

The Garden Conservancy News

Fall 2025



Uncovering a Garden,
Discovering a
Masterpiece Page 5



Caption



The Garden Conservancy

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The Mission of the Garden Conservancy is to preserve, share, and celebrate America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public.

The Garden Conservancy

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Left: A visitor admires the Enchanting Rose Garden in Grosse Pointe Farms, MI, during Open Days in June.



From the President and CEO

I'm constantly inspired by the enduring power of gardens and our collective commitment to preserving their rich history. On a recent Society of Fellows tour in England, Board Member Lisa Trulaske made the stunning discovery of her garden's original Russell Page design drawings at the Garden Museum in London.



Soon after, I was delighted to learn that Chelmsford, the magnificent country estate in Greenwich, CT, was selected for inclusion in the prestigious Garden Club of America Collection at the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens (AAG). This recognition honors its exceptional early 20th-century landscape design and the dedicated stewardship of its owners, Board Member Alease Fisher and her husband, Paul Tallman. The AAG meticulously documents gardens through photographs, plans, and descriptions, ensuring these artistic and historical spaces are preserved for future generations.

We are also thrilled to hear that the restoration of the majestic cascade fountain restoration at Greenwood Gardens in Short Hills, NJ, is nearing completion. Over the years, the Garden Conservancy has collaborated with the Greenwood team to transform this cherished private estate into a vibrant public resource. This ambitious restoration revitalizes a century-old masterpiece, exemplifying the intricate work of garden preservation. The restoration of the fountain, a unique adaptation of a 17th-century Baroque design, was a priority for the late Peter P. Blanchard III, who, along with his wife, Sofia, shared his father's dream of preserving Greenwood Gardens for public enjoyment.

Finally, this past May, we premiered our documentary *Earth, I Thank You: The Garden and Legacy of Anne Spencer* at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. The film beautifully highlights the cultural significance of Anne Spencer's historic garden. We were thrilled by the enthusiastic response and are planning more screenings in 2026.

These stories, which you can read about in the pages that follow, underscore why garden preservation is so vital. They ensure that these living works of art continue to educate and inspire us for years to come.

Sincerely,

James Brayton Hall
President and CEO, The Garden Conservancy

Left: Chelmsford, Greenwich, CT. Photo: Stacy Bass

On the cover: Garden Conservancy Board Member Lisa Trulaske, right, examines the original Russell Page designs for her St. Louis garden with Christopher Woodward, president of the Garden Museum in London, in May. Read about her exciting discovery on page 5. Photo: James Brayton Hall



In this St. Louis garden, masses of honeysuckle kept the garden hidden from view. After two astonishing discoveries, the veil is lifted on Russell Page's design.



Uncovering a Lost Garden... and Finding a Masterpiece

When Lisa and Steve Trulaske moved into their home in St. Louis, the garden was an overgrown mess. There was little hint about how the landscape should look, or how to begin restoring it.

"It was just a mud pile with a ton of honeysuckle," Lisa recalls.

Fortunately, the house, long vacant, still held the secret.

Their architect, Mark Critchfield, made his way into the basement one day in 2012 and found a room-sized safe. In the safe was a box, and inside was a sheet of paper with the garden's original design. It was signed by one of the world's most revered and accomplished garden designers of the 20th century, Russell Page.

Using the drawing like a treasure map, Lisa, Steve, and Critchfield began to explore the structure that was lying beneath the overgrowth. To their astonishment, they discovered a reflecting pool, enclosed by three walls, and an arched doorway leading in. The discovery set them on an exciting path toward restoring an elegant work of art.

Page, born in England in 1906, studied art in Paris and distinguished himself with a remodeling of Longleat, in Wiltshire, England, a treasure of landscape design dating to the 1500s and transformed by the famous Lancelot "Capability" Brown in the 1700s. Page grew in acclaim for his combination of artistry and horticulture as he went on to design gardens throughout Europe, the Middle East and North and South America. Inspired by European and Islamic gardening traditions, he produced a great diversity of designs for parks and gardens over the course of his career.

In the United States, his legacy includes the newly restored 70th Street Garden at The Frick Collection in New York City and the Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Gardens at PepsiCo in Purchase, NY.

