

The IDEA Center for Public Gardens: programmes empowering positive change

Mae Lin Plummer ¹

Abstract

Public gardens must be spaces that put human connection and a sense of belonging at the centre of the organisation if they want to be relevant in an increasingly socially aware and changing society. Public gardens in their broadest sense include botanic, historic, pleasure and community gardens, arboreta, land trusts and parks. As cultural institutions gardens can uplift under-resourced communities around us and expand the identity of who we are and who we serve, without abandoning or shaming historical legacies. We have a responsibility to play our part in righting the harmful and exploitative wrongs of the past that continue to uphold systemic inequities by embracing and embodying the principles of IDEA: inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

The IDEA Center for Public Gardens™ (the Center) was launched in January 2022 as a partnership between Denver Botanic Gardens and the American Public Gardens Association, with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Its aim is to empower public gardens to prioritise and champion the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) within gardens and beyond. Living and working from these can be an incredibly enriching and uplifting experience, and a journey to be celebrated. The Center does this by offering intensive peer-to-peer cohorts to develop practices, fund scholarships and build alliances to create collaborative unity and impact across cultural institutions. A case study is included here and describes how Naples Botanical Garden in Florida, USA, incorporated IDEA principles into its annual theme as a year-round initiative to welcome new audiences and enhance staff inclusion in botanic garden activities. The Center is a call to action and an invitation to help improve the world one change at a time.

Introduction

The IDEA Center for Public Gardens™ (the Center) is empowering institutions to embody the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA). Joy Columbus of Smithsonian Gardens, a participant in the Center's inaugural cohort programme, put it simply: 'We are helping humans care for humans in a better way'.

Awareness of harmful historic narratives around plant knowledge and exploitative

behaviour has been coming to the forefront of our awareness as cultural institutions. It is uncomfortable. It is also a challenge we can overcome. Tracy Qiu is a consultant for the Center and doctoral student researching what it means to decolonise public gardens. She has discovered in the course of her research that the early origins of our modern botanical gardens can be traced from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment and their transition into imperial possession (McCracken,

¹ Mae Lin Plummer is Director of the IDEA Center for Public Gardens, a programme of Denver Botanic Gardens and the American Public Gardens Association.
Address: 909 York Street, Denver, CO 80206, USA.
Email: maelin.plummer@BotanicGardens.org

1997). There is a long history and extensive documentation on the symbiotic relationship between botanical gardens and imperial expansion, such as British colonial efforts in establishing monopolies on plant-based resources like quinine, sugar cane, rubber, tea and sisal² (Brockway, 1979). We can learn from discomfort, be courageous and engage with one another in truthful conversation when we approach solutions together. Taxonomic nomenclature and interpretation are areas where visible and significant strides can be made in relation to horticulture. The language we use and stories we tell are often based on the perspective of western scientists, who position themselves as the source of plant knowledge. The use of language is culturally ingrained in our institutions, but language and stories are also powerful change agents. They are sometimes overlooked because the effort seems too overwhelming or uncomfortable and invites conflict. 'Conflict is an idea trying to rise to the top,' says Dr Thomas Rashad Easley, one of the Center's instructors for the annual cohort programme.

Another area of opportunity in horticulture, and across all institutional departments, is hiring for greater diversity. As diverse as visitors to public gardens may be, our volunteers, staff, leadership and board members often do not represent the diversity of the communities we are in. In a conversation with Phil Douglas, Director of Horticulture at Denver Botanic Gardens, about addressing this challenge, he shared that their department has eliminated the horticultural education or experiential

requirements for horticulture internships (which are paid positions). Anyone who is interested and has attended college or university, in any discipline, can apply and be considered for an internship. This approach creates opportunity for a wider range of candidates who are curious, passionate or interested in horticulture to participate.

