

THE

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3 · MAY–AUGUST 2023

# SANCTUARY



## **JOHN PIRMAN** **DIVING into NATURE**

July 22–September 17 · Downtown Sarasota Campus

MARIE SELBY  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS





*“I see no better way to celebrate 50 years of Selby Gardens than by opening new, state-of-the-art facilities in which we will thrive for the next 50 years.”*

There is always something new and exciting to experience at Selby Gardens. Just look inside this issue of *The Sanctuary*. A summer exhibition of fabulously fun work by iconic Sarasota artist John Pirman. An edible garden that will provide tasty food for visitors and horticultural therapy for its growers. An innovative program that creates tranquil, safe space in the Gardens for our neurodivergent community. We always look forward in meeting our mission. But this year is also one of milestones that deserve pause for reflection.

Several important moments mark the early formation of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, from the discovery that Marie Selby left her property to be a botanical garden for the enjoyment of the public to the first \$1 admission charged for a visitor to enter her namesake gardens. But we know 1973 as our founding year, due to the key leadership of Dr. Carlyle Luer, the receipt of tax-exempt charitable status from the IRS, and the hiring of Dr. Calaway Dodson as first executive director shortly thereafter. That means we've reached 50 years as a nonprofit organization and botanical garden!

We'll recognize this golden anniversary in the coming months in conjunction with some major events. Our annual Orchid Show, which opens in October, will focus on our 50 years as a globally important research institution and a locally indispensable cultural attraction. Of course, that will be done against a backdrop of the plant family for which Selby Gardens is best known. Our horticulture and exhibitions teams will outdo themselves with an abundance of orchids for your discovery and enjoyment. We are eager for you to be a part of these celebrations.

During the run of The Orchid Show, we also expect to cut the ribbon on Phase One of our Master Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus. This project is nothing short of transformative—for Selby Gardens and our community. It will secure our priceless research collections for the future. It will put Sarasota on the world map as a leader in sustainable design. It will accommodate more visitors, including underserved members of our community. I see no better way to celebrate 50 years of Selby Gardens than by opening new, state-of-the-art facilities in which we will thrive for the next 50 years.

If you read the previous issue of *The Sanctuary*, you might recall that our Historic Spanish Point campus also just celebrated an anniversary. Last year marked 40 years since the historic site in Osprey opened to the public. On May 1 we reached another, albeit newer, anniversary: three years since Selby Gardens adopted Historic Spanish Point as a companion campus. In that short time, our two-campus organization has accomplished much. It's largely possible thanks to you, our members—the largest membership base of any such organization in our region.

You keep good company as a member of Selby Gardens. We promise to keep giving you good reasons to visit and support our bayfront sanctuaries—for another 50 years and more!

Cheers,

Jennifer O. Rominiacki  
President & CEO

On the Cover:  
Pool Party, by John Pirman, 1992

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**MISSION**

To provide bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history

**PROGRAM SPONSORS**

Selby Gardens' programs are sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts; and are paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues.



**CONNECT WITH US**



**DOWNTOWN SARASOTA CAMPUS**



**Queen's Crepe Myrtle**  
*Lagerstroemia speciosa*

Also called the pride of India or giant crepe myrtle, this species is the "big sister" to the more common crepe myrtle, *Lagerstroemia indica*. A member of the loosestrife family (Lythraceae), this medium-sized tree is native to tropical Asia. When in bloom during the summer months, it is a stunning specimen, with each branch terminating in a profusion of large pink to purple flowers.

It is called crepe myrtle because the petals of each flower are delicately ruffled like crepe paper, a common characteristic of the family. In autumn, the large, leathery leaves turn red before shedding, revealing the smooth, gray, peeling bark. Queen's crepe prefers tropical conditions—full sun, warm and humid, moist and fertile soils—and protection from salt spray. Two can be found on the Downtown Sarasota campus, just north of the Succulent Garden.

**ABOUT**

- Member of the same family as pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) and henna (*Lawsonia inermis*)
- Wood is strong and rot resistant, similar to teak
- All parts of the tree have medicinal uses in various Asian traditions



# WHAT'S IN BLOOM

**HISTORIC SPANISH POINT CAMPUS**

**Camphorweed**  
*Pluchea odorata*

This member of the Asteraceae family (aster or daisy) has a number of common names, including marsh fleabane, sweetscent, and stinkweed. It is an erect annual or short-lived perennial that grows around freshwater and brackish marshes and coastal hammocks throughout the southern U.S., Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Growing to four feet tall with grayish stems and aromatic foliage covered with silvery, glandular hairs, camphorweed presents showy, flat-topped clusters of pink to purple flowers from summer into fall. The flowers attract pollinators such as butterflies and bees, but they don't look like typical aster flower clusters because they lack ray flowers—those often brightly colored petals around the inflorescences of other asters such as the sunflower. Camphorweed can be found along ponds and in moist locations at both of our campuses.

