August 8, 2011

Dear Friends of UW Botanic Gardens:

Summer Greetings to you from UW Botanic Gardens! I hope you are having a wonderful (if somewhat delayed) summer, filled with the joy of the season. I invite you to come visit us as often as you can—the gardens and natural areas we manage are free to all, so whether it’s respite and relaxation you seek, a quiet walk in the woods, the beauty of what’s blooming, a guided kayak tour of Foster Island, or the splendid colors of fall, UW Botanic Gardens offers you magnificent nature experiences year-round.

I also invite you to continue your support to UWBG, joining us in our goal to promote an educated, inspired, and engaged society, dedicated to sustainable ecosystems. Together we can do great things to safeguard the health of our environment, restore damaged ecosystems, and preserve valuable species for generations to come. Now, more than any time in the recent past, your support is vitally needed as state funding continues to decline, resulting in a continued reduction of staff.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF: I’m Sarah Reichard, the new UWBG Director

Many of you have known me for several years as a former graduate student at the Center for Urban Horticulture (I finished my Ph.D. in 1994) or, since 1997, as a professor based at our beloved CUH. I research plant conservation issues, especially invasive plants and the recovery of native rare species, and I started the UWBG conservation program. On July 1, I was appointed the Director of UWBG.

I come to this position with great excitement for the future. We have remarkable gardens, amazing programs, and dedicated staff. I have long been active nationally and internationally in public gardens, and I would rank us up with the best. I am committed to leading UWBG into a more sustainable future—environmentally, academically, and financially. I am focused on organizational change and development to embrace these ever-changing times. Our strengths make us unique among gardens in our region and include our well-regarded academics and scientific research; our valuable collections of plants, books, seeds, and specimens; and the public’s respect and affection for the Center for Urban Horticulture and the Washington Park Arboretum. Our opportunities include increasing and broadening UW student involvement in the Gardens; developing a new marketing and business plan that adapts with our changing times; improving management of our collections as well as visitor access to them through technology; and developing broader strategic partnerships with corporations, public agencies, and non-governmental organizations. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve our goals.

WHAT ELSE IS NEW AT UW BOTANIC GARDENS? Turn the page and see…
Yesler Swamp Trail: A group of committed and passionate neighbors have stepped forward to help us develop an educational and natural area that we now call “Yesler Swamp.” It is located just east of the Center for Urban Horticulture’s greenhouses. Friends of Yesler Swamp and the UWBG staff are working together to restore the historic native plants of the area; protect and conserve the local wildlife; and create a handicapped-accessible wetland trail that will offer views of the wetlands, the beaver lodge and lagoon, and the lake. Check out this joint project at (http://yeslerswamptrail.wordpress.com/).

UW Farm: UWBG is providing nearly an acre of land for a new project call the UW Farm. We are joining forces with a UW student-led group, committed to growing and learning about sustainable food systems, and Tilth’s Seattle Youth Garden Works, empowering homeless and underserved youth through farm-based education and employment. A small yet ecstatic gathering of Farm Partnership members shouted “It’s really happening!” as they watched the plow, generously donated by Full Circle Farms, turn over the first soil in the Center for Urban Horticulture’s northwest field. About 600 cubic yards of compost will be needed to restore fertility to the land. The farm will contribute to the bounty of our region’s food system by producing vegetables for student consumption and for sale on the University of Washington campus and at the University District Farmers’ Market.

Summer Camp in the Arboretum: This year we initiated summer camps for students in grades 1-6, with one week each focusing on biodiversity, food gardening, and native plants and peoples. Stay tuned for the themes for next year, when we plan to expand to six weeks of fun and learning in the Arboretum!

If you can’t come to us…

Visit Us Virtually: The UWBG website, www.uwbotanicgardens.org, is a portal to a world of information about plants, gardening, and conservation. Discover the best plants for your garden with monthly Plant Profiles, complete with beautiful pictures and detailed descriptions. Get answers to vexing gardening questions by searching the Gardening Answers Knowledgebase, or ask the Plant Answer Line directly. Read the latest on Washington’s rare plants in the newsletter of Rare Plant Care and Conservation. Find out what staff and faculty are up to by reading the news on our home page. Check the UWBG website regularly to see what’s blooming at the Arboretum and what classes are being offered. Stay connected to UWBG by subscribing to e-Flora, UWBG’s monthly email newsletter. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter (links are at the top of the home page); or add our news and calendar feeds to your RSS reader.

We invite you to join us in our mission to sustain managed and natural ecosystems — and the human spirit — through plant research, academic and public education, and display as we strive to be an international hub in plant science, information, and stewardship.

In addition to this letter, you may hear from the UW periodically, asking for your support of a broad range of programs, including the UWBG. Please know that we are delighted to receive your support regardless of how you choose to give.

Sincerely,

Sarah H. Reichard
Director

P.S. We would love to add you to our e-Flora Newsletter email list. Help us update your contact information by including your email on the enclosed donation form.
PLEASE SEND THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR DONATION
Or make an on-line gift at www.uwbotanicgardens.org

Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ $1,000  ☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ $_____

Checks should be made payable to the University of Washington, or…

Charge my Visa or MasterCard (circle card type)
Credit Card Number: ___________________________ Expires: __________
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Please designate my gift toward:

_____ Director’s Priorities (Where most needed)
_____ Children’s Education & Outreach        _____ Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium
_____ Adult Public Education & Outreach        _____ Arboretum Tree Fund
_____ Washington Park Arboretum              _____ Rare Plant Care & Conservation Program
_____ Union Bay Natural Area                  _____ Elisabeth C. Miller Library

_____ Climate Change Garden Research & Outreach

Name (please print): ___________________________
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University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Box 354115, Seattle, WA  98195-4115

Does your employer provide matching funds? If so please, be sure to include their form!