing sun.

KPW: When I spoke to Panayoti he did seem to think that some of the most successful years coincided with the warmest days.

AK: I don't have a breakdown of each day but I can tell you some of the more popular divisions. Perennials definitely did really well this year and they're usually one of our top sellers anyways. The Herb Division also did very well. Plant Select which usually does very well anyways, and the last of the top four is The Annuals division. They're usually the four that do really well. Other divisions do great they just don't have as much inventory as the other divisions.

KPW: Have you modeled your plant sale or any aspects of it after anything you've seen at other institutions? Or if you did any other benchmarking research like that.

AK: I have not. I know other botanic gardens do plant sales and things, Atlanta does a big one, but I don't know any specifics about their sales.

KPW: Did you observe anything this year that you think you would do differently next year?

AK: I think after every plant sale, based on the amount of inventory that's left, or if the division really went through product then maybe we adjust their budget for the next year. I think a prime example would be in 2013 we introduced a new division of mixed succulents so they were already planted in pretty décor containers and so they were a little pricier but they really sold well in 2013. We had them come back in 2014 and they sold but they weren't gone, like in 2013 they were gone basically Thursday night and Friday morning. So, small things like that we will adjust based on what was sold or we'll change some plant inventory if something really sold well or if we had a lot of leftovers we won't get as much of that again. But as far as the layout or adding divisions, given the space that we have I don't think there can be too much. We can maybe expand a division or add a really small one. In 2013 we did have a summer bulb section so we may bring that back in 2015.

KPW: Did you get any interesting customer feedback?

AK: Nothing noteworthy, unfortunately. It's kind of a tradition. People love coming here because the horticulturists are very visible at this sale. I love watching people talk to them because whatever they say, they'll do. Panayoti can say, "You need ten flats of this." And they'll buy it. So, it's very interesting to watch, people react to their advice or what they would do and I think that's fascinating.

This year was the first year for plant sale that we used the iPads. Previous years we would basically rent the big chunky registers and we would have scanners so all the labels would be scanned. So this year, last fall, we introduced the iPad Square for our Fall events, so this was our biggest inventory event where we used it and it seemed to work out fine. We had a few customer reactions because they liked the physical receipt, but that's pretty typical as people tend to get used to it.

Horticulture is really involved and then someone from my team, the Events Department, ran the cashier station and all the setup that you saw all the tents, plywood, tables, sawhorses, chairs... We start that on Monday and we finish it up on Tuesday and that's mainly our Operations Department, so it's a huge setup.

I don't know if you made it inside to Mitchell Hall to have a snack or lunch but you also probably saw all of the volunteers that are involved and then our Development Office works to get the lunch donations so all of the food that was available was managed by our Development Office which is always nice.

There's just a lot of department involvement, which is nice, and everybody kind of sees that it is an important event for the garden. For planning purposes, we as an institution are right now doing budgeting for 2015 and so once that's kind of established I will meet with my committee probably in December or January and distribute their budgets and they'll start planning for the sale in May. Some of them may email me in October or November if they're able to order things now. They'll start working on it but we don't officially meet until January as a group.

KPW: Do you have a plant sale wrap up meeting or staff meeting at the end?

AK: I usually meet with my committee which is about 35, mainly volunteers and horticulture, but with the timing this year with APGA and the Chihuly exhibit there just wasn't a good time to meet and so we mainly did wrap-ups via email but I did meet with some of the departments involved as soon as everyone was on property. But I didn't host a meeting for the volunteers to come in just because of everything else that was going on.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Ms. Stephanie Lindemann, Manager of Horticultural Events, Chicago Botanic Garden July 29, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you tell me the history of the Bloomin' Festival and the Fall Bulb Festival, and your involvement?

Stephanie Lindemann (SL): Both events are coordinated with a staff person in concert with our Woman's Board. The Woman's Board actually started in 1950 and they started the Bloomin' Sale 50 years ago before the garden even existed in a parking lot in an effort to raise funds for a botanic garden and to educate the public about plants. But that was back in the day before the Internet, and the widespread of nurseries, and the increased offerings in big box truck stores, so it was the place to get cool new plants on the north shore of Chicago. So the goal was to fundraise and to educate the public about plant material and what survives and does the best in our area and to offer the best quality plants.

I can say that is the goal of the bulb sale, as well. The bulb sale hasn't been going as long; it has been about 13 years. The bulb sale was started here at the garden, but both of them were held in the parking lot up until a few years ago when the bulb sale moved inside.

KPW: How long have you been involved with the sale?

SL: I have worked with the Woman's Board for the past three-and-a-half years to help them produce their events.

KPW: How did you see the sale change in that time?

SL: With the Bloomin' sale I had the opportunity to run it for one year, it had already been in decline. I basically was unfortunately the person that ran the very last year. With the bulb sale we have seen increased revenue. For one, we've had phenomenal weather. Two, we have marketing that really does help because it is synonymous with a festival. There always has been a bulb sale, and we've always had a fall festival at the garden and about five years ago we married the two and they both really compliment each other very well and give more offering to people. People who might not have come to buy bulbs come to enjoy the children's activities and when they

come here they buy bulbs, and the other way around, as well. So it really makes it a destination.

The Bloomin' Sale became a festival to try to attract customers. We saw the Fall Festival model really worked and wanted to try to make that help the Bloomin' Festival with more. They moved away from trying to lower their risk and continue to offer really high quality plants so they went to more of a vendor model and in that they added other things like honey, produce, and pottery, and non-plant items and even as far as live music and demonstrations for entertainment and that was not put against the budget for the Woman's Board it was absorbed as just an expense of the garden and it wound up being a couple of thousand dollars to try to support the event but it did not increase sales.

KPW: Was the Fall Bulb Festival always stronger than the Bloomin' Sale?

SL: No. It has gone through its ebb and flow, I've tightened up what I know sells well when... We have a wonderful relationship with our bulb vendors, and one of my vendors allows me some leeway in that he gives me some flexibility in my inventory in that if we agree on twelve different items and I overbuy and we don't sell I can return them, so it lowers my overhead because after three days I can't carry them, I can't sell them. I can either sell them at cost or give them away to community gardens so I've lost my potential for earning. He supports the garden through that flexibility.

KPW: Could you tell me a little bit more about the Bloomin' Festival, specifically the plant sale?

SL: Back in the day there was a committee and a full time staff person that had their finger on the pulse of what's new, what are people looking for, and what are good deals. As we moved forward the stress on the staff and the roles changed somewhat and between the Women's Board where they had a committee chair and subcommittees so there would be a chairman for roses, a chairman for shrubs, there would be a chairman for shady plants, etc. They would do research and collaborate and find the things they would be interested in and the staff would source them, so they saw a decrease in income steadily over time no matter what the offering was so they started lowering their risk because it was disheartening to get to the end of the sale and just see a ton of stuff left over, and what do you do with it? And then Mother Nature comes into play if we had a cold or rainy weekend for instance and we would just have massive amounts of plant material left over. So basically the net revenue from 2005 to 2012 was down from 90,000 dollars to 12,000 dollars. You also attribute that to when they decided to go to the vendor model they cut their potential income from 100% down to 20% because they were getting 20% income from their vendors. And we did take all of the sales, then reimburse the vendors so we had control over price points and we used a barcode system with price points on it and we could collate

every sale from every vendor and reimburse that vendor. So that was kind of the business model towards the end, and thus the dramatic drop in income.

It was often an enormous staff intense time because unloading and arranging, and even though we had volunteer help, some of that hard labor you just can't ask volunteers to do. It also took a parking lot, and our visitation has increased so dramatically in the last five years that it actually put pressure on our ability to park people and prevented us from making that parking revenue so there was the loss then associated with using the space. Chicago Botanic is a Cook County Forest Preserve and we do not charge admission, our income revenue comes from parking. If you are a member you can park for free. If you are not a member then you pay to park. So that is a direct revenue loss. It used to not be a problem, but luckily, now you can say it is.

KPW: Would you mind explaining to me the funding structure of CBG?

SL: We are a Cook County Forest Preserver as a physical space, but the Chicago Horticultural Society runs the garden. So we have a CEO, and a Board of Director's, and a Woman's Board, and a Guild, so we have three entities that help fundraise and support the garden, but the Board of Directors helps to govern the garden, as does the Cook County Forest Preserve, so we basically have two boards that we answer to. We have an operating budget, which more than a third of is supported by the Cook County Forest Preserve, the rest of it is raised through the annual fund, membership, and direct revenue.

KPW: Would you consider the revenue that used to come in through the Bloomin' Festival, or that now comes in through the consolidated plant sales significant to your budget?

SL: Annually the Woman's Board has been able to fund approximately \$200,000 a year that goes directly towards operating. They do other special projects, but that usually is their goal to help support the garden. They like to be very garden and plant based, they are unique in that fact. They are very plant based and like to be hands-on and they're ready to get their fingernails dirty. It's a phenomenal group.

KPW: Including the Woman's Board, what was the role of volunteers in the sale?

SL: Some are master gardeners, and they would be assigned as section sellers, on the sales floor, and could offer educational points or help direct people to find what they wanted. We have shopping carts for people, we had way-finding and courier service, we had cash registers and helped to unload carts, and assisting the cash register people account for every plant, assist with the transaction, and then load back up and help them get to their cars.

KPW: Did you track volunteer hours?

SL: We did track volunteer hours, but I don't know the numbers.

KPW: What was the structure of the plant section committees?

SL: Usually, one or two members of the Woman's Board would tackle a section and oversee, especially as the product arrived, to arrange it in a systematic way, whether it was alphabetical or by division. But they were not necessarily always on the sales floor. We often had garden volunteers that assisted, as well, depending on how large a section it was.

KPW: Did you feel that the staff worked well with the Woman's Board?

SL: Oh absolutely! Yes.

KPW: What would you say was the group psychology around the plant sale? Was it enjoyed by the staff?

SL: I do think that as a whole the staff that participated in putting it together did enjoy what it did for the garden and enjoyed the interaction with the Woman's Board. It was a change of pace. We're always working hard, it was just a different kind of hard I suppose, but the moment that the investment doesn't match the return then it changes, for some, their investment.

KPW: Did you hold any online or mail order presales?

SL: I know that they did offer them, pre-me, they would offer annuals. You could order flats of annuals. That proved to be difficult to manage and they dropped it.

KPW: What was the staff involvement with the sale, across the board, beyond horticulture?

SL: It was really a grass roots event. There would be demonstrations on how to put your containers together or how to prune a rose. The horticulturists would give their time to demonstrate and be on the sales floor when possible to help lend their expertise.

KPW: Would the staff be compensated for this time?

SL: Sometimes they would volunteer, sometimes the managers would allow them to flex out their time. The event started Thursday night with a preview event. It was a ticketed event for first crack; it was not expensive, about \$35 a ticket. We admitted about 200 or more. The preview accounted for 16%, roughly, for the total transactions

for just 2 hours. In the scheme of things that margin is pretty great for the small amount of time. Then we would have Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Friday would be a members' only shopping experience and Saturday and Sunday were open to the public, and definitely the members' benefit was taken advantage of, that accounted for 46% income for the event. They would line up an hour-and-a half to two hours before they were allowed in.

KPW: Did you also give a discount with membership?

SL: No member discount, their benefit was shopping first.

KPW: Did you give staff or volunteers a discount?

SL: No, staff were also given early shopping privileges. Friday we would open at noon to the members, and from 9:30am to 10:30am staff could come and shop. I don't think volunteers could.

KPW: Did the sale have an impact on membership?

SL: Absolutely, yes. They would sell memberships right at the entrance because people were so eager to shop right on that Friday.

KPW: Did you barcode your plant inventory?

SL: Yes, we would barcode just as a price point and with a code of who the vendor was, so if it was plants that the Women's Board was selling it would have a "WB" code and it would say "WB \$7.00" or "WB \$8.00" and basically it ended up being a spreadsheet that you sorted at the end of the day. I will tell you that the barcoding program that was used was a Band-Aid, and would not give adequate information, was somewhat difficult to use, and actually is now extinct. I've had to find a different system for our bulb sale, which we use for other events at the garden as well. It can create a barcode, manage inventory, and at the end of the day give some idea of what we did. The problem with the Bloomin' Sale was that we were in a parking lot and there was no WiFi and we had to use a VeriFone and had the situation where at the end of a day we had to go into a room and plug it into a phone jack and hope that all of the sales actually went through and then follow up with the ones that didn't. So there was always at least \$500 if not more lost because you just couldn't recover the funds.

KPW: Which other forms of payment did you accept and how else did you utilize technology in the sale?

SL: For the Bloomin' Sale we used a company that does fundraising credit card machines that you plug in at the end of the day. Since then we've moved to virtual

terminals that do real time processing for cash and credit cards. It used to be that we encouraged people to pay by check or cash because we didn't incur charges but we had to stop that because we want people to buy a lot. So, technology now, we use a POS, point of sales system, through Gateway, the folks that make TurboTax. We purchased their POS system so that we can manage our inventory and they have credit card processing so it acts as a real cash register and it limits the transaction time which always makes the customers happy because you're moving them through quicker.

KPW: Did you print a paper catalog for the sale?

SL: In the last couple of years we stopped printing them. The garden as a whole has taken on a paperless policy whenever possible. I would say that at least the last four years that I know of the catalog has been offered on line. Prior to that there was printing.

KPW: Have you ever surveyed your customers?

SL: Absolutely. We have attempted to survey our customers. Volunteers would ask for a brief survey. I think they used that to try to narrow down options. For the Bloomin' Sale, as the sale declined, we wondered if there were too many things, and wondered if we could focus on what people really liked about the sale. Was it about the plants, the service that was provided, or the price, or things like that? We found it to be valuable, however the writing was on the wall with the Bloomin' Sale. I'm not sure that we ever did that with the Fall Bulb Sale.

KPW: How were the sales marketed?

SL: It's actually been changing. It was newspaper ads, radio ads, website distribution, that kind of thing, but we've moved more to a social media metric within the past year. So how we market we're trying to change based on the effectiveness in the Chicago plant market. We also of course have a members' magazine that is printed and goes to more than 50,000 households. The membership of the garden is more than 50,000 annual renewals.

KPW: Do you partner with anybody specifically? Sponsors or partners.

SL: We always included Chicagoland Grows plant material and highlighted anything that, especially, our plant breeders were responsible for, and those were often the first things to fly out the door, but we also have a sponsorship program which on occasion would be groups that wanted to be part of the event, and in that case their names would be appropriately placed within marketing pieces and usually that meant some piece of collateral as customers were walking out the door or a big thank you sign with their logo at the bottom as partners of the event.

KPW: Were sponsorship dollars a significant contribution to the net?

SL: No, to be totally honest, no. That was not what they were interested in. They wanted the longer running exhibitions; they wanted bigger bang for their buck that way, so any holiday programming, festival, or summer event. That's where the sponsorship interest lies, for the most part anyway.

KPW: Is there a future for the Bloomin' Festival?

SL: Currently, no. There are still quite a few nurseries on the north shore, the availability of buying specific plant material that you want online is possible, and the big box stores in the north shore have gotten smart and realized that there are serious gardeners here and have upped their quality and array of plant material and they can offer return policies that we couldn't. Just lots of those kinds of factors played against this kind of event for us in this location.

KPW: What would you do differently?

SL: I think that the vendor model did not work. I think that it became too many things for all people, meaning the plant array was too large. I would simplify, focus on something that's harder to find, for instance, maybe Midwest natives, and do the top hot 100. The things that our scientists and hort staff really love and I think that those would be best sellers and sell out.

KPW: Did you the plants for the Bloomin' Festival or were they mostly brought in?

SL: They were 99% brought in.

KPW: Do you have any other thoughts on the Bloomin' Festival?

SL: There was a national search, and a year-and-a-half of research to figure out how to move forward or what to do, and really, the business model; the investment and return didn't match. Even though the education was so valued and so strong, including the camaraderie, quite frankly. But in the end, the financial responsibility just didn't match.