**ABOUT**

- In the Caribbean, used to make an herbal tea with purported stimulant, diuretic, and antispasmodic properties
- Should be planted in moist, full-sun areas, but may quickly naturalize
- Inflorescences can be used in dried flower arrangements



# RAISING THE

# ROOF



An early artistic rendering of the rooftop garden's potential

When Phase One of the Master Plan for our Downtown Sarasota campus opens later this year, it will create the world's first certified net-positive energy botanical garden complex. The new garden-to-plate restaurant that's part of the project will be the first-ever net-positive energy restaurant.



Rendering of the LEAF from Mound Street, with restaurant at center

Propelling those sustainability achievements will be the nearly 50,000-sq.-ft. solar array that will cap the entire fourth floor of the LEAF (Living Energy Access Facility), the structure that will house parking, the restaurant, and a new plant and gift shop. The solar panels will generate nearly one megawatt of power, providing an excess of electricity needed to power the entire Phase One footprint. But that's not the only rooftop source of renewable fuel that's coming with this project.

The new sit-down restaurant, to be operated by our food-service partner Michael's on East, will be a single-story space that extends from the northwest corner of the LEAF. And planted atop its roof will be an edible garden of produce, herbs, and even flowers for use in the meals prepared below.

Seeing and admiring plants that could end up in your delicious dish the next day is cool enough. But it's the story of how those plants will get to the rooftop and then to your tabletop that might leave you truly fulfilled. That's because the edible garden was conceived with therapeutic benefits and entrepreneurial training mixed into its fertile soil. And it will be managed by military veterans getting back on their feet by tending plants with their hands.

## Helping Veterans Grow

Operation ECO Vets (OEV) is a Bradenton-based nonprofit organization that provides personal, educational, and professional growth opportunities for veterans. Some of those vets have experienced PTSD; others deal with physical disabilities. Focusing on self-reliance, sustainability skills, and social connection in a natural, outdoor setting helps them heal from the wounds of war and life.

OEV started as Green Path Veterans Farm, a project of Florida Veterans for Common Sense, says founder and U.S. Navy veteran Camille Van Sant. The group created an organic farm at Easterseals Southwest Florida, a longtime nonprofit that supports individuals with disabilities, growing food for use in Easterseals' schools. As the effort expanded, it developed its own identity and Operation ECO Vets was born, with Van Sant heading up the new nonprofit.

Van Sant recognized an array of needs that vets were bringing with them to the organization. "We had a lot of homeless vets, a lot of combat vets, who had trouble getting back on their feet," she says. OEV offered them internships and part-time jobs doing edible landscaping around town. "It was an entrepreneurial opportunity," she says. "You just need a truck and some tools. We were teaching them about growing their own food, which is really good for combat veterans." Services like counseling were added too.

OEV's relationship with Selby Gardens sprouted from its partnership with Easterseals. About five years ago, Easterseals and OEV started coming to Selby Gardens to design and tend edible garden beds in the Ann Goldstein Children's Rainforest Garden at the Downtown Sarasota campus. Volunteer vets and Easterseals students plant them each spring and fall, and the students visit the site monthly to harvest and maintain the gardens. In the process, they enjoy everything from occupational therapy to life and job skills training, all while digging in the dirt.

As plans for Phase One of the Master Plan developed, Selby Gardens asked OEV about taking on the planned rooftop garden. The concept would showcase edible gardening, provide horticultural therapy for veterans, and supply the restaurant with fresh, healthy, sustainable food. Like so many aspects of the project, the rooftop garden will be innovative. "No one's currently doing it in Florida," says Van Sant. "It's groundbreaking, definitely. It's a challenge, and the sun is blazing on you the whole time. But I can't wait to get it started."



Christina Esposito of Operation ECO Vets will manage the rooftop garden.

## Garden Varieties

While Van Sant has since officially retired from OEV, she remains closely involved as the group's founder. She is overseeing the rooftop garden project and will work on its design. But the daily work will be ably handled by OEV's new farm manager, Air Force veteran Christina Esposito. She'll bring in other vets as backup workers when needed, and the organization will provide ongoing administrative support.

"It's a small, intensive garden, with high rotation," notes Van Sant, who studied horticulture at an agricultural college before her naval service and then a long career in business. "We don't want to grow things that take too long." That means lots of salad greens and herbs. They'll grow baby carrots that are really baby carrots, she chuckles.

Van Sant and Esposito also plan to raise some unusual subtropical plants. The list includes cranberry hibiscus, Mexican sour gherkin cucumbers, longevity spinach, and katuk. "They're pretty plants too," says Van Sant. "We want to keep it up to the standards of Selby Gardens—which is the best!" While the garden is focused on production, there will be plenty of opportunities to learn from its operation. An herb box on the ground floor next to the restaurant will help showcase what's growing above.

