

A Botanic Garden for the Nation

THE UNITED STATES BOTANIC GARDEN

*A Botanic Garden for the Nation:
The United States Botanic Garden*

THIS beautifully illustrated book presents the first comprehensive look at the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C. Conceived by the nation's founders as a resource for collecting and studying plants, the U.S. Botanic Garden is closely linked to the history and development of the capital city. Through historical documents and colorful photos, *A Botanic Garden for the Nation* tells an important story about this special place.

The story begins in 1796 with the support of George Washington, who believed a Botanic Garden would be a significant addition to the capital. Along with other early leaders, including Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, Washington understood the value of plants for the health and economic well-being of the nation, a message that still resonates today. Though it took time to achieve Washington's vision, the U.S. Botanic Garden now occupies a prominent location in the heart of the city, where it continues to highlight the critical role of plants in human survival.

Located on the Capitol grounds at the east end of the National Mall, the Botanic Garden Conservatory is perfectly situated to reach out to the public. More than 750,000 visitors a year experience its exciting plant displays, innovative exhibits, and special programs. Through sumptuous photographs, *A Botanic Garden for the Nation* offers a tour of the Conservatory, starting with the formal Garden Court, with its fountains and special flower collections, and continuing through every plant environment, including the lush Jungle, colorful Orchid House, and spare World Deserts. The engaging text explores ecosystems and reveals details about interesting plants and plant collections.

"Windows on the Mall," a chapter written by William C. Allen, architectural historian for the Architect of the Capitol, focuses on the history and design of the Conservatory building, whose

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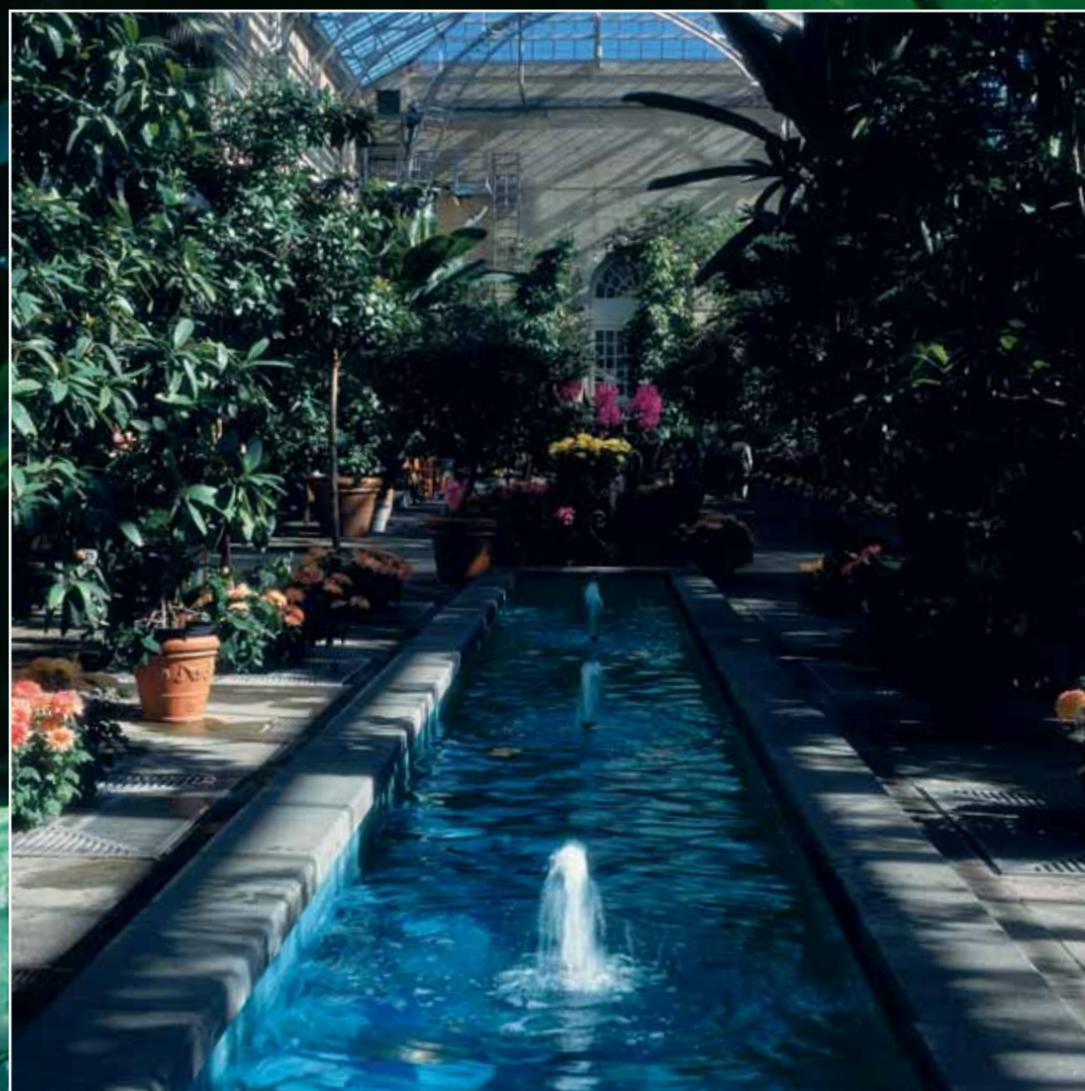
distinctive glass dome makes it a jewel on the National Mall. Newly discovered period photos show the Conservatory in its various incarnations, from the 1860s greenhouse in the shadow of the new Capitol dome, to the Palm House that drew visitors throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The chapter ends with views of the renovation that resulted in the reopening of the state-of-the-art Conservatory in 2001.

From the Garden Primeval to the new National Garden, the U.S. Botanic Garden is a living museum that showcases the beauty and benefits of plants. *A Botanic Garden for the Nation* celebrates the history and the horticultural heritage of this vital institution.

ANNE-CATHERINE FALLEN is a writer and photographer living in Arlington, Virginia. She has written for books, publications, and museum exhibitions on such diverse topics as Gothic architecture, the Everglades ecosystem, and satellite imagery. Her artist book *The Lively Dance* is in the collections of museums and art libraries throughout the U.S. and Europe. As a landscape photographer and gardener, Ms. Fallen has been inspired for many years by the plant collections of the U.S. Botanic Garden.

WILLIAM C. ALLEN has been the architectural historian in the office of the Architect of the Capitol since 1982. His book *History of the United States Capitol: A chronicle of design, construction, and politics* is the definitive work on this iconic building. In addition to his research and writing, Mr. Allen supports preservation and restoration projects undertaken by the Architect's office.

KAREN D. SOLIT was the botanist for the U.S. Botanic Garden when she undertook research that led to the publication of *History of the Botanic Garden, 1816-1991*. Since then she has been a garden writer and the owner of a landscape contracting company. Ms. Solit is currently writing fiction.



ISBN 0-16-076772-5



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