

Matthaei Botanical gardens
and Nichols arboretum
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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**Matthaei Botanical Gardens
& Nichols Arboretum**
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caring for nature, enriching life

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and Nichols arboretum

Matthaei-Nichols: Setting Goals



The first of our goals was to increase collaborations within the University

Arb visitors enjoy a fall day in Nichols Arboretum last September during the New Millennium Kite Festival. The festival, a campus-community collaboration, kicked off the U-M Center for Chinese Studies 50th anniversary and brought together multiple units from across campus, including Center for Chinese Studies and Confucius Institute with support from the Office of the President, Alumni Association, College of Engineering, Stearns Collection, Office of University Development, College of LSA, Ross School of Business, University Musical Society, School of Art & Design, Arts at Michigan, and International Institute.

So, how are we doing?

Last year, Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum went through a major planning process to think about our future. We thought long and hard about our strengths, challenges, and opportunities and came up with a game plan for the next three years. Now that we're a year into that plan, it's a good time to stop and ask, how are we doing?

Our first goal was to increase collaborations within the University. We continue to engage a broad spectrum of faculty and students from the natural sciences to engineering, architecture, arts, and humanities. This past year, we hosted classes in plant biology, general ecology, conservation biology, and practical botany as well as classes in architecture, museum studies, drawing, engineering, environmental ethics, and sustainability. As a way of building stronger relationships with faculty, we've created a new program of "faculty associates" for which some 27 faculty have signed up so far.

In terms of student involvement, we run the gamut from casual use of the Arb by students as a place to take a break from their studies to hundreds who show up to volunteer in various capacities. These include students participating in service learning opportunities

through University courses, environmental organizations, and professional and honorary societies. We also have a year-round presence of student workers, including 32 interns last summer, 37 work-study students this fall, and five resident student caretakers. We have two student groups—the newly formed Arb Ambassadors and our existing Cultivating Community, with its emphasis on food systems.

Our second goal is to expand our leadership in environmental conservation and restoration. Grants from the Sustain our Great Lakes Program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) are making it possible to complete work, respectively, on inventories and habitat management of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) and on our native plant communities. And we're raising funds for our planned Great Lakes Garden, which will be a unique showcase for the special plants found throughout the ecosystems of Michigan and the Great Lakes region in general.

Our third goal is to refine and enhance our horticultural collections and garden spaces such as the Alexandra Hicks Herb Knot Garden, the Peony Garden, and the new display home and studio for our treasured bonsai and penjing collection.

Finally, our fourth goal is to build innovative outreach programs for connecting people with nature through a robust program of community education offerings for children and adults. Capitalizing on our rich relationship with a variety of conservation, plant, and garden societies, we have transformed our calendar to showcase the variety of programs being offered at Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum whether by us or by our partners. This fall, we collaborated with local chapters of the Wild Ones, Michigan Botanical Club, and the Washtenaw Audubon Society, and with the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Program in the Environment to bring author Douglas Tallamy to Ann Arbor for a special lecture on the impact of introduced plant species.

We make education at the University of Michigan a culturally rich experience, reminding students and community members of the value of nature in their lives, exposing them to innovative practices in land stewardship and conservation, and promoting an ethic of environmental responsibility. On the following pages, you'll see how we are putting our plans into action. We hope you'll join us as we move forward!

Bob Grese, Director

Bob Grese

Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum

On the Cover



The front of the annual report features an interior shot of "Hair, Spikes, Cattail, and Turkeyfoot." The attention-grabbing structure was installed by U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning Professor Vivian Lee and her student team in 2010 at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Matthaei-Nichols offer ideal venues for U-M faculty and students to display cutting-edge architecture, art, and installations.

Professor Lee's design won the 2010 R+D award from *Architect: The Magazine of the American Institute of Architects*. The structure, made of thatch and natural materials, looked forward in its use of digital fabrication while remaining firmly rooted in the tradition of assembly.



Left and above: "Hair, Spikes, Cattail, and Turkeyfoot." Photographs © 2010 Vivian Lee



Student Power at Matthaei-Nichols

Students engage with Matthaei-Nichols in numerous ways. Nearly every student is familiar with Nichols Arboretum as a place to unwind. But we also draw hundreds of young scholar-volunteers. These include students participating in service learning opportunities through courses like Ecological Issues or Environmental Ethics, environmental organizations such as EnAct, professional and honorary societies such as Theta Tau and Omega Chi Epsilon, and religious groups like St. Mary's Student Parish. Summer 2011, for example, saw our student volunteer group Cultivating Community, which engages with food systems and how they operate, working on a project with Focus Hope.

Left: Students from Alpha Pi Omega participate in a Service Palooza Eco-Workday in the Arb. **Below:** A group of student interns and Matthaei-Nichols' staff pause for a portrait between their many summer projects.

