GUIDE to GROWING

Fernwood Botanical Garden
& Nature Preserve
TO ENRICH THE LIVES OF ALL PEOPLE
by stimulating appreciation of nature, by exemplifying harmony between people, plants, gardens, and wildlife, and by using the distinctive natural and cultivated habitats known as FERNWOOD.
“In these times of stress and changing values there is a basic need for all of us, young and old alike, to have some time to enjoy, study and understand the world we live in... in short, to become aware. The plan, principal purpose and total program of Fernwood is to open eyes, ears and hearts to these natural miracles around us every day, so many of them missed because of a lack of time, knowledge, and awareness.”

-Kay Boydston, Reflections, 1974
FERNWOOD BOTANICAL GARDEN BEGAN AS THE COUNTRY HOME of Kay and Walter Boydston, who purchased the first 12.5 acres in 1941. Over the years, Fernwood became a popular gathering place for those who shared Kay’s love of nature, horticulture, and the craft arts. Fernwood became a public garden in 1964 through the efforts of Niles philanthropists Lawrence and Mary Plym. Subsequent land purchases increased Fernwood’s size to 105 acres.
Youth
WE CAN GROW THAT
FROM THE DIRECTOR

HOW CAN YOU NOT THINK OF KIDS WHEN THINKING OF FERNWOOD? Perhaps you had a daughter or son in nature camp. Or did your third grade class make a field trip to Fernwood? Much has been written about the importance of kids spending time outdoors. Many are familiar with Fernwood’s camps and class field trips, but our connections with young people also extend into the classroom through our Travelling Naturalist Program. Fernwood reaches more than 4,000 children each year either in the classroom or on site. By doing so, we have the opportunity and challenge to reach and influence 4,000 young minds—future responsible stewards of our land.

But our work does not stop there. Through generous funding from the Hunter Foundation, a local chapter of The Herb Society of America, and private gifts, Fernwood inaugurated a high school garden internship program this past year. The interns brought great spirit and energy to the work at hand each day, and we hope to be able to continue the program in the future.

Thanks, also, to a generous gift from the Huizenga Family Foundation, Fernwood is on the way to creating a new Nature Adventure Garden just for kids. A team of landscape architecture students at Purdue University helped design the new garden, which will be installed in the area adjacent to our beloved Railway Garden — another fun space outdoors for our youth — and the young at heart.

Carol Line Executive Director
The Fernwood Experience

Fernwood is a special place where people, plants, and nature come together: beautiful gardens are tucked into a landscape of cultivated and natural areas above and along the scenic St. Joseph River. Miles of trails await and the Visitors Center features an art gallery, fern conservatory, cafe, and a gift shop. Fernwood’s Nature Center offers a smorgasbord of natural history. Many bird species visit its outdoor feeding stations (over 150 species have been recorded). Visitors can watch through the Center’s large picture windows and listen to them over a special audio system. Indoor exhibits showcase Fernwood’s many ecosystems, animals of the region, and items of seasonal interest. There is also a live, working beehive, complete with queen! Temporary, interactive displays and a small library let children learn while experiencing nature up close and personal.

Fernwood’s 55-acre nature preserve, with its tall trees, carpets of wildflowers, gushing springs, and tranquil ponds, is a magical place that draws people back again and again. The Boydstons decided to make Fernwood their home when, in Kay’s words, “We heard the liquid call of two wood thrushes as well as the wild sweet song of a water thrush as we crossed the bridge by the little falls.”
Curiosity
WE CAN GROW THAT
Taking advantage of nature’s classroom, Fernwood offers educational programs throughout the year for all ages. Offerings include gardening programs and classes, nature studies, arts and crafts classes, nature hikes, yoga, book discussion groups, and more. For children, Fernwood offers summer nature and art camps that allow them to discover the world of plants and wildlife through exploration, play, creativity, and imagination.
Fernwood has an annual budget of approximately $725,000. All revenue sources — member dues, admissions, fees for classes and events — are vitally important. (Fernwood has an Endowment Fund, but distributions have been reduced substantially due to market conditions.) Donations, however, make possible Fernwood’s enhanced services and special offerings.

With your help, Fernwood can continue to be a dynamic and inspiring destination for generations.
Fernwood by the Numbers

- 4000 students served each year
- 1150+ likes on Facebook
- 2014 Fernwood’s 50th
- Hours invested each year by Fernwood volunteers compared to Fernwood staff

Worth the Trip
Fernwood welcomed visitors from 25 states in a single year, and more than 314,000 people live within 40 minutes.