Opposite page: Tulips flourish in Lisa and Steve Trulaske's restored garden in St. Louis, where a reflecting pool is among the elements in Russell Page's design. Photos: Thomas Sikorski



At the Garden Museum in London, Lisa Trulaske is stunned and delighted to discover detailed plans for her garden in St. Louis, prepared by the world-renowned designer Russell Page. At left is Garden Conservancy President and CEO James Brayton Hall, and at right is Christopher Woodward, the museum's president. Photo: Nora Gurvich

His legacy also endures in private residences like the Trulaske home in St. Louis.

A Hidden Hardscape

Page's plan called for a horizontal garden of eight rectangular parterres separated by bluestone paths. He designed the main axis to terminate in a series of steps leading to the reflecting pool.

Excited and inspired, Lisa reached out to her

good friend Mary Morgan. Deeply knowledgeable about gardening, Morgan taught Lisa about the importance of the discovery, and stepped in to lead the charge on the restoration. None of it would have happened, Lisa says, without Morgan's expertise and willingness to teach her about Page and the magic of gardens.

Lisa began reading everything she could about Page's legacy. She learned about his life and his personal style, right down to his signature white Gucci shoes.



As they started restoring the garden, the Trulaskes followed one guiding thought: “What would Russell do?”

By 2014, they had restored the garden exactly as the Russell Page plan indicated.

A New Discovery

Lisa continued learning and exploring garden preservation as a member of the Garden Conservancy Society of Fellows and the Board of Directors, which she joined this year.

In May, she took part in the Society of Fellows tour in London, visiting the Chelsea Flower Show and touring Munstead Wood, Gertrude Jekyll’s historic home in Surrey, among other attractions. Toward the end of the activity-filled tour came a visit to the Garden Museum.

An oasis of green space in busy Lambeth, South London, the museum celebrates the art, design and history of gardens and gardening through a lively program of events and exhibitions. The museum’s Archive of Garden Design provides access to the working records of leading British garden designers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Its Russell Page collection includes plans and drawings from around the world.

Lisa initially hesitated to go. Because of a mishap that had occurred with her own Russell Page document, she was troubled by a sense of embarrassment at visiting such a venerated archive. The original drawing had gone missing, and she had only copies.

Fortunately, she pressed ahead. The group enjoyed an exhibition, Cecil Beaton’s Garden Party, and received a warm welcome from Museum Director Christopher Woodward, Deputy Director Sarah Hardy, Archivist Rob Hillman, and other staff. As the team began spreading out papers, Lisa looked down and froze.

“My heart just stops,” she recalls of the moment. “I get chills. I’m looking at the design of my house, and all the gardens Russell designed. I’m looking at 15 huge designs of my property.”

This was Page’s detailed vision for the garden. He had listed the plants to be used. He had identified the trees across the street. Lisa was stunned.

The staff was surprised, too—and delighted by Lisa’s reaction.

In advance of the visit, Hillman had searched the Russell Page collection for “St. Louis,” aware that Lisa owned a garden designed by Page. The search returned three files;

one for Missouri Botanical Garden, and two for private clients. It seemed a long shot, but Hillman retrieved the plans anyway.

Lo and behold, it was “a magical moment,” he recalls, “as Lisa recognized the final file as her own garden, and even more magically spotted similarities between Page’s original designs and her own work on the site since. Page talked sometimes about the aspect of inevitability that a good garden design would have—well, there it is!”

For the Garden Museum, the moment underscored the importance of its Archive of Garden Design, opened in 2019. “The archive was set up to reflect that gardens vanish or change with their owners over time,” says Sarah Hardy, the museum’s Deputy Director. “We aspire to preserve for future generations the gardens that inspire us today.”

For Lisa, it’s a second fortunate discovery. The plant lists will be used for the quadrants of the Russell Page garden and for surrounding areas of the garden.

“Now I know. I know ‘what Russell would do,’” Lisa says.

Stewarding, and Sharing, a Garden

Day to day, Lisa is appreciating how her garden adapts to changes through the seasons and shifts in weather. “The world is crazy but look at what nature does. It’s adapting,” she observes. A green and white palette predominates, and the garden is especially magical during tulip season. Meanwhile, the Trulaskes are working with the Chicago-based landscape architect Douglas Hoerr on the expansion and redesign of the outer gardens.

Lisa and Steve share a sense that as stewards of a Russell Page garden, it’s their duty to bring back this natural work of art. They take the responsibility seriously and happily.

“The story doesn’t seem to end,” Lisa adds. “This garden changed our lives—and will continue to do so.”

