



MISSOURI
BOTANICAL
GARDEN

News Release

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For Immediate Release

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN TO ACQUIRE LAND DONATION *Property Will Facilitate Development of Hardy Plant Nursery*

(ST. LOUIS): A generous donation by a local family has created a significant opportunity for the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Oertli family has donated 6.38 acres of land to create the Oertli Family Hardy Plant Nursery. The Nursery will alleviate the space constraints in the current Missouri Botanical Garden greenhouses to maintain permanent collections and conduct research and propagation work to support conservation programs. It will eventually allow the Garden to produce at least 95 percent of the plant material for its annual displays, most of which the Garden currently buys.

The Oertli family, which led Guarantee Electrical Company since the 1940s, recently completed a 10-year employee ownership transfer to the electrical contractor which occupies a large portion of a 16-acre complex known as 3400 Morgan Ford. The family has owned this property outside of the business, and in considering various options for the property going forward and in learning of the Garden's need, it was agreed to sell Guarantee the facilities and land that it utilizes and to gift the balance to the Garden.

"We know Guarantee is delighted to have the Garden as a long-term neighbor, and we believe this is a true win for everyone involved, including the largely residential Tower Grove South neighborhood," said Rick and Roger Oertli, co-managing members of the family LLC that controls the property. "The part sale and part gift of the complex was a wonderful way to satisfy the needs of the company, the family and the Garden."

Plants grown in the new facility will be hardy herbaceous as well as woody perennials, with a focus on wild-collected specimens. Growing taxa of wild origin serves as a tool for both

conservation and education purposes and allows the Garden to conserve important genetics and support wild populations through *ex-situ* conservation while providing an incomparable learning opportunity for horticulturists.

“This is an important step in our mission to conserve some of the world’s rarest and most endangered plant species while supporting the Garden’s displays and permanent collections in a more sustainable way,” said Andrew Wyatt, Vice President of Horticulture and Living Collections. “Horticulture is more than a love of gardening. It’s a science that includes understanding propagation and cultivation. This new nursery greatly strengthens the Garden’s capacity for this important work.”

Additional supporters of the Oertli Family Hardy Plant Nursery include Lelia and David Farr, June and Fred Kummer, and the William T. Kemper Foundation – Commerce Bank Trustee.

“We are grateful for this generous gift,” said Garden President Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson. “It supports the Garden’s mission and its role as world leader in plant science and horticulture.”

Support for our world-class horticulture program is still needed. Learn how you can help at www.mobot.org/fortheworld.

For general information, visit www.mobot.org or call (314) 577-5100 (toll-free, 1-800-642-8842). Follow the Garden on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/missouribotanicalgarden and <http://twitter.com/mobotgarden>.

Today, 157 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display. With scientists working in 35 countries on six continents around the globe, the Missouri Botanical Garden has one of the three largest plant science programs in the world and a mission “to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment in order to preserve and enrich life.” Learn more at www.mobot.org.

The Missouri Botanical Garden focuses its work on areas that are rich in biodiversity yet threatened by habitat destruction, and operates the world’s most active research and training programs in tropical botany. Garden scientists collaborate with local institutions, schools and indigenous peoples to understand plants, create awareness, and offer alternatives and craft conservation strategies. The Missouri Botanical Garden is striving for a world that can sustain us without sacrificing prosperity for future generations, a world where people share a commitment

to managing biological diversity for the common benefit.

More than 45,000 households in the St. Louis region hold memberships to the Missouri Botanical Garden. Memberships begin at \$65 (\$60 for seniors) and offer 12 months of free general admission for two adults and all children ages 12 and under, plus exclusive invitations and discounts. Members help support the Garden's operations and world-changing work in plant science and conservation. Learn more at www.mobot.org/membership.

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NOTE: Digital images available by request.

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