



Contact:

Jim Vidmar, VP Marketing & Communications  
for The Myriad Gardens and Scissortail Park  
(405) 445-7080 Ext 118  
[jvidmar@myriadgardens.org](mailto:jvidmar@myriadgardens.org)



## Myriad Botanical Gardens awarded Great Idea Challenge Grant

**Oklahoma City, OK January 8, 2019** – The Oklahoma City Community Foundation and Mayor David Holt hosted a reception Wednesday after to announce the recipients of the Great Idea Challenge Grant. The Myriad Gardens was recognized as a runner up and awarded \$20,000 to develop their proposed ReWild OKC Program.

ReWild OKC suggests a re-envisioning of Oklahoma City as an urban garden and challenges the public to see naturalized plants in an aesthetic way. Taking a layered approach to rewilding our city, labeling wild plants throughout downtown, curating a weedy vacant lot into a green zone, and creating vertical gardens on walls and fences along with programs to bring garden education to children across the city.

“ReWild OKC is an entirely new way of thinking about our urban and natural environment. The program will improve quality of life by creating harmony between nature and city. The Myriad Gardens horticultural staff will cultivate a pocket garden downtown by naturalizing a vacant lot and creating or labeling vertical gardens on walls and fences. These spaces will be extremely low maintenance and composed of native plants not commonly seen in designed gardens. Rather than being customary destinations, they will be found spaces, naturalized, wildlife-friendly greenery embedded into the structure of our city,” said Maureen Heffernan, Executive Director of the Myriad Botanical Gardens.

The ReWild green spaces will be aesthetically pleasing and, once established, require very little maintenance with drought resistant and wildlife-friendly plants. The labeled weeds, gardens and vines

will be combined into an urban green walking tour that the public could do independently or in groups. Greening our urban landscape will improve sustainability and quality of life in Oklahoma City and could become a national model for re-wilding urban areas.

The Myriad Botanical Gardens is one of Oklahoma City's most beloved public spaces, offering its visitors a 15 acre natural escape in the very heart of downtown. A half-acre children's garden, an off-leash dog park, restaurant space, splash fountains, and paths for walking and jogging provide guests young and old with a place to seek solitude with nature, or seek community and the company of others. Additionally, the Myriad Gardens offers a variety of horticultural education programs for adults and children.

The Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory's unique design has earned attention and praise in the architectural community. It is 224 feet long, 70 feet in diameter, and is covered by 3,028 sections of translucent, double-layered acrylic panels. The Conservatory includes 13,000 square feet of plant display area in two distinct climates: the Tropical Wet Zone, which is at the south end and is watered daily; and the Tropical Dry Zone at the north end which receives water from April through September, followed by drought from November through March. Some 2,000 varieties of plants and a 35-foot waterfall round out the spectacular features of the Conservatory.

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