With a November opening planned for Phase One, Van Sant expects to start planting in August. Many things like tomatoes and peppers will be started off-site and then planted on the roof once the soil is in. "You have short windows," she says. "You want to have transplants ready to go."

The high-volume garden will require focus and care. "You're harvesting and replanting," says Van Sant. "It's a lot of labor." But if anyone is up to the job, it's Operation ECO Vets. Their hard and healing work should make the product on the plate taste that much better too.

# TRANQUIL TUESDAYS

Selby Gardens' Downtown Sarasota campus is often described as a sanctuary. An oasis. A place to escape the commotion of daily life. For sensory-sensitive and neurodivergent individuals, however, that experience might not come so easily.

Last fall, Selby Gardens introduced a new program to welcome and better accommodate community members who have sensory sensitivities or might experience the gardens differently. Dubbed "Tranquil Tuesdays," the event opens up our Downtown Sarasota campus on select Tuesday evenings for private, complimentary access for neurodiverse and sensory-sensitive guests, as well as their family members and caretakers. Visitors can enjoy the beauty and peace of the outdoor gardens for an hour of quiet exploration without the usual daytime crowds, noise, and other distractions.

On arrival, participants receive a customized map with easily identified icons to indicate garden areas with interactivity (touch, smells) or displays that might be overstimulating (loud sounds, strong odors). Noise-cancelling earmuffs and wheelchairs are available for use too. Guests are encouraged to bring any tools, toys, or stimming devices to make their visit as comfortable as possible.

"It has been such a long time since I have been able to visit the Gardens," said Peter Fischer Jr., a young adult with epilepsy who visited with his parents on a Tranquil Tuesday in March. "Walking through after-hours and being surrounded by all the plants was relaxing. I also very much enjoyed seeing the sun go down on the water, listening to the waves brush up against the rocks. It was a beautiful experience."



A family tours our Tiffany exhibition during Tranquil Tuesday

The Fischers participated through JoshProvides Epilepsy Assistance Foundation, one of several local nonprofit organizations with which we have partnered to open the Gardens to their members and clients. Others include Easterseals Southwest Florida, Loveland Center, and The Haven.

"Everyone should be able to experience the beauty of Selby Gardens, and this sensory-friendly program broadens accessibility," says Kristie Geimer, director of clinical therapy at Easterseals. "It's been an honor to participate in Tranquil Tuesdays and to be part of a community that is expanding awareness, acceptance, and opportunities for all individuals."

While Tranquil Tuesdays are scheduled periodically throughout the year, daily guests to the Downtown Sarasota campus may use the sensory maps and complimentary noise-cancelling earmuffs any time. Simply ask a Guest Relations staff member at the Welcome Center.



Ryan Vogler enjoys the Koi Pond and waterfall

**"Tranquil Tuesdays was the perfect match for my son, who has epilepsy, autism, and anxiety. The lack of crowds and commotion made for the most perfect evening for him and our family."**

– ANDREA JOHNSTON  
Mother of JoshProvides client Ryan Vogler

"We are committed to providing accessible resources as we strive to welcome everyone in our community," says Ross Johnston, manager of visitor engagement. "By offering this special program, we have expanded Selby Gardens' ability to engage all audiences."

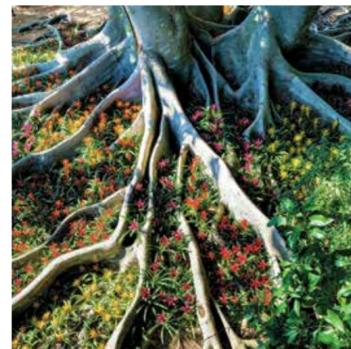


# TIFFANY

THE PURSUIT OF BEAUTY IN NATURE  
On view through June 25 at our Downtown Sarasota campus

Our 2023 Jean & Alfred Goldstein Exhibition, *Tiffany: The Pursuit of Beauty in Nature*, has drawn record attendance to the Downtown Sarasota campus since opening in February. Visitor counts have been up more than 25 percent over last year's all-time highs! The show also has drawn accolades from Tampa to New York to London and beyond. If you haven't seen this kaleidoscope of color and creativity yet, you have until June 25. And with the changing light of the seasons and the day, every visit promises a delightfully different experience.

**"[N]ot your grandfather's artist in the garden, not the usual sculptures and paintings simply set among the plants."**  
– THE NEW YORK TIMES



**"The Selby show's theme is spot on."**  
– FINANCIAL TIMES



**"The horticultural team...has worked its magic to interpret Tiffany works in plants and innovative outdoor display pieces created in-house."**  
– TAMPA BAY TIMES

**"The Gardens' talented creators echo nature's colorful complexity with their Tiffany-inspired creations."**  
– SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE



**"Viewers will appreciate not only the beauty of the works, but the technical skills that brought them to life..."**  
– SARASOTA MAGAZINE

PRESENTING SPONSORS: Drs. Joel Morganroth and Gail Morrison Morganroth LEAD SPONSORS: Amicus Foundation, Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Steinwachs Family Foundation, and Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

# PIRMAN PERSPECTIVES

Artist John Pirman's distinctive style will grace our Downtown Sarasota campus this summer.

