



**Date:** December 2, 2008

What's growing on  
at the Garden!

**MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN COLLECTS OVER 150,000 POUNDS OF WASTE  
IN 2008 PLASTIC POT RECYCLING PROGRAM**  
*Over 335 Tons of Plastic Saved from Landfills to Date*

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden operates the most extensive residential garden recycling program in the nation. With the addition of a record 150,000 pounds of horticultural waste in 2008, the Garden's Plastic Pot Recycling program has saved over 670,000 pounds, or 335 tons, of plastic garden pots, cell packs and trays from landfills to date.

"The growth of this program has been outstanding, and it is apparent that the passion gardeners have for recycling their plastic containers drives this effort forward," said program founder and organizer Dr. Steven Cline, manager of the Garden's William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening. "Providing an alternative to pitching pots by offering a program to recycle them has sparked a sense of loyalty to doing the right thing."

The yearly public collection of plastic garden pots, polystyrene cell packs and trays was expanded in 2008 from a six-weekend to a six-month collection period. The Missouri Botanical Garden serves as the central collection site, open daily from May through October. Several retail garden centers throughout the metro St. Louis area also participate in the environmental effort as satellite collection sites. In 2008, these included Greenscape Gardens, Crabapple Cove Nursery, Summerwinds at Timber Creek, Garden Heights Nursery, Rolling Ridge Garden Center, Bowood Farms, and University Gardens.

Over the last five years, the program has further expanded to include collections from "green" industry businesses such as landscaping contractors, public works departments, grounds management professionals, and wholesale growers. Green business participants dropped off truckload quantities at the Garden's collection center on a weekly basis throughout the program's duration.

(over)

## **ADD ONE: Plastic Pot Recycling**

In 2008, more than 75 volunteers contributed to the Garden's recycling effort by donating over 1,000 hours to assist in the collection and processing of horticultural plastic. New this year, the gardening public was asked to assist in the sorting of pots and trays according to plastic type into recycling trailers hosted at the seven area garden centers. This contributed to the ability to expand the program from 2007.

Plastic is granulated on-site into small chips that are easily transported for recycling. Retaining wall ties and timbers made from the plastic regrind are sold back to consumers for use in landscaping 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 Management District, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Environmental Improvement and Energy Resource Authority, and California-based Monrovia Growers also support the program.

“The Garden looks forward to enhancing the program in 2009 by expanding the fleet of recycling trailers to additional nursery and garden centers, and making the satellite collection locations more convenient to all gardeners in the city and metro area,” said Cline.

Program organizers also hope to offer the Garden's successful program as a model for other communities.

“We are currently working with the green industry in Kansas City to consider development of a similar recycling site, offering seasonal garden container recycling to the public and green industry as we have done in St. Louis,” said Cline. “We are especially pleased that over the past four years, Monrovia Growers, one of the largest plant container producers in the U.S., has taken a leadership position on behalf of the green industry and supported the developmental collection phase of the program. 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](http://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 color images available by request. Download media materials at [www.mobot.org/press](http://www.mobot.org/press).**