KPW: Would you tell me more about the Fall Bulb Sale?

SL: It's an active sale that has been growing, minorly, but it has been growing and not plateauing. It used to be in a parking lot and then they moved it inside because, it was in October and you never knew what kind of weather we were going to have which was hard on the staff and volunteers, so it was moved into a more comfortable indoor

space. It takes approximately a week to set up the sale, but it takes another week, prior to that, to package and produce all of the products that go into the sale.

Roughly the timeline for the sale is: The Woman's Board starts in January selecting bulbs so that we can order them, we can shop and compare prices so we can place orders by the end of April so that we can get what we want. We do a catalogue online and we have a presale where members can order bulbs in bulk. We're doing that for the first time this year. We did a presale of a select number of bulbs for the past 4 or 5 years and its never gained ground. It was always like 8 people bought 100 bags of bulbs and there you go. It was a lot of organization for not quite the return. I'd rather put effort somewhere else. It's different this year because we're offering them in bulk. My thought was that I don't want to touch bulbs. I want to touch them as little as possible, and this is one thing we don't offer is large number of bulbs. So you can buy that bag of 50 and I don't ever put a new label on it, I don't take it out of a bag and put it in a new bag, I just pick it up and put it in a pile for the person who ordered it. Another thing is that I've been working with my bulb vendor so he's happy to supply them. I don't ever place an order unless I have an order so it's never money out of my pocket, it's only money up front and it lessens the amount of handling, which hopefully will lessen the amount of mistakes...

KPW: How do you package and sell the bulbs?

SL: We have perforated plastic bags that we put a custom label on that includes our barcode and information about the bulb and depending on what the bulb is we take them out of a bag of 100 and put them in smaller quantities and separate them by variety and cultivar with their own label and selling label that is complete with a photograph and other information that that people usually look for, i.e., color and fragrance, deer resistant, early, mid, late, that kind of thing. Then they're put in sections. We have allium, forced bulb, narcissus, tulips, and specialty bulbs sections.

KPW: Do those sections have the same structure for selections as the Bloomin' Sale did?

SL: We use the women's board, master gardeners, and staff to lead the bulb sections.

KPW: That sounds like intense repackaging.

SL: It definitely is. It is a labor of love, but it is one of those things that we can claim is fundraising for the garden by the public and it educates them and gets them high quality product in a large selection that is not normally found in a retail situation. For that reason we really think we'll hold onto the business model as long as it's successful.

KPW: Would you mind sharing what the net has generally been?

SL: We generally make about \$30,000.

KPW: Do you offer a catalog or any information about what you'll be selling?

SL: I offer the catalog online, it does not include pricing, the pricing is determined as close to the sale as possible because often there are price breaks depending on the vendor and we pass on those savings to our customers. We want to be as competitive as possible and for the most part we are almost always under, even under what even online vendors for the amount that you're buying... The funds are often, we do market whatever the specialty project the Woman's Board are working towards. This year it's graduate students, before it's been conservation, community garden programming, Windy City Harvest, emerald ash borer, renovation of the English Lawn Garden. People get to say, "This is so great, I get to have great bulbs and I get to support the next generation of scientists"

KPW: Do you think that the Bloomin' Sale lost its mission through all of its additions?

SL: I really do think that it was about product offering and how much competition there is in the area, when it comes down to it.

KPW: What do you think is in the future for the Fall Bulb Sale?

SL: I really think that we've hit our stride in the amount of bulbs that fit well in the room and the number of people that visit the garden over the weekend. Granted, if we have gorgeous weather then it's great. If we don't, then we usually have more products left over. So, my thoughts about expanding, not so much during the weekend, but services, and presale offerings is where I see the potential growth. Otherwise, I really kind of think it's hit it's potential.

Excerpt of Interview with Mr. Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator, Director of Outreach, and Plant Select Division Leader at Denver Botanic Garden May 10, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Panayoti Kelaidis (PK): In the 40 years I've been involved in the sale, it changes pretty drastically every couple of years, we take on some new idea because there will be a new chairperson or a new person from the staff. We no longer have volunteer chair-people, it was volunteer chair-people up until about 5 or 10 years ago and now it's staff, and more and more staff has become involved in the sale but it was first started by volunteers, and of course the botanic gardens was all volunteers, there was very few staff, and so the history of the botanic gardens has been paid staff taking over what the volunteers have created. The sale is no exception. If you look now in almost every booth there are staff people working the booth and there are three DBG staff working in this area. I have chaired this booth (Plant Select) almost since its inception 20 years ago, there were no staff people in this booth, except me, until the last 2-3 years when they kind of adopted it and now it's sort of more or less made it a requirement. It used to be that a lot of the staff were sort of the schleppers for the sale and now they've taken on a lot more of the responsibilities. They co-chair all of the divisions now. The divisions are always co-chaired between a member of the staff and someone from outside of the organization. So the nature of the sale has been professionalized a lot in recent years. It has also become more expensive. The plants are more expensive, they charge more for plants and people seem to be paying it. We used to be a little bit cheaper than some of the nurseries, but now we're about the same, if not a little bit more, but people feel like they're getting their money's worth and they love to support the botanic gardens. We are an unusually well supported garden by the populous because they pay a sales tax that supports us, then they pay a mill levy if they live in Denver so a lot of people support us in 3 or 4 different ways: they'll be members, they pay us through their taxes, sale taxes, the mill levy, and so what's amazing is that nobody has ever complained. As far as large cities go we're unusual in the extent to which the people of Denver support public institutions. We have received substantial bonds from the people of Denver, they join us at a high level and we have over 30,000 members. I think that part of the reason why the plant sale is so successful is that people feel here in Denver that Colorado is a very hard place to garden and that you better get help. Since our climate is challenging they perceive the botanic garden as being particularly valuable at performing the service of being educated on how to garden and what to purchase here.

It's been fun, it's our biggest event. It covers a lot, visitor participation, interest. We have other large events that might challenge the plant sale in terms of numbers, but not

in terms of money. We have a big pumpkin festival in Chatfield that makes a lot of money, but the Chatfield location has the advantage of having almost unlimited parking and it's also surrounded by extremely wealthy, young demographics who really love it so we're in a very lucky situation. We have two sites, an urban site and a suburban site.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Do you think that it's primarily about raising funds or do you think that it's about supporting the mission?

PK: That depends on who you're talking to. For many of us it's about promoting the horticulture that we're interested in and make plants available that are growing here in our garden, but different people have different goals.

KPW: Have there been any spectacular failures through the years or surprising successes?

PK: One of the interesting things about the plant sale is how consistent it is. There are years where it is much bigger, but when it's bigger we seem to have more lookee-loos. There have also been disastrous years, like in 2010, when we had a snow on the second day, a very heavy snow. On the first day we did a very good business, but we rely on the second day, and on the second day we couldn't even come to work... all of the tents were collapsed, and essentially it was a blow out the second day, but then it warmed up, the snow melted and then that week Monday through Saturday we sold the plants at the gift shop and we ended up selling everything, pretty much. It's a good example that it has been resilient and that the gardens are pretty clever, and has had a lot of very clever people who have been able to rise to the occasion so it almost always pans out. There are years, if it is hot and sunny, that people just come out like crazy and that can be pretty hectic.

The most spectacular successes were back in the 90's when we had bigger promotion and for some reason or another we had the biggest attendee numbers we ever had... around 30,000 people attending the sale and it was jammed both days, and it was crazy, and we made more money, and it was fun, and it was all over the grounds, but it was hard on the staff and took a tremendous toll on our resources. Recently, in the last 10 years, we've scaled back and it has made it a little easier for the staff because by 7 o'clock (7pm) tonight this place will be completely cleaned up. Back in the old days it took a day or two just to get picked up. Back then we also did big Sunday events, Mother's Day luncheon things, so after killing ourselves with the plant sales a bunch of staff had to come back and prepare for these big events on Sunday which we no longer have, even though they were very successful they were given up because they took such a toll on the staff.

We've changed a lot in our history of the botanic gardens because we were all plants or plant oriented displays and it was all about education about plants, but the social functions of the garden have expanded ever since we had a woman, Diana was her first name, she was a marketing person back in the 80s. She was the first staff person hired to do marketing here at the garden. She developed most of our social events and started us down the path of becoming what I call the activist botanic garden, where we aggressively seek out membership, and aggressively seek out participation, and come up with all sorts of events to promote awareness and became one of the first gardens to promote sculpture events. We did sculpture events starting in the early 1980s, Big Bugs in the 1990s, and a Zimbabwean artist exhibit Chapungu. Our exhibits have become planned and run by museum trained professionals. We are expecting over a million more visitors than an average year with this year's Chihuly exhibit. We do social event called the Fete des Fleur in late August. It's a 300-400 dollar event that always sells out. The garden has really become a desirable venue.

KPW: Do you think that DBG would ever discontinue the plant sale?

PK: I don't think it's apt to happen. I think that there's a built-in community both in the garden and in the community at large that expects it. DBG as a whole, I think, prides itself on having this event. I think that they realize that this is probably one of the ways that we can remind the community that we exist. If we didn't have this big sale at this time of the year how else are we going to remind everybody that we're here? I think it's pretty inevitable. For those of us at the gardens who love the sale because of the opportunities to educate people, and there are also the business type people who realize that this is the biggest time of the year, March and April, that everybody is attuned to plants in Colorado and the Plant Sale is a huge promotional event. All the newspapers cover it, all the television stations cover it and we usually have a tremendous amount of exposure because we are viewed as being the face of horticulture. For us not to do this would be like the Pope not getting up on his Pope-Mobile and proclaiming something. It's what we do... One of the wonderful things about this particular institution and about botanic gardens because they are institutions, is that we do things, just because we do them. It's hard to change an institution, and we just keep honing in, and evolving it, and changing it, and improving it really. So, this year for example, plants are a lot more expensive than they have been, which means it's just going to make more money, and if it makes even more money, then it makes even more sense for the powers that be to have it.

KPW: Do you see any major changes happening?

PK: Yes, I've seen the professionalization of the plant sale. More staff driven, more staff control, but it still has a strong component of volunteers, we just seem to like having more staff involvement. There was a time when it was very managed, driven, publicized by volunteers and that was actually a more difficult time because we had

the occasional volunteer who was very inspired, and very clever, and very good and would do well, but then you'd get somebody who wasn't as good and that impacted the whole sale because there was less consistency. Of course you get inconsistency in staff too, but not quite as much. We have had the same staff person running the sale for many years now (Allison Kiehl), and I think that makes a big difference. Having consistency helps.

KPW: When did the sale take its current physical form?

PK: About 7 or 8 years now. We were doing some big construction projects and we discovered that the loop worked because it kept people out of the main garden, and minimized impact there. It looks like we're going to stick with this for a while. When we had it all over the grounds it was tough. A lot of the gardens didn't really have room for tables, there were narrow restrictive paths and people would trample the edges. People would sometimes put plant sale plants on top of garden plants. Having it throughout the gardens was a nice idea; only I do think it's better this way. In the areas that we have the sale now there is a lot of cement, and it's wide, and so it allows us to make it easier for the people coming through here.

Every garden has a sale of one sort or another and it's interesting because each one has their own style or focuses but they all seem important. It'd be fun to get together all the different people who run this to get together and compare notes; they could probably really help each other.

Excerpt of Interview with Ms. Claire Sawyers, Director, The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams: Would you talk a bit about the history of the plant sale?

Claire Sawyers: It started as the major effort taken on by our friends group, The Associates of The Scott Arboretum, as a fundraising endeavor. That was certainly compatible with our mission, so I think initially it was conceived of primarily as a fundraising event that volunteers could lead and manage. That was started, around 1982 or 1983. My predecessor Judy Zuk was the one that got it off the ground. It was during her time. We have held it every other year since then. It's a fall event. It started out also as a cooperative understanding with the Tyler Arboretum. They would hold a plant sale one fall; we would hold a plant sale another fall. At that point many of our volunteers were involved in both organizations and in the early days of the Scott Arboretum, John Wister was the director here and also the director of the Tyler Arboretum so there's kind of a long history of collaboration and cooperation. Since the very first plant sales, Tyler has moved its sale to a spring plant sale and I think they do it annually... We have continued to hold it every other year because of the demand that it puts on volunteers and in the early years there was an advance order component to the plant sale that was conceived of as a way to raise capital as a way to have enough money to buy the plants for the sale. So a small catalog was put out, people would make a commitment, write that check, send the money in. It would generate \$20,000-\$30,000 which was then the upfront money to buy plants for the day-of-sale. We did away with advanced orders in the early 90s because of the complexity of that, and it didn't require a two-year planning process, but every time I brought up the idea that we could do this annually people kind of recoiled like it was too much work and we couldn't do it every year, so we've had discussions about that but we have not implemented that based on volunteer reaction and staff reaction in terms of the demands and the time. But our planning schedule now is possible to do within a year's timeframe as opposed to needing to generate an advance order catalog and collecting that money. So, it was essentially a two-year planning cycle when we had an advance order catalog and it's not anymore. It's always kind of the second weekend in September and has been going on probably since the early 80s, so this is 2014. We hold it in odd years, so it must have been '83 that was the first plant sale.

KPW: What has changed since you've been involved?

CS: It's been 25 years, so, there have been lots of changes. We did away with advance order catalogues. It has moved locations. It has changed the technology that we use. It's hard to kind of capture the evolution of 25 years in a simple answer to that. What I would focus on now, I guess, is the change that we're wrestling with right now, which is, the plant sale has grown to involve about 200 volunteers, and while we have incredibly dedicated and loyal volunteers, the last time it was very challenging for us to find the chair of the plant sale. This time we have given up finding a chair and co-chairs of the plant sale and so the biggest change that we are implementing between the last sale and this sale is that it will now be staff team led relying on the subcommittee structure that was existing. There will not be a volunteer chair of the plant sale or co-chairs, there will be no vice-chairs, but we're keeping essentially the subcommittee where we had a chair of food, or a chair of a woodies, or a chair of perennials, we're still relying heavily at that tier of volunteer leadership. We haven't done it before, so we don't know if it will work or not. To succeed this time it will mean that we need a lot of volunteers to commit to what they did last time so we're not spending a lot of time getting people up to speed on that. In other ways we're simplifying it. We're eliminating some things that we don't see as key to their success of the plant sale. We have decided that we will not do houseplants; we will not do bulbs, which got added back in. We had bulbs 25 years ago. They got sorted out because of the difficulty of getting bulbs delivered in time, to get them packaged and priced and on the field, so they went away for most years. New leadership last year said "Wouldn't it be great to have bulbs?" We tried bulbs. It's a lot of work for not a lot of money, so we're trying to streamline and simplify and downsize so that it feels more manageable given that staff will be leading it. We're doing away with houseplants, we're doing away with the handbook, as we knew it, which was a project in itself, we're doing away with designer sessions. So, trying to say let's focus on what's critical and simplify. That's the biggest change that we're wrestling with right now, going into the next plant sale.

KPW: Those are some major changes. Would you talk a little bit about the committee structure as it will be?