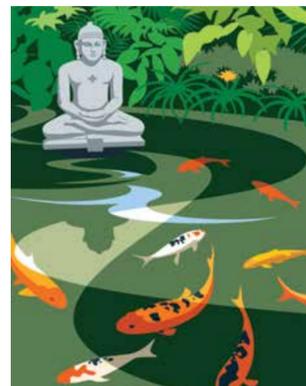


Historic Spanish Point, 2023

**DIVE into NATURE** this summer at Selby Gardens with the iconic art of designer and illustrator John Pirman, who has called Sarasota home since 2008. Pirman's artwork will feature in the galleries of the Museum of Botany & the Arts and the outdoor Gardens at our Downtown Sarasota campus from July 22 to September 17.

Readers of *Sarasota Magazine* will recognize Pirman's alluring views of the city and its surroundings, which have graced each issue's final page for years. A selection of these images will be accompanied by examples of his earlier work as a freelance illustrator in New York City, much of which has never been exhibited to the public. They will include shopping bags, promotional materials, and holiday cards for clients such as Bloomingdale's, Estée Lauder, Nick at Nite, and MoMA. One of the Bloomingdale's shopping bags, produced by Pirman for Christmas 1985, is now in the collection of the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in New York City. Two of the holiday cards are in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Other highlights of the exhibition will be the original preparatory designs for a number of Pirman's finished pieces, exquisitely executed in cut paper, a technique he developed from an early age. As Pirman's artistic



Koi Pond, 2013

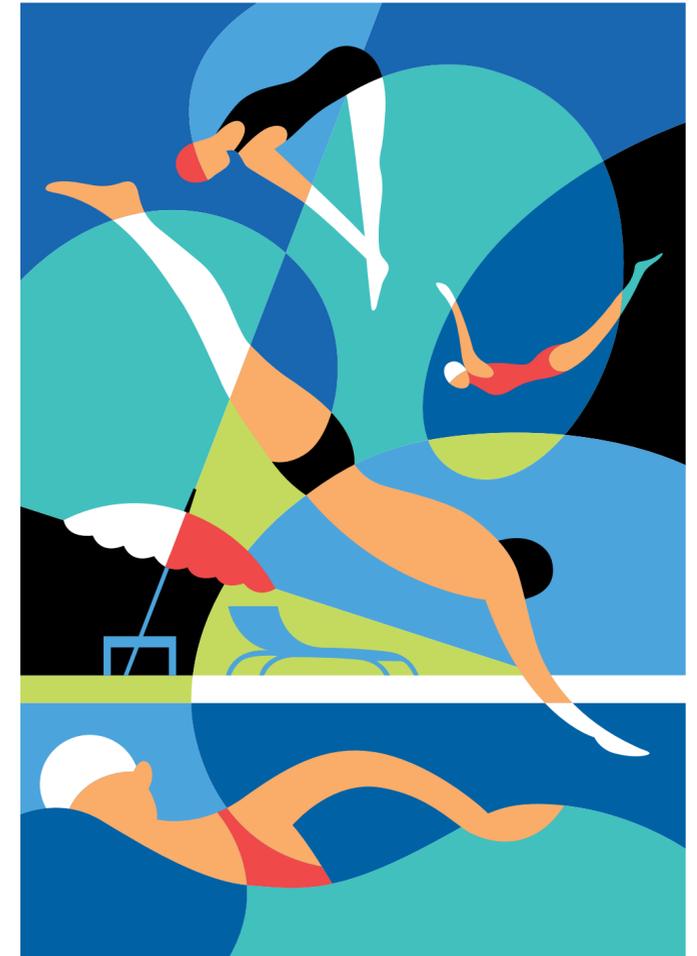


practice evolved, he replaced the X-ACTO knife with what, in its own way, has proven a much sharper tool: the computer. He now hand-illustrates his elegant and sophisticated compositions with precise digitization.

The layout of *John Pirman: Diving into Nature* will loosely follow the journey of Pirman's development as an artist, from his formative years in Ohio to his career in New York City and, ultimately, his current practice in Sarasota. The exhibition will show how he captures Sarasota's natural beauty and historic architecture in his own unique way, which emphasizes the interplay between these two distinctive features of our local landscape.

Pirman's passion for mid-century modern architecture and design is evident in his work, both as subject matter and as aesthetic influence, with its clean lines and clearly defined forms. Equally apparent is his love of the outdoors, including water, sun, and tropical foliage. These natural elements will resonate with the tropical environment of the botanical garden setting in which the work will be presented.

