Elisabeth C. Miller Library
Seattle Botanic Gardens
Acquisition Policy – August 2025
Reviewed October 2026

The Elisabeth C. Miller Library supports the mission of the Seattle Botanic Gardens (SBG), the research and teaching of the University of Washington (UW), and in outreach to other academic institutions, the gardening public, and horticultural professionals. The Library collects books, journals, and other materials that support the plant collection development, research, and teaching at the Center for Urban Horticulture, the Seattle Japanese Garden, and the Washington Park Arboretum.

In June 1988, a statement of understanding between the University of Washington and Elisabeth C. Miller in part guides collection development:

> "The library exists as a resource for the horticultural public including gardeners, landscape architects, professional horticulturists, garden club and plant society members, and students and faculty of the University."

Collection practices also seek selections that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in horticulture, especially the life-affirming value of gardens and gardening to all people.

Collection Development Guidelines

Acquisitions are based on the attached collection levels by subjects. As part of the selection process, the following questions are posed of potential acquisitions.

1. Is the material important in a collection of core materials in horticulture, especially in a temperate, urban environment?
2. Is the material needed by faculty or students for research and teaching at the UW or for frequent reference use in the library?
3. Is the material already available in the UW Library System? At other libraries in the region? Are the materials available in an electronic or on-line format?
4. Does the material have significant archival value for SBG or within the Puget Sound horticultural community?
5. Does the material have historical significance, particularly in the history of horticulture in the Pacific Northwest region?
6. Does the material have historical significance for its provenance?
7. Is the material important for professionals and public in the horticultural community? Has it been requested by library patrons?

8. Does the material meet the needs of library staff to provide efficient and effective reference services? If time sensitive, is the material the best/most current available?
9. Are the materials held in the collections of libraries at other, peer botanic garden libraries or horticultural institutions?

Special Collections

Materials may also be added to the library in response to gift funding of major library donors and support groups with special collections developed according to community support and requests. These special collections include:

- Alpine and Rock Garden Plants
- Biographies of prominent gardeners and plant explorers
- Botanical Illustration
- Horticultural history
- Horticultural Literature, including memoirs and garden journals
- Parent/Teacher Resource Collection
- Youth Collection

Many of these special collections reflect the plant interests of regional gardeners or plant collections in the Washington Park Arboretum:

- Alpine and Rock Garden Plants
- Conifers
- Edible mushrooms
- Ferns
- Fuchsias
- Iris
- Maples
- Rhododendrons and Azaleas
- Tulips

Several individuals have made large gifts from their private libraries or through purchases on behalf of the Miller Library. These books are about a wide-range of topics and are shelved by subject area. The individuals are recognized through bookplates and in as a list collection in the catalog. These donors include:

- Prentice Bloedel
- Elisabeth and Pendleton Miller
- Malcolm Moore
- Brian O. Mulligan
- W. George Waters

Awards

Books selected by major horticultural organizations are a high priority to add if subject is within scope. Awards are noted in the Koha catalog record. Awards include:

The American Horticultural Society (AHS) chose "75 Great American Garden Books" in 1997 in celebration of the society's 75th anniversary. Valerie Easton, Miller Library co-manager at the time, was on the selection committee.

Each year since 1997, the AHS has selected "outstanding garden-related book published in North America" in the previous year. "These books are evaluated on writing style, authority, accuracy, and physical quality." (Quotes from Society website, July 23, 2025).

The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries (CBHL) created its Annual Literature Award in 2000. The award is given to "both the author and publisher of a work that makes a significant contribution to the literature of botany or horticulture" (from the Council's website, July 23, 2025).

From 2001-2013, two awards were given each year. One in the "Technical Category" and the other in the "General Interest Category". Since 2014, only one Annual Literature Award is given, however several Awards of Excellence may be awarded in various format or subject categories.

Levels of Collection Intensity

The levels of collecting intensity and current strength are based on the National Agricultural Libraries "Format of Scope Statement" in large part reproduced below. These in turn are based on standards developed by the American Library Association.

The five levels are:

Minimal level (code-1): Collections that support minimal inquiries about this subject and include a very limited collection of general resources, including monographs and reference works. Periodicals directly dealing with this topic and in-depth electronic information resources are not collected.