CS: We've sent out recommitment asks to ask last plant sale's subcommittee chairs to see if they'll do it again. This is what we're undertaking with that. Here's the 2015 preliminary information. The assumptions that it's built on: the event is close to mission, it has a broad impact and therefore we're going to make the commitment to continue it even though we haven't found volunteer leadership, we're going to simplify it, lead it by a staff team with a subcommittee structure and responsibilities largely remaining unchanged, the focus will be retained on the signature fundamental aspects of the sale. So, some of those things that I talked about we figure we can simplify by not adding those on and still retain the basis of the event. It will be setup week, September 7th, the sale September 11th or 13th so it's the same timeframe. We're going to try to reduce the size of plants and the footprint of the sale. We found that we

had a better profit margin, and better success if we don't get too many big plants and we keep them small. We did some downsizing in terms of numbers and the size of plants at the last sale and it proved to be more effective than previous sales. We have staff members with essentially two or three subcommittees reporting to them so each staff person leads. Our curator Andrew will take the two plant committees, perennials and woodies. Bulbs and houseplants they go away. Jeff, horticulture coordinator, he has always been the lead in logistics. We, many years ago, moved that from a volunteer position to a staff position because it was just too engaged with college staff for a volunteer to effectively do that. Setting up the tent, getting the electric lines there, getting all that kind of stuff. Jeff has been essentially the chair of that committee for a number of years already. For him that's not a big change, and we're adding to him customer service. Becky, our PR and Volunteer Coordinator will do PR, cashiers, point-of-sale, and some of the volunteer coordination. Jodie, who is an admin assistant, will do the preview party, the membership efforts at the plant sale, and also engage with volunteer management at the plant sale. Josh, horticulturist, will do education committee and experts. We have plant experts there. Jackie, admin assistant, will do the food committee. Julie, education coordinator and our education intern will do photography, appreciation party, and downsized handbook, which will be the recognition that we need to do, and the basics of the sale but not a catalog with back-binding and charts and graphs and descriptions of all of the plants. The simplification, the things that are on the cut-list, most of this I've already mentioned, houseplants, the design studio, the handbook, reducing to essential pages. We will have our regular Wednesday volunteers manage the labels for the plants, so tearing those apart, organizing them for use on the field. We used to have another committee that would do that, so we figure that that's not necessary. We had a couple of sales with a special committee to take on a special feature for the sale that will simply be managed by the perennial or woody committee depending on the theme that is selected. So, it's trying to shrink the number of volunteer committees involved and to divvy them up with staff members that are kind of appropriate for those committees based on their normal job assignments... That's the restructuring as we're thinking about it now. What hasn't gotten underway is to set up what I'm envisioning is that we'll hold monthly meetings tacked onto staff meetings where, as a staff, we work as the oversight committee and find out what we need to be dealing with... Ideally, September a year out, we'll have a staff meeting to bring all the committees together. Right now I'm getting commitments and finding out what holes we do have, to get that committee together, to get them online thinking about it a year out.

KPW: Where is the plant sale currently held now and what is the thinking behind that?

CS: For many years we held it on the north end of campus, which was a field hockey field, and it became a parking lot, so it required finding a new location. Now it's held on the Cunningham playing field and again, managing change... Change is hard. It's become my new mantra... We put together a task force, and put some criteria

together, to identify what we need and what would be ideal. We identified five or six sites for this task force to look at and that resulted in us moving to the Cunningham playing field... We have restrooms that are embraced within the sales site, there's street parking, better access so it doesn't impact the campus as much. I would say, originally, the volunteers were deeply concerned that the need to move the sale would kill it, but I would say it improved it and gave us an opportunity to do some reevaluation and come up with a better site, so that's where it's held.

KPW: How long does setup take?

CS: We have reduced it. We used to commit a week to it. At the last sale we waited until Tuesday, so Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday the sale is held Friday evening with the preview party. Saturday and Sunday.

KPW: Is this a protected area?

CS: We put up fencing, we hire security for the sale time, not so much for security for the plants but for a deterrent of anybody who might decide they might try to hold us up or do something like that. We have a tradition, which is our form of security, and that is, we have at least one person on the field 24/7 once plants are delivered. During the setup days we have a whole bunch of people on the field working. At the end of the day we generally have a volunteer there from about 5PM until 8:30-9PM and then staff spend the night on the field and we try to cajole our partners, our friends, or whoever to sleep on the field with us. We ask for the college public safety to drive by and use search lights. It's not really security. If there's somebody serious they'll do what they're gonna do. This is to try to prevent mischief making. It's rough. It used to be kind of a right of passage, staying on the field, it just gets to be a long week when you don't sleep well and you're dealing with mosquitos and heat and search lights and the rest of it, but we have maintained that so that's what we do for security.

KPW: How many plants do you sell?

CS: We use a POS system that monitors all of that. I'm going to say that we generally have about 3,000 plants that change hands. I find that after 10 sales I can't remember facts and figures from one particular sale to the next. I do have a final report that would outline everything that's sold, but I didn't pull it out before you got here. We generally have, I'm going to say, 150 to 200 woodies, 150 to 200 different kinds of perennials, depending on the size and the cost it may be that we have 5 of one kind up to 24 of a kind, and one of the ways that we succeeded with this last plant sale was to have very few leftovers. So, better purchasing, because we buy all of the plants, so after we lay out that money, anything left on that field just takes profit away. So we had probably as much as \$12,000 in leftovers at previous sales. This past sale we had so little leftover that we didn't worry about follow-up sales or trying to recoup money

from those plants. So, better targeting... That's an average of what we've done in the past as an approach to diversity of offerings and quantities within that.

KPW: In the case that you do have leftovers, do you have follow-up sales?

CS: We use them on campus. We try to put them to use here or we use them for raffle drawings or things like that. We basically fold them into the operations. When we have had so many leftovers that they filled up the parking lot we'd have a sale the next week. We'd put out quick notices to say that if you want another one, come, you can buy from 4pm to 6pm, off of the parking lot. So we'd have one staff person out there kind of writing receipts and taking money just to reduce the quantity. It was not seen so much as we needed to get rid of them so we didn't have to deal with them. We did sales at the Perennials Conference. We'd hold plants and bring them to the Perennials Conference and have sales table at that event. Two sales ago we had a mud-fest. The weather was just so horrendous it really impacted attendance so we had a boatload of leftovers. We didn't have a parking lot because the Wister center was under construction so we moved them to a vacant faculty house that had a large backyard, put out announcements, put another volunteer team together and had a post-sale sale. I would say there's been a variety of configurations, which again, kudos to staff and volunteers for taking it on, but we want to avoid that. It's not something that we want and not something that we want to have to plan for. It's really in response to the quantity of the leftovers and the value of the leftovers that are there that kind of force us to say, okay, what do we do?

KPW: Are there subcommittees to perennials and woodies? Do you break them down further?

CS: No, we used to have a houseplant committee, and it was not done with the same rigor. The reason that we had houseplants was to basically offer something to students and that's why where eliminating it. It was a lot of work, didn't generate a lot of money. It was seen as a way to address an interest from the student population. We would kind of say, here's sources that we've used in the past, so we'd get a shipment of orchids, a smattering of different houseplants, and it was kind of fun but it was not what you'd call a big revenue earner. So, it was left to kind of a houseplant chair and co-chair to get them in, label them, decorate the tent with them, so, not key. They weren't in the handbook; we didn't know what we'd get until the week of, so I'd say it was a very small aspect of the plants being offered.

KPW: How do you choose the inventory?

CS: That would be done by the woodies and perennials committee. Andrew, our curator, orders all of the plants. So that we're going to streamline. We're basically going to have him put together a proposed list, run it by the committees, but there

were years where we would have volunteers come with their lists. In the early years of the sales we might have 20 different sources that we were using. That's a lot of communication and coordination. That's a lot of falling through, because we're not a regular retail outlet we never are their best customer. We have consolidated that. We now essentially rely on a handful of suppliers and so to kind of look at their list and say here's what we want is a lot more effective than coming up with a dream list and then spending untold hours trying to find a source for the plant, trying to put in little orders. It mainly meant we had plants that you couldn't get any place else, but it was too much work, so streamlining that process in terms of who's involved in coming up with ideas putting the order list together, and making the orders is being simplified as well.

KPW: Would you talk about what technology you currently use at the sale?

CS: We use a POS system with scanners and the software is called ERPLY... and was very affordable for us. We can buy it for three months and then we can end the contract. We can use it for our spring plant sale for two months, then end the contract. I think we were kind of in their original customer base so they've been very responsive to us. So we put the inventory in, it has a barcode on the tags, we scan those, it's laptops, we have credit card machines on the field. We are not able to go to tablets for credit card processing, at least for the time being, the college does not see that as a secure enough method for processing credit cards. We run phone lines to the site to setup credit card machines to run the credit card through.

KPW: What other methods of payments do you accept?

CS: Cash works, checks, credit cards. We've had very few bad checks. We lose a little if our volunteers don't keep their wits about them and they use a Discover card, we do Visa and MasterCard. We lose a little money if volunteers get distracted and type in 70 cents as opposed to \$70. We rely heavily on volunteer cashiers and so part of our rationale of going to the POS system is that we thought it would be more foolproof as you're just scanning and it's adding up and giving the amount, but it means you still need to carefully train volunteers to pull the labels. We should have the capability now of comparing what we sold, what is left, and what is really left. It means we still need to take a manual inventory like we do, but the question I'm always interested in is how many plants walked off the field without the label being pulled, because of course, that's money out the door. We've taken volunteer training to a fine art and try to make sure that we have volunteers who have a lot of stamina so they can actually pick every plant up, pull the label out and move it, so they're standing in the line with the wagons to physically determine that they've looked at the plant and pulled the tag out. It's very tempting when it's busy and people are busy and impatient, and anxious to go that there's a wagon full of plants that you sort of rifle through it and say here are the tags and there are plants that get overlooked. That's the devil in the details. But in the

end, everyone's exhausted, and do we really care? How much did we really lose with plants disappearing? That's not what we're focused on. We have recognized some of those issues... Because we don't do retail on an ongoing basis, we're kind of cranking up that whole mindset each time...

KPW: What are the goals of the plant sale?

CS: I would say the original goals, we try to talk about it in equal terms as both a fundraising event and an educational event. We put a lot of time and effort into the educational aspects of it. The handbook was one of those notable efforts to make sure that we had knowledgeable consumers, but I would say the efforts for education, the walks that are held in advance of the plant sale, lectures that are held in advance of the plant sale. We put up blue signs all around campus on plants that we're featuring at the sale... So, again, interested consumers could come and wander around campus and get an idea of what the plant will mature into. We do typical educational cards on the fields, pictures, size, and cultural requirements that in essence repeat a lot of the information in the handbook but in a different format. We have plant experts, largely professionals from other institutions that wear a red penny and they're both educational and we ask them to put on their marketing hat, salesmanship and customer service hat, as well. I think the caliber of volunteer that we get by asking our friends and colleagues to come means that the customer does get good horticultural information from our plant experts. One year we had a cell phone tour on the field, we're not going to do that again. Again, a lot of work and kind of redundant with the information that's there. We know that the event is also a friend-raising event. It's not our goal; it's a desirable outcome. In years past I've always said that it's a two-prong event. A fundraising event and an educational event. And now we've talked about it having three legs, but we don't design it to build community and friends, that's just one of the desirable outcomes and we want to keep that in mind with the changes and approaches that we take to it. The mission of the Arboretum is to display the best plants for home horticulture for local gardeners, and so when we do program evaluations the plant sale, at least in the past, has consistently come out as our signature program because it is a direct influence on local gardens, getting good plants into the hands of local gardeners, and educating them about it, so I would say it is as closely allied with our mission as anything that we do.

We tend not to establish firm financial goals. We have, we've put a budget together and we theoretically have goals, but I would say we downplay that and from my perspective the reason is, in part, because even if we don't make any money, I don't want people to think it's a failure because it is an educational event and there's a tendency for volunteers to feel defeated or that they were unsuccessful if we establish what we think is going to be a motivating stretched goal, if we don't get it then it feels like failure as opposed to success. So, we tend to share facts and figures, but I would

say we have tried to focus on the nature of the event and the friend-raising part of it as opposed to the fundraising part of it for those reasons.

KPW: Would you talk more about the educational components? How many lectures and walks do you hold before the sale?

CS: That has changed. We probably hold two or three walks, some in the evenings, some on the weekends leading up to the plant sale to show highlights of the plant sale. We used to hold an evening lecture and a daytime lecture for the public and we've shifted that to be an update for the volunteers, that's open to the public. We were seeing attendance decline so we were seeing volunteers coming to one of them and we wanted them to feel like they were getting information on the plants being offered. So we've streamlined that to one specific lecture of someone talking about plant sale highlights, we may have someone talking about Hydrangeas or a themed Hydrangea lecture that ties into the plants. We tend to use the Hybrid, the newsletter, for the issue or two leading up to the sale to highlight aspects of the sale. The Hybrid comes out four times a year and in a plant sale year Andrew's plant choices tend to be things that we're imagining we'll have at the plant sale. So, he works off of that list to educate them about one plant that will be at the sale.

KPW: Do you have themes for every year?

CS: The beginning theme was good plants, and it then developed to have what I regarded as a subtheme for marketing purposes so that there was more copy to talk about in promoting in it. We have generally picked a subtheme just as a way to create a sense of something different at each sale. So tree peonies one year, vines one year, last year was a little obtuse, it was essentially "it's not done with fall" to try to promote fall interest plants. With tree peonies we had a very creative volunteer who made tissue flowers that looked like the tree peonies since they're not in bloom. Picking a theme that works for a fall plant sale can be a bit challenging...

Usually the theme is chosen up front since it ties into the graphics. If we do it right then it's a theme that can be played out in the graphics.

KPW: How do you market the plant sale?

CS: Most people come because they're members or through word of mouth. Because it has been volunteer-driven in the past in terms of publicity and marketing it has varied widely. There's generally a publicity plan that's put together which identifies appropriate ads to spend money on and where to place them. It has ranged from printing up simple fliers in-house and asking all the volunteers to post them in their community, to buying an ad in PHS's Green Scene to announce the event. I would say we're generally spending \$5,000 on advertising is perhaps the most we've ever spent.

Generally local newspapers, The Swarthmorian, we've tried the Inquirer, various mainline editions that prove to be expensive but not terribly effective. Now a lot more is done by email reminders to our community. It's free, quick, and easy. We do two post-card mailings to our members. We did an advance order catalog that turned into a flier that was expensive to produce, it was color, a magazine format and so we now try to drive people to the website where things can be posted and don't cost as much. Typically, we do two postcard mailings to everybody in our database. We use the Perennials Conference, Woodies Conference mailing list to mail that postcard to. This has changed a lot over the years. The first handful of sales that I was involved in we would borrow PHS's list, Tyler's list, Bartram's list, every garden that I could ask we would get their mailing list and try to get out the duplicates and do the advance order catalog mailing to all of them. We were mailing 10,000-12,000 advance order catalogs. We don't do that anymore. We're advertising to probably about 3,000 in our database. A couple of thousand in the conference database and then whatever the program is that is conceived of by the PR Committee that year. We had a volunteer this last sale, it was a new endeavor, I think it was a new idea but it got conceived of too late in the game and that was offering to local garden clubs a lecture and we then offered a group rate to come to the preview party if they got 10 people it was like \$5 off a ticket. Garden clubs plan their talks a year out, so I think the volunteer who agreed to do that she maybe gave two talks. I'm not sure we'll be able to maintain that, it's a lot of time, staff time-wise we wouldn't try to do that, but if a volunteer wanted to do that it'd be nice outreach and a nice way to make them aware.

KPW: Do you use social media at all?

CS: We do Facebook. Becky does all of that, it's done by a staff person...

KPW: What is the charge for the preview party?

CS: The way we present it has changed. We would have people just give to the plant sale to help underwrite the cost of the plant sale. Send us a donation. You got nothing. Your name would be listed in the advance order catalog. Then we decided it would be a good idea to help raise funds if we had a preview party and so we would give that to people who made the donation as a thank you and so it wasn't you buying tickets. It was a thank you to our donors to come to the preview. That was an uphill battle. We realized that people used to do that without getting anything. There was no incentive, it was just giving from the goodness of their heart to make this event go on. Now I would say it is an incentive driven donation. There are people who give that never come to the preview party, like many other fundraisers. But now we talk about tickets to the preview party as a thank you for your donation.