Immersive Internships Fuel Creative Learning

An exuberant crew of student workers—including 32 interns last summer, 37 work-study students this fall, and five resident student caretakers—passes through Matthaei-Nichols each year. Every spring and summer our natural areas, gardens, and corridors come alive as the student interns begin their “terms.” For the summer interns, we are the very definition of immersive learning. Each student is given a special project or projects to work on, alone or in a group. Wherever they work, our students are given real-world projects that pay back richly in terms of education, portfolio building, and more. It doesn't end there, however. Matthaei-Nichols' staff also benefits greatly from the interns' fresh approaches, hard work, and new ideas. A definite educational win-win!



The Bonsai and Penjing Garden at Matthaei



Work has begun on the new bonsai and penjing garden at Matthaei. The garden, located behind and west of the Conservatory, will feature studio and exhibit space and allow for the display of more of our collection.

The bonsai collection began in 1977 with a gift of core specimens from the estate of Dr. Morton Seevers. Dr. Seevers was the former director of the University of Michigan Department of Pharmacology and an ardent bonsai lover. Over the years we've added more trees to the collection, which now includes more than 40 plants.

The new garden will allow us to feature many more trees than previously possible. Additionally, a working bonsai studio will be integrated into the garden. In this space professionals and volunteers will do the work of maintaining these special trees in full view of the public. This will be an exceptional educational opportunity for the public to interact with knowledgeable bonsai people.

Above: An artist's depiction of the new bonsai and penjing garden at Matthaei, which will include studio and exhibit space.

Leadership in Environmental Conservation and Restoration



our four properties. And our planned Great Lakes Garden will be a unique showcase for the special plants found around the shores, prairies, and woodlands of Michigan and the Great Lakes region.

A key goal at Matthaei-Nichols is a carefully planned program of environmental conservation and restoration. With the help of a team of Great Lakes scientists and a grant from the Sustain our Great Lakes Program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, we are continuing the second year of an inventory of our resident—and rare—population of eastern massasauga rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*), and we're restoring and managing the mosaic of wetlands, open fields, and woodlands used by the massasauga. Thanks to special funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS), we have begun a botanical inventory and mapping of the native plant communities found on



Left: An eastern massasauga rattlesnake on the property at Matthaei. **Above:** The showy lady's slipper orchid, which is native to Michigan.

donors at the \$250 and above level for fiscal year 2011 (July 1, 2010–June 30, 2011). In addition to the donors listed below, our Friends membership level is near 2,000—an all-time high. (Please note that with the exception of cumulative lifetime supporters, endowments, and planned giving and bequests, the following list reflects membership and gifts only during fiscal 2011.)

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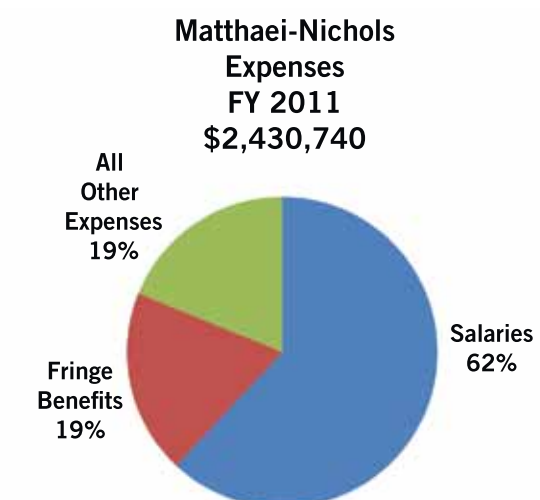
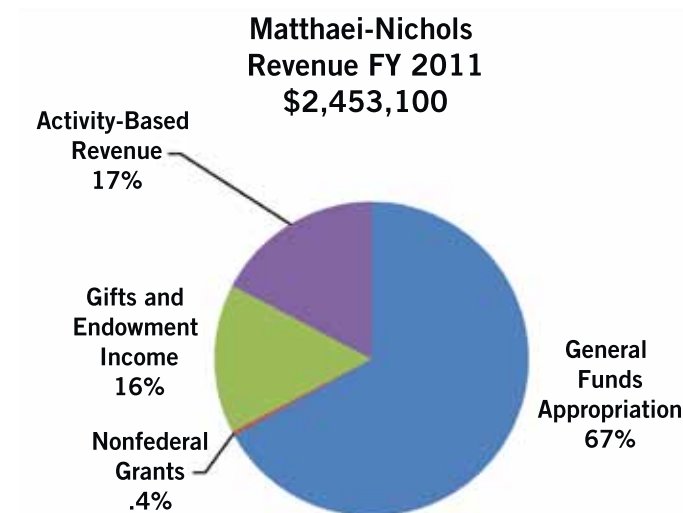
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