



Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

WHEREAS, the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners is pleased to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Chicago Botanic Garden and its vital partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Botanic Garden grew from a dream before it opened in 1972 by the Chicago Horticultural Society, which presented annual flower shows, displayed at the World's Columbian Exposition and was an active part of World War II's Victory Garden movement; and

WHEREAS, over time, ambitions grew through the dedication and creativity of many to bring a botanic garden to Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Botanic Garden opened its doors in the spring of 1972; there was a small greenhouse and just one garden area open to the public and only about 30 staff. Hard work and creativity fueled the early years, and it wasn't all roses as the founders and staff turned machine-sculpted ground into the 28 designed and 4 natural areas enjoyed today; and

WHEREAS, during the second decade, the Chicago Botanic Garden grew rapidly developing 14 garden areas in quick succession. The Chicago Botanic Garden focused on community, developing relationships with visitors through new public programs such as plant society shows, festivals, and concerts; and

WHEREAS, starting in 1992, the Garden was still growing and added a new priority: plant conservation. The Chicago Botanic Garden launched a science program with a single lab and housed our seed bank, boasting only seven species, in a Sears chest freezer located in a closet. Today, the Negaunee Institute for Plant Conservation Science and Action has international recognition and involves nearly 100 staff and graduate students. In 2001, the Chicago Botanic Garden joined forces with seven partners to form Seeds of Success, a national seed banking project. This collection holds almost 2,000 species of endangered plants and native plants important for restoration- important, diverse, genetic resources for the next generation; and

WHEREAS, in the early 2000s, the Chicago Botanic Garden expanded what it does, how it works, and where it has a presence. The Chicago Botanic Garden launch of Windy City Harvest activated a social justice focus for its work through urban agriculture-jobs training, fresh produce markets, working farms, and community gardens-which developed reciprocal partnerships with 16 Chicago-area neighborhoods. The Chicago Botanic Garden collaborated with Northwestern University to establish the Joint Graduate Program in Plant Biology and Conservation; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Botanic Garden continued to grow in this last decade, adapting as living museums do. A new master site plan reflected new priorities in response to a changing environment, community, and organization. The production greenhouses, Shida Evaluation Garden, and Regenstein Learning Campus exemplify these shifts and growth. The build-out of a state-of-the-art production greenhouse and a nursery now has enabled the growth about 80 percent of the plants at the Chicago Botanic Garden. The opening of the Mitsuzo and Kyoko Shida Evaluation Garden doubled the size of our plant evaluation program; and

WHEREAS, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chicago Botanic Garden illustrated its capacity for adaptability through

its Windy City Harvest participants who operated as essential workers, feeding communities in great need. The Chicago Botanic Garden's Glencoe campus found new ways to maintain the landscapes, the collection, and plant production capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Botanic Garden will mark its 50th birthday with *Flourish: The Garden at 50*, a series of experiences that celebrate the Garden's extraordinary growth with art installations created from Chicago, national, and international artists connecting visitors with nature in new ways.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Toni Preckwinkle, President, and the Forest Preserves of Cook County Board of Commissioners congratulate the Chicago Botanic Garden on its 50th Anniversary and its long and successful partnership with the Forest Preserves of Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be presented to the Chicago Botanic Garden.