The decision was a practical one made by observing the dominant demographics of who has access to the programme and who participates, questioning requirements and then deciding to try something different. It was also the result of the lived experience of the Director of Horticulture. He studied at a technical college and would not have had the opportunity based on the programme requirements. Academic and experiential requirements, while appropriate for certain jobs, were identified as barriers to creating visibility and opportunities for careers in horticulture, especially in a country such as the United States where it is relatively unknown as a career option. Questioning and eliminating certain requirements, policies and practices is an excellent start to breaking down barriers, especially those that uphold exclusivity.

In an exercise facilitated by Dr Easley, cohort participants were guided through a similar process by being asked to share the stories of how they got into their current position. What were the interests, education, work history, community and family that contributed to where they are now? The goal was to expose patterns and identify areas outside of the norm to create opportunities. This is one example of the many relevant thought exercises and conversations that participants experience in the Center's cohort programme. There is tremendous opportunity in a conversation, and a collection of conversations can change the world.

² Some of the oldest British botanic gardens have their origins in the cultivation of plants, often called 'physicks', for the study of plants and the education of medical practitioners. Both Brockway (1979) and McCracken (1997) refer principally to the role that the largest botanic garden in the UK played as a 'guiding force in plant transfers' (Brockway, 1979).

Gardens can be compared to a conversation. The visitor can take a meandering journey through discovery, contrasts, emotional peaks and valleys, problem solving and storytelling. They often have initially unknown areas ready for exploring. By journey's end, the visitor will have explored different perspectives, maybe acquired new knowledge or awareness, and shared an experience. Like conversations, gardens change. Public gardens are transformative places that thrive on imagination and possibilities. We can help solve real-world problems and challenges, but this requires that we create a sense of belonging for those we haven't included or represented in the past. Increasingly, public gardens are looking inward to navigate our role amid greater social and cultural awareness and conflict. Many organisations are in a conversation about who they have been and are looking towards who they want to be in the future. We know we can do better, and our actions are more impactful when we do them together. The Center is a call to action.

The IDEA Center

The Center was launched in January 2022 and is incubated at Denver Botanic Gardens, Colorado, USA, which provides operational funding. Brian Vogt, the CEO of Denver Botanic Gardens, says, 'We began our IDEA journey over a decade ago with clear intention: to create gardens and experiences for all people.' He adds, 'The deeper our work went, the more joyful it became. We know this isn't a project with an end date. It's something profound that changes a culture, outcomes, approaches and worldview.' Services such as the annual cohort programme are supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services

National Leadership Grant for Museums (IMLS MG-249862-OMS-21). Such grants support projects that address the critical needs of the museum field and have the potential to advance practice in the profession to strengthen museum services for the American public.³ The American Public Gardens Association (APGA/the Association) provides an essential link between public gardens and the Center. Its member base of over 650 public gardens offers access to a significant body of IDEA-related resource materials accumulated prior to the creation of the Center, as well as various training platforms and symposia. The Center's initiatives include awarding scholarships to individuals from under-resourced communities to attend industry conferences and symposia, and funding thought-provoking performances and workshops at the annual Association conference. These workshops explore how systemic inequities, implicit bias and common misperceptions show up in relationships (Figs 1 & 2). The performances also guide reflective awareness to deepen understanding. The Center offers an intensive peer-to-peer cohort to build awareness and develop practices for cultural institutions who strive to be more inclusive and relevant.

'I've been surprised by the many layers of application that this topic applies to in the day-to-day work at a garden. We are employees, we are employers. We are part of the community. We are part of a bigger political system. Sometimes advocacy systems. Environmental justice has been mentioned ... this topic applies in every one of those layers in some way, shape or form.'
Kim Perez, CEO, Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

³ www.imls.gov



Fig. 1 Kayli Hattley at Wellsley College Botanic Garden was the recipient of one of three scholarships funded by the IDEA Center to attend the American Public Garden Association's annual conference in June 2023. Photo: APGA/Tom Bollinger Photography.



Fig. 2 The IDEA Center and Denver Botanic Garden sponsored Pillsbury Theater's mind-shifting performance 'Breaking Ice' at the APGA annual conference. Photo: APGA/Tom Bollinger Photography.