Lisa has shared the garden with the Garden Club of America, the Garden Club of St. Louis, and the Garden Conservancy, and has found joy in seeing people embrace the garden and ask questions. The Garden Club of St. Louis is documenting the garden for submission to the Smithsonian’s Archive of American Gardens.

“Gardens are natural works of art,” she says. “They need attention and creativity. They do require work, but that work is not done alone. It’s teamwork and community effort that makes our garden thrive.”



Fellows at Sudeley Castle during the tour of the Cotswolds and London.

Join the Society of Fellows: Exclusive Garden-Study Tours and Events Await

The **Society of Fellows** is a distinguished and committed group of garden enthusiasts, professionals, and philanthropists from across the United States who provide vital support for the Conservancy’s preservation, Open Days, and education programs. In appreciation, the Conservancy extends exclusive invitations to garden-study tours that showcase gardens and landscapes unique to destinations in the United States and abroad. These unique experiences offer a chance to learn directly from leading horticulturists, designers, and historians, all while enjoying gracious hospitality.

This summer, the Fellows’ exclusive **Garden History Master Class Tour** through the Cotswolds and London was an unforgettable journey. We explored traditional gardens, culminating in a special visit to Highgrove, the King’s private estate. We also had the rare opportunity to see Gertrude Jekyll’s legendary **Munstead Wood**, a site not open to the public. The tour continued in vibrant London with a visit to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, expanding our appreciation for Britain’s rich gardening heritage.

Another standout experience was our journey to Quebec’s Charlevoix region to explore the world-famous garden of our founder, Frank Cabot—**Les Quatre Vents**. This visit was a meaningful way to connect with the Garden Conservancy’s founding vision and mission. The tour also included a memorable private reception and a festive locally-sourced dinner, fostering a deep sense of connection.

By becoming a Society of Fellows member, you’ll gain access to these extraordinary opportunities and play a crucial role in our efforts to preserve America’s most significant gardens for future generations.

Ready to deepen your connection to the world of gardens? Join the Society of Fellows today. Visit gardenconservancy.org/joinfellows to learn more and become a member.



Chelmsford Joins the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens

We're thrilled to share that Chelmsford, the home and gardens of Garden Conservancy Board Member Alease Fisher Tallman and her husband, Paul, has been selected for inclusion in the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens, recognizing the preservation of Chelmsford's early 20th-century landscape design and the dedicated stewardship of its current owners.

The Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens safeguards the ephemeral history of American gardens. It provides a visual and documentary record of evolving landscape design and horticultural practices across the nation. This collection is an essential resource for researchers, historians, and designers studying the rich legacy of landscape architecture and garden culture in the United States.

Gardens are inherently transient; plants grow, seasons change, and designs can be altered or lost over time. The Archives of American Gardens play a crucial role by documenting these spaces using photographs, plans, drawings, and written descriptions. This comprehensive approach ensures that artistic, historical, and botanical aspects of American gardens are preserved.

Chelmsford's Contribution to the Collection

Chelmsford's inclusion adds a significant record to this national archive. Its well-preserved early 20th-century landscape design offers insights into the period's horticultural trends and design philosophies. The garden boasts a storied past with contributions from notable landscape luminaries such as Warren Manning (master plan, 1910), Charles Gillette (landscape architect, 1910-1942), Bryant Fleming

(landscape architect, 1920-1925), and Phillip Watson (garden designer, 1998). The detailed documentation of Chelmsford illustrates how a significant estate has been maintained and adapted over time while retaining its historical integrity.

Alease and Paul have meticulously preserved and enhanced Chelmsford, driven by Alease's deep connection to gardening and the discovery of a "treasure trove of landscape plans" in the basement, including an original watercolor of Manning's master plans. This allowed them to adhere to Manning's nature-centric approach ensuring an informal style that complements the rambling McKim, Mead, and White house. Their initial projects included uncovering walking trails and planting thousands of ferns along a river gorge. They've also added personal touches like a dogwood grove and cheerful blue hydrangeas, while continuing to evolve the garden with additions like a grand boxwood parterre, narrowed perennial beds, and new stone pathways. Their stewardship preserves Chelmsford's historic design, making it a vibrant hub for family, friends, and charitable events.

Exploring the Archives of American Gardens

The Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens provides a unique window into the history of American landscapes. For anyone interested in garden history, landscape design, or horticulture, the collection offers a wealth of information to explore.

