



United States Botanic Garden

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

USBG Seeks “Sustainability Themed Exhibits” For Summer 2008

Deadline: COB September 28, 2007

Overview

Each year from Memorial Day through Columbus Day, the United States Botanic Garden (USBG) presents temporary exhibits around the Conservatory and in the outdoor gardens. It has become a Washington tradition for office workers, visitors from across the nation and around the world, and Capitol Hill staff to relax or picnic on the Terrace in view of the U.S. Capitol surrounded by beautiful, themed gardens and exhibits.

For 2008, the USBG will invite non-profit organizations; municipal, state, or federal government agencies; and public gardens from across the United States to contribute to this exhibit. On the Conservatory Terrace, each participant will have an area for a garden “room,” a structure, or a demonstration that illustrates or incorporates an aspect of sustainability. In the out door gardens, sculptures, structures, or interpretive panels will be artfully placed to demonstrate or represent sustainability concepts.

The purpose of the exhibits is to provide an informative and attractive demonstration of the design and implementation of sustainable practices as they apply to gardens, garden practices, and living in our landscape more sustainably.

The following summary is designed to answer most questions and to lay out guidelines for participation. Please feel free to contact us if you need additional information. We hope you will consider submitting a proposal!

1. Description of Summer Exhibits:

The USBG mounts summer exhibits that are on display from Memorial Day through Columbus Day weekend each year. The USBG is located on the National Mall adjacent to the U.S. Capitol. The portion of the exhibit on the flagstone terrace surrounding the historic Conservatory is a series of ‘rooms’ that are open and available to the public 24 hours each day. The adjacent National Garden is locked each night and will host sculptures, interpretive structures and sign panels. The

summer exhibit is well publicized and very popular, often drawing more than 250,000 visitors and national media interest.

2. Description and requirements of individual displays:

- a. **Terrace:** The Conservatory Terrace can be divided into a maximum of 12 unique display spaces differing in size, shape, and exposure. Each participant will design and implement a garden, structure, or demonstration that incorporates aspects of sustainable design, technology, and/or construction. Participants will also provide text for interpretive materials for their entry. Each display should include a seating area and shade. Furniture, structures, or plantings (see section 6 below) may be used to provide divisions between the rooms. Unless otherwise arranged, maintenance of the exhibits will be the responsibility of the USBG.
- b. **National Garden:** Sites are available in the National Garden for erecting structures or sculptures that interpret sustainability and demonstrate or provide some aspect of education. Planted containers may be used to provide context for the sculpture or to soften their presence in the landscape. The footprint for the structures should be no larger than 60 sq. ft.
- c. The summer exhibit may be expanded to include sites in **Bartholdi Park** if needed.

3. Location and Site Constraints:

- a. The USBG Conservatory is located at 100 Maryland Avenue SW, across First Street SW from the United States Capitol. A plan view of the Conservatory Terrace showing the approximate locations of exhibit spaces, the National Garden, and Bartholdi Park are attached. All entries will be assigned locations by the USBG. Images of previous summer exhibits are also attached.
- b. The U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory is open to the public 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day of the year; the Conservatory Terrace and Bartholdi Park do not close; and the National Garden closes no later than 7:00pm. Security is provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and follows 24-hr. surveillance protocols established for the U.S. Capitol Complex.
- c. Please consider the following in creating your garden or structure design.
 - i. Daily temperature fluctuations are seasonably variable on the paved terrace and range from 50°F to 105°F with summer days in the low 90s. Summer nights typically remain warm and reflected heat and light from the flagstone paving and limestone façade should be a design consideration.
 - ii. Gardens are typically hand watered as automatic irrigation is not available unless incorporated into your exhibit.
 - iii. Terrace exhibit locations (see attached site map) #1-6 receive full sun most of the day; locations 7-10 receive direct sun until about 1 p.m., indirect sun in the afternoon, and are shaded by the building in late afternoon.
 - iv. Bartholdi Park and the National Garden exhibits will be in full sun.
 - v. On the terrace winds are highly variable although most of the spaces receive some protection from the Conservatory. The corner at locations #6 and #7 typically receives the most wind. There is a very small risk of high winds from hurricanes that travel up the Atlantic Coast. Wind gusts of 70 mph

sometimes occur during thunderstorms. Tall structures should withstand wind and deter climbing.

- vi. Safety is an overriding concern; all designs will be evaluated by our safety officer.

