



FAR REACHES
BOTANICAL CONSERVANCY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT





Our Mission & Goals

The FRBC acquires and conserves wild and cultivated ornamental plants new to North America with special emphasis on those that are threatened or vulnerable to loss. We maintain these plants as a living reference collection for education, scientific purposes, and public enjoyment.

Our Strategic Goals:

- 1. Continue Collection of At-Risk Plants** - Conduct horticultural research and collecting expeditions to search for species acutely threatened by immediate human pressure or climate change, particularly those not capable of migration or adaptation, and actively import plants from at-risk specialty collections in Europe and elsewhere.
- 2. Ensure Conservation and Distribution of Threatened Plants** - Pursue ex situ conservation practices and cultivation, with distribution to botanical institutions, public gardens, scientific researchers, and the horticultural community.
- 3. Broaden Engagement and Education of Diverse Communities** - Increase public participation in horticulture and gardening by providing education on how our work and plant collections contribute to understanding and preserving global biodiversity.
- 4. Build Infrastructure and Organizational Sustainability** - Steward the Conservancy's collection and establish systems to ensure the long-term viability of the plant collections and the organization.

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2019 Highlights

Many of the world's plants remain poorly known. Some have never been introduced to cultivation for lack of opportunity and some are not yet known to science. The twin hammers of climate change and human exploitation fall heavily on many fragile populations, with no good outcome in sight. Disturbingly, in our 20 years of fieldwork, we have seen an incredible increase in habitat loss and degradation resulting in species extinction. This is the time to act, and we accomplished much over the past year.

- 🌿 UK Plant Acquisition Trip. On our spring trip, we brought home over 100 new plants from Scotland, Wales and England.
- 🌿 Crevice Garden Installation. Our new crevice garden will demonstrate how to grow some of the alpine plants at greatest risk to climate change, including endemics from our own Olympic Mountains.
- 🌿 Horticultural Research and Collecting Expedition to Asia. Our fall expedition yielded 150 taxa new to the FRBC, including many new to cultivation as well.
- 🌿 New Species. The new species of *Heteropolygonatum* found on our 2018 FRBC expedition to Vietnam is poised for formal description by Dr. Aaron Floden.





Conservation Programs Year in Review

At the FRBC, we identify regions that hold key wild plant species that are poorly known in cultivation and whose populations are threatened by human activity and climate change. We also locate European specialty plants grown by a single individual or horticultural entity.

We then conduct horticultural research and collecting expeditions (given the days of root-washing while adhering to inspection and export protocols, Europe has felt like an expedition!) to bring seeds, cuttings or plants back to our nursery. Once established, these are propagated for distribution to botanical gardens, horticultural entities, researchers, and home gardeners. Ex situ cultivation is one of the cornerstones of our conservation practices – placing these rare plants in permanent collections and encouraging gardeners to grow them is our principal strategy to insure against their loss.

Horticultural Research & Collecting Expeditions: Our 2019 U.K. trip added over 100 plants to our collection, from named cultivars of the Blue Poppy *Meconopsis* and Asiatic Gentians to an array of *Roscoea* species and hybrids, from the obscure Scottish native *Caltha palustris* ‘Minor’ to rare goodies like *Schefflera trevesioides*, *Impatiens balsanae* and *Aucuba confertiflora*.

The star of these introductions is the lost *Cornus* of Frank Kingdom-Ward, who found this creeping dogwood over 70 years ago in northern Burma. To his lasting regret, he was unable to bring it into cultivation and it was not rediscovered until last year by an English botanist who collected a scant few specimens. We were gifted a small bit as insurance to help safeguard this great rarity and are happy to say it has grown enough that Sue recently potted it into a gallon container.

We have also focused our U.K. trips on select genera with the intention of holding a national collection. The 29 new *Roscoea* we acquired in 2019, combined with those from our 2018 trip, are a significant addition to the extensive *Roscoea* collection hosted at Far Reaches Farm. This is likely the largest assemblage in North America and one of the most comprehensive in the world.

Our autumn plant hunting expedition to Asia resulted in nearly 150 collections, many of which are first-time introductions to cultivation. Others are of species from areas where they have not been introduced previously. It is important to have a genetic profile of a species across the breadth of its range observing relevant changes in habit or morphology.

For example, we collected a very narrow-leafed form of *Reineckea carnea* on a mountain range from which it had not been introduced. *Reineckea* is often regarded as a monotypic genus – just a single species. We have collected 2 very distinct forms in the past and this third collection is a noticeable deviation from the usual. These three, along with our other more typical collections, will soon become part of a comprehensive DNA sequencing of *Reineckea* by Dr. Aaron Floden at Missouri Botanic Garden.

We also collected a mysterious *Disporopsis* species first introduced in 2018 as a single clone by our friend Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden. Our goal was to find additional clones so that Dr. Floden can do a full analysis on what may well prove to be an undescribed species. This looks closest to *Disporopsis jinfushanensis*, which Far Reaches Farm introduced in 2010.

First Time Flowerings: Some of our more notable 2019 first-time flowerings include a shrubby *Stewartia* species with a vivid red star in the center of the white flower (never seen before) and a distinctive *Ternstroemia* sp., both from China. The flora of Vietnam was well represented by flowerings of *Heteropolygonatum* sp. nova, *Aeschynanthus* sp., *Agapetes* sp. and *Arisaema calcareum*, among others.

Introductions flowering from the UK were numerous but *Ourisia x bitternensis* 'Cliftonville Roset' and *Gentiana* 'Oban' stood out. *Meconopsis