To learn more about the diverse holdings within the Garden Club of America Collection, you can explore the Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens online at gardens.si.edu/collections.



Top: A historic photo of the naturalistic grand staircase—composed of stone riser and treads with grass landings—circa 1914 and taken by renowned photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston. Bottom: Aerial view of the boxwood parterre and circular driveway at the entrance to the house, photographed by Neil Landino. The parterre is planted with one thousand Winter Gem boxwoods and was installed in 1998.

Opposite: Looking west across the frog pond through the folly of antique ruins. Photo: Chris Nichols.



Restoration of Greenwood Gardens' Historic Cascade Fountain Nears Completion

As a proud preservation partner of Greenwood Gardens, the Garden Conservancy is excited to witness the ongoing restoration of its majestic Cascade fountain, a centerpiece of the enduring beauty and historical significance of this remarkable 28-acre public garden in Short Hills, NJ. This ambitious project, set to be completed this fall, revitalizes a century-old masterpiece and represents the intricate work of garden preservation.

The Garden Conservancy collaborated with Greenwood Gardens to transform a cherished private estate into a vibrant public resource by conducting a feasibility study, directly managing the gardens, providing strategic guidance and resources, and fostering public appreciation for landscape design and exceptional gardens.

The Cascade, a unique adaptation of a 17th-century Baroque design by Carlo Maderno, has always been a focal point of Greenwood Gardens' Arts and Crafts style. Its strategic location beneath the East Terrace offers a breathtaking vista, extending to the 1,200 acres of the adjacent South Mountain Reservation. "The restoration of this iconic symbol of Greenwood's rich history will transform the visitor experience," states Louise Moos, Chair of the Board of Trustees at Greenwood Gardens.

The story of Greenwood Gardens is one of enduring vision and tireless stewardship, deeply intertwined with the Blanchard family. Peter P. Blanchard III, who passed away in 2022, grew up on the property and worked closely with the Garden Conservancy for two decades. Along with his wife, Sofia, he pursued his father's dream of preserving Greenwood for public enjoyment. The restoration of the Cascade fountain was one of Peter's many goals, reflecting his deep understanding and appreciation for the delicate harmony between humanity and the natural world.

Left: The magnificent Day Era Cascade on the East Axis, circa 1924. From inside the mansion, Pauline Day would look out over the East Axis from her bedroom window and enjoy the garden views, while Joseph Day could push a button on control panels "and the lacy falls of the seven veils" sprang into life. Right: Construction crews are working on the renovation of the fountain in 2025.

Meticulous Restoration and Public Engagement

After two years of meticulous study and testing, the design team, led by Allan Summers of Robinson Anderson Summers Landscape Architects and general contractor Hobbs Incorporated, determined that much of the original structure could be preserved. This commitment to retaining the fountain's historic integrity, while integrating modern advancements, aligns perfectly with the Garden Conservancy's preservation philosophy. The project includes structural repairs, the installation of modern plumbing to reestablish the mesmerizing cascade, the restoration and re-mounting of original Rookwood tiles, and the thoughtful addition of new ornamental horticulture displays that will frame the fountain.

Visitors to Greenwood Gardens this season have the extraordinary opportunity to observe this intricate process firsthand, as the garden remains open to the

public throughout the construction. This transparency allows for a deeper understanding of the dedication and craftsmanship involved in bringing such a complex structure back to life.

"At a total cost of \$2.7 million, Greenwood has so far quietly raised 90 percent of the total needed from generous donors as of July 2025," notes Abby O'Neill, Executive Director of Greenwood Gardens. The Garden Conservancy commends Greenwood Gardens for their successful fundraising efforts and their unwavering dedication to this significant undertaking.

Once the restoration is complete, the revitalizing sight and sound of water flowing down the Cascade will once again enchant visitors, uniting the garden's rich past with its vibrant future.

For more information on Greenwood Gardens and to plan your visit, please go to greenwoodgardens.org.







Un-Development: Metabolic Studio Blends Art and Research for a Healthier Los Angeles

Can urban landscapes heal themselves? Can art drive environmental restoration? Anyone interested in these questions is invited this October when Metabolic Studio, an interdisciplinary art and research hub, hosts a Garden Master Series program called “Un-Development” on Tuesday, October 21, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The program includes a tour led by founder Lauren Bon, a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow in Fine Arts, along with Metabolic Studio team members. Bon’s practice demonstrates self-sustaining and self-diversifying systems, fostering exchanges that help regenerate life.