So, over probably \$10,000 to \$15,000 is raised from donations that come in. Two levels, gold and silver, you get four tickets or two tickets. When it goes out it's just the

request to contribute to the plant sale. We do a business sponsorship level and just a personal sponsorship level, so this will need to be rethought some in terms of the publicity that we give to them. \$400 gold you get recognition in the handbook and you get 4 tickets. \$200 silver you get two tickets and your name listed, not a quarter of a page you get a standard business size card printed. That was mailed out to nurseries, professional groups in the area, address lists that had been built on ideas. Car dealerships weren't responding, related businesses were responding the best. It has become very tailored to related businesses. To become a friend of the plant sale, \$150 is gold level with 4 tickets. Silver level gives you two tickets. Then if you come to the night of the event you wouldn't get the recognition but you can still make the donation by tickets. For years I tried to say this is a thank you gift, not that you're buying tickets. You make a donation and this is the appreciation of it. I don't think that in the end it matters, I think people are going to give whether they're coming to the party or not.

KPW: What do you do at the party?

CS: At the party we do alcohol, food, hoopla. For many people it is the opportunity to buy first, so it's on Friday evening and it is essentially wine, beer, appetizers, nibbles, flower arrangements. Depending on the weather, sometimes we have a little bonfire. Most of the people coming that night are the heavy hitters. They're coming to shop. They're not coming just to drink. Our biggest sales are on Friday night. The chance to shop early and first is the main driving force to the preview party. I would say that was a successful endeavor. We implemented a members' only shopping period to try to incentivize membership, we didn't have a preview party, we didn't have members' shopping when the sale was first conceived of. We might get 50 new members in response to the plant sale, which for us is a lot. So we try to promote that before the sale and if you join leading up to the sale you get a voucher which has been a \$10 voucher and we try to make it so that you would have the option to get at least 1 free plant, so we try to make sure that we have some perennials that are priced at the voucher level or below. We used to say that you'd get a free plant and we figured it would be a better incentive if they could pick out what worked better for them. Anybody who signs up for membership, we start promoting that on the summer leading up to the sale, we send them a voucher, and anyone who joins leading up to that period gets handed the \$10 off purchase towards your plants.

The membership only period, that's generally on Saturday morning 10am-12pm. We need to be careful to put that in all of our literature, we tend to get people who show up during that members only period they feel a little "bait-and-switch" because they didn't realize they needed to be a member to shop in that time period. If you come on Friday evening you don't have to be a member but most of them are.

\$75 gets you two tickets and we don't split it in half, and when people go, "whoa that's expensive" then we tell them it's a donation. It's the mentality that you aren't buying a ticket you're helping to underwrite the event.

We used this format for a Spring sale which we've been doing for maybe 3 or 4 years now, we wanted to be consistent in that approach, so we started to use terminology about buying tickets to the preview party to the Unusual and Tropicals Plant Sale so we approach it in the same way for both of these so it's not too confusing for our members and the people who are trying to come.

KPW: Do you discount plants towards the end of the sale?

CS: No. Never have. Probably every sale the question gets raised and every sale we say it's going to come back to bite us because people just wait. The only discounting we have done is when we've had mass quantities leftover. Andrew will contact other organizations and say if you buy them all we'll give them to you at the price that we bought them for wholesale, or if you buy 10 or more, but that's really to other professional organizations, not to individuals. To our customer base we don't offer discounts.

KPW: Will you talk about the Unusual and Tropicals Plant Sale?

CS: 2012 was the first year. It's held every year, and we've done it for 3 years. We hold that in the Wister Center parking lot and 150-200 people attend it. The fall sale we shoot for 1000 people. I think at the last sale we were at 900, but it has been as high as 1200. The spring sale is to try to create a unique niche for that has been the Unusual Tropicals and Annuals Sale. We're netting an average of 3,000-\$4,000 on the spring sale and I would say our average on the fall sale... best year has been a net of \$50,000, worst year about \$20,000, an average of \$30,000-\$35,000 in a 20-year span. We do a greens sale, but it's not live plants it's cut plants for Christmas.

KPW: Are your goals the same for the spring sale as the fall sale?

CS: I would say yes, but everything is scaled down. There's a plant list. Eve puts together what I would call a handbook which is a huge effort on her part, so we make that available, it gets posted on the website. I would say that printed educational material is provided. There are not the education cards on the field. We have experts to answer questions. We maybe have had advanced lectures... I would say, because it's just not a huge committee, there aren't 15 people working on education, it's basically Eve working on education. Yes, the goals would be the same but carried out on a different scale. The Unusual Tropicals and Annuals is a little bit of an anomaly for us in that we're stretching the envelope in terms of our mission. Our focus has always been on hardy plants and so this we talk about and justify on the grounds of our

original mission, which says it was for “average gardeners of basic means.” And so when we think about the average gardener and basic means of 1929 it’s very different than that of 2014 and you can go to Home Depot and buy tropical plants that are affordable. And so while I don’t ever imagine us as having Victorian bedding out of annuals here, it’s not our look, and I think it comes from that original implementation of that mission. I think it’s justifiable for us to say you can create great balcony gardens, great patio gardens, great seasonal interest with the addition of tender perennials and tropicals. So that’s the spirit that that sale is undertaken with. I would say we wrestle with that a little bit and we’re wrestling with that now in our planning process to take a look at our mission and evaluate what feels like it’s off-mission as opposed to simply responding to current day trends and changes in society.

KPW: Is there a committee structure for the spring sale as well?

CS: Andrew is basically the staff leader of that, but he lines up the volunteers. It’s shrunk enough, and we’ve tried to say let’s not let it get as complicated as the other sales. There are a handful of volunteers that help with the setup. It’s not a subcommittee structure; it’s kind of a committee. Everybody on the staff has some aspect to play in it, we have different responsibilities. I would say that we are the executors with volunteer support of whatever our role is. It’s a lot simpler. Maybe 20 volunteers as opposed to 200 volunteers.

KPW: Is there anything I haven’t touched on?

CS: It’s confusing enough getting a handle on an event that you haven’t experienced...

Here are the volunteer hours:

Fall Plant Sale: 3,716hrs in 2011, 182hrs in 2012, 3329hrs in 2013

Tropical Sale: 422 hrs in 2013, 474hrs in 2014

Green Sale: 173hrs in 2012, 192hrs in 2013

We did track staff hours one year, many years ago, and we decided we didn’t want to do that (laughs). The reason I’m laughing is that if we paid ourselves what we earned we could not claim that the plant sale is a revenue generating endeavor, and so again when that gets out into our volunteer population then they say “well it’s not worth it,” well we don’t do that with any other program. We’re funded by endowments, so we don’t go, hmmm... Okay, this lecture we had you sign up for \$15 a ticket, if we took into consideration our staff time to administer it, the cost of the facilities, we wouldn’t raise any money either. It was holding this up to a scrutiny that we don’t do in other ways, so depending on your mood you could say, ugh, too much staff time, not worth it. But you could say that just about any program we take on because of being a not-for-profit, and the way we are funded, we have dedicated funds to carry out the mission that we carry out. There are definitely programs that when we scrutinize and

when we go, you know what, the return on investment just doesn't feel good, and so in this case after that first year, we know that the whole staff is essentially committed to at least that week on the field, and it's a long week, it's a full week, but I think some of your questions about do we track that, it seemed to raise more questions than it answered and so again we kind of deemphasize that to say, look, it's a program we all love, we get excited by it, it creates a lot of enthusiasm and good will and it brings people here and all that good stuff and so do we really want to focus on it being a lot of work?

So the one follow up to do we offer a discount, maybe starting three sales ago, and possibly because of the number of leftovers that we had, and how to make use of those leftovers we implemented a volunteer voucher-thank you at the end of the sale. So, any volunteer who gave a minimum of 10 hours we said they would get a voucher. The first year, I think we said, we'll tell you what the voucher is worth at the end of the sale and that is based on what was left over. We didn't want to give out \$40 to everybody if there was only \$200 worth of stuff left on the field. I think the first year we did a \$40 voucher because there were a lot leftover. The last sale I think it may have been more like \$20 or something like that, but we borrowed that from some other sale that we had read about that they had a volunteer voucher. The quandary with that is that we want volunteers there because they want to be there, we don't want to incentivize their work, we don't want people just doing their hours and then be done, or making up hours, it changed the mentality a little bit so we try to downplay that as well so that it does seem like an unexpected thank you as opposed to, "I will volunteer in order to get a free redbud." We always say we don't know if we're going to have that. We hedge it, because if there aren't any leftovers then we don't want people to be incentivized by that and then be upset if they don't get much for a thank you voucher. We have staff check them out, so we add them to the schedule. It also helps with breakdown because suddenly 200 plants get taken off the field without us having to load them into trucks and bring them back up here.

KPW: Have you borrowed plant sale ideas from other gardens?

CS: We had little educational events on the field... we've abandoned that because it was kind of like competing with ourselves. It's hard to get people to focus. The design showcase was very successful. Having the 30-minute session with a professional landscape architect, but hard to orchestrate, so the volunteer who was heading that up, we said we would continue with it if she took it on again and she said "No," so that's why we're cutting that out. People would get agitated about their slots. The first year people wouldn't come, they would sign up and forget about it, and we would think that our friends had contributed very valuable professional time for this, so the same volunteer who led that effort the second year, she had them submit plot plans and communicated with them on a regular basis to make them realize that this was a big deal that they were getting this. There was one woman, who wanted that time, and she

hadn't signed up, and she really valued it. I think that was highly successful but labor intensive and required the good will of many professionals and so, can we do it every two years and continue the good will? We decided that's something that's going to be let go.

We used to do art and artifacts, highly popular, again, problematic. We had stuff coming on commission from all over the place, one of this, two of that, fragile in some cases. The customers loved it, but again, we didn't make a lot of money on it and it took a lot of staff hours to orchestrate, to handle the material, to pick it up, to get it there, to return it if it didn't sell. We did that at several sales and then abandoned that idea. I know some people would say to bring that back, but again, taking into account what it cost to do. Book sales are kind of a way to clear out donations that we don't have any use for. The library committee has taken that on. Books are basically given away, but we don't see that as necessarily a draw or a fundraiser but it's a nice thing to do if volunteers are willing to do that and it's nice to think that these books are being used and getting into gardeners' hands. That's not every sale, again it's kind of, do we have a bunch of donations that we don't want for ourselves, does this have an outlet, do we have volunteers that are willing to price them and set them up and go through them? Those are things that we may try at a time or two, they may come back or they may not.

Weather makes a huge, huge difference. We have had hurricanes impact it. Floyd hit the night of the preview party and we cancelled the preview party, but we were able to pump the field (old location). It was kind of a depressed field so we had a lake under the plant sale tent. We were able to pump the field off. Stu, my boss, helped us get a couple of sump pumps on the field so we actually pumped the water off of the field. The next day was a gorgeous day so the sale went on. We had volunteers who put lilies in their trunks and glass art and artifacts in their trunks overnight. We didn't have anybody sleep in the tent that night. We had staff come in every hour and knock water off of the tent so we wouldn't have the tent split apart. We worry now with the increased threat of climate change. Not this past sale, maybe two sales ago, it really was a mud-fest. It rained the whole week. Jeff would run off and get bales of straw and get this kind of absorbent stuff that they use on athletic fields. We kept pouring stuff on the field and it was still a mud-fest. Attendance was low that year, and people were coming to the preview party in little sandals and high heels and it was like "Ahhhh." You're going to ruin those shoes! We had talked about what do we do if we really have a hurricane hit? We used to take out event insurance and we don't do that anymore. It somehow got problematic because the college is self-ensured for certain things and it became cost prohibitive. I haven't looked at it in a number of years, but we figure that we have \$40,000 worth of plants on the field and if a hurricane blows them all away how do we recoup from that? So we did take out event insurance for a handful of sales, we don't do that anymore, but I do worry about, what do we do if we really have a direct hit of a hurricane on a plant sale and every sale we kind of go, you

know, we need to develop a real hurricane plan other than safety, and collecting what we can. I think we would have to figure out how to setup again, two weeks later. So that's something I worry about.

We had 9/11 happen on a Tuesday of plant sale setup week. We didn't know if the day of mourning would be on the weekend. It was the Friday day, so the show went on and we had people coming who said, well, they cancelled all the sports on TV's and this is a very life-affirming thing to do, so we didn't know how that would happen but it made it uncanny when we think about what has impacted that. The thing that I would say I've grown more concerned about is just educating the public about fall as a good time to plant. When the plant sale was first set up in the fall, when Judy started it at that time, there was a significant and nationwide nursery industry campaign; there were banners, t-shirts, everything, "Fall Is For Planting." They had a very concentrated and effective marketing campaign to increase the nursery sales season. I think to a large degree, what I have said to staff is that I think that falls to us now. We need to be telling our people that fall is for planting because I think if the average gardener is gardening 15minutes now, they're not planting in the fall. They go to the garden center in the spring, they buy the petunias and put them in the ground. We have our loyal following, but I would say getting people to maintain their interest and enthusiasm and to recognize that it's a better time to plant for this region is part of the educational marketing aspect that I feel like we need to do more to get that word understood by the average home owner. We can't kind of ride on the coattails of the nursery industry anymore.

KPW: Is that why you continue the plant sale as a fall plant sale?

CS: In reality, yes that should be a part of it, but it'd be interesting to have a conversation with Tyler to say, "How did moving to the spring impact the outcome of the event as a fundraising event?" We keep it in the fall partly because, May, for us, we already have events on every weekend. The Unusual and Tropicals Plant Sale starts to hedge our bets with that a little bit even though it's a very tight group of plants that we're offering at the spring sale. Who knows? Down the road that could morph itself into Wildflowers and Unusual Plants because there are many plants that we don't offer at the fall sale because if they're not in bloom, it's a hard sell. We do have a knowledgeable core who come to our plant sale, but we don't want to just be preaching to the converted. We want to get people there and get them excited. So, if you don't have plants that are in bloom they're looking at them and saying, "I have to plant them now, and then I have to wait." So, there's a whole group of plants that we would stand behind that are not easy to market at a fall sale. So, what if we marketed those in the spring, would we do better? Could we justify that through the case of exposure and outreach? In reality I would say we keep it in the fall because it fits in our schedule. There's a lot of inertia. When you have people programmed-in to do certain things, if we shifted that to spring, we'd all be kind of going, how are we going

to do that. It may be that the balance between the Unusual Annuals and the fall sale will shift over time. It's already shifted in that we have established a plant sale, it's small, but in the spring every year. So it hedges the bet also on weather a little bit. I don't know that we would be able to convince ourselves and our volunteers that we should do the fall sale every fall. I think we do have a lot of enthusiasm for it because it hasn't crossed the line into "Oh my gosh, not this again." It doesn't feel that way. I wonder about people involved in the Philadelphia Flower Show. It's thrilling for those of us who don't really have to sweat the details of it, but every year doing that? Again, for us, our big deal is that sale. That's what we're focused on, you can't get anything else done that week. It's all hands on deck. All the staff is down there for that week. It may be that this is kind of the perfect balance for the size of our organization to do it every other year. Does the audience think in terms of every other year? Do you lose people in the meantime? I'm sure we do. You don't wait two years to buy a plant if you have a hole in your garden. I'm not sure that people wait until the fall. If you're fired up you plant your garden in the spring. I think those are some of the questions we don't have answers to. They're kind of uphill battles in terms of the future of the plant sale...

In this area, just to think about us going to the spring, I think spring sales are very effective, but if you think about how much competition there is in the spring. If you pick any spring weekend and you're going to be in competition with one or two other organizations. I think that there are host of reasons for us to stick with the fall at least for the time being.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Mr. Fred Spicer, Executive Director and CEO,
Birmingham Botanical Gardens October 9, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you start by giving a history of the sale, the changes it's undergone, and your involvement with it.

