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What's growing on
at the Garden!

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For Immediate Release

THREE HIGH HORTICULTURAL HONORS FOR THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden has added one statewide and two national recognitions to its growing list of awards for horticultural excellence. Three trees have been declared State Champions by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). The oak collection has been certified as a North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC) Collection by the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). The extensive daffodil collection has been named the first American Daffodil Society (ADS) Display Garden.

“These recognitions demonstrate the wonderful treasure that the Missouri Botanical Garden and its plants are to the metro St. Louis region,” said Jim Cocos, vice president of horticulture. “Our valued State Champion trees reflect the fact that our institution has been here for almost 150 years. The national recognition of our oak and daffodil collections reflects the strength and breadth of our plant collections, which are prized for their diversity and quality.”

The **Champion Tree** program recognizes the largest tree of each species living in Missouri. Size is calculated using a formula developed by American Forests and the MDC that takes into account a tree’s height, crown spread and trunk circumference. The Garden now holds the record for the biggest white basswood (*Tilia heterophylla*), western soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*), and possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*) in the state. All are native Missouri species.

The deciduous white basswood is often used for landscaping and known for its sweet, bee-attracting flowers. Towering above the Museum Building, the Garden’s tree is 103 feet tall with an 81-foot spread. The 52-foot tall western soapberry, near the Lehmann Rose Garden, has glossy green

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ADD ONE: Horticulture Honors

leaves which turn a showy yellow-gold in autumn. Its name comes from the chemicals in its fruits, which lather like soap in water but can also be toxic. The possumhaw is a much smaller deciduous shrub which displays colorful orange-red berries throughout winter. The average possumhaw is just seven to 15 feet tall with a five- to 12-foot spread. The champion possumhaw, located across from the Museum Building, is 18 feet tall with a 33-foot crown spread.

The Garden has also been honored by the APGA as a partner in the first multi-site *Quercus* (oak) collection to achieve official **NAPCC Member Status**.

“Your organization stands among a prestigious group of gardens and arboreta that have committed themselves to the conservation and care of specific plant collections curated at the highest professional level,” said Pamela Allenstein, NAPCC coordinator.

The Garden joins 14 other institutions nationwide that will collaborate to strengthen their unified collection and preserve plant diversity. They will make tree data and germplasm (plant genetic material) available to each other for evaluation, selection, breeding and various other research purposes. The Garden’s collection includes 385 individual oak trees representing 48 different taxa, or categories.

The American Daffodil Society has awarded the Missouri Botanical Garden’s *Narcissus* (daffodil) collection as the first sanctioned **ADS Display Garden**. Certified collections must include not only a large number but also a wide variety of daffodils for public display and education; meet various criteria for plant signage and garden maintenance; and undergo bi-annual reviews by the ADS.

The *Narcissus* collection located in the Samuels and Heckman Bulb Gardens showcases nearly 650 unique varieties, representing 12 of the 13 horticultural divisions. The collection includes a number of historic varieties and a selection of daffodils hybridized in Missouri. Visitors can learn about the plants on display through interpretive signage and detailed labeling specialized for the collection. Blooming season runs from late February through April, with peak bloom usually in early April.

The 79-acre Missouri Botanical Garden is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in south St. Louis. Admission is \$8 adults (St. Louis City and County residents, \$4 adults, \$2 seniors). Children 12 and under are free. Special rates apply for some events and amenities. Visit www.mobot.org for details or call the recorded line at (314) 577-9400.

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