The goal of the Center in its first year was to carry out a needs assessment to understand where institutions were in their journey and whether they were new to IDEA initiatives or had already developed activities to address their inclusion agenda. The assessment also sought to understand the barriers and challenges to the embodiment of IDEA principles. An annual cohort programme was then developed to activate intention. Additionally, it was critical to the Center's success to create an uplifting and supportive learning environment to strengthen our community and help reinforce the idea that this work can be done from a place of curiosity, joy and celebration. The Needs Assessment Summary Report is available on the 'Cohort Program' page on the Center's website (IDEA Center for Public Gardens, 2022). Some of the most frequently cited barriers that emerged from the needs assessment included leadership failing to prioritise IDEA work; the need for greater fluency and knowledge of IDEA principles to ease fear and discomfort; resource constraints; time and capacity; and a lack of diversity among staff volunteers, leadership and visitation.

The annual cohort programme

The inaugural cohort programme was designed to support organisations to navigate and work through the barriers and challenges identified in the needs assessment and to be accessible for organisations of varying types, size, budgets and locations. Free of charge and held virtually, it was launched as a pilot in May 2022 and concluded in May 2023. More than 20 public gardens, arboreta and parks across the United States and Canada took part in

the first cohort (see Appendix 1 for a list of participants).

The requirements of the programme included:

- Letters of commitment from the board chair and executive director
- Participation of individuals at the highest levels of organisational leadership, including a board member and the CEO/ executive director (or equivalent for differently structured institutions) for the duration of the programme
- One staff member, preferably an IDEA champion or leader for the duration of the programme
- The implementation of an IDEA-related project.

The intention with this approach was to promote prioritisation from those with power and influence, to encourage dialogue across organisational hierarchy and to help break down hierarchical barriers to the embodiment of IDEA principles. The goal of the project was to encourage a 'learn while doing' approach and cross-department collaboration.

'I'm really excited about the momentum that this programme builds in our organisation. It was a re-ignite of my own wellsprings. This work, I think sometimes where you're trying to hold the flame for your organisation by yourself, it can be kind of a burning-out situation. So being able to sit in conversations with everyone – I feel like I wasn't alone in it. Having executive leadership at the table really has built some momentum and re-ignited my passion and excitement and wellspring.'

Ashley Krueger, staff member, The Gardens on Spring Creek, Fort Collins.

The structure of the programme involved monthly virtual workshops led by different instructors. Topics covered in the workshops included foundational learning and diversity application, decolonising gardens, LGBTQ+ inclusion, indigenous inclusion and disability inclusion. The thread connecting all topics is an approach through the lens of personal, professional and organisational identity. Implicit biases and judgements are often based on individual lived experiences and these affect how we communicate and engage in relationships. It is difficult to separate personal values from professional, and this can make the complexities of navigating organisational change challenging. IDEA work focuses on our shared humanity and relationships, approached authentically and earnestly. A foundational principle of the programme is to promote connection and relationships around mutual benefit, in place of the transactional and extractive nature that often dominates western business practices. Transactions and data have a time and a place, but creating a sense of belonging, whether among staff or with guests, takes a level of intentionality, effort and vulnerability.

A significant shift was observed among participants in the pilot cohort when an executive director shared a difficult and sensitive situation with a guest at their garden and then asked the group for help. It was a moment of vulnerability that others could relate to, from various viewpoints, and they opened up to share their own challenges and offer some solutions. Towards the end of the programme, participants expressed the value they placed in a dedicated 'space' to be vulnerable, connect with each other, share and problem-solve, in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

'There is this whole field of info that was never taught. When you grow up, you go to school, you take all the classes and I was in [school] a long time and never learned a lot of this ... each of us brings our own innate biases and you can't help it because it's a factor of who you are and where you grow up. It was a good, safe place to ask questions.'

Cynthia Klemmer, CEO, Zilker Botanical Garden.