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

Basic level (code-2): Collections that introduce and define a subject, particularly as supplemental to a more intensive collection available elsewhere locally. A representative collection of general monographs and reference tools are included but few if any periodicals or other media.

The collection should be frequently and systematically reviewed for currency of information. Superseded editions and titles containing outdated information should be withdrawn. Classic or standard retrospective materials may be retained.

Study level (code-3): Collections that provide information about a subject in a systematic way, but at a level of less than research intensity and support the needs of general library users through college and beginning graduate instruction include:

An extensive collection of general monographs and reference works and selected specialized monographs and reference works. An extensive collection of general periodicals and a representative collection of specialized periodicals.

Limited collections of appropriate materials in languages other than the primary language. Defined access to a broad collection of owned of remotely- accessed electronic resources.

The collection should be systematically reviewed for currency of information and for assurance that essential and important information is retained, including significant numbers of retrospective materials.

Research level (code-4): Collections that contain the major published source materials required for independent research include:

A very extensive collection of general and specialized monographs and reference works.
A very extensive collection of general and specialized periodicals
Access to a very extensive collection of owned or remotely- accessed electronic resources.

Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research.

Comprehensive level (code-5): Collections in a specifically defined field of knowledge that strive to be exhaustive as far as is reasonably possible (i.e., "special collections"), in all applicable languages include:

Exhaustive collections of published materials. Very extensive manuscript collections. Very extensive collections in all other pertinent formats.

Older material is retained and systematically preserved to serve the needs of historical research. A comprehensive level collection may serve as a national or international resource.

Collecting Intensity by Subject and Sources from other UW Libraries

SUBJECTS		Library of Congress Call #	Collecting Intensity	Other UW Sources
General Reference				
	Atlases, Dictionaries, Language Guides	Various	1	Various
Physical Sciences				
	General Works	Q	1	NS
	Meteorology; Climatology	QC 854-995	1	NS
	Geology/Physical Geography	QE 79-948	1	NS
Conservation, Ecology, Restoration				
	Ethnobotany (regional)	QK98.6	3	NS
	Ethnobotany (general)	QK98.6	2	NS
	Conservation - plants, plant communities	QH 75-77	2	NS
	Invasive plants, noxious weeds	QH 79	2	NS
	Natural History (regional)	QH 73, 104.5-105	2	NS
	Ecology - general	QH 540-550	1	NS
	Ecology - plants, plant communities	QK 900-911	2	NS
	Restoration Ecology (regional)	QH541.15.R45	2	NS, Bot
	Urban Ecology	QH541.5.C6	2	NS
	Garden Ecology	QH541.5.G37	3	
	Wetland Ecology	QH541.5.M3	2	NS, Suz
Botany				
	General Works	QK 41-47	1	NS
	Popular Works in support of Horticulture	QK 50	3	
	Herbaria	QK 75-77	2	NS
	Systematics, Taxonomy, Nomenclature especially cultivated plants	QK 95-96	2	NS
	Edible, Useful Plants	QK 98.4-98.7	3	NS
	Medical Botany, Herbals	QK 99	3	NS, HS
	Poisonous Plants	QK 100	2	NS
	Cryptogams (non-flowering plants)	QK 504-639	1	NS

	Ferns	QK 520-532	3	NS
	Fungi	QK 603	1	NS
	Mushrooms (Popular Works)	QK 617	2	NS
	Plant Anatomy	QK 640-707	1	NS
	Plant Physiology	QK 710-899	1	NS
	Plant Evolution	QK 980-987	1	NS
	Plant Pathology	SB 621-795	1	NS
Floras, Field Guides				
	Pacific Northwest	QK 143-144, 149 (northern), 182, 192, 203.B7	4	NS, SC
	Western US, Canada	QK 133, 139, 141-142 & indv. states	3	NS
	Pacific Connections countries (Australia, China, Chile, New Zealand), especially regions modeled for focus forests	QK 101-474.5 various	2-3	NS
	Japan (especially regions modeled for Seattle Japanese Garden)	QK 369	2-3	NS
	Temperate Mediterranean Climates	QK 101-474.5 various	2	NS
	Other Temperate Climates including state or US regional floras	QK 101-474.5 various	2	NS
	Tropical, sub-tropical Climates	QK 101-474.5 various	1	NS
Zoology				
	Fauna (local)	QL 101-739 various	1	NS
	Insects, arthropods in Gardens	QL 434-599	2	NS
	Birds (regional)	QL 671-699	2	NS
	Birds in Gardens	QL 671-699	2	NS
Horticulture/Gardening				
	Horticultural Therapy, Garden Accessibility (physical)	RM 735	2	
	Urban Farming, Community Gardening, Sustainable Gardening	S 1-972	3	NS
	Urban and small-scale Forestry	SB 437.8	2	NS
	Permaculture	S 494.5.P47	2	