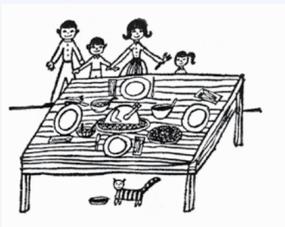
The exhibition inside the Museum will continue outside with large-scale prints of Pirman's illustrations on aluminum panels, set directly in the landscape. Among them will be beloved views of Selby Gardens, including the Selby House, the Koi Pond, and the Moreton Bay fig tree, displayed in their respective locations around the Downtown Sarasota campus. Accompanying the prints will be a large, brightly colored sculpture of powder-coated aluminum designed for a private collector. This dynamic work brings Pirman's treatment of color and geometry quite literally into the third dimension.



Pool Divers, 1988

## GALLANT TALENT

John Pirman's artistic development traces back to kindergarten. A charming image of a dog from those days consists of basic geometric forms and marks his first design made from pieces of cut paper, a process he returned to early in his career. Displayed with that image will be a *Highlights* magazine from 1966, with an illustration by eight-year-old Johnny Pirman of his family at Thanksgiving dinner—Pirman's first published artwork!



Lifeguard Whistle, 1992

## JOHN PIRMAN DIVING into NATURE

July 22–September 17  
Downtown Sarasota Campus

## MEET SELBY GARDENS'

# DR. PHIL GONSISKA

Senior greenhouse horticulturist Phil Gonsiska PhD brings an inquiring mind (and dry wit) to the practice of plant care at the Downtown Sarasota campus.

Phil Gonsiska's fascination with plants started young. "It's something that has been with me since my earliest memories," he says.

His relationship with Selby Gardens took root early too. As a child, Gonsiska and his family vacationed in Clearwater Beach from their home in Ohio each summer. During one of their frequent visits to a garden center (natch), his gregarious father struck up a conversation with a cashier, who said, "You really should go check this place out..." They did, and Gonsiska became a regular visitor to Selby Gardens many years before he became a regular employee.

That childhood interest in plants blossomed into academic pursuit around the country—University of Kentucky (BS in Plant and Soil Science), Florida International University (MS in Biology), University of Wisconsin–Madison (PhD in Botany). But Selby Gardens stuck in Gonsiska's mind and stayed in his sights. As an undergrad, he sought out a summer internship here. "That's when I discovered canopy ecology," he recalls. "I said, 'Woah, I want to do this.'"



### ABOUT DR. PHIL GONSISKA

**BS:** Plant and Soil Science, University of Kentucky, 2001 **MS:** Biology, Florida International University, 2005

**PhD:** Botany, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2010

**Research Interests:** Habitat selection and geographic distribution in vascular epiphytes

Set on studying epiphytes in graduate school, Gonsiska figured he'd focus on orchids. "Orchids have been and always will be my first love," he says. But as he considered the red tape that can tie up orchids when it comes to the kind of field research and collecting he wanted to experience, Gonsiska decided that studying bromeliads offered a more practical path—one he followed with gusto. (His doctoral research in the wilds of southern Mexico is an adventure story for another day...)

Gonsiska came to Selby Gardens for good in the summer of 2020, arriving from Bok Tower Gardens, a couple of hours northeast in Lake Wales. There he had been the rare plant curator, overseeing a collection of Florida endangered plants and a seed bank. "I got to work with a lot of interesting but very tiny plants," he recalls. "Very spiny plants too—things haven't changed much!"

Naturally, Gonsiska was first assigned to the Selby Gardens greenhouses with lots of bromeliads. He got to work with orchids too. He since has been promoted to senior greenhouse horticulturist, helping to ensure that our seven working greenhouses and world-renowned Tropical Conservatory flourish.

**"ANY TIME I ACQUIRE A PLANT, IT'S PROBABLY GOING TO BE A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP."**

– PHIL GONSISKA  
Senior Greenhouse Horticulturist



### An Inquiring Mind

As a professional horticulturist with degrees in botany and biology, Gonsiska effectively bridges the basic and applied sciences in his approach to his work. "The things I learned in botany and the things I learned in horticulture feed off each other," he says.

His background and his past experience with bromeliads dovetails nicely with the knowledge and skill set of his supervisor and Selby Gardens' resident greenhouse orchid expert Angel Lara, vice president for botanical horticulture. "I think between the two of us, we've put together a lot of things," Gonsiska says.

And putting things together is key when caring for such a large and important collection with a small (but mighty) team. The new glass houses set to arrive with Phase Two of Selby Gardens' Master Plan for the Downtown Sarasota campus will open new possibilities. But as they are still several years off, caring for more plants in less space remains the way of work for now.

Still, Gonsiska manages to pursue discovery amid the daily duties of watering, repotting, and the like. For example: "I have this interest in understanding why epiphytes aren't invasive species in Florida," he says. "So, I've been keeping track of which bromeliads in the collection produce seed, and whether that seed is viable. Which basically means I get to watch plants and I get to plant seeds!"