Fred Spicer (FS): We were pretty certain that the sale is somewhere near 40 years old, and that's just the spring sale. We've really not been able to put a fine point on that because we don't have anything that says this was the year of the first sale. The fall sale really has been going on not quite as long, more like 25 years. The changes over time really have been the scale. It has grown wildly, and we used to have the spring plant sale here at the gardens and it used to be sort of in a part of the garden inside the garden, then at some point it moved into the parking lot in a tent. It was our largest draw for a four-day period, and we were eating up a third of our parking lot with just the plant sale and it was kind of untenable, so in 2005 we moved it off-site and we've been sort of living off the good graces of commercial real estate people who have abandoned buildings, supermarkets, abandoned furniture stores. That's kind of been a challenge but it's also been really, really good. For the past two years for the spring sale we've been in an abandoned J.C. Penney. We take up an entire floor of what used to be the J.C. Penney. You might think it weird to say that the ideal place to have a plant sale is inside, but it is kind of weather proof. It doesn't matter if it's too hot, it doesn't matter if it's too cold. After four days with the plants under fluorescent lights, by Sunday afternoon they're not looking as good as they might outside and keeping everything watered is a little bit of a challenge. But also, since the sale is going on and we're not restocking everyday, there's less to water everyday and by Sunday afternoon we're really trying to move the last plant out.

The other big change has been, and this really started in 2001, which is when my position was formed, the Executive Director/CEO position. I walked into a 39 year old nonprofit that never had an Executive Director and really only had a tiny bit of staff. So in the past 13 years as our staff has grown, the duties that formerly were volunteer duties have been assumed by staff. Marketing and PR is now completely a staff function as it should be. Logistics and the move-in is completely a staff function. There used to be a Thursday night, kind of a fancy party, and there were chairs of that party and it used to be a little more elegant than it needed to be, sort of like a forced elegance, and staff has taken over. We still have a preview party, a ticketed event, and we have a members' only night on Thursday night. We're just not spending \$10,000 on a party anymore. We're trying to keep that money in our pockets and we work with

vendors to get as much donated for that party as we can whether it's food or beer and wine or snacks, and we've been pretty successful at that. So it's not just M&M's and peanuts, but it's also not as elegant as it used to be.

The marketing has gotten more savvy.

In terms of the fall sale, about 8 years ago we decided to go to a two-day fall sale, a Saturday and a Sunday. When the fall sale first started it was to sell the things we didn't sell in the spring. And it was a small affair because we were trying to move towards a zero inventory for the winter. When we decided to go to a two-day fall sale we decided that it made so much more sense to plant, especially woody plants in the fall. We're going to bring in big bushes, more inventory, winter annuals, which we did not have when the fall sale first started, and now the fall plant sale has grown nicely and continues to be a big success...

KPW: Is the fall sale held onsite?

FS: The fall sale is held inside the gardens, we don't have it in the parking lot. We're fortunate in that October is reliably our driest month of the year and there was only one year in the past 13 years where we've actually had significant rainfall and we actually moved it into our auditorium. It's been drizzly a bit, or cool, or really hot, October can go either way for us. But it's been a successful event since we started having it.

I'm involved a little bit on the buying end, I'm involved in pricing strategy, we look at some psychological pricing factors and what we charge as a retail price. We try to make it simple and idiot proof. It includes tax so during the checkout process it's a much easier system that we have, rather than adding tax on everything. I'm involved in the promotion, whether it's television spots, or live TV spots, or live remotes for radio, or going down into the studio. I'm usually either working for the whole sale in the tree and shrub area, that's kind of my area of expertise and all the volunteers who work in that group are kind of relying on me to be like the final answer for questions that customers might have. Also, my role is... I'm kind of the crazy person on the PA system not only thanking everyone for coming and thanking our sponsors, but we sort of make announcements every hour or so. Typically on Saturday afternoon depending on how the sale is going and if we see if we are still long on some things that we want to be moving out we may start making price discounts on stuff...

Our goal on Sunday is to sell everything, within reason, so me making announcements, I more or less do that for almost four hour straight because we're just trying to move the plants out so we're really, really pushing it.

KPW: Do you have a lot of plants left over at the end?

FS: This year we had very few, and we'll also look at that to say, you know what, we paid a little more for this than we should have, and it'll be fine over the summer, so we'll put it aside for the fall sale. Last year we probably had more left over in spring than we normally do, but I would say the past 4 out of 5 years we've had virtually nothing left over, just a smattering of things.

KPW: How does the popularity of the fall sale compare to the spring sale?

FS: It's... 5 percent in terms of the dollars and the number of people.

KPW: Are you left with a lot of stock at the end of the fall sale or do you have the ordering down appropriately.

FS: From a percentage we probably have a little more left over typically. I think it kind of has a different vibe because we're here, outside. I'm not on the PA system doing the crazy last minute markdowns and there's so much less material, but if we've got 5 flats of pansies and it's Sunday at 3pm and we only have an hour left in the sale the people who are running, the volunteers who are in charge of each different area, I might go to the person in charge and say "you need to just make these disappear, and if somebody's interested in a flat, rough out the price and take two dollars off of that." But if I've got 6 or 7 of "shrub A" and it's in good shape and it's going to be in flower in April when we have the sale then I'd be more hesitant to mark that down. We probably have a little more, on a percentage basis, that we hold over for the fall sale then we do at the spring sale. I'd rather carry something through the winter than I would through the summer.

KPW: Would you talk more about the partnership with the commercial real estate group?

FS: We've used different commercial realtors. We're sort of scouting out locations and saying "Hey, that supermarket over there just closed down, that's a really good location for us." The first year we took it offsite we were actually in another parking lot of a local mall and that worked out okay. There was plenty of parking, we were still in a tent that had a yellow ceiling and our plants were yellow. We would put in incandescent lights to make the color more normal, but that wasn't ideal. The next year we were in the same mall but we were in a supermarket that closed and we were in that location for five years. We had a relationship through someone who was on our Board of Directors who knew the owner of that mall complex so they donated the space to us and just asked us to pay the utilities. Whatever the electric and water was for those four days, and I think by year five we probably put about 2500 dollars into making some repairs and doing a few things because, you know, when you leave a building idle for five years things are going to happen to it... We would have to have a

fire marshal come in and do an inspection, we would be responsible for getting the restrooms back up to snuff, making sure that we had enough fire extinguishers. Some of it was a give and take with the owner. Some exit lights were burned out, maybe their guy would fix those and we would do something else. After that, for a year we were in another supermarket that had closed. It wasn't the best location but it worked, and that again was through a Board connection with a commercial realtor and after that we were at a former furniture store, which was twice as much space as we needed. That was through another Board relationship with a realtor. For the last three years we've been at that J. C. Penney. That did not come about through our Board, but one of our local city councilors was instrumental in helping us with that. It was in another mall that closed down. It's not the perfect location for us, but it's the perfect space. It has loading docks and plenty of behind the scenes storage and plenty of parking. Every customer could bring three RV's and we'd have enough parking. It's got a back-of-shop for our treasurer to have a little office and the restrooms work. It really is a good space for us and everybody knows where it is. It's not as close to us as some of the other locations that we had, but it's still a good central location and everybody knows where it is. We certainly know that there's an advantage to not moving the sale every year, but even in the years where we have moved it to a new location we don't feel like it's really hurt us because we think after 40 years a lot of people in our area are really thinking about the plant sale and they're looking for the plant sale and they're going to find where it is whether it's through out direct marketing to them or other marketing that's more shotgun that they're picking up whether it's local signage or billboard or spots on NPR or television stations. That realtor is actually in Dallas, but they've been very good in the similar range where the space is free, we're just paying for the utilities and any small repairs.

KPW: Do you have any other sponsors or partnerships that you've formed?

FS: The last few years, there's a local upscale franchise restaurant called Brio, that has been really good working with us to do the food for the preview party. At this point now, it's been 6 years they've been working with us. We don't have any other relationship with them other than that one time thing. It's been a challenge for us to get larger sponsor support for plant sale because it's a sale and everyone knows that we're making money on the sale. We've had some smaller sponsorships, a local lawn and garden furniture manufacturer, some real estate people, a young lawyers group that were a surprising sponsorship for a couple of years. Also, typical media sponsors. We have a really good relationship with the couple who runs our gift shop. They're perennially one of our sponsors. We're talking small, small levels. \$1-\$2,000 types of things. Our sponsorship list is a good, long list because we receive a lot of in-kind donations, building space, media, food. There's a coffee roasting company that donates about \$5,000 worth of boxes a year. There's a supermarket chain or two that donates the use of shopping carts for the operation of the sale. Over the years we've bought shopping carts as local nurseries have gone out of business. We pick them up

for a song... We really couldn't sell as many plants if we didn't have the shopping carts. There are only so many plants you can hold in your arms as you're walking around a J. C. Penney. A local beverage company donates soft drinks and things for the preview party and for our members' night. It's a lot of in-kind sponsorships.

KPW: Do you pick up the shopping carts or are they delivered?

FS: We generally have to pick up the shopping carts. So we're renting three or four or five large trucks to take plants and other things from our location here, over to where we'll be. We'll sometimes be taking some of our tables as well as having rental tables delivered. We'll set up 250 tables to make the display. Signage, we'll schlep over all the adding machines, chairs, signage, banners, and what have you. We'll get some of the nurseries that we're buying from to ship right to our site, but some nurseries, if we're not getting a few load, they'll bring you the stuff when you'll get it and we'll have to transfer it to the site later.

KPW: How significant are the preview party and members' only day for the sale?

FS: I would say that the preview party is not as significant as it used to be. We haven't really raised the ticket price in a while and I'd say most of the people that are coming for the preview party are people who have a real strong vested interest in the garden, they're either some of our top donors, or they're people who, frankly, would be going away for the weekend and they know that they're going to come and get first crack. Then we just have a handful of people who are such plant nerds that they want to be absolutely first and they know that we may only have a very limited amount of something and they want to be there that night to get it. Members' night is quite significant and we'll do a tremendous business on members' night. Because our garden is free admission, and free parking, the members' night of the plant sale is one of our biggest, most valuable membership benefits. People will become a member just to get that first hour-and-a-half, that first evening, that first crack at the plants.

KPW: Your website is explicit about the goals of the sale and how it ties into the mission of the garden. Do you think that people get it?

FS: One of the things that we do and it's part of our training for the people who are working in the booth is some basic sales training. We have a lot of people that are volunteers, some of them are raising the plants all year long and some are just coming together for the sale. We say, yes, you're selling the plants and you need to understand the benefits and features of the plants, where it will grow, how it will grow, how to kill it, those sorts of things. So you're selling the plant, but really you're selling the garden. We really emphasize that to everyone who's helping us sell the plants and I always like to say that if I could figure out another way to have a fundraising event and at the same time have almost every interaction between any of our volunteers and

the staff who are working the sale and the customers, there's a million little tidbits of education going on all the time. Almost every plant that's sold there's a Q&A. How do I grow this, what is it like, oh I've never seen this tell me about it. We're not only raising funds for our education programs but as we're doing that we're delivering the mission in hundreds of little ways. I do think people get it. We emphasize it through signage and training for our volunteers. I don't think people are coming to our plant sale expecting to get a deal. They're supporting the gardens and we make sure to tell people. Thanks for coming. Thanks for supporting the gardens. That's one of the mains for us, when I'm on the intercom; I'm thanking them for supporting the garden and our educational mission. I think people do get it, and we speak to that with our marketing and all of our live spots.

KPW: You administer surveys via website to plant sale customers. What have you done with the feedback?

FS: Some of it's simple. What were you looking for that you didn't find? What did you think of the location? Tell us how to improve the location, tell us how to improve the checkout, the preview party. We're looking at that kind of feedback and I would say 70% of it is plant suggestions that we're looking at and either we're implementing them or we're looking at it and thinking, we're not going to sell that. If somebody wants an invasive exotic, we're not going to sell that. We also know that people shop at a place because of certain creature comforts or we're asking people why they shop with us. I think why did they come to the plant sale? It's the knowledge, it's the selection, and it's the knowledge that our volunteers and staff bring to that shopping experience. If they're buying a daylily they're talking to people in the daylily society. They can go very surface or many levels deep on daylilies. Some people appreciate that, but I think that most of our customers understand that that level of expertise they're not going to find at a big box store. They're not going to find the same level of enthusiasm about the plants or the same interest in the plants or the fact that the person who's selling at the big box store doesn't have 600 daylilies at home. They can't possibly be as deeply committed to Hemerocallis as some of our volunteers. Some of the plant societies are defunct now. That's probably another big change that we've seen since it started. We used to have a lot more bonafide plant society member groups and there used to be an Iris society chapter locally that's been gone for 20 years. We still have a group who is responsible for growing and selling Irises, Peonies, and Hostas. There is no society anymore.

KPW: Do you have any plans to align the plant sale with your collections policies?

FS: We have some things that we have on the property that are either part of historical collections or there are too many of them, or we don't have a good plan B yet because of a lack of resources. I'll give you a good example, Nandina, we're not planting any more Nandina, where we can we're removing Nandina from the property, where we

can we're clipping the fruit off before it ripens and the birds eat it, or it falls and makes more Nandina. In our collections policy we officially state it's a plant of concern for us. We don't sell it at the plant sale. I think in that case they're not aligned, and I think in the case of the plant sale we're probably where I wish we were at with regard to management of our site. There might be a few more examples like that.

KPW: You feel you have more flexibility in enforcing or spreading the values that you want to through you plant sale than with the collection that you have?

FS: Absolutely, there's no question about that. I think probably that's where I was going with that answer because certainly I would think that it plays out that some of the things that are the most important elements of our living collections are very well represented at our plant sale. Whether it be Camellias or ferns or Japanese maples or native herbaceous plants...

KPW: Are there any challenges that you faced with the plant sale and how have you dealt with them successfully?

FS: The biggest challenge is that we have a spot, that we have a place. Commercial real estate people, so far, have been very willing and happy to allow us to use this space that they have. Ultimately, that's not what they want. Ultimately the corporation that owns the mall that J. C. Penney is in, they want to do something with that mall... If you asked me today, where is your plant sale going to be next spring, I don't know, because the commercial realtor won't commit until January 1st. We feel pretty confident that it'll be in the same place it was last year. We have a couple of plan B's that, if we need to, we'll put them into action. On January 2nd our special events coordinator is going to start hounding those people in Dallas to confirm that we have that location.

The other challenge that we had to overcome is getting our grower groups, our cadre of volunteers that focus on a single group of plants that they're growing or at least working with throughout the year in terms of checking inventory, looking for new plants to buy and looking for new sources to buy. Several of our grower groups had had a very controlling, not in a bad way, leader for a number of years. And that strong leader had a number of very dedicated followers and when that strong leader said, "I gotta take a break and I'm not going away forever, but as of now I'm not the leader" and another grower group leader said "Hey my husband's retiring and we're moving to North Carolina and I'm not going to do this" There was not another leader in training, and there was no obvious, immediate person who said "Hey, I'm so glad that person is no longer here because I've always wanted to do this as the leader." So we had to work with a couple of these groups and say, "Hey, here's the old model, where you had a very strong central government and there were a lot of people following it.

That model, because there's nobody stepping up to be the next dictator that model is going away and we have to find a new model. The model we're suggesting is divide and conquer. You might not have one person who wants to do everything, but certainly you have 5 people who want to do 1/5 of everything, we've just got to figure out what that is and we can help you divide that up and we can help you figure out the pieces that most make sense. We can shift some things, have some of the staff temporarily take it, we can help you bridge that until you figure out who is going to do it."

We've had some turn over in three of our groups. Two of which are bigger groups: Our Wildflower Natives, and our Perennial grower groups. It's worked out really well in transition from our totalitarian to our egalitarian shift. It's helped some of the junior people in those groups kind of step up a little bit and they look back two years ago and they say, "You know this has been very, very smooth compared to the way the other person used to do stuff. Because the other person did stuff, they knew it would get done but nobody really knew what was going on. We came in for our regular workday and were told what we were going to do. Now we know two weeks ahead of time what whoever is going to come is going to do and we can share that." And people seem to like that. It's no surprise but volunteers everywhere are aging out, demographics are changing, and there are less people available at the age you want them. I've spoken to our volunteer coordinator, and it's really organization wide, but I want youth and diversity, however we can plug them in; I want young people, I want diverse people. We have a big loading procedure after you check out, and last year, with this particular venue that we're in, we want you to pull your shopping cart out, we'll pull your boxes out. We'll give you a number, we'll put the number with your plants, and then you queue up and we'll load you up. We'll have a line of six or seven cars when we're really busy and we need a bunch of people with good backs who don't need to know what the plants are. We've got a couple of volunteers who run the thing, but we need people to carefully move boxes and load cars and do things like that. The loading areas have been a good place to plug in some young groups. We've worked with a young group of Muslim volunteers called iCERV. They've been terrific. We have to be careful because when their shift is over they hit the hospitality room and they clean up. That's more of the downside. They're kids, that's another downside, but we've been able to plug some very diverse groups into the plant sale. Also, groups of college kids, whether it's a fraternity or sorority, whether it's loading the trucks here over to the plants sale, or at the plant sale helping to unload.