	Soils	S 590-599	3	
	Irrigation	S 619	2	
	Fertilizers, Soil Improvements	S 631-667	2	
	Gardening (all topics) - Pacific Northwest	SB 1-999 various	5	
	Directories	SB 44	2	
	Nomenclature, Terminology, Name Indexes	QK 9-13, SB 45.5	3	
	Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Plant Indexes	SB 45, 107	3	
	Horticultural Practices, Principles	SB 46-60, 91-106	2	
	Biography (Plant Explorers, Horticulturists, Landscape Architects)	QK 15-31, SB 61-63, 469.9-470	4	NS
	Botanical Illustration	QK 98-98.3	4	NS, SC
	Plant and Landscape Photography	QK 98.35	3	
	Commercial Horticulture, Management & Methods	SB 126-128, 317-319	2	
	Tree & Field Crops	SB 169-317	1	
	Vegetables, Fruit, Herbs Culture	SB 320-401	3	
	Ornamentals: Recommended Lists	SB 407-408	3	
	Ornamentals: Monographs, Individual Plant Culture	SB 409-413	4	
	Greenhouse, Container, Indoor, Roof Gardening, etc.	SB 413-419.5	3	
	Ornamentals by group: Perennials, Groundcovers, Vines, etc.	SB 421-434.7, 438-439.8	3	
	Ornamentals: Shrubs & Trees including Arboriculture	SB 435-437.7	3	
	Exhibition, Preservation, Display	SB 441-450.87	2	
	Bonsai	SB 454.3.B6	3	
	Garden culture (general)	SB 453-454.8	3	
	Garden culture (Pacific Northwest)	SB 453.2.P23	5	
	Garden culture (Japan, Pacific Connections countries)	QK 264, 355, 369, 462-463	3	
	Garden culture (other regions)	SB 453-454.8	2	
	Garden culture special situations: Drought, Shade, Small, etc.	SB 454.3	3	
	Garden styles: Cottage, Fragrance, Natural, Seasonal, for Wildlife, etc.	SB 454.3	3	

	Gardening Literature, Essays	SB 455	4	
	Plant Lore	QK 83	2	
	Children's Plant Science & Gardening (mostly in Youth Collection)	QH 48, QK 49, SB 457	3	
	Botanical Gardens, Notable Public and Private Gardens, Garden tourism (regional)	SB 465-466	5	
	Botanical Gardens, Notable Public and Private Gardens, Garden tourism (general)	SB 465-466	3	
	Garden History (regional)	SB 468-468.5	5	
	Garden History (general)	SB 468-468.5	3	
	Garden History (groups: African-American, Islamic, etc.)		3	
	Landscape Architecture	SB 470.5-472	3	BE
	Landscape Gardening/Design	SB 473	3	
	Landscape Materials, Structures	SB 473.4-475.9	3	
	Propagation	SB 115-124	3	
	Pruning	SB 125	3	
	Pests, Diseases, Weeds; ID & Control	SB 599-618, 950-985	3	
Miscellaneous				
	Library Collection Management	AM 5-160	1	Suz
Other UW Sources Key:				
	UW Built Environments Library	BE		
	UW Bothell/Cascadia Library	Bot		
	UW Health Sciences Library	HS		
	UW Suzzallo and Allen Libraries	NS		
	--Natural Sciences Collection			
	UW Special Collections Library	SC		
	UW Suzzallo and Allen Libraries	Suz		
	--General Collections			