Participants were required to identify a project that would embed the IDEA principles in their organisation. They had to explain why the project had been chosen and which resources, participants and partners were needed to achieve its desired outcomes. They went on to define what success would look like or how it would be measured. The final project deliverable was to turn their experience and lessons into a toolkit or case study. The creation of these toolkits resulted in a substantial collection of resources gathered from the first cohort which could be passed on to the next. The goal is to have the toolkits and case studies from the first cohort available on the Center's website on the new Resources page by the end of 2023 or early 2024.

'We were able to have critical conversations of what we wanted to get out of our IDEA work and what we're actually trying to accomplish. And it turned from checking boxes to conceptual ideas.'

Jeremy Burgarchich, San Diego Botanic Garden.

Projects fell into thematic categories: accessibility; community outreach and engagement; art and exhibits; board diversification; IDEA committee (creation/

re-creation); IDEA analysis and strategic planning; and IDEA institutional training. Almost all the projects changed in scope over the duration of the programme. Some pivoted completely, yet the categories remained unchanged. The reasons for change included projects being too big or ambitious to accomplish in a year; revisiting the approach or strategy through shifts in perspective and knowledge; and organisational changes that happened during the programme. All participants learned valuable lessons and are moving forward, regardless of change. That is really the point: change is inevitable and it is important to keep going!

'What I especially liked to hear was the diversity of starting points. There were some who had done so much on [this topic] and who also progressed so far along, but I never felt that we were behind. We were never judged as to what you have in place or not because our starting point was respected.'

Margareth Lobo Gault, Board Member,
Toronto Botanical Garden.

In May 2023, the Center inaugurated the second year-long programme. The second programme includes the first organisation participating from the UK, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. This marks the beginning of what the Center hopes will be more international collaboration and greater unity in our efforts to do better as an industry. The overall structure of the programme is unchanged. Small adjustments have been made to improve the experience in response to feedback received at the end of the pilot. These include making the cohort smaller, creating more opportunity to discuss projects and putting moderators in place for small

group breakout sessions. Additionally, participation was expanded so that board and staff members could invite a 'buddy' to fully engage in the programme with them. While overall engagement in monthly sessions for the pilot was consistently 80 per cent or more, one of the challenges observed during the programme was inconsistent participation of board members. Sometimes people found they were alone in advocating for higher prioritisation of IDEA within the organisation. Staff participation was consistently high; however, some – especially people of colour or those from an under-represented community – noted the lack of influence in being a sole voice championing IDEA. Having an ally or someone to partner with is intended to provide greater empowerment and an opportunity to share the challenges of this work.

Several measures have been taken to maximise access to the programme. One of the goals of the Center is to ensure that participation is free of charge and that it is delivered virtually to remove financial and geographic barriers. The first three years are fully funded through the IMLS grant. The Center also channels all announcements about the programme through APGA communication networks. APGA has wide membership with the Center's target institutions and thus access to a broad range of potential participants. See Appendix 2 for a list of participants on the second cohort.

'There are some pretty meaningful and heavy topics that are discussed, but they are discussed with positivity. And I think we're able to address some things that you really wrestle with. But the way that it was done, I think was in a very positive and productive way.'

Ed Moydell, CEO, Bloedel Reserve.

CASE STUDY Naples Botanical Garden's participation in the cohort programme 'Mexico: a celebration of plants and culture'

Britt Patterson-Weber

The mission of Naples Botanical Garden, Florida (NBG) is to conserve the plants and habitats of the tropics, to cultivate beauty, to share knowledge and to inspire the protection of nature in its visitors (Naples Botanical Garden, 2023). NBG joined the IDEA inaugural cohort programme in May 2022 and was developing plans for a different project, but the devastating havoc wreaked by Hurricane Ian on 28 September 2022 meant a change in these plans was required. The 2022–2023 theme, 'Mexico: a celebration of plants and culture' (Fig. 3), had already been set, and the cohort participant group realised that this could also be the cohort project. The theme would strongly focus on the plants of Mexico and their place in Mexican culture. This focus would extend to maximising inclusion of the Hispanic and Latino community and staff, a group under-represented in the NBG visitor demographic.

