



Date: November 1, 2007

What's growing on
at the Garden!

07101

For Immediate Release

**MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN'S RECYCLING PROGRAM
SAVES OVER 100,000 POUNDS OF WASTE FROM LANDFILLS**
Over 300 Tons of Horticultural Plastic Recycled To Date

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden set a new recycling record in 2007 with the collection of over 100,000 pounds of horticultural plastic originally destined for landfills. The Garden's successful Plastic Pot Recycling program in St. Louis is the most extensive public garden recycling program in the U. S., collecting over 300 tons of waste in the past ten years.

The "green" initiative is led by the Garden's William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening, which organizes the yearly public collection of plastic garden pots, polystyrene cell packs and trays on six weekends in May and June. In several years, satellite collections centers were established at retail garden centers in the St. Louis metro area; 2007 participants include Greenscape Gardens, For the Garden by Haefners, Crabapple Cove Nursery, Summerwinds at Timber Creek, Schmittels Nursery, Garden Heights Nursery and the City of Kirkwood Recycling Depository. Over the last four years, the program has been further expanded to include collections from green industry businesses such as landscaping contractors, public works departments, grounds management professionals and wholesale growers.

Over 100 volunteers contributed to the Garden's recycling effort this year by donating more than 500 hours to assist in the collection and processing of horticultural plastic. Pots and trays are sorted by plastic type and granulated on-site into small chips that are easily transported for recycling. The plastic regrind is sold back to consumers as retaining wall ties and timbers for use in landscaping

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ADD ONE: Plastic Pot Recycling

projects. The plastic timbers are water and pest resistant and can be cut and drilled similar to wooden lumber. They outlast traditional wooden railroad ties that have a lifespan of only ten to 15 years.

Proceeds from the sale of plastic timbers are used to fund future collections. Grants from the St. Louis – Jefferson Solid Waste District, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Environmental Improvement and Energy Resource Authority, and California-based Monrovia Growers also support the program.

“It is increasingly apparent that our disregard for the reuse of plant containers ends in millions of pounds of plastic being wasted into landfills each year,” said Dr. Steve Cline, manager of the Kemper Center for Home Gardening and Plastic Pot Recycling program founder and organizer. “Providing an alternative to pitching pots by offering a program to recycle them has sparked a sense of loyalty to doing the right thing. We continue to be impressed with the public and green industry response to this effort.”

The Garden looks forward to enhancing the program in 2008 by expanding the fleet of recycling trailers to additional nursery and garden centers, and making the satellite collections available year-round. Program organizers also hope to offer additional bins at collection centers so consumers can sort their plastic when it is deposited, making the collections more efficient by saving significantly on labor. Repositioning of recycling trailers at the Garden’s collection site will also make drive-thru deposits accessible throughout the year.

“Ultimately, our goal is to develop a workable system of collection and processing so that other communities can adopt a similar effort and evolve this into a common practice,” said Cline. “We are especially pleased that in the past three years Monrovia Growers has taken a leadership step forward on behalf of the green industry and supported the experimental phase of the program. This public/private partnership enables us to continue the growth of a fundamental recycling program such as this. We look forward to other green industry support, including the container producers, as we deal with this ongoing waste issue.”

For more information on the Garden’s Plastic Pot Recycling program, visit the Web site www.mobot.org/hort/activ/plasticpots.shtml or call (314) 577-9561. For more information on purchasing plastic landscape timbers, call the Kemper Center at (314) 577-9441.

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NOTE: Digital images available upon request. All news releases are available for download as .pdf files at www.mobot.org/press.