KPW: Have you noticed a repeat of service from the groups that you engage to help in the plant sale coming to the garden or other events?

FS: A little bit. Not much... A lot of the volunteer opportunities that are available in the garden themselves are on a day-to-day basis. 3 people for a couple of hours is good, 30 people for 3 hours... most of our work is not that kind of work. The plant

sale gives us an opportunity where we can say, “Hey, you know, we do have something for 30 people to do for 3 hours. It’s called put the boxes together.” That’s an important job because the customers don’t want to take that flat piece of cardboard and make a box out of it and we need to have those ready. There are a number of tasks that work very, very well for volunteer engagement for groups like that that we really don’t have opportunities to plug them in well to the other things that we do.

KPW: Have you looked to any other plant sales for inspiration?

FS: When I came here 13 years ago, where I was we had a couple little plant sales. I had been involved in a few things in New Jersey, had seen the Brooklyn Sale, and had gone to a class at an APGA conference that Brooklyn and Denver talked about. When I got here, I said, “Whoa, this is something on a whole different level.” So, I have not, to be perfectly honest, gone to a lot of other botanical garden plant sales to say, “What ideas we can steal?” I think people are doing things that fit their site, area, organization, and region. On the other hand, I’ve had a bunch of people call me up and say, “Hey, can I come to your plant sale and see what you do?” I think we’ve been on the other end of that. We’ve entertained the notion that maybe we can do a big book thing like Denver did at one time, but I don’t think there’s a way we can do that. For several years we had Cooperative Extension, we have 6 employees of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System here in our building, we thought to plug Master Gardeners and Extension into this because their message is perfect for customers of our plant sale. For a couple of years we tried that, but nobody was interested. So, we didn’t do that for a few years and then, I think last spring was the first year we tried it again, and I don’t know if it’s because of the upsurge in home vegetable gardening and home food production, but we tagged them along near the vegetable area and they were busy as all get out with people asking questions and looking for information or where to find stuff on the extension website, so that’s something that we tried again and it worked.

KPW: Are there any changes that you’d like to make?

FS: Nothing big, we look at this thing every year and sort of go, okay, there’s two sort of management theories. If it’s not broken, don’t fix it, and the other one is if it’s not broken, break it and build it some other way. I don’t think we’re looking to do anything major. So much of how we do it logistically is dependent on where we’re at, what facility will we be in, so we may have to change from year-to-year to live within the facility that we have. I think, in the future, there’s ways to change. We may be maxed out in the Spring Plant sale in terms of dollars, unless we really ramp up marketing and we really decide that on Saturday morning we’re going to really restock, but that’s a lot more work and it’s a dice roll because we know come Sunday afternoon we’ll be gone, so how much more can we really push out. The last spring sale was \$277,000 gross. I don’t know how many more people we can bring through.

If I had a hundred more shopping carts, at certain times during the sale, the first hour on Friday morning or the first four hours at Saturday I'd have a hundred more people with shopping carts on the sales floor. I think part of what we're most happy about with the location that we have right now is that there is room to spread out and one of our biggest complaints that we get is that it's too crowded. One year it was really tight, and that's why we saw the sales actually drop off when we had the plant sales here at the gardens. Over 2002, 2003, and 2004, people were avoiding the sale because it was a hassle to park, it was way too tight to navigate it and that's when we decided we needed to get out of here. People are leaving the area for the weekend rather than coming to our plant sale. That's not what we wanted. We might get a few more carts, but we think strategically we've got enough people. We sort of gauge how we're doing by how many carts are idle at any given time, and if we can go most of Saturday with there never being a shopping cart idle, despite the fact that someone may have to wait 5 minutes for one. They can shop and come back, but we'll have people waiting by the door for the shopping carts to cycle back...

Just tweaking the inventory on a yearly basis to keep things fresh and current, but we sell so many species, so many native species, whether it's wildflowers, and in most of our native plant areas there aren't any cultivars, we're selling species. We also sell a lot of native trees, some new and different things in some areas, but not necessarily. I'm not going to stock eight different *Hydrangea paniculata*. Our people are not looking for that. Native plants are never going to be invasive exotics. We feel like we're safe there, and that's what is meaningful to plant long-term for our areas. We'll still sell Camellias because they're beautiful and non-invasive, non-aggressive, our state flower, and part of the heritage of gardening around here. I don't know that there are any big changes on the horizon for us.

KPW: What percentages of your plants do you grow onsite with the grower groups and what do you order in?

FS: Probably 20-25% grown onsite vs. brought in. I'll include in that grown here, we'll get bare root plugs and pot it up and three months later it's for sale. We're not propagating our own Hostas; we're buying the cultivars from somebody who's licensed to sell them to us. A lot of the natives we're growing at the garden, or strains that are well adapted to our area. 99% of our herbs we grow. Climate has a lot to do with it. You can have a year round herb garden in Birmingham. A lot of stuff comes right through the winter. Cilantro is a winter herb for us.

KPW: Do you have any added value products at the sale?

FS: Very few, herb baskets that are put together, seven of your most common herbs, a pizza garden. They haven't been big movers. We'd have potted containers and try

auctioning those off, but it just didn't work for us. We tried rare plant auctions and things on members' night, but it didn't work for us.

I wish I could say that I have created this thing but it's generations of people and we feel like we're carrying the torch now of something that some really terrific volunteers started and we couldn't do it without the volunteers that we have, and we're continuing. We feel like we're stewards at this point.

Excerpt of Phone Interview with Mr. Kenny Zelov, Assistant Director of Horticulture at Desert Botanical Garden August 14, 2014

This transcription is a reasonably close verbatim of the conducted interview. For the purpose of readability I have taken the liberty of omitting pauses, filler sounds, filler words, unrelated conversation, and speech disfluency. No changes were made to factual data or implied meaning of the dialogue.

Kevin Philip Williams (KPW): Would you talk about the history of the plant sale?

Kenny Zelov (KZ): I believe it was originally volunteer run. We have a big group of core volunteers who originally created this and ran this. How long it's been going on? I couldn't say. Our garden is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and I guess it's probably been going on in various degrees for 20 to 25 years. I've been involved with it for almost 3 years, we do it biannually, and this will be my seventh sale coming up in the second week in October. We do a spring sale in March and a fall sale in October.

KPW: What are the goals of your plant sale?

KZ: Fundraising is probably at the top of the goals. We are a public garden, not receiving funding from any municipality and therefore it's one of the ways that we drive that revenue. The Horticulture department pretty much 100% runs this sale. Our goals are to present a variety of plant material for anyone and everyone so we have plants that represent your real basic material, things that you can find in most places, but we also try to have stuff for collectors, people who are looking for rare or unusual cactus and succulents, and trees and shrubs, things that you can't find elsewhere and having enough variety that we really represent a one-stop shopping experience where you can find pretty much, hopefully, anything that you're looking for. I think we do a pretty good job with that. Also trying to represent as many of our native plants as we can. We don't provide our own plants, we don't grow our own plants for the sale, so we depend on our suppliers and they don't always have everything and anything that we're looking for, but we do also emphasize the native plant material.

KPW: How many plants do you sell?

KZ: In excess of about 30,000. Our sale consists of three days and one evening event prior to the event, so it's kind of like opening and closing a business in three days.

KPW: Do you grow any of your own material?

KZ: We grow about 5%. What we do is, when we're making cuttings of things in the garden, or when the other option is to just get rid of it, we pot it up knowing that we

have some extra material that we can put out at the sale. It's just a small amount. Also our plant propagator tries every year as best she can to try to have a rare and unusual plant that we can't get elsewhere and she offers that, as well.

KPW: Would you talk about the different roles of the horticulture staff in the sale?

KZ: Learning from the whole organization process of it, the operations side of it, my full-time job here is the assistant director of horticulture and plant sale is one of the things that fall under my job description. I have a helper, one of our other staff people, she's currently the collections manager for our agave and aloe collections and she wears multiple hats when the plant sale comes along. She and I do all the organization, and the running, and the ordering of the plants, and the organization of the setup and then we enroll the rest of the horticulture staff when we start getting plants delivered. We need help with off-loading trucks and organizing the lot, so it's an all-hands scenario there. I can't say the horticulture staff does 100% of it. We have a setup staff that helps us set up tents. We also have our business office who does the cashiering, we have a big cashier tent and they man and work that over the weekend. Leading up to the plant sale it's almost completely horticulture and during the sale we utilize other departments and our volunteer core to help support the sale, too.

KPW: Who does the inventory selection?

KZ: Between myself, and the assistant that works with me, we choose the plants based on availability, that's probably the highest on the list, what we can get, and trying to provide variety, something new. We don't have a big group that works with us on that. And historically knowing what we sold in the past, what's popular and what hasn't been. We keep an inventory of what we originally bring in, then what we sell and what we return. We have a pretty good idea, historically, of what we've sold and what hasn't. Really what drives it is what we can get. If we can't get it, we can't sell it.

KPW: How do you keep track of what did and didn't sell?

KZ: We keep track with a beginning inventory and an ending inventory and knowing manually just what was sold. We don't use a barcode system yet... When they go through our cashier they keep track of how many different container sizes we sold, so we know we sold a certain number of 1 gallons, 2 gallons, 5 gallons etc. But exactly what they are we don't keep track of that.

KPW: What are the roles of the volunteers at the sale?

KZ: We have a regular group of volunteers that we work with in the horticulture department and they know, within a two-week period that when they're here that they're probably not going to do their normal duties in support of the horticulture staff,

they're going to be out in our plant sale lot doing whatever is going on that day and typically it involves the unloading of trucks, the moving of inventory from one area to the next, the watering of plants, the care of the plants, so all of this leads up to the sale. We offer volunteer opportunities for them during the sale itself where they can be doing any number of things from helping with customer service, to helping the customers move the plants from the checkout lines to their vehicles, or we have an information booth they can be a part of. Anything and everything, it's really a scenario where without them it would be real difficult to do what we do.

KPW: It said on your website that you offer delivery services. What exactly are the delivery services you offer?

KZ: We offer delivery service in two scenarios. One is, if they're buying large specimen plant options, then we connect them with a company that sells us those plants, and they're very adept at moving them and doing it correctly. We just connect them with a phone number and ask them to contact them. They are paid independently of us. We just tell them the range of what they offer for delivery and planting. What we think that does is it allows us to take the guesswork away from people. The other scenario we have is if you purchase \$1000 or more of anything that's relatively small and deliverable without big equipment or know-how, we hire an outside service to do that and they deliver the plants with no charge to the customer. If they purchase under \$1000 then we do charge them for delivery, and the same outside service does that for us.

KPW: Do you offer any other services?

KZ: Not really. We don't really offer any consulting services, or potting services... except on rare occasion. Sometimes for regular large donors, or purchasers at the plant sale we go out of our way to offer them extras.

KPW: Would you talk about the schedule of the sale?

KZ: Before the Friday members' sale is the Patron's Circle. These are members that fall into a donation category that make them eligible to attend sneak previews on various things and the plant sale is one of those things. We have a Thursday night event from 4pm to 8pm where we give them dinner and sort of wine and dine them and then they get the absolute first look at the plant material. Oftentimes, they're excited and will buy quite a bit, or often the larger material often goes that first day... Friday is just for our members, that tends to be our busiest day, both volume and customer-wise. We open at 7am, often we have people lining up at 6am, 100 or more people just waiting to rush in. These are the hardcore people who want that specific thing that they're looking for. That day is pretty busy until 5pm when we close. Saturday and Sunday is open to people, whether they're members or not, at no charge

of course. I should add that the members get a 10% discount for their membership. We take 10% off of their totals. We also incentivize people if they want to come on Friday and are not members, then they can sign up on that day and become members. They can come early and get the membership discount. They can get that discount across any day. Saturday is our second busiest day and Sunday tends to be a little bit slower.

KPW: Do you give any other discounts to volunteers or staff?

KZ: Yeah, we do. Staff and volunteers, these are volunteers that are helping at the sale, they'll get 20% off. Staff and volunteers will get the additional 10%, if you volunteer at the event, not just volunteering at the gardens.

KPW: Do you know what percentage of the sales is done on the members' night is?

KZ: Yeah, probably about 40%-50%.

KPW: Do you hold any pre-sales or online sales?

KZ: No, except if you want to consider that Patron's Circle event a pre-sale, but that's not open to everybody.

KPW: Is your spring sale stronger than your fall sale?

KZ: Not necessarily, they're both pretty good. They're both pretty even. Since I've been here we've aspired each sale to do better and we have. Each sale does better than the previous sale. We have certain environmental conditions that can play a role with sales. If we have a particularly harsh winter where a lot of plant material has been damaged because of cold weather then our spring sale tends to do a bit better because people are filling voids where things have died. The same holds true if we have a particularly harsh summer, where things died, and people lost plants then we see them for the same reasons. I think historically spring and fall are about equal.

KPW: Do you discount plants towards the end of the sale?

KZ: We do. We don't like to make it consistent because we don't want people to know that on Sunday at 2 o'clock everything is discounted. So we'll vary the discount amount and the time that we do it. Plus, the vast majority of our plants are purchased on consignment, so if we don't sell all of them we can send them back, so we won't be stuck with this huge inventory, but it's certainly better to make something rather than nothing. So yes, we do offer discounts, typically on Sunday afternoon... We usually give about a flat 30% off.

KPW: What percentage is bought on consignment and would you talk about that relationship?

KZ: About 95% is on consignment. It's a sensitive relationship. Since I've been here, I come with a slightly different skill set than my predecessors because my intention was to grow this every single year and to have more plants and more selection and along with that I've been asking our suppliers about that. Before I came we had a pretty consistent flow of consignment from our suppliers, but I've fostered that even more. Where it gets tricky is that we don't just buy plants from within our state's borders, but we buy plants from California, and the California agricultural rules are very tricky, particularly going back into California, so many of these suppliers don't take their plants back because they can't. There's a whole set of paperwork that makes it very difficult to move plants from Arizona back to California... My point is we try to purchase mostly from in-state suppliers, but on occasion we'll use California suppliers. For the one or two that I use, we've made arrangements, and I'm not exactly sure how they work this out, but they hold that inventory after the sale and offer it to other local suppliers. If we have a hundred of something left they'll see if they can sell that to someone else in Phoenix. It's been great for us. I do anticipate that as we continue growing that we might start to see a little bit of pushback on that, and we might have to be less aggressive or more conservative with our order. Or we might be hit with restocking fees, which I've been lucky enough to avoid up until now. But if I have to be conservative and not have as many plants then we might not do as well and neither will our suppliers. I think that's been a big help in being able to grow the sale is to have them available on consignment.

KPW: Do your suppliers handle delivery and then pick up and redistribution?

KZ: They do.

KPW: Where have you looked for inspiration for the plant sale?

KZ: To be honest, I haven't looked anywhere. I think because we've been doing this for quite awhile. The model, even when I stepped in was pretty darn good. It had a lot of established relationship and a clear understanding for where it stands as far as the garden's mission and priorities. It's not the biggest fundraising, but it's still a big one. I would imagine that we do well and that probably others look to us instead of vice versa, but I'm still very interested in knowing what others do...

KPW: Do you see the plant sales driving membership?