4. The USBG expects that each of the selected participants would provide:

- a. Expertise, design, and construction of an exhibit showcasing a aspects of sustainability, e.g., green roof design and construction, rainwater harvesting and use, solar energy capture for lighting, wind power to pump water, various sustainable gardening practices, water recycling, water wise garden design, or other “green practices.”
- b. Furniture, containers, equipment, or other items that are deemed unique and important to your design.
- c. Plant material that performs well in the heat and humidity of the Washington area. These could be supplied directly by you or through a contract with a local nursery or supplier. The USBG will be glad to assist you in plant selection.
- d. Content for one or more graphic panels that identify the institution and give an overview of its programs, signature features, and what is being demonstrated. USBG needs to review all content for panels. Additional information will be provided on the interpretation during project implementation.
- e. Additional literature, if desired.
- f. Staff to oversee installation and disassembly of the display
- g. Participation in at least one scheduled family day and one educational activity.
- h. One main point of contact and a contact person who will work with our public relations staff.

5. The USBG may be able to supply, if requested:

- a. Table, four chairs, and umbrella for the terrace displays.
- b. Various sizes of planters with trellises
- c. Masonry, terra cotta, faux granite, or wooden containers in a variety of styles, colors, and sizes
- d. Loan of plant material from our permanent collections
- e. Staff from the USBG horticulture and operations divisions to assist in the installation and takedown of the exhibit.
- f. Volunteers and docents to deliver hands on activities at discovery carts that are representative of your programs; your institution will have to assist with training and any specialty items that are required.
- g. One or more scheduled lectures or programs offered by one of your staff and advertised in our Calendar of Events.
- h. Other items you are welcome to specify

6. Schedule: Both construction and dismount will be coordinated and scheduled for each participating institution by the USBG. Construction of the gardens will be from mid-April to mid- May and must be completed no later than 22 May 2007.

Dismount of the exhibit will begin October 14 and must be completed by October 31, 2007.

7. Logistics:

- a. The USBG anticipates the selection of participants by early October with an initial meeting or conference call scheduled thereafter. The USBG exhibit curator will be available to you throughout the planning and installation process to assist with problem solving, design adjustments to your plan, and other details. Your organization may be assigned a secondary USBG staff person to assist in coordination.
- b. Site visits during the process are encouraged. The current exhibits, Celebrating America's Public Gardens, close on Columbus Day.
- c. Logistics for arrival, unloading, and assembly will be determined after participants are selected and depend on the specific requirements. Due to security around the Capitol all incoming trucks will go through a screening process. Shipping directly to the USBG is problematic needs to be carefully coordinated.

8. Proposal Requirements:

Your proposal is a preliminary statement about your plans at this time and need not contain all details. This information will be used to judge the potential of your entry to contribute to the overall success of the exhibit.

- a. **Overview of your Institution** - Provide the name, address, website, mission, and brief description of your institution or organization.
- b. **Point of Contact:** Include the name and contact information for the person who will be responsible for your entry.
- c. **Concept Design and Narrative:** Submit a one-page narrative description of your display plan and include a conceptual drawing or design. Please conform to the requirements specified in section 2.
- d. **Your preferred location:** National Garden or Terrace location. If your preference is based on horticultural needs, please state the justification. There is no guarantee that you will receive the location that you request.
- e. A list of the plants, furniture, containers, or other materials that you hope to borrow from the USBG.
- f. A list of the plants, furniture, objects, or other materials that you propose to supply for your entry.
- g. A brief list or description of any special site requirements (e.g., connection to water or electricity, overhead construction, new masonry, construction of raised beds over the flagstone, etc.).
- h. A basic maintenance plan or overview of what your entry will require for maintenance during the exhibit period.

9. Funding:

The USBG will award each participating institution a \$1000.00 stipend to assist in defraying costs. If your institution would like to participate and can do so only on a cost-share basis, please include in your proposal a budget that shows the total costs to

create your entry and the cost-share plan that you propose. USBG expects that most participants will be able to fund their project.

10. Participant Selection Criteria

The USBG will select participants based on the quality and feasibility of executing the designs. The overall concept is that a visitor to the exhibit will experience a diversity of techniques, innovations, technology, ideas, practices, and designs that make gardening, homes and landscapes more sustainable. Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- a. Clarity of proposal
- b. Feasibility of executing the proposed design
- c. Feasibility of maintaining the garden or structure
- d. Addition of diversity of themes or principles of sustainability
- e. Relevance to private citizens and visitors.

11. Site Visit

We encourage you to visit the USBG to see the current summer exhibit prior to October 8, 2007. Please make an appointment in advance so that appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

12. Deadline: Proposals should be received by COB p.m. EDT, September 28, 2007.

13. Submittal Address: Submit two copies of your proposal by U.S. Postal Service or electronic files in PDF format to:

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