The city of Naples has many connections with the plants and culture of Mexico, not least geography and climate; they are

physically closer to each other than Naples is to some other cities in the state of Florida. The Garden cultivates plants from over 530 taxa of the phenomenally diverse flora of Mexico. The country is also the origin of so many of the world's staple crops and has such a widely known and respected culinary tradition that it offers many opportunities for stories and plant–people interactions to share.

The festival took the form of a year of new activities, all with knowledge-sharing, inclusion and curiosity about the plants and culture of Mexico as their guiding aim. These included:

- The creation of a new, previously unmanaged garden area to display Mexican flora and culture, featuring five beds specially designed and curated by NBG staff. They include a kitchen garden, parts of Frida Kahlo's house and garden (Fig. 4: Frida Kahlo, one of Mexico's most famous artists and cultural icons, used art to explore race, gender, class, postcolonialism and identity), and a Mexican garden recognising the country's tremendous biodiversity and range of ecosystems (Reed, 2023)
- Art exhibits in the garden and internal display spaces in sculpture and textiles (Fig. 5)
- Exhibits and activities focusing on cultural festivals such as Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead, a celebratory holiday remembering friends and family members who have died)
- Creation of traditional dishes and menus in the visitor café by culinary team members from Mexico



Fig. 3 The logo developed for the 2022–2023 theme. Image: Naples Botanical Garden.



Fig. 4 The 'Frida and Her Garden' exhibit was created out of an inaccessible part of the garden for the festival. Photo: Naples Botanical Garden.



Fig. 5 'La Catrina garbancera de José Guadalupe Posada' by artist Ricardo Soltero. Photo: Naples Botanical Garden.

- Involvement in all activities by staff members with Mexican and Hispanic heritage who shared their experiences (Fig. 6)
- Multilingual education programmes, tours and hands-on activities interpreting plant–animal–people interactions (Fig. 7).

The whole festival was an example of what can happen when both plants and people are genuinely put at the centre of botanic garden activities with an intention to inform, share, learn and entertain.

As is frequently the case, the direct impact on previously unfamiliar garden audiences is difficult to measure precisely. Hurricane Ian had a lasting impact both on visitor numbers and on the health and outlook of the local population. Surveys showed stable visitor numbers with regard to Hispanic visitors, which



Fig. 6 Avelina Cruz Lopez, Community Relations Manager (pictured on the left in black), advised on the construction of the community ofrenda for the Día de los Muertos display. Photo: Naples Botanical Garden.

is higher than for comparable local attractions, and a 7 per cent increase in 'Children in household' numbers, indicating more family visits than in previous years (Fig. 8). However,

numerous anecdotes and lots of enthusiastic feedback from the more than 250,000 visitors who attended the events plus the staff indicated a wealth of positive experiences.

Mache

Hutlzi (tweest-zil) Kolibri a ap vizite Garden nan. Kammarad Polinizatè Hutlzi yo ap tann pou yo anseye Hutlzi sou plant meksikèn prefere yo. Anpil plant meksikèn gen varyete ki etran yo ja anseye pouy Miksik, sa vle di ke w ka jwenn yo ap pouse nan lòt zòn tankou Amerik Diid, Karayib la epi menm nan Florida!

Rankontre ak Kòchitl (so-cheel) Abby ki nan Kapnik Brazilian Garden nan pou jwenn enfòmasyon sou plant meksikèn ki nan koleksyon nou an. **Chèche twa plant ki komestib ak Kòchitl epi agram konnen kijan yo litize yo. Agram, se sa kat nou an, litize yon kretyon pou make ki kote ou jwenn chak plant.**

1 Vaniy
Pense ak desè prefere w ki fat ak vani yo. Ki pati nan plant la ou pense se yo litize nan manje?
Komplete mo kache yo pou w delikouri repons la.