KZ: We do. We set up two membership booths on the Saturday and Sunday days of the sale, one in the entrance and one by the cashier's tent at the exit, and every year it's always impressive how many new members we get that day. I'm thinking it's

somewhere in the 500 number range or so each time. Hopefully we maintain them and keep them for years to come... Our total membership is 36,074, and that's the highest it's ever been.

KPW: Would you talk about how the sale is physically set up?

KZ: We do have it in our parking lot area. In the last year and a half we've moved it from one area to another, but we now have an events plaza that's part of our parking area and it's a large circular parking area that the whole interior is stabilized granite, so we use it for various events, but it hasn't translated well to the plant sale itself because it doesn't drain well and we have to put so much water on it just to keep the plants going the whole two weeks during our setup and breakdown that we found it doesn't really work very well. So we don't use that we just use the actual asphalt and that's tended to work best for us, it just gives us more flexibility with moving vehicles in and out. Irrigation isn't an issue because it drains and we don't have any standing water. It's all on hardscape currently. We do break them out in sections and a lot of that is based on water requirements. Our cactus and succulents don't want water everyday so we have separate areas for plants with drier needs... Then we break out by trees. That's one big area. Shrubs and perennials in one area. We have big tents that have various succulents that we can't necessarily put out in the full sun, or the hard to find things or the things that you might grow in a patio area or a pot. Then we also have a section for retail vendors. So we bring in various people who sell their own artwork or pots, not plants, but things for the garden. We also have a big seating, outdoors seating area, where people can sit under some umbrellas to get out of the sun...

KPW: What is the composition of people on the sales floor? Is it staff, volunteers, outside experts, or nursery owners?

KZ: We did have that once and it didn't work well. We have a guy in town who only sells Australian plants and for many years he came here and had his own area and kind of walked and talked about his plants. We found it didn't work well, we eliminated it at the last sale because it was kind of awkward to have him hovering around his plants. You can argue that he's the expert, and he can offer some insight, but it got a little confusing. At this point we don't have any outside people coming in. The staff and the volunteers are the people answering the questions. The volunteers that fall into the question and answer category are typically the ones that volunteer for horticulture, we call them horticulture aides. They tend to be interested in volunteering for the sale and they usually have a level of expertise with what they're talking about. We also require our entire horticulture staff, in shifts, to be out there as well, so our cactus expert would be hovering around the cactus, and our tree and shrub expert would be around that area. We always have someone helping in the different areas whether it's staff or volunteers.

KPW: Are staff on-call for those three days?

KZ: Yes, we set up a schedule in advance, so they know when they need to be out there and in that case, some of the expectation is that they'll work off-hours or get a little more overtime for that period, and we budget for that.

KPW: How are your plants labeled?

KZ: Just recently in the last two or three sales we've required the majority of our suppliers to label their plants with their own sticker, which has the, ideally but not always, the botanical and common name and also has the price on it, so they pre-price based on the information I've given them. They put their own price tags on them, which eliminates a ton of labor of us having to price everything. Some don't, we have a few that are just not sophisticated enough at the way they do business that we can't expect them to do that. We'll just put our own labels on there whether it's just a little sticky or a plant stick... We've tried to get away from that because it can cause problems with people pulling the labels off or switching labels...

KPW: Would you talk about your checkout system?

KZ: At the end of the layout we have a big 30x40' cashiers tent and they're all funneled eventually through this area through the cashiers tent. The first agent is someone who's writing the ticket, the ticket writer, and they're going through each persons shopping cart, we also have 250-some-odd shopping carts that we own that we use, and manually writing a ticket and adding the prices up... Then they take it to the cashier who rings it up and collects the payment. From there it goes to a person who can help you take it to your vehicle.

KPW: How does the plant sale impact parking for visitors?

KZ: Most years we're able to accommodate the normal flow of visitors with the plant sale parking. At our last sale we had a seasonal exhibit here, the Chihuly exhibit and it was insanity because we didn't have enough parking so we were forced to condense our sale and minimize the impact on parking. That was a challenge, but most of the time when we don't have something like that going on we can work it out. We have extra security that helps to direct traffic those days, but it does become an issue because these sales can coincide with good weather when people would want to be visiting the garden. It's definitely a challenge. In the last two years we've added this new large parking area that can accommodate an additional 300 or so vehicles and that makes a big difference.

KPW: What forms of payment do you accept?

KZ: Cash, credit cards, I believe the accept checks.

KPW: How do you accept the credit cards?

KZ: We now have, within the last year; we have WiFi and wireless payment. We have these handheld devices that they use to run the credit cards.

KPW: Are there any other interesting ways that you utilize technology in the sale?

KZ: Other than promoting on social media, which we do, I don't really think we utilize too much technology. The infrastructure of the area is limited too. When we built the parking lot we didn't run power out there. So what we do is we run all of the power through a generator, so the infrastructure is set up for power, but it was never actually hooked to the power box itself. So, we can run power through there but we are limited with our ability to plug in computers and things.

KPW: How do you market the plant sale?

KZ: We have a relationship with a local newspaper called The Arizona Republic. We do a full-page ad before and during the sale. Also, our Director of Horticulture goes to one of the local TV stations and does a plug before and also during the sale. We have our membership community. We advertise in calendars we send out, we send out a mailer just for this to all our members. We put simple things like signage on some of the street corners adjacent to the gardens. We've had a few corporate sponsors that have also done some marketing for us. Chipotle is one that we used recently. We use Facebook. We periodically have some of the other local publications for sponsorships. We have one this year, Phoenix Home and Garden Magazine is sponsoring the sale, so we have a full page ad in their magazine which is marketed and targeted to lots of our membership community.

KPW: Do you print a paper catalog or have one available online?

KZ: We do have one online, it's probably not accurate every year, and it has a disclaimer stating that it's just a representation of what could be at the sale. But it's still fluid. When plants show up, we might be expecting something, but then they say we ran out of that. It's not 100% accurate.

KPW: Would you talk a little bit about your sponsorships?

KZ: Currently this year we have one with the Arizona Republic, the local newspaper. We have a marketing department that handles most of that so I don't know the ins and outs of it, but I know that we do pay for advertising for the ads in their papers but I

think there's also some sort of discount. I don't know exactly how that works. I also mentioned the one currently with the local magazine publication, Phoenix Home and Garden. Last year, I think a couple of years in a row we've had Chipotle, the burrito people out here. They'll have a little mobile setup out there and they'll do a cooking demonstration, making guacamole and the concept was that we sold a lot of the plants here, herbs and veggies, that you could watch the demonstration and then buy the plants here at the sale. They also gave away coupons for anyone who bought something, they got a two-for-one coupon or if you became a member you got a free meal or something like that.

KPW: Are sponsorship dollars significant to the net revenue?

KZ: No. I think a lot of it tends to be more in-kind donations, not necessarily money per se, but product or advertising.

KPW: Do you have any partnerships with any local organizations?

KZ: Yeah we do. The Master Gardeners have a booth at our sale. We allow them to just advertise what they do. In the past we've had a group called The Watershed Management Group and they do various educational things with some water harvesting scenarios that they teach, so they offer different services.

KPW: How do you think that the plant sale ties into the mission of the garden?

KZ: One of our four pillars is education. We feel like here's an opportunity for people to come to the source and get good information. With big box stores you don't know what you're getting. We try to offer desert plants that are appropriate for the Southwest of the United States, so that ties into our mission. We also offer things that people can grow in other conditions, like in a pot under a patio, so they're not just Southwestern United States plants, but plants that are desert adaptable, be it succulents from South Africa that you can grow... Between education, conservation efforts, and having plants appropriate to the region that we're in. And always having something compelling. New plants, new hooks that will get people in to connect to something and then they connect to other things through that. Making it compelling and always reinventing it and not always having the same group of plants every year.

KPW: Do you hold formal talks through the Education Department or through horticulture either before or during the plant sale?

KZ: We have an information booth that has all different types of publications that they can hand people. Or if they want a plant list of plants that attract hummingbirds, or butterflies, or monarchs. The Education Department runs that. They're there to answer

questions. We don't typically do anything before or after. During would just be manning this booth.

KPW: Why do you think that people come to the plant sale?

KZ: I think our reputation is what drives people here. They know they're going to get good information, and good healthy plants. I think sometimes you get less than that from other plant suppliers. I think the selection that we offer is unique. You don't have to go to a bunch of different places to get unique plants. I think that people also like to support the garden and we remind them that it's a fundraiser. I'll sometimes hear, "Well, I can get this plant for \$5 less at Lowe's or Home Depot." I tell them I'm sure they can, but this is a fundraiser, and we try to be competitive, and if they want to support the garden then this is a way to do that.

KPW: What do you see as the future of the sales?

KZ: I'm always about driving the revenue and I want to continue to offer unique things... I'd like to offer more educational opportunities; I'd like to have demonstrations on drip irrigation, which is a big part of what we do here. I'd like to tie some of those other pieces of desert landscaping into it... We do also have some of the retail vendors that offer unique things. It's not a big piece of our revenue for it but I think it provides a broader experience for people that are not just seeing plants but they're seeing pots or art that they can use in their garden. We've talked about trying to make it more of a festival atmosphere where there's possibly live music or more opportunities to get something to eat, but when we've tried those things in the past it always comes back to people coming to the sale to buy plants not to drink a beer or have a hotdog. Those things generally do not do well and we've kind of shied away from them. Maybe creating more of that festival atmosphere, we're very good here at throwing parties, so getting that atmosphere into the plant sale would be a big picture goal. But I always seem to come back to the fact that people come here for the plants, and the fact that our members' day is so big shows right there that they're not coming to get the first hamburger at the hamburger stand. They're all about the plants...

This is my seventh sale and I think that every single one has exceeded the prior one.

KPW: Do the vendors pay for their space or is it commission based?

KZ: We require 20% of their total sales, but they don't pay for their space.

KPW: Are the plants sales a kickoff or capstones of the event seasons?

KZ: Kind of, more so for the fall. Following the plant sale, in the same space we have a Halloween, pumpkin festival that follows on the heels of our plant sales. Honestly, in

Arizona everything is driven by the weather. We're pretty much a ghost town right now, but in October when things start to cool off and we have cool mornings and cool evenings then we start see our attendance start to go up. The biggest things that drive it are the weather, but that is one of the earliest festivals that we have...

Appendix H

PUBLIC GARDEN PLANT SALE WEBSITE SCREENSHOTS

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

<http://www.bbgardens.org/spring-plant-sale.php>



CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!



The 2015 **Spring Plant Sale** will be held on April 10 -12 for the public.
We'll begin the weekend with the preview party on Thursday, April 9, 5-6:30 p.m.
The Members-Only Sale will immediately follow on Thursday, April 9, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

April 10-12, 2015

Schedule of Events:

Thursday, April 9

Preview Party: 5-6:30 p.m.

Food will be provided by Brio Tuscan Grille

- Registration is Not Yet Open -

Members-Only Sale: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

(members do not need to register for the members-only sale)

*In celebration of the 50th Anniversary all member households in attendance will receive a free signature plant.**

Friday, April 10

Public Sale: 9-7 p.m. (Free Admission)

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of The Gardens the first 50 shoppers will receive a free signature plant.

1/30/15, 2:35 PM

Birmingham Botanical Gardens (cont.)

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

<http://www.bbgardens.org/spring-plant-sale.php>

Saturday, April 11

Public Sale: 9-5 p.m. (Free Admission)

Sunday, April 12

Public Sale: 11-3 p.m. (Free Admission)

Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale features over 100,000 plants, most of which have been nurtured by volunteers at The Gardens. This sale allows a unique opportunity, providing expert knowledge on the plants and by offering unique plants difficult to find in ordinary garden centers. And your purchase helps The Gardens reach its educational goals.

The Spring Plant Sale furthers The Gardens' mission of promoting public knowledge and appreciation of plants, gardens and the environment while providing consumers seasonally appropriate planting advice from experts and satisfaction from supporting a worthwhile cause with each purchase.

[2013 Spring Plant Sale Photo Gallery](#)

2014 PSA



USDA Hardiness Zone Map

To see the new 2014 USDA Hardiness Zone Map, [click here](#) (link will take you to an outside site).

For more information about Spring Plant Sale contact Special Events Coordinator Shelly McCarty at 205.414.3965 or smccarty@bbgardens.org.

If you would like to volunteer for Spring Plant Sale, you can download the Teen Volunteer or Adult Volunteer forms by clicking on the applicable link. If you would like more information about volunteering for this event or to learn about all volunteer opportunities at The Gardens, call Taylor Steele, volunteer coordinator, at 205.414.3962 or email tsteele@bbgardens.org.

2014 Sponsors



1/30/15, 2:35 PM

Birmingham Botanical Gardens (cont.)

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

<http://www.bbgardens.org/fall-plant-sale.php>



2015

Fall Plant Sale

October 17 | 9 - 5 p.m.

October 18 | Noon - 4 p.m.

in Blount Plaza at Birmingham Botanical Gardens | Rain or Shine

Annuals - Biennials - Climbers - Fall Lettuces - Camellias - Daylilies - Herbs - Irises - Natives - Perennials - Trees - Shrubs - Ferns

As plant lists become available, links above will become active. Click on the booth of your choice to view a list of available items at each.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!



On October 18-19, The Gardens will host its annual Fall Plant Sale in its Blount Plaza – welcoming patrons with opportunities to purchase herbs, sustainable trees, fall annuals, shrubs, natives, perennials and more, while benefiting The Gardens' mission to promote public knowledge and appreciation of plants, gardens and the environment. On Saturday, The Gardens' Fall Plant Sale will be open to the public 9-5 p.m. On Sunday, hours are Noon-4 p.m. Proceeds from the sale benefit The Gardens' mission to promote public knowledge and appreciation of plants, gardens and the environment. We fulfill our mission through programs such as Discovery Field Trips, Plant Adventures, Adult and Family Classes and many, many more.

Autumn is the best time to plant trees and shrubs!

Trees available for purchase at this year's Fall Plant Sale have been selected especially for Birmingham's climate and condition. They have proven easy-to-grow, free of injurious insect and disease pests and both heat and drought tolerant. Available natives add to local biodiversity and most will live for several generations, while available exotics are not known to be invasive. For a list of suggested natives best suited for replanting Alabama, [click here](#).

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Brooklyn Botanic Garden

BBG's Annual Plant Sale Offers Over 20,000 Plants on April 30...

http://www.bbg.org/press/brooklyn_botanic_gardens_annual_pl...

[Brooklyn Botanic Garden](#)

[Home](#) » [Press](#)

BBG's Annual Plant Sale Offers Over 20,000 Plants on April 30 and May 1



BBG's annual Plant Sale. Photos by Rebecca Bullene, courtesy of Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Release Date: March 17, 2014

BBG Plant Sale:
Wednesday, April 30 | 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Thursday, May 1 | 9 a.m. – Noon
Cherry Esplanade

Members-Only Preview Sale: Tuesday, April 29 | 4:30 - 8 p.m.
Children's Plant Sale: Wednesday, April 30, Thursday, May 1 | 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Magnolia Plaza

Press Preview: Monday, April 28 | 2 - 4 p.m.

Brooklyn, NY—Brooklyn Botanic Garden's annual benefit [Plant Sale](#) returns this spring with the largest selection of top-quality, affordable plants in the metropolitan area. The Plant Sale has been a much-anticipated spring tradition in NYC for over 60 years, offering an unmatched selection of locally-grown, hand-selected plants for gardens big and small, indoors and out.

More than 20,000 plants—ranging from the tried-and-true to the new and different—will be

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Brooklyn Botanic Garden (cont.)

BBG's Annual Plant Sale Offers Over 20,000 Plants on April 30...

http://www.bbg.org/press/brooklyn_botanic_gardens_annual_pl...

for sale under a tent on the expansive lawn of BBG's Cherry Esplanade. Over two days, thousands of plant lovers will take advantage of the sale's incredible selection and gardening advice from the Garden's expert staff, including director of Horticulture Mark Fisher (houseplants), rosarian Sarah Owens, and team members from GreenBridge, BBG's community environmental horticulture program (window boxes, tree beds, and containers).

