

Production Facility

GREENHOUSES to shelter and propagate plants have been part of the U.S. Botanic Garden since the 1850s, when Congress first appropriated funds for its construction. As the Botanic Garden grew in the shadow of the Capitol, more greenhouses were added to accommodate the expanding collections. When the Botanic Garden was moved the short distance from the center of the Mall to Maryland Avenue in the 1930s, production greenhouses were built adjacent to the Conservatory. By 1956, the greenhouses had deteriorated and Congress authorized their demolition. Plant propagation and storage were relocated to Poplar Point, just two miles away in Anacostia, on land that had been acquired in 1926 for horticultural production purposes. Eventually, 24 greenhouses supported the Botanic Garden and horticultural production for the Capitol complex. In the 1980s, the Poplar Point site was traded to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for construction of a subway station. WMATA, in turn, provided the Botanic Garden with a state-of-the-art greenhouse facility on 25 acres just four miles away. The new Production Facility opened in 1994. With 85,000 feet under glass, it is the largest such facility supporting a botanic garden in the United States. Its computerized environmental controls provide the flexibility to grow a wide variety of plants for public display and to landscape Capitol Hill.

(OPPOSITE)

VENUS' FLYTRAP SEEDLINGS
(*Dionaea muscipula*).

Venus' flytrap seedlings flourish at the Production Facility in preparation for summer display in the Southern Exposure garden.

(ABOVE)

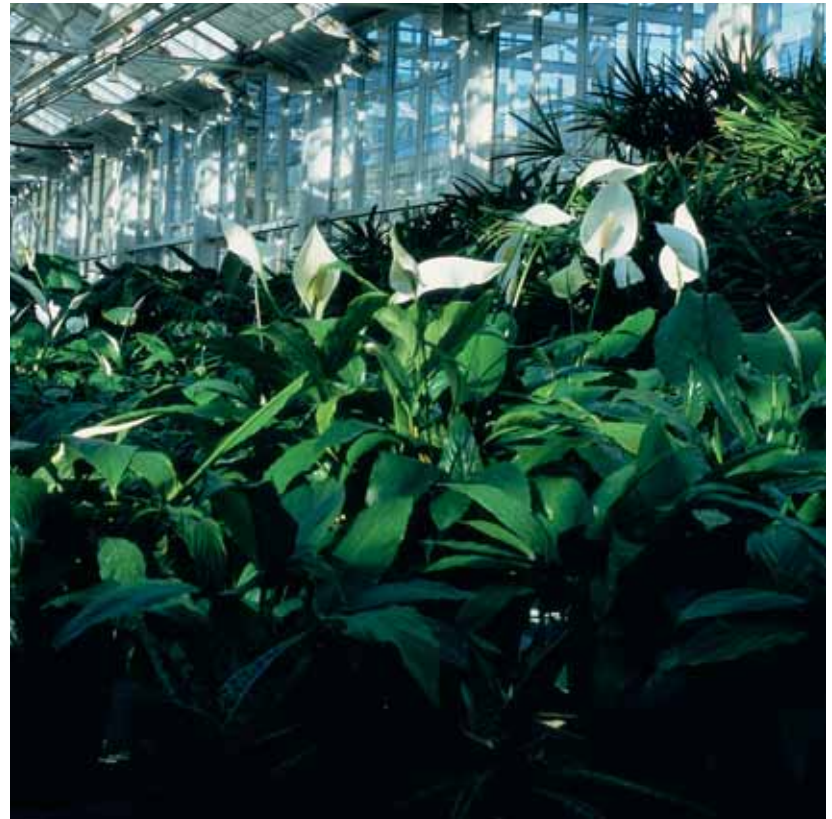
Amorphophallus odoratus.

(RIGHT)

THE PRODUCTION FACILITY
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL





(ABOVE LEFT)
CAMERON ELM
(*Ulmus americana*).

This tiny tree was propagated from a cutting of the Cameron Elm, located on the House side of the U.S. Capitol. The tree was removed in 2004 when decay in the trunk threatened its structural integrity, presenting a public danger. Estimated to be between 125 and 150 years old, the elm was first slated for removal in 1875 when Frederick Law Olmsted was implementing his plan for the Capitol grounds. At that time, Senator Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania stopped the crew from cutting down the tree, which was later named for him. The progeny from this elm and a number of other historic trees now growing at the Production Facility will be replanted on Capitol Hill.

(ABOVE RIGHT AND OPPOSITE)
ROWS OF PLANTS
FOR THE CAPITOL.

Since the nineteenth century, the Botanic Garden has cultivated and provided plants for the beautification of the Capitol complex.

(LEFT)
SEASONAL PLANTS.

Earthstars (*Cryptanthus fosterianus*) at the Production Facility await installation in the annual Christmas extravaganza at the Conservatory. Seasonal exhibits, popular since the early 1900s, require careful planning and extensive cultivation of special plants.