Metabolic Studio is a living laboratory, located in downtown Los Angeles adjacent to the Los Angeles River. It is actively dedicated to soil regeneration, seed preservation, and bioremediation, working to mitigate the sixth mass extinction by reactivating buried landscapes. The studio’s mission is to address critical social and environmental issues through art interventions. This principle guides their work, which often focuses on water, land use, and energy, seeking to redefine relationships between humans, non-humans, and living systems.

Among their projects is *Bending the River*, which reclaims a portion of LA River water, channels it through a native wetland treatment, and redistributes it to local parks.

Another undertaking, FarmLab, explores the connection between art, ecology, and community. Lauren Bon and Farmlab created *Junker Gardens*, using the shells of cars as mobile deployable gardens for use in distressed urban environments in Los Angeles. The gardens grow from the engine cavities, cabs, flatbeds, and trunks of scrap vehicles. Conjuring new ways to integrate organic life into an auto-centric built environment, the wheeled vehicles are still mobile when pushed or towed.

The studio’s work began in 2005 with *Not a Cornfield*, which transformed a 32-acre industrial site into a living sculpture of corn, highlighting land regeneration, water management, and public space.

Tickets for Un-Development are \$50 for Garden Conservancy members; \$70 for the general public and can be purchased at gardenconservancy.org/events.

Lauren Bon and Farmlab created *Junker Gardens*, using scrapped vehicles as mobile deployable gardens for use in distressed urban environments in Los Angeles.

Anne Spencer Garden Documentary Premieres in DC; More Screenings Planned for '26

The Garden Conservancy premiered *Earth, I Thank You: The Garden and Legacy of Anne Spencer* on May 4 at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. This 35-minute documentary explores the historic garden of Harlem Renaissance poet, teacher, librarian, and civil rights advocate Anne Spencer, highlighting the cultural significance of the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum in Lynchburg, VA.

Michelle Commander, Smithsonian Museum's Deputy Director, and Robert Balentine, Garden Conservancy Chairman, welcomed attendees. Torey Carter-Conneen, CEO of the American Society of Landscape Architects, provided opening remarks.

Following the screening, Pamela Governale, the Garden Conservancy's Director of Preservation, introduced Dr. Carlyn Ferrari, author, Spencer scholar, and Assistant Professor of English at Seattle University, who moderated a panel discussion. Panelists included Brent Leggs, Executive Director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and Senior Vice President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Dr. Evie Shockley, Zora Neale Hurston Distinguished Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing & Writers House, Rutgers University; Shaun Spencer-Hester, Executive Director of the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum; filmmakers David and Michael Udris of Udris Film; and James Brayton Hall, President and CEO of the Garden Conservancy.

James Brayton Hall remarked, "We were thrilled by the enormously exciting response to the film. The audience appreciated learning about Anne Spencer's incredible garden and legacy. Anne Spencer's garden is not only a deeply personal and poetic expression of place—it is a powerful example of why gardens matter."

The Garden Conservancy plans additional screenings in 2026.

Kate Cordsen, a Garden Conservancy board member, is the film's Executive Producer. The film was made possible by the Suzanne and Frederic Rheinstein Fund for Documentary Films.



Clockwise from upper left: Kate Cordsen, Shaun Spencer-Hester, and James Brayton Hall; Anne Spencer in her garden; the panel discussion after the film screening; the garden today.

Join us in honoring Madison Cox at San Francisco Fall Show Luncheon on October 17

Join the Garden Conservancy for a truly special event at the San Francisco Fall Show on October 17. This year, we're honored to host a benefit luncheon celebrating the renowned garden designer, author, and lecturer **Madison Cox**.

Enjoy this exquisite afternoon at the Festival Pavilion of the Fort Mason Center for the Arts & Culture in San Francisco, all while supporting a vital cause. Your attendance directly contributes to the **Suzanne and Frederic Rheinsteinst Fund for Documentary Films**, which broadens our understanding of gardens as crucial cultural legacies. This fund has already produced five impactful documentaries, including a recent one celebrating the garden of Harlem Renaissance poet Anne Spencer, which premiered at the National Museum of African American History & Culture.