IFW

2 Còhne
Grenn ki sot tonbe soti nan palmye còhne a ke yo litize pou fabrike yon angrèyan endotan pou fi manje — lèl. Yon kokiy ki di ki anwoz grenn nan pèvete amann blanch ki anndan lèl ke yo pou pou poud lèl la. Pense ak lek alman ke yo prepare gras ak litizasyon lèl. Ekri oswa desinen yo nan espas ki vid la ki pi ba a.

Zanimo yo depandè plant pou yo viv. Plant yo se sous manje akabri, epi yo ka ofri paroteksyon kont pèdètè potansyèl. Twoglodi kaktis yo konnal nich yo ki gwoèl yon balon foutbal ameriken nan kaktis lòt nich yo anwoz ak pikin ki jwenn anpil.

litize gid chf yo pou kolore twoglodi kaktis la k ap fè nich li nan yon kaktis fige Babar.

Twoglodi kaktis yo ja gen asitid pou yo vole byen. Olye sa, yo sote atè a pou yo obchoe manje. Pi souvan yo manje zanzeyen, sikarabè, form, glop ak fei kaktis. Èske w ka sote nan Foster Succulent Garden nan pou ede twoglodi kaktis la jwenn yon ti gwoz ki byenn gwo?
Anèskè onèk ke w te sote pou w trape a.

1 2 3 4 5

Observe

Mexico is home to the Chihuahuan Desert. This hot, dry habitat has over 3,000 species of plants! To survive in an area without a lot of water, plants like cacti have special adaptations that help them survive in their environment.

United States of America
Chihuahuan Desert
Mexico

Many species of cacti have sharp spines called spines. Spines keep animals from eating the cactus. Use a hand lens to observe the cactus spines up close.

How many spines can you count?

Draw spines on the cactus to help protect it from getting eaten by the tortoise!
Color the image when finished.

Frída Kahlo lived in a blue house called La Casa Azul. Use the number guide to color in the walls at Frída's Garden.

Frída Kahlo's house is called La Casa Azul in Spanish, which means "the Blue House" in English. It is now a museum that you can visit! What color would you paint the house of your dreams? What plants would you have in your dream garden? Would you have any fruit trees? Draw them here!

1 2 3 4

Explora

Por la noche, las flores del agave producen mucho néctar y polen que atrae a los murciélagos, como al murciélago maguero, un murciélago hoicido. La nariz de estos murciélagos queda cubierta de polen cuando se alimentan de néctar, y así los murciélagos magueros polinizan el agave mientras van de flor en flor. El néctar de agave les da la energía que necesitan para migrar cientos de kilómetros desde su lugar de invierno en el centro de México hasta las cuevas del norte.

Ayuda al murciélago maguero a encontrar la flor del agave en su migración del centro al norte de México.

La tortuga del Bolson es la tortuga más grande de Norteamérica y solo se la puede encontrar en el desierto mexicano de Chihuahua. Al igual que la tortuga de la Florida, la tortuga del Bolson cava madrigueras bajo tierra utilizando sus patas delanteras como patas. ¡Sus madrigueras pueden medir hasta 750 metros de largo y 2 metros de profundidad! Las plantas son importantes para las madrigueras de las tortugas. Ordena las letras para descubrir por qué.

Las hierbas y arbustos que roban la madriguera de las tortugas ayudan a mantener una interior agradable para ellas. Sin las plantas, la madriguera sería demasiado calurosa.

3

Monstera
Aunque parece una mazorca de maíz extraña, el fruto de la monstera tiene un sabor mucho más parecido al de un batido de frutas. Colorea el fruto de la monstera. Une los puntos para crear la forma de la hoja.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

Fig. 7 Examples of pages from the 'Family Wonder Days' activity guide created for 5- to 10-year-olds in Creole (top), English (centre) and Spanish (bottom). Booklets: Naples Botanical Garden.



