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For Immediate Release

**MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN SAVES OVER 130,000 POUNDS OF
HORTICULTURAL WASTE FROM LANDFILLS IN 2009**
Over 400 Tons of Plastic Collected to Date

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden operates the most extensive residential garden recycling program in the nation. With the addition of **130,000 pounds** of horticultural waste in 2009, the Garden's Plastic Pot Recycling program has saved over **800,000 pounds** (400 tons) of plastic garden pots, cell packs and trays from landfills to date.

“Providing an alternative to pitching pots by offering a program to recycle them has sparked a sense of loyalty to doing the right thing,” said program founder and organizer Dr. Steven Cline, director of the Garden's William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening. “Despite the economy, gardeners are still planting their landscapes and plastic pot containers continue to accumulate. Fortunately, with the assistance of funding through the St. Louis – Jefferson Solid Waste Management District and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Garden was able to continue this six month collection program this year and the response continues to be great.”

The yearly public collection of plastic garden pots, polystyrene cell packs and trays was started in 1998. The Missouri Botanical Garden serves as the central collection site, open daily from late April through September. Ten retail garden centers throughout the metro St. Louis area participate in the environmental efforts as satellite collection sites. In 2009, these included Greenscape Gardens, Crabapple Cove Nursery, Summerwinds at Timber Creek, Garden Heights Nursery, Rolling Ridge Garden Center, Bowood Farms, Hartke Nursery, Thies Farm and Greenhouse, Sunset Plantland Nursery, and University Gardens. Also contributing to the collection

(over)

ADD ONE: Plastic Pot Recycling

are businesses associated with the green industry; landscaping contractors, public works departments, grounds management professionals, and wholesale growers.

Plastic is granulated on-site into small chips that are easily transported for recycling. Through a cooperative agreement with a local manufacturer, Plastic Lumber Company of America, LLC, plastic lumber is being made from the regrind and sold back to consumers for use in landscaping projects. The plastic timbers are water and pest resistant and can be cut and drilled similarly to wooden lumber. They outlast wooden lumber by at least five times and are competitive in cost.

Proceeds from the sale of plastic timbers will be used to offset some of the costs of 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.

“For 2010, the Garden looks forward to enhancing the Plastic Pot Recycling Program 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. “We also hope to offer the successful program as a model for other communities.”

In 2010, program organizers will continue 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 similar to the efforts in St. Louis. Over the past five 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.

For more information on the Garden’s Plastic Pot Recycling program, visit the Web site www.plasticpotrecycling.org or call (314) 577-9561. For more information on purchasing plastic landscape timbers, call the Garden’s William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening at (314) 577-9441.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is the oldest continually operating botanical garden in the nation, celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2009. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years*.

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NOTE: A digital color image is available by request. **Download media materials at** www.mobot.org/press.

The Missouri Botanical Garden’s mission is “to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life.” Today, 150 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display. *Missouri Botanical Garden: Green for 150 Years*.