Raised in California, Cox moved to Paris at the age of 20 to study his craft, eventually becoming the first American to design a garden at



the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show in 1997. His passion extends to lecturing globally and authoring numerous influential books on garden design, including *Private Gardens of Paris* and *Majorelle: A Moroccan Oasis*. Today, Cox presides over the internationally renowned Foundation Jardin Majorelle in Marrakech, cementing his legacy in the world of horticulture.

The Garden Conservancy is delighted to continue its cultural partnership with the San Francisco Fall Show, the leading international art, antiques, and design fair on the West Coast. Don't miss this unique opportunity to connect with fellow garden enthusiasts and honor a legend in landscape design.

For advance tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and benefits, please contact Susan Kenny at skenny@gardenconservancy.org or 845.424.6500 or visit gardenconservancy.org.

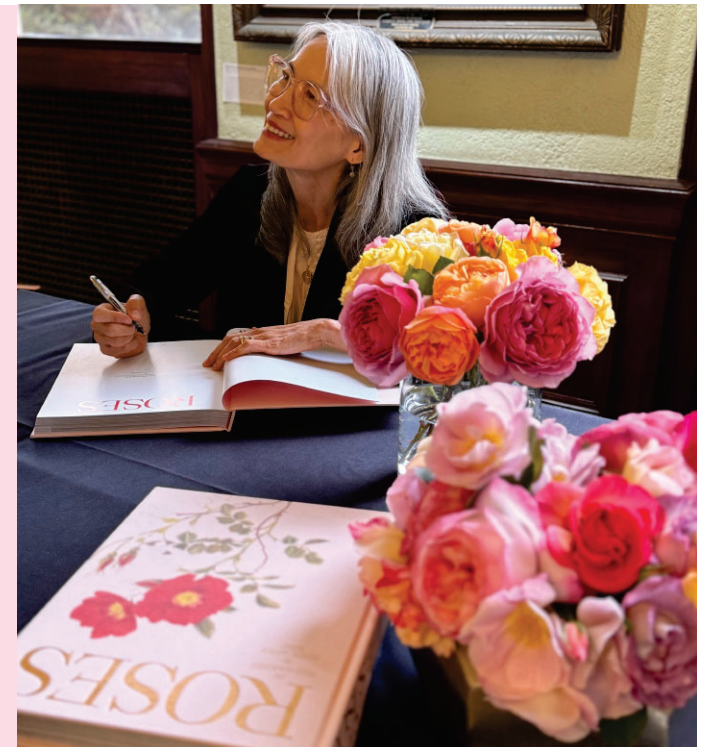
Ngoc Minh Ngo's "Roses in the Garden" Tour Concludes After Captivating Audiences Nationwide

The Garden Conservancy's 2025 National Speaking Tour, featuring celebrated photographer Ngoc Minh Ngo, successfully concluded this summer after a series of engaging conversations across the country. Drawing from her newest book, *Roses in the Garden* (Rizzoli), Ngo invited guests on a global journey through stunning rose gardens, and her own personal story as a Vietnamese refugee pursuing a passion for roses and photography.



Ngoc began the tour with the Daniels Family Garden Lecture at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, FL, joined by Garden Conservancy President and CEO James Brayton Hall. She continued with events at The Ebell of Los Angeles, with landscape architect and Garden Conservancy Board Member Joseph Marek; Filoli Historic House & Garden in Woodside, CA; New York School of Interior Design; Chicago Botanic Garden, and Missouri Botanical Garden.

Left: Ngoc Minh Ngo with landscape architect and Garden Conservancy Board Member Joseph Marek at The Ebell of Los Angeles on May 6. Right: Ngo signing copies of her book.





The Garden Conservancy

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Detroit Garden Weekend in June attracted hundreds of garden enthusiasts to Open Days, Digging Deeper, and Garden Masters Series events around the Motor City.

Not a member? Join us!

Whether you prefer to visit other people's gardens, cultivate your own, or a combination of both, the Garden Conservancy offers membership opportunities to learn, explore and be inspired!

Become a Garden Conservancy member and join a growing national community passionate about gardens and the essential role they play in our lives. Membership connects you to all we do through exclusive member benefits, including complimentary credits redeemable for Open Days or Virtual Talks, member pricing on all events, Conservancy publications, and more. Memberships start at just \$50 and last a full year!

Visit gardenconservancy.org/memberships
or call 845.424.6500 to join today!

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