Gonsiska also teaches an "Introduction to Orchid Care" class a few times a year. Ross Johnston, Selby Gardens' manager of visitor engagement, says the program regularly sells out and always earns rave reviews. "The most frequent comment is that Phil makes a subject that so many people are afraid of—how to care for orchids—approachable, realistic, and relatable," says Johnston. "They say, 'It wasn't intimidating.' Phil talks about all the ways to keep orchids alive, not the ways that people kill orchids."



### A Nurturing Nature

Like many a plant professional, Gonsiska also tends a personal collection at home. His has mostly orchids, followed by cacti, with a smattering of other plant types. It includes specimens he's collected since junior high, others that were gifts, and some he was asked to nurse back to health that were never reclaimed by their owners. "Any time I acquire a plant, it's probably going to be a long-term relationship," he confesses.

If you haven't met Phil, you might recognize him around campus by his signature black bucket hat. Another manifestation of his pragmatic side, it provides protection in the Florida sun—as well as in one of the greenhouses. It seems the plants in Greenhouse 4 all had long hangers, and he kept bumping his head on them. "The first six months I was here, I went in there with a hard hat," he says.

You also might hear colleagues refer to him by a newish nickname that's started to stick. "Even though it should have gotten old by now, I do find the whole 'Dr. Phil' thing to be really amusing," he admits. "It cracks me up every time."



# PLANT DISCOVERIES IN THE DR

Research botanist and gesneriad expert Dr. John L. Clark made a successful expedition to the Dominican Republic earlier this year, his first as a full-time staff member of Selby Gardens. Collaborating with scientists from the University of Florida and the Dominican Republic's Jardín Botánico Nacional, Clark helped document many valuable botanical discoveries.

The team prepared 20 collections of flowers and fruits in preservative fluids to contribute to Selby Gardens' spirit collection, the largest such collection in the Western Hemisphere. They also made 150 herbarium collections—including four new species to science! Each of these included five to 10 samples, so that contributions could be made to herbaria throughout the DR and the U.S. with a focus on Caribbean flora. Finally, the researchers captured over 6,000 digital images plus video footage, including several species rarely seen before in high-resolution photos.

Clark credits his knowledgeable colleagues from the Jardín Botánico Nacional with enabling the team to document 24 of the 27

currently recognized species of gesneriads from the country during the three-week research expedition. That included species previously known from just a single collection and species that hadn't been documented in over 40 years!

"I love working in the Dominican Republic because Dominicans embrace botany," Clark says. For example, in the town of Ocoa, the central square had two statues: one of a statesman considered to be one of the country's three founders, and the other of a Swedish botanist who discovered and described thousands of Caribbean plants.

Clark says the expedition's success was not only in providing baseline biodiversity data, but also in raising new questions for future discovery. Return visits will seek to further explore the evolution of morphological diversity, evaluate species boundaries, and better understand several critically endangered species, which can support conservation initiatives to promote Dominican biodiversity.



Dr. John L. Clark (left) with Teodoro Clase in the Ocoa town square

### PLANT FINDERS

Since 1973, Selby Gardens botanists have discovered or first described for science over 2,000 plant species.

# HERBARIUM MILESTONE

Selby Gardens' Botany department recently marked a milestone, surpassing 120,000 preserved plant specimens in our herbarium.

The Selby Gardens herbarium comprises specialized collections of tropical flora, largely neotropical, with an emphasis on air plants (epiphytes). The dried and pressed specimens—most collected by our own botanists on research expeditions—are mounted on archival paper, documented with key data, and stored long-term for reference and study.



Herbarium specimen of *Oncidium klotzschianum*

Along with our rich living plant collections, spirit collection of liquid-preserved specimens, and library of rare books and hand-colored botanical illustrations, the herbarium rounds out Selby Gardens' world-class research collections.

It's the specialization of these collections that gives them international stature. "Our herbarium ranks in the top five nationally for orchids and bromeliads," says Bruce Holst, vice president for botany. "If anyone is

studying orchids or bromeliads, they'll be coming here for a visit." We loan specimens to institutions around the world too.

That concentration also has earned Selby Gardens participation in major efforts that leverage technology to document and share herbarium specimens. For example, we joined 16 big gardens and museums in a National Science Foundation-funded project to collectively digitize millions of specimens and share them globally via the Internet. "The plant families we focus on give us exceptional collections," says Holst. "That's what has us working alongside other institutions with herbaria that are 50 times larger than we are."

Enhancing our herbarium's quality is the best-practice care employed by the Botany staff and dedicated volunteers who assist them with the critical mounting process. "Every plant is different, so it takes attention to procedure and detail," says Assistant Curator Elizabeth Gandy. "There's no 'undo button' in mounting."

