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What's growing on
at the Garden!

MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN OPENS SUSTAINABLY-RENOVATED VISITOR PARKING LOT

(ST. LOUIS): The Missouri Botanical Garden is pleased to announce the completion of sustainable renovations to its east visitor parking lot. The renovations, made by BSI Constructors, are the second of a three-phase improvement project funded through previously-awarded grants. In keeping with the Garden's commitment to being an area leader in sustainable practices, the parking lot is a showcase for environmentally-friendly design focused on improving stormwater management.

“As one of the region's major tourist attractions, the Garden is in a unique position to be able to educate thousands of people about best ‘green’ practices, not just in our landscapes but also in our hardscapes,” said Deborah Frank, vice president, sustainability. “When visitors pull into our east parking lot, they'll see a first-hand example of how to incorporate sustainability into a routine construction project. We hope that others will follow our example and consider sustainable alternatives when contemplating necessary renovations in their own homes or businesses.”

One of the most recognizable features of the new parking lot is the addition of a large, central bio-remediation area to collect rain water drainage. Bio-remediation is the use of plantings to naturally reduce the need for treatment of contaminated groundwater. Planted with Missouri natives suitably adapted for retaining moisture, the area allows water to gradually seep into the ground rather than going directly into the storm sewer system. The plants utilized in the parking lot project were selected by horticulturists from the Garden's Shaw Nature Reserve, as recommended in the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) Landscape Guide for Stormwater Best Management Practice Design (<http://www.shawnature.org/nativeland/MSD.aspx>). Examples include trees such as swamp

(over)

ADD ONE: Parking lot improvements

white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) and bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum* ‘Shawnee Brave’), shrubs such as winterberry (*Ilex verticillata* ‘Red Sprite’) and Japanese snowball (*Viburnum plicatum* ‘Popcorn’) and various groundcovers, including copper iris (*Iris fulva*), prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) and blue cardinal flower (*Lobeila siphilitica*). Two foot bridges cross over the bio-remediation channel for a closer look at the plantings (labeled for ease of identification) and for easy visitor access to the Ridgway Visitor Center.

Portions of the east parking lot were paved with pervious (or porous) concrete and asphalt. Precipitation is able to soak directly through both materials and into the ground, reducing runoff. As the water moves from the surface of the lot to beneath plant roots, excess salt and wastes are naturally disposed of in a process called groundwater recharge. Asphalt and concrete removed from the previous parking lot is being recycled for future roadway aggregate.

Grasscrete, a third type of sustainable paving, was utilized in areas surrounding trees. Grasscrete is designed with numerous cutout vents or openings filled with sandy soil or grass, again alleviating the amount of stormwater runoff that a traditionally-paved lot would incur.

In addition to the sustainable features, the newly-renovated lot includes numerous functional improvements. The east lot holds 275 free parking spaces, including an increased number of designated handicapped parking spaces. An additional sidewalk was installed for safer access from the handicapped spaces to the Ridgway Visitor Center. A new sliding gate with security-card access replaced an older gate at the southeast perimeter of the lot. The sidewalk on the east side of the visitor center was relocated to allow a wider turning radius for buses dropping off groups at the Linnean Plaza entrance. Lighting and irrigation systems were also improved.

The final phase of improvements to the west side of the main parking lot is scheduled to begin in October 2010.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in south St. Louis, accessible from Interstate 44 at the Vandeventer exit and from Interstate 64 at the Kingshighway North & South exit. Free parking is available on-site and two blocks west at the corner of Shaw and Vandeventer.

For general information including hours and admission, visit www.mobot.org or call (314) 577-5100 (toll-free, 1-800-642-8842).

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NOTE: Digital images 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, 151 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in St. Louis, just south of I-44 at Vandeventer-Kingshighway (exit #287B). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Dec. 25. Grounds open at 7 a.m. Wednesdays and Saturdays (exception: special admission rate events). Admission is \$8; free children ages 12 and under and Garden members. St. Louis City and County residents are \$4 and free Wednesdays and Saturdays until noon (exception: special admission rate events - third weekend of May, Labor Day weekend, and first weekend of October). Park for free on site and two blocks west at the Shaw-Vandeventer intersection. The Garden is easily accessible by taking the MetroLink commuter rail line to the Central West End station and picking up a Metro bus (www.metrostlouis.org). For general information, log on to www.mobot.org or call the 24-hour recording at (314) 577-5100 or 1-800-642-8842. For membership information, visit www.mobot.org/membership call (314) 577-5118 during weekday business hours. For volunteer opportunities, visit www.mobot.org/volunteer or call (314) 577-5187. The Missouri Botanical Garden is a tobacco-free environment.