

Synopsis of the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society (NPBGS)

History:

- 1998: NPBGS was founded in April, at the initiative of Dr. Chiwon Lee, NDSU horticulturalist, and a group of motivated local people. Dr. Lee was the founding President of the Society, serving from March 1999-March 2002
- 1999: Agreement with the Neuropsychiatric Research Institute for use of facilities space in exchange for care of Atrium plants; negotiated by Marilyn West.
- (2005?): Dollie Becklund proposed to West Acres that NPBGS do their interior and exterior plant scapes designs; West Acres was not ready at that time for an agreement.
- 2006, April: A Memorandum of Understanding with the Fargo Park District to develop gardens at the 52 acre Yunker Park site was negotiated by Dollie Becklund and Jim Larson. Grant for a Greenhouse funded by FM Area Foundation.
- 2007: Spring groundbreaking for Greenhouse; Greenhouse completed in fall.
- 2008: Japanese Gate built; Rain Garden and Woodland Garden developed.
- 2009: Board secured Sadafumi Uchiyama as Builder for the future Japanese Garden; Earth and Rock moved to site; Monsanto donated a 30' x 80' greenhouse.
- 2010: Sadafumi Uchiyama presented Japanese Garden grading plan to NPBGS in Fargo; Houston Engineering did a site survey for grading.
- 2011: Grant written by Jill Brandt to Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust for staff support was funded; Board hired Jacqueline Williams as contractual Ex. Dir. (fall). Edible Forest plans initiated by Arboretum Committee. Japanese Garden Case Statement and Business Plan completed. *Path for Educational Garden Access* was completed with \$2,500 funding from FM Area Foundation grant. *Alerus Financial Butterfly Garden* named with donation from Alerus Financial.
Two Endowment Funds established: *Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society Tax Credit Fund* and *NPBGS Japanese Garden Tax Credit Fund* (via Heartland Trust).
Hummingbird Garden was created.
- 2012: Edible Forest Plan to develop a section of the Arboretum (along 32nd Ave. N) was halted when NPBGS discovered that Yunker Park land was part of a City of Fargo land exchange that resulted in the National Park Service having a lien over future development. An impasse in negotiations with the Fargo Park District and the National Park Service over future land development issues occurred; FM Area Foundation grant for Edible Forest was redirected to construction of a future *Living Fence*. The storage trailer was sold; Wooden Pergola with Patio was constructed in its place; 100 year-old grape vines planted. *Wisteria* Pergola Bench was constructed. Ex. Dir. Jackie Williams and John Zvirovski negotiated an agreement with West Acres for NPBGS' plant scape interior and exterior services.
- 2013: The Okayama Japan – America Cultural Exchange Society (JACES) gifts NPBGS with a Hina Doll Collection. NPBGS hosts JACES representatives in September, plant commemorative Sargent Cherry trees in front of the Japanese Gate (see plaque - Japanese Gate). Hina Dolls displayed at West Acres.
- 2014: *Living Fence* constructed. NPBGS considers Moorhead Power Plant site as potential land for a future Japanese Garden.

- 2015: Land search for other possible garden sites was ongoing. The concept of scattered sites throughout the city was considered. There were exploratory discussions with the Red River Zoo, Trollwood, and a south Fargo land developer. A landowner in Downer, MN offered land. NPBGS presented to the Moorhead City Council a Japanese Garden Plan for the former Moorhead Power Plant site along the Red River, west of Woodlawn Park. Moorhead City Council voted in June in favor of NPBGS developing the site into a Japanese Garden.
- 2016: Negotiations with City of Moorhead for a land lease broke down when the final City agreement offer included rental fees that were overwhelming, and other non-negotiable terms.
- 2017: Board of Directors increased from 4 members to 8 with interim appointments of 4 additional members in September. Board decided to renegotiate with the Fargo Park District for the current Yunker Park site.
- 2018: NPBGS revised and decreased the master plan area, which was then presented to the Fargo Park District. NPBGS negotiated a Concession Agreement with the Fargo Park District (FPD) which was consistent with the National Park Service's land use terms. The FPD Board of Directors voted to accept the new Concession Agreement between NPBGS and the FPD. Japanese style Dry Garden construction began with ground excavation, contouring of the dry creek hills, dry pond lining, construction and installation of a pond bridge, and initial plantings.
- 2019: Edible Forest construction began with installation of a pathway, deer fence, lawn, and below-ground irrigation system. Perennial pollinator beds were created, and some trees were planted in the fall. Most trees and shrubs were planted in 2020, with additional plantings in 2021. Jim Walla wrote the Edible Forest Guide, which was updated in 2021. ND Outdoor Heritage Fund and Fargo Park District Foundation grants, combined, provided about 50% of this project's funding.
- 2020: Accessible Pathways were added to connect the Edible Forest and Children's Garden, as well as the Kiwi Pergola and accessible picnic table, with 50% funding from the FPD Foundation. This project also upgraded pathways in the Children's Garden from bark mulch to compacted aggregate gravel for accessibility.
- 2021: A new pathway between the Woodland Garden and Dry Garden was installed; older garden pathways to and near the greenhouse were amended with more packed aggregate. A Flagstone Pathway was created for the Japanese Gate approach, and the dry pond and creek were lined with stone; support for these two projects was provided by Davis Scott, in memory of his wife, Hazel Moritz Scott. A new path between the greenhouse and Edible Forest was created along with an earthen culvert bridge. NPBGS' website was redesigned for multiple platforms; Instagram was added to our social media presence and is integrated with the website and Facebook page.
- 2022: Initiated fundraising and grant writing for Japanese Garden; re-skinned greenhouse; planted new shrubs, trees, and perennials in Woodland Garden.
- 2023: Phase 2 Construction of Japanese Garden and Chrysanthemum Pathways completed.

Current Status of Organization: In 2024 NPBGS plans to start planting trees, shrubs & perennials in the Japanese Garden. A new Herb Garden will be developed.