27% of annual budget from donations

Membership Visitation

- 2007: Membership, Visitation
- 2008: Membership, Visitation
- 2009: Membership, Visitation
- 2010: Membership, Visitation
- 2011: Membership, Visitation

3,000,000
With Your Help

WE CAN GROW

ANYTHING
CHOOSE YOUR PROJECT
Education and hands-on learning have always been important at Fernwood, and never more so than this past summer as we welcomed three talented and enthusiastic local high school students to our horticulture staff. With the help of Benjamin Futa, a student from Purdue University, and acting under the direction of Fernwood’s Steve Bornell, the team breathed new life into the gardens and grounds, adding more than 600 hours of much needed labor over an eight-week period. Not only did the team tackle general garden maintenance, they were instrumental in renovating and transforming several high-profile garden spaces including our South Vista Stream Side Border. After such a successful beginning, we are eager to continue and expand the internship program in the future. Extended daily hours and additional weeks will make for a more in-depth and enriching experience for both students and Fernwood’s staff. With each season, we’ll be helping create lifelong gardeners with a passion for horticulture and an appreciation of special places like Fernwood.

Fernwood is seeking $12,000 to hire three interns for the 2012 season. Each internship position offered by Fernwood requires approximately $4,000 of donor and sponsor assistance.
Stream Side Border Renovation Timeline

Early Spring 2011

Mid Summer 2011

Late Summer 2011
The garden interns’ energy and enthusiasm for the work at hand was felt and appreciated by all who came into contact with them. Their energy, spirit and pride in their work was a positive experience for all at Fernwood this summer.

“The interns provided the labor but as importantly, their drive and enthusiasm created such momentum that much more was accomplished than originally planned.”

Carol Line, Executive Director

Steve Bornell, Director of Plant Collections
Learning by Doing Interns Caitlin Dippo (St. Joseph High School) and Maddie Higgins (Buchanan High School) take a dip in the Fernwood Lily Pond while the rest of the intern team Hayden Regina (Marian High School) and Benjamin Futa (Purdue University) work to spruce up the surrounding Lilac Garden. Photo: Summer 2011
Based in part on a design composed by students at Purdue University, the new Nature Adventure Garden will allow children and families to explore and celebrate their connection with nature. Thanks to a generous gift from the Huizenga Family Foundation, construction can begin early spring of 2012, but an additional $10,000 will be needed to complete the project.

A Path to Discovery
Composed of natural materials, the new Nature Adventure Garden will invite children to explore and celebrate their connection to nature.

Photo: Karl Gercens
This early concept for the Nature Adventure Garden designed by Scott Peters, Richard Burge, and Jessy Shao, takes children on a wonderful journey through Fernwood’s natural and local history. Garden elements are constructed of natural materials and provide an interactive template for families to celebrate their connection to nature.

*Final design subject to change.*
Renowned landscape architect Paul Busse designed Fernwood’s Railway Garden, which includes scale models of local landmarks built entirely with natural materials. The facility, which changes each year, has become one of Fernwood’s most cherished destinations.

Year Round Display
Fernwood’s indoor conservatory is transformed into a magical holiday railway display, keeping the excitement alive during the winter months.
Composed of natural materials, this scale model of the Niles Train Depot is one of several permanent features in the Fernwood Railway Garden collection that needs regular maintenance and refurbishing.

Local Landmarks

Fernwood’s “Garden-Scale” model trains and track material make the garden come alive, but the cost to maintain them is high. Your support will help preserve the garden years into the future.

Moving Parts
In the past, volunteers have monitored the Railway Garden much of the time and helped keep the trains running. However, volunteers are not available all the time, and when they’re not, a Fernwood staff member must perform the monitoring function, taking time away from their other duties. Monitoring responsibilities will only increase with the opening of the Nature Adventure Garden, and having adequate staff available is the only way to discharge this important responsibility.

Fernwood would like to be able to continue to add new replicas of local area attractions to its permanent collection and to lease additional replicas from the designer’s collection. However, keeping the Garden fresh for both new and return visitors in this way involves considerable expense. At some point, Fernwood would also like to be able to expand or otherwise modify the structure itself.

The Adventure Garden is expected to require little ongoing maintenance, but “little” is not the same as “none.” Donations will help Fernwood meet these needs and relieve the pressure on its operating revenues.
The Saline Fiddlers, all students at Saline High School in Saline, Michigan, are a brilliant example of what young adults can achieve if given direction and the opportunity to pursue their interests. They have performed all over the United States, including at the White House and at Lincoln Center. Attending one of their electrifying performances is an unforgettable experience.

