



From our Executive Director

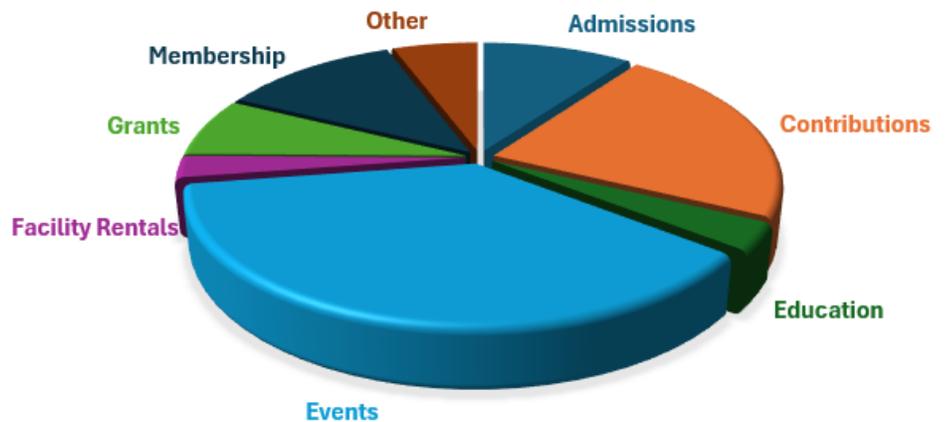
Monty Don, the British horticulturist once said, “A garden is not a place, it’s a journey.” I have to agree. We were on a wonderful and sometimes wild journey in 2024. We made some great strides, stubbed a few toes in the gravel, planted some seeds of opportunity, and recovered beside our community after a very tumultuous hurricane season. It went by so quickly as if someone literally tore the months out of the calendar. Yet here we are ready with a clean slate and a new year full of possibilities.

Come take a walk with me as I’d love to share with you some of the memorable 2024 highlights here at Heathcote.

GARDEN LIFE

**YEAR-END REVENUE WAS
\$407,359
UP 11% FROM 2023**

FISCAL YEAR 23-24 REVENUE



Admissions 16,000
Membership 408

Volunteers 197 = 8,336 hours
\$279,172 financial value

Staff 7 dedicated members maintain the Gardens daily

GIFT SHOP - TERMITE DAMAGE UPDATE

Our Gift Shop's journey began in the summer of 2023 and stretched through much of 2024. Thanks to the dedication of RK Davis Construction, we navigated the damage, tackled interior demolition, and upgraded the shop with new electrical, plumbing, and fixtures. They showed up week after week, working tirelessly to have everything ready before the Garden of Lights. Marzo Roofing also stepped in, skillfully installing the new roof despite unpredictable rain and soaring temperatures. If you haven't visited since the remodel, I hope you'll stop by! Our Gift Shop Lead, Patti, brought her magic touch—painting, restaging, and creating an inviting space that reflects the Old Florida charm of the gardens. Most of all, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who supported us through this massive project. Your generosity, encouragement, and belief in Heathcote helped us through, and for that, we are truly thankful.



PROJECTS & UPDATES

- New plant signage ordered and installed
- Upgraded to fiberoptic internet via FPUA
- New roofs on the Heathcote House, Gift Shop, and public restrooms
- Expansion of the Butterfly Garden
- Replaced and repaired siding on Heathcote House along with the back outside staircase
- Cleaned out the attic in the Heathcote House to allow for more viable storage
- Created curriculum for the Explore & More Children's Program to include a summer program
- Launched the Gardens for All Community Access Program for families in under-sourced communities
- Judged and awarded the James J Smith award at the South Florida Bonsai Society Expo in Orlando
- Added pet-friendly admissions
- Launched the new donor management system
- Launched the Garden Lunch Pass Program
- Secured a Bonsai Intern to help maintain the Gallery
- The passing of one of our beloved cats, Buddy.



GARDEN OF LIGHTS

Garden of Lights is a beloved tradition and our biggest fundraiser.

- **10th Annual**
- Over **7300** attendees came despite 2 rain days
- **27 Volunteer Illuminators** worked from January – November 2024, creating and handcrafting the designs
- Hosted the **2nd Annual Night of Illumination** for individuals with **cognitive & developmental difficulties**
- Garden of Lights raised **\$115,800**



GROWING INTO 2025

New & Exciting

- Expanding USDA partnership in research
- Move the chickee hut and vegetable garden to the Pioneer House area
- Replace the old propagation structure with a hoop house, new irrigation, and potting/growing benches
- Partnership with Fairchild Tropical Gardens' Million Orchid Project
- Installation of a sensory garden for special needs individuals
- Begin replacing the perimeter fence for security and improved aesthetics
- Launch the long-awaited digital membership
- Upgrade the irrigation system
- Three bonsai entries accepted in the Epcot Flower & Garden Show



Join the Fun - Events!



- **Membership Day** Sunday February 16th
- **Volunteer Appreciation** Sunday April 6th
- **Tea in the Gardens** March 9th – **SOLD OUT**
- **Summer Explore & More Program** June 6th – July 25th
- **Fall Garden Fest** October 18th & 19th
- **Garden of Lights** November – December



HELP US GROW: A BOLD VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We're **dreaming big** for Heathcote—and we need you by our side. This year, we're embarking on essential projects to preserve and enhance the Gardens for generations to come. From replacing our aging perimeter fence and propagation structure to upgrading the irrigation system, conducting a site survey, and creating a brand-new sensory garden. These improvements total over **\$227,500** (see insert).

Unlike many organizations, Heathcote receives no operational funding from the County or local government. Every bloom, every tranquil path, every moment of inspiration here is made possible by you—our dedicated supporters—through donations, memberships, events, grants, and facility rentals. And while this goal may seem ambitious, we believe in the power of this community. In fact, several generous donors have already stepped up with an **\$13,000 matching challenge** to kick-start this effort!

These are **big** projects because Heathcote is a **big** part of so many lives. Will you help us bring this vision to life? Your gift, no matter the size, **will** shape the future of this beloved garden—your garden, your sanctuary. Let's make it happen together. **Can we count on you?**

"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden." - Minnie Aumonier

In 2025, Heathcote celebrates 39 years as a beloved community treasure—a place of beauty, history, and inspiration. Together, let's shape its future and keep it thriving for generations to come. **Will you walk with me?**

Here's to the Garden life,

Vicki Hoyos
Executive Director