The two-day Plant Sale offers an extensive variety of plants, both for indoors and outdoors: annuals, herbaceous perennials, small trees and shrubs, roses, herbs, vegetables, houseplants, orchids, hanging baskets—and more. Easy space-saving plants for apartment dwellers, like cherry tomatoes in hanging baskets, heavy-fruited blueberries for containers, and a wide range of water-conserving succulents are offered alongside 19 varieties of clematis and dozens of roses and other garden favorites.

Among the specimens on offer are rare and unusual plants, including native species and hard-to-find cultivars, all meticulously selected and reasonably priced by a team that has worked on the sale for over 40 years to grow it into the city's premier resource for garden plants.

NOTE TO MEDIA:

On Monday, April 28, accredited media can attend a preview of the Plant Sale from 2 to 4 p.m. Pre-registration is required; to RSVP, please contact communications@bbg.org.

On **Wednesday, April 30**, the following talks and demonstrations are offered for gardeners of all experience levels:

- 
• **Bonsai Clinic and Demonstration**, led by BBG bonsai curator Julian Velasco. Bring your own pest-free bonsai for pruning, repotting, and advice. \$25 for participants; spectators are welcome, free of charge (10 a.m. - noon and 2 - 3 p.m.).
- 
• **Roses and Their Companions**, with Sarah Owens, curator of BBG's Cranford Rose Garden (11 a.m. and 4 p.m.)
- 
• **The Best Houseplants for Sun and Shade**, with director of Horticulture Mark Fisher (2 p.m.)
- 
• **Reviving and Repotting Orchids**, with David Horak, curator of BBG's orchid collection (11 a.m. and 3 p.m.)
- 
• **Tips on Selecting Unusual Long-Blooming, Easy-Care Annuals**, with BBG curator Jennifer Williams (11 a.m.)
- 
• **Shrubs and Perennials Offering the Best Bang for Your Buck**, with BBG curator Michael Mauro (11:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.)

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Brooklyn Botanic Garden (cont.)

BBG's Annual Plant Sale Offers Over 20,000 Plants on April 30...

http://www.bbg.org/press/brooklyn_botanic_gardens_annual_pl...

- **An Exploration of Unusual Herbs**, with BBG curator Jennifer Williams (3 p.m.)
- **GreenBridge Workshops**: Get a head-start on improving your neighborhood with Planting a Window Box (5:30 p.m.), Colorful Containers (6 p.m.), and Tree Bed Gardening (6:30 p.m.).

With each paid Garden admission during the Plant Sale, visitors receive a free admission coupon to use on a return visit. A supply of red shopping wagons is provided, but buyers are encouraged to bring a cart if they can. All major credit cards, cash, and checks are accepted.

Visitors are encouraged to share stories and photos of the Plant Sale on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram using the hashtag #brooklynbotanic.

A special **Members' Preview will take place Tuesday, April 29**, from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00p.m. on Cherry Esplanade; admission is with a BBG membership card only; memberships may be purchased at Garden entrances. The annual **Children's Plant Sale** will take place Wednesday, April 30, and Thursday, May 1, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Magnolia Plaza (pre-registration required; please visit classes.bbg.org).

BBG's 2014 Plant Sale is presented by the BBG Auxiliary. Sponsorship support for the Plant Sale is provided by Monrovia Growers. All proceeds benefit Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

NOTE: On Tuesday, April 30, the Garden will close to the public at 4 p.m. for the Members' Preview Sale. On April 30 and May 1, the Garden will open at 9 a.m. instead of 8 a.m.

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Chicago Botanic Garden

Fall Bulb Festival | Chicago Botanic Garden

<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/bulb>



Fall Bulb Festival

Welcome fall; think spring!

Year after year, this is one of the most popular family days at the Garden.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, October 2 – 4, 2015
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Members-only preview bulb shopping, Friday, October 2, 2015
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

[View the 2014 Fall Bulb Festival Catalog](#)



Outdoors:

There's live music, a harvest market, cider, wine, and beer to purchase, and the awesome gourd mountain for selfies!

More than 20 local vendors offer fresh herbs and vegetables, mouthwatering jams and honeys, gourmet baked goods, and chocolate!

Kids:

Take the obstacle course challenge: The **Northshore University HealthSystem obstacle course** with four activity stations.



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Chicago Botanic Garden (cont.)

Fall Bulb Festival | Chicago Botanic Garden

<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/bulb>

On Saturday and Sunday, kids can visit each station, complete the activities, and get their passports stamped. Everyone who completes the obstacle course will receive a special keepsake!

- Hula hooping
- Resistance bands
- Jumping rope
- Reaching for the sky

Kids love the ever-popular straw-bale maze, fun outdoor fitness activities, and fall inspired crafts, too.



Indoors:

225+ varieties of daffodils, tulips, crocus, and specialty bulbs tempt gardeners at the annual Bulb Sale, presented by the Woman's Board of the Chicago Horticultural Society. Buy mums, asters, peonies, potted amaryllis, paperwhite narcissus, and "Bulb Boost," too. Roving staff are on hand to answer questions and offer tips.



The Woman's Board is in its fourth year of "Growing the Future," a \$1 million pledge to the Garden. Proceeds from this event support fellowships for the plant biology and conservation graduate program, a collaboration between the Garden and Northwestern University.

[View the 2014 Fall Bulb Festival Catalog.](#)

Generously supported by



Admission is free. Parking fees apply.

2014

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Chicago Botanic Garden (cont.)

Fall Bulb Festival | Chicago Botanic Garden

<http://www.chicagobotanic.org/bulb>

PARTICIPATING VENDORS



Prairie Pure Cheese (Sun only)
Spark of the Heart
Holcomb Hollow
DTB Woodworking (Sat/Sun only)
Katherine Anne Confections
Wild Tree
Sunkissed Organics (Sun only)
Made From Mud
Faiths Farm
Completely Nuts
Famous Kal's
Toffee Traditions
W&M Land Corp
Century Farmhouse
Tuscan Hen Foods
Xanadu Apiary
Windy City Harvest
Wild Flour Bakery (Sun only)
Rushing Waters Fisheries
Garden View Café

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Denver Botanic Gardens

Fall Plant and Bulb Sale | Denver Botanic Gardens

<http://www.botanicgardens.org/events/special-events/fall-plant-...>



plan your visit our gardens events exhibits calendar programs science gardening resources get involved

go become a member donate to the gardens

[home](#) » [events](#) » [special events](#) » fall plant and bulb sale

fall plant and bulb sale



what's blooming?



See orchids and bromeliads

Enjoy indoor waterfalls, the Orangerie and the orchid display in Marnie's Pavilion. [See highlights of what's blooming inside and outside at the Gardens during January.](#)

botanic buzz

Want to be updated on the latest news and events at Denver Botanic Gardens?

subscribe to our e-newsletter

Visit the Gardens for an incredible variety of thousands of bulbs and unusual plants perfect for cool weather.

Interact with the Gardens' horticulture staff and learn valuable plant information that will send you home feeling like a master gardener!

It is best to arrive early, as supplies go fast. Please remember to bring your own wagon so you can stock up on all of your favorite plants. [Here is a list of bulbs and plants that will be available at the sale.](#)

Dates & Times:
Friday, Sept. 19, 2014
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 20, 2014
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Location:
West Terrace, enter through the North parking lot

Admission:
Free both days to the sale, regular admission to the Gardens
Members receive 10% off all purchases

If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please call the Gardens' volunteer office at 720-865-3565.

For more information please email us at specialevents@botanicgardens.org.

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Denver Botanic Gardens (cont.)

Special Friends - Scott Arboretum

<http://www.scottarboretum.org/plantsale/specialfriends.html>



Special Friends

[What is a Special Friend?](#)
[How do I become a Special Friend?](#)
[Special Friend Preview Party](#)

What is a Special Friend?

Special Friends of the Plant Sale help underwrite the costs of staging the sale. The Plant Sale is the main fundraising and educational event staged by the Associates to benefit the Arboretum and has drawn 1,500 to 2,000 participants in past years. These successful sales have been held biennially since 1979, allowing the Arboretum to directly fulfill its **mission** by getting good garden plants into the hands of home gardeners.

As a Special Friend, we acknowledge your financial support by inviting you to the Special Friends' Preview Party on Friday, Sept. 11 from 4 to 8 pm. This provides you with an opportunity to be the first to shop at the Plant Sale as well as to enjoy refreshments and hors d'oeuvres. Special Friends who submit their support by April will also appear in the in the **Plant Sale Handbook**.

The assistance we receive from Special Friends is crucial to the success of this event. Thank you for considering the opportunity to show your support for the event and the efforts of the 200-plus volunteers who make it happen.

How do I become a Special Friend?

You can become a Gold or Silver Special Friend. **Simply donate** \$150 for Gold and \$75 for Silver to the Associates of the Scott Arboretum. **We invite you to make your donation and pick up your tickets at the gate on Friday night.** Gold level Special Friends receive four donor passes and Silver level receive two donor passes to the **Preview Party**.

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Links

1. <http://www.scottarboretum.org/aboutus/index.html>
2. <http://www.scottarboretum.org/plantsale/handbook.html>
3. <https://dnbwbe1.blackbaud.com/OPXDONATE/AddDonor.asp?cguid=DEA4C8FC-1BF0-4817-974A-42F839E933F8&sTarget=https%3A%2F%2Fdnbwbe1.blackbaud.com%2FOPXDONATE%2Fdonate.asp%3Fcguid%3DDEA4C8FC%252D1BF0%252D4817%252D974A%3D%38C95715-BCCD-4F09-9F51-E32A814EAA43>

The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue, Swarthmore, PA 19081
tel (610) 328-8025 • scott@swarthmore.edu • (610) 328-7755 fax • [facebook](#)

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Rutgers Gardens

Rutgers Gardens: Spring Flower Fair

<http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/springflowerfair.html>

Spring Flower Fair 2015

Perennials

The Ultimate Plant Sale! The sale is a must-see shine. Come out to support the Gardens and our Student Internship Program.

The Spring Flower Fair is a garden plant sale that provides you with the opportunity to purchase everyone's favorite varieties, as well as unique and/or difficult-to-find plants that will enhance your garden with flower, form or food. This year we increased the selection of those hard-to-find plants, but also focused upon those plants that will provide solutions to difficult sites in your garden!

Your purchase directly benefits the Rutgers Gardens Student Internship Program, which will provide hands-on educational experience for over 12 students this coming summer. Rutgers Gardens is entirely self-supporting, and your support is greatly needed and appreciated!



Preview Sale and Reception - Thursday, May 7, 2015 from 3:00 pm - 7:30 pm. The sale is open to all members and special guests. Avoid the weekend crowds while you have a glass of wine, and be the first to select and purchase your plants.

Rare Plant Auction - Be here for a live auction of some rare and unusual plants.

Pre-sale Plants - Each year we feature a few plants that are very difficult to find

1/30/15, 2:36 PM

Rutgers Gardens

Rutgers Gardens: Spring Flower Fair

<http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/springflowerfair.html>

or are typically very expensive to purchase and – as a benefit of being a Gardens Member – we are offering them for sale to members *in advance* of the spring sale. The plants will be available for pick-up at the Thursday evening Preview Reception.

Plant Sale Highlights Class - April 24 - Join the Director, Bruce Crawford, to learn about some of the plants we will have available at this year's sale. Learn about the growing conditions and uses of some of our most popular plants, as well as the rare and unusual. \$10 per person - Members are free.

Find out more about the benefits of becoming a [Rutgers Gardens Member](#).

General Information about the sale

The Spring Flower Fair is organized by the Rutgers Gardens staff along with help from various plant experts and many dedicated volunteers. The sale is located at the Log Cabin and Alumni Pavilion in the Gardens. MasterCard and Visa, along with checks and cash, are accepted.



2015 Schedule of Events

Pre-order sales will be processed for Rutgers Gardens Members ONLY. Plants may be picked up on May 8 at the Preview Sale and Reception.

Plant Sale Highlights Class: April 24 at 7:00pm

Bring your landscape design questions to this class where Bruce Crawford, Director of Rutgers Gardens, will address them. Also, he will discuss the growing conditions and uses of some of the most popular plants, as well as the rare and unusual plants available at this year's sale.

Rutgers Gardens Members: Free

Non-Members: \$10.00

Location: Holly House

Thursday, May 7 from 3:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Spring Flower Fair Preview Sale and Rare Plant Auction - Members and Special guests only. **Must join or renew by May 1, 2015.** Invitations will be mailed and RSVP is necessary to attend.

Friday, May 8 from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Sale open to the general public.

Saturday, May 9 from 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

Sale open to the general public.

1/30/15, 2:36 PM

Rutgers Gardens

Rutgers Gardens: Spring Flower Fair

<http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/springflowerfair.html>

Sunday, May 10 from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm

Sale open to the general public.

Rutgers Gardens thanks the following businesses for helping provide our Volunteers with t-shirts, lunch and snacks at the 2014 sale



Plant Material

- Trees and Shrubs
- Herbaceous Perennials
- Ornamental Grasses and Bamboos
- Vines
- Fun and Wacky Annuals
- Herbs
- Vegetables and Fruits (see below)
 - Beans to Peppers
 - Summer Squash to Winter Squash

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The Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College

Special Friends - Scott Arboretum

<http://www.scottarboretum.org/plantsale/specialfriends.html>



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1/30/15, 2:36 PM

UC Davis Arboretum and Public Gardens

UC Davis Arboretum: Plant Sales and Nursery

http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant_sales_and_nursery.aspx

Plant Sales at the Arboretum Teaching Nursery



Several times each year, our support group, Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum, holds plant sales at the Arboretum Teaching Nursery, offering hundreds of different kinds of uncommon garden plants that have been locally grown, including the [Arboretum All-Stars](#), our top recommended plants for Central Valley gardens. Dozens of volunteers work hard all year to grow plants for sale to support the Arboretum. [Learn about volunteering at the Arboretum.](#)

[Members](#) enjoy special preview sales and receive a 10% discount. These sales are also open to the public during the times specified below. Become a new member at the sales to receive 10% off your purchases AND an additional \$10-off coupon! [Find out more about becoming a member here.](#)

Spring 2015 Plant Sales

THE NEW FRONT YARD: We know that many homeowners out there are in the process of developing their "New Front Yard" by replacing high-water use plants with low-water alternatives. That's why this October you are going to find just what you need at our "New Front Yard" fall plant sales. We are going to have the area's largest selection of attractive, drought-tolerant, easy-care, region-appropriate plants including lots of California natives and Arboretum All-Stars.

[Download the NEW FRONT YARD plant list](#)
Our list of 40 attractive, low-water plants that also support wildlife

MEMBER APPRECIATION SALE

Date: Saturday, March 7
Time: 9 AM - 1 PM (Members Only)
Place: [Arboretum Teaching Nursery](#)

Not a member? Join at the door or call ahead! At our annual member appreciation sale members not only receive 10% off their purchases, they get an additional \$10 off thank you coupon. New members will receive an additional \$10 as a thank you for joining. The benefits far outweigh the cost. [LEARN MORE.](#)

PUBLIC SALES from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Saturday, April 11
Saturday, April 25
Saturday, May 16 (Clearance Sale)

Place: [Arboretum Teaching Nursery](#)

What else you will find:

- Davis Botanical Society
- Arboretum All-Star demonstration beds
- Arboretum experts and Master Gardeners
- Knowledgeable sales staff to help you choose the best plants for

PLAN YOUR VISIT

GARDENING

EDUCATION & RESEARCH

GATEWAYS PROJECT

SUPPORT

VOLUNTEER

Arboretum

All-Stars

California Native Garden

Low Maintenance Garden

Wildlife Attracting Garden

All-Stars

Plant Search

Plant Sales/ Nursery

Gardening Reference

Resources

ABOUT US

CALENDAR

ARBORETUM

ALL-STARS

MEMBERSHIP

NEWS



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