Fig. 8 Family visits increased from 23 per cent to 30 per cent of overall visits during the year of the theme. Photo: Naples Botanical Garden.

More information about the festival, events and plants used is available at www.naplesgarden.org. See in particular the following:

Conservation

www.naplesgarden.org/conservation

REED, J. The making of an exhibition. *Cultivate*, Spring 2023: 20–23
www.naplesgarden.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/0223-Spring-2023-Cultivate-Web-1.pdf

Notes from the Garden

www.naplesgarden.org/blog

Britt Patterson-Weber is Vice President of Education & Interpretation at Naples Botanical Garden. Email: bpatterson-weber@naplesgarden.org

The future for IDEA

Future initiatives being developed by the Center include continuing education for past cohort participants, institutional education programmes, consulting services, and the development of further alliances and partnerships to create more momentum and impact across public gardens and beyond.

Public gardens can serve communities in more meaningful ways than ever before, for the benefit of all. Our journey is evolving and there is much more to come. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, ‘Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.’ What if you believed gardens could change the world? What would you do next?

'I would say if you believe in a engaged workforce and you want to engage everyone in your garden, there's no option but to take this class, lean in and be a part of a cohort, be a deeper part of the public gardening community, and help us continue to raise the bar of what public gardens can be in this world.'

Stephanie Jutila, CEO, Toronto Botanical Garden.

For more information about the Center and the cohort programme visit www.ideacenterforpublicgardens.org

References

BROCKWAY, L.H. (1979). *Science and Colonial Expansion: the Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens*. Academic Press, New York and London.

IDEA CENTER FOR PUBLIC GARDENS (2022). 2022 IDEA Needs Assessment Summary & Key Themes. Available online: www.ideacenterforpublicgardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022_IDEACenterNeedsAssessment_SUMMARY-REPORT.pdf (accessed August 2023).

MCCRACKEN, D.P. (1997). *Gardens of Empire: Botanical Institutions of the Victorian British Empire*. Leicester University Press, Leicester.

Appendix 1

List of public gardens, arboreta and parks across the United States and Canada that participated in the first annual cohort programme from May 2022 to May 2023.

ABQ BioPark (Albuquerque, NM)
 Bloedel Reserve (Bainbridge Island, WA)
 Charleston Parks Conservancy (Charleston, SC)
 Fort Worth Botanic Garden and Botanical Research Institute of Texas (Fort Worth, TX)
 Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (Columbus, OH)
 The Gardens on Spring Creek (Fort Collins, CO)

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden (Des Moines, IA)
 Matthaei Botanic Garden and Nichols Arboretum (Ann Arbor, MI)
 Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Chaska, MN)
 Mt. Cuba Center (Hockessin, DE)
 Naples Botanical Garden (Naples, FL)
 Native Plant Trust (Framingham, MA)
 New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill (Boylston, MA)
 Pittsburgh Botanic Garden (Pittsburgh, PA)
 San Antonio Botanic Garden (San Antonio, TX)
 San Diego Botanic Garden (San Diego, CA)
 Smithsonian Gardens (Washington, DC)
 Toronto Botanical Garden (Toronto, Canada)
 Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (Vancouver, Canada)
 Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy (Austin, TX)

Appendix 2

List of public gardens, arboreta and parks across the United States and the UK that are participating in the second annual cohort programme from May 2023 to May 2024.

Descanso Gardens (La Cañada Flintridge, CA)
 Elizabeth F Gamble Garden (Palo Alto, CA)
 Friends of Lasdon Park and Arboretum (Katonah, NY)
 Ithaca Children's Garden (Ithaca, NY)
 Jenkins Arboretum & Gardens (Devon, PA)
 Madison Square Park Conservancy (New York, NY)
 Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (Pittsburgh, PA)
 Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Edinburgh, UK)
 Ruth Bancroft Garden and Nursery (Walnut Creek, CA)
 Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens (Santa Barbara, CA)
 Wellesley College Botanic Gardens (Wellesley, MA)