Currently, a team of skilled volunteers works together weekly to mount specimens prepared by staff botanists or visiting scientists. Once the new Elaine Nicpon Marieb Herbarium and Laboratory opens with Phase One of the Master Plan, Holst expects to increase capacity and grow Selby Gardens' herbarium at an even greater rate.



Herbarium specimen of *Epidendrum pseudoschumannianum*

# THE BOATS OF SELBY GARDENS

Our two bayfront sanctuaries share a history strongly linked with our local waterways.

When Marie and Bill Selby honeymooned in Sarasota in 1909, they booked a bayfront room at the Belle Haven Inn. Because they loved boating and fishing, they also brought their yacht and moored her nearby at the Main Street dock. This put them just steps away from a boat ride or fishing trip on the bay. In 1920, the Selbys purchased the point of land on Palm Avenue with access to Hudson Bayou that now forms the nucleus of our Downtown Sarasota campus. The bayou provided a safe harbor for a succession of yachts, each named *Bilma*, reflecting the Selbys' combined first names.



*Bilma II* docked on the Selbys' Hudson Bayou shoreline



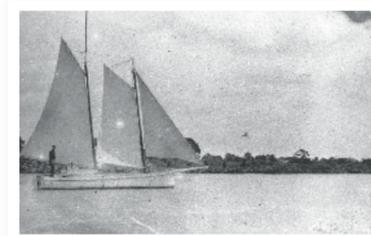
Marie Selby's express cruiser *Bilma Jr.*

The Historic Spanish Point campus has its own waterfront connection, beginning with the homesteading Webb family, who depended on waterborne transportation to get their crops to market and their seasonal guests to and from Sarasota. John Webb acquired the *Ruby*, a five-ton schooner, to ship their vegetables and citrus to the busy ports of Cedar Key and Key West. When the Webbs met sea captain and boat-builder Frank Guptill in the 1870s, they convinced him to help them build a larger vessel to ship their growing volume of produce. The new schooner was rated at 10 tons and named *Vision*, embodying their ambition as entrepreneurial pioneers in Florida.

Romance inspired Frank Guptill to marry into the Webb family, causing him to stay in Osprey. In a lean-to shed along the Little Sarasota Bay shoreline, he crafted a variety of vessels large and small to accommodate the needs of the Webbs' growing resort and the

area's waterborne economy. For years, Frank and his bride Lizzie lived on his schooner *Florence* before building their home atop the largest shell mound on the homestead.

A wide range of boats were built at Frank's boatyard. These included small sailing vessels to allow seasonal guests to visit the barrier islands and larger vessels that enabled neighbors to transport their crops to market. One of the most famous boats Frank worked on was the *Phantom*, which he cut into pieces and enlarged to increase shipping capacity. The *Phantom* operated for several decades along the west coast of Florida.



The Webb family's five-ton schooner *Ruby*

As internal combustion engines became available, Frank was among the earliest adopters in Florida to convert sailing vessels to power. His first such conversion was the *Zephyr*, a former schooner that became the first powerboat in the region. Later, the Webbs asked Frank to motorize an older sailboat, which he

did by installing a one-cylinder "make and break" engine. The Webb family named her *Magic*, reflecting her swift speed without the need for wind. As seasonal guest income eclipsed the profits from the farm, the *Magic* transported guests between Osprey and Sarasota and took them into the Gulf of Mexico for fishing expeditions.



The original *Magic*

Today, visitors to both Selby Gardens campuses are reminded of this shared waterfront heritage. At the Downtown Sarasota campus, photographs of the Selbys' yachts are among the historic images displayed in the Selby House Café. Visitors to the Historic Spanish Point campus can check out the restored Guptill boatyard, where boats are still built and maintained by a crew of skilled volunteers. Traditional boats on view nearby include the sailing sharpie *Lizzie G* and lobster boat *Marie*. Boat tours even take guests out on the water themselves.

### TOUR BOATS

Selby Gardens members and visitors have two options to experience our bayfront sanctuaries just like the Selbys and the Webbs did—from the water! At the Historic Spanish Point campus, 45-minute tours aboard a replica of the *Magic* head into Little Sarasota Bay. For a full-day excursion, our "Set Sail with Selby Gardens" campus-to-campus boat tour includes a narrated roundtrip cruise, access to both campuses for self-guided exploring, and a bayfront lunch. Check our website at [selby.org](http://selby.org) for schedules and reservations.



# TRIPLE YOUR GIFT

## TO OUR MASTER PLAN CAMPAIGN

A leadership gift from Willis A. Smith Construction has seeded a double matching opportunity for new gifts to the Campaign for Selby Gardens! With the fundraising goal for Phase One of our Master Plan in sight, all new gifts effectively will be tripled until that goal is reached.