This amazing and acclaimed group of talented young people is coming to Fernwood on Sunday, September 23, 2012, as part of Fernwood’s annual Autumn Air celebration. The appearance fee for the group plus expenses is $3,000, and Fernwood is seeking sponsors for this exciting event.
“Since 1994, the Saline Fiddlers have undeniably set the standard for extracurricular music programs in the United States.”

Saline Fiddler’s website
Kay Boydston, Fernwood’s founder and first Executive Director, authored a personal memoir of Fernwood and her gardening experiences that was published in 1974.

Kay’s words (see page 2 of this brochure) remain as or more relevant, today. Unfortunately, Fernwood has no more copies of this important work and needs to fund a new printing. Sales will help spread the Fernwood story and generate revenues to support its operations. The Walsworth Print Group, a St. Joseph-based printing company, has generously agreed to reprint Reflections at its cost, which will come to approximately $4,000. Contributors will receive one copy, individually signed by Fernwood’s Executive Director, Carol Line, for each $100 they contribute.
Garden Master Plan

Fernwood’s cultivated gardens, made all the more special by the natural wonders that surround them, feature unique plants, a variety of garden styles, and one-of-a-kind specimens. These gardens have a strong history and presence, but the time has come to rehabilitate outdated and overgrown spaces and update established collections. Before undertaking a major renovation of any of these spaces, however, we need to ensure that changes will be compatible with the whole.

This is the function of a garden master plan, and Fernwood is fortunate to have secured the services of Ann Hildner, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at Purdue University in the preparation of such a plan. Professor Hildner will enlist the help of her talented students in this project much as she did in designing the new Nature Adventure Garden. Professor Hildner has agreed to do this work for a fee of $6,000, a fraction of what the project would cost otherwise.
Garden Maintenance Cart

Fernwood has a single, powered garden cart in its inventory. It's noisy and subject to frequent breakdowns due to its advanced age (nobody knows how old it is). It may, nevertheless, be the tool used the most by Fernwood’s garden staff, and a new and reliable garden cart is badly needed.

Fernwood’s Needs

Our staff is wishing for something big enough to do the job, and also presentable to our many visitors. They also would like it to be powered by an electric motor to make it quiet and reduce Fernwood’s environmental impact. The approximate cost of a new vehicle like the one pictured at right is $10,000.

Note the space on the sides of the box for tastefully done signage acknowledging a contribution from a generous donor.
The “Unwelcome Surprises” Fund

If you’ve been to Fernwood lately, you may have noticed that Fernwood’s 20-year-old Visitor Center has a brand new roof. The work, which included upgrades to the ventilation system, was accomplished at a cost of about $35,000. Thanks to an unexpected bequest, Fernwood was able to cover the entire cost of this work, but other unforeseen surprises have put stress on day-to-day operations. For example, in 2010, a severe storm hit Fernwood the evening before our annual benefit Garden Party, causing several thousand dollars in damages. Insurance covered the bulk of the costs, but Fernwood still paid a $2,500 deductible. In 2011, unforeseen and vital repairs came to over $6,500.

While Fernwood was able to cover these expenses, the money could have gone toward new attractions, programs, or general operations to further enhance our visitors’ experiences. These experiences demonstrated the need for a “rainy day” fund to cover similar costs that will certainly arise in the future. Fernwood has set a goal of $6000 for 2012.
YOU’VE READ THIS FAR AND STILL ARE LOOKING FOR A REASON TO HELP, REST ASSURED THAT FERNWOOD’S NEEDS ARE MANY AND THAT IT WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS IN ANY AMOUNT, WHETHER DESIGNATED FOR A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR NOT.

The majority of Fernwood’s revenue goes to pay staff, utilities, and a long list of other operating expenses. If funds became available, Fernwood would be able to pursue other projects like upgrades to our Nature Center and other facilities, new signage, a bar-coded membership system, upgraded computers for staff, and a new bridge over Corkscrew Falls, to name a few.

Unless they wish to remain anonymous, all donors will be recognized based on the level of their contribution. You can donate online, by sending a check, or by calling Fernwood directly. If you have any questions, you are welcome to call Fernwood’s Executive Director, Carol Line, or Claryce Asmus, at 269.695.6491.

www.fernwoodbotanical.org
Memories
WE CAN GROW THEM