

Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society
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Can you dive into the history of the NPBGS?

The Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society (NPBGS) was founded in early 1998 by NDSU horticulturist Dr. Chiwon Lee and a group of dedicated plant enthusiasts. We received our non-profit 501 (c)(3) status in 1999, and we have a nine-member volunteer Board of Directors who oversee the organization's work in developing and operating the Northern Plains Botanic Garden.

In 2006 NPBGS negotiated an agreement with the Fargo Park District so that NPBGS could grow and develop a botanic garden at Yunker Park in north Fargo. We next built our 3-season hoop greenhouse in 2007, which has served as our home of operations on site for garden development. In subsequent years, NPBGS created a number of display gardens, interconnecting accessible pathways, a grapevine pergola with patio, and a distinctly iconic Japanese Gate which anchors the south side of the park along 28th Avenue N. We revived the alphabet garden into the Children's Garden which includes the perimeter alphabet display beds, the interior sensory section, a fairy garden, and a kids' activity zone.

NPBGS revised its master plan and negotiated a new agreement with the Fargo Park District in 2018 so that future development would be consistent with the National Park Service's land use terms. Work then started on the Japanese Dry Garden, which is located south of the Japanese Gate. It features a dry, rock-lined creek bed with raked gravel that is crossed by a low wooden pedestrian bridge. This garden is the harbinger for a future Japanese Garden, to be located north of the gate, which is being planned.

In 2019 we began construction of the Edible Forest, our largest display garden project to date, which includes native fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and pollinator-friendly perennial plants which were planted in the past two years. A deer fence and in-ground irrigation system help to protect and grow this new display garden. In 2020 we improved the pathways in the Children's Garden with packed aggregate, and interconnected the Children's Garden with the Edible Forest. Pathway improvements continued in 2021 – 2022. A flagstone pathway approach was installed in front of the Japanese Gate, and dwarf coniferous shrubs and azaleas were planted in front in the Japanese Dry Garden. A pathway bridge over the concrete culvert drain was constructed to connect the greenhouse to the Edible Forest south entrance.

NPBGS followed its plan in 2022 to diversity plant species in the Woodland Garden with plantings of numerous shrubs and understory plants. The Japanese Garden Capital Campaign was initiated as a silent campaign via internal fundraising and grant writing in anticipation of initiating Phase 2 construction of the Japanese Garden north of the Japanese Gate.

When are the "busier" months of the year?

Our busiest time for visitors is the growing season, June through August, when plants are

actively growing and flowering. Local visitors enjoy using the walking paths from spring through fall.

What is something that you believe more people should be aware of about the Botanic Garden?

The Northern Plains Botanic Garden is free and open to the public during daylight hours. There are gardens to explore with accessible walking paths, seating areas, picnic tables, and the public garden gates are open during the growing season, from April through October. There are no public restrooms at this time.

Our programmatic focus has been toward developing the botanic garden in the past few years. We hope to renew our educational programs, including workshops and public speakers in the future. We do host garden tours upon request during the growing season.

We have online resources available to the public, including our

Edible Forest Guide:

https://www.npbqs.org/files/uqdf427fb_73df2bdab4e04d9197af1cee937019b4.pdf?index=true



Virtual Garden Tour: <https://tours.bemorecolorful.com/v/3pzO9X6JqM2>



The botanic garden operates through public support. Grant funds have helped leverage our various garden and construction projects, but we rely on public donations, members, and volunteers for the vast majority of our operational support. Like most non-profits, we seek more donor and volunteer support. For more information on how to get involved:

<https://npbqs.org> or contact us at info@npbotanicgarden.com .