“Willis Smith is known for building landmarks in this community, and Selby Gardens’ transformed Downtown Sarasota campus will indeed be a world-class landmark,” said John LaCivita, president of Willis A. Smith Construction. “Selby Gardens has an amazing leader in Jennifer Rominiecki, and its forward-thinking Board of Directors is committed to preserving history and securing legacy while creating an innovative, one-of-a-kind facility for the future. We could not be more proud to help secure the final funding that will make Phase One of this iconic Sarasota project a reality.”

This limited-time, double-matching opportunity is possible because of the Phase One Capping Challenge already in place. A group of loyal Selby Gardens champions seeded that challenge a year and a half ago, collectively committing more than \$5 million to match all new gifts to the campaign dollar for dollar. To push us across the finish line, Willis Smith further incentivized new gifts by adding an additional match up to \$250,000.

“Now, every new gift for Phase One will be tripled thanks to leadership support provided by Willis Smith, our construction manager for Phase One,” said Selby Gardens President & CEO Jennifer Rominiecki. “We are so grateful to John and his leadership team at Willis Smith, who are just incredible partners.”

Phase One construction is projected to be completed in October of this year, with grand-opening festivities to soon follow. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of Selby Gardens’ founding, a milestone we will celebrate as part of this momentous achievement in our history. To triple your gift for Phase One today, donate at [selby.org/support](http://selby.org/support) or call 941.248.3583.

**“We could not be more proud to help secure the final funding that will make Phase One of this iconic Sarasota project a reality.”**

– JOHN LACIVITA  
President, Willis A. Smith Construction

### PHASE ONE INCLUDES:

- New Welcome Center
- State-of-the-art Plant Research Center with a new herbarium, laboratory, and library
- Living Energy Access Facility (LEAF), with parking, a garden-to-plate restaurant, a gift shop, and a nearly 50,000-square-foot solar array
- Cutting-edge stormwater management system
- Publicly accessible multiuse recreational trail (MURT)
- Off-site roadway improvements
- Numerous new garden features with more open space

### NAME YOUR GIFT

Would you like your name or a loved one’s recognized as part of our transformed Downtown Sarasota campus? Naming opportunities remain available for Phase One and start at \$2,500. To learn more, contact Jemma Fagler at 941.210.0576.



MARIE SELBY  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS

CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, AND PUBLIC

# PARTNERSHIPS

Investments made in Selby Gardens by community partners help us accomplish our mission to provide bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history.

To become involved, or for more information, contact Ashley Jimenez at [ajimenez@selby.org](mailto:ajimenez@selby.org).



Moreton Bay Fig Tree, by John Pirman, 2016

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Recognizing our many supporters



**DOWNTOWN SARASOTA**

1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236

TEL 941.366.5731

**HOURS AND ADMISSION**

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed Christmas Day)

Members	FREE
Member Guests	\$11
Adults	\$26
Ages 5–17	\$11
Age 4 and under	FREE



**HISTORIC SPANISH POINT**

401 N. Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229

TEL 941.366.5731

**HOURS AND ADMISSION**

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed Christmas Day)

Members	FREE
Member Guests	\$11
Adults	\$18
Ages 5–17	\$11
Age 4 and under	FREE

**MARIE SELBY BOTANICAL GARDENS**

1534 Mound St., Sarasota, FL 34236

**EXHIBITIONS**



**John Pirman: Diving into Nature**  
July 22–September 17, 2023

The iconic and alluring work of Sarasota-based designer and illustrator John Pirman, including several of his signature views from Selby Gardens' two campuses, will be on view inside the Museum of Botany & the Arts and outside in the Gardens.

*Pool Divers*, by John Pirman, 1988



**Seeing the Invisible**  
Through September 2023

See it before it closes! This exhibition featuring interactive artworks created with augmented reality technology remains on view at our Historic Spanish Point campus through September.

*Sigalit Landau, Salt Stalagmite #1 [Three Bridges]*, 2021



**43rd Annual Juried Photo Exhibition\***  
August 28–September 17, 2023

Enter your best shots from our bayfront sanctuaries in our popular annual photo show, now in a fully virtual format. Winners will be showcased and all accepted submissions will be included in the online gallery.

\*Virtual program. Visit [selby.org](http://selby.org) for submission dates and requirements.

2022 Best in Show, "The Bishop," by Patricia Nebel

**SPECIAL EVENTS**



**Fourth of July All-American BBQ**  
Tuesday, July 4 • 5:30–9:30 p.m.

Savor All-American favorites from the Michael's on East Grill, enjoy a variety of family-friendly activities and games, and watch the fireworks show over Sarasota Bay. All-inclusive option available.

Information and tickets online at [selby.org](http://selby.org).



**Mark Your Calendar: Lights at Spooky Point**  
October 13–31, 2023

Our Halloween-inspired light show returns to the Historic Spanish Point campus, with BOOtanical-themed surprises around every bend!

Tickets go on sale in late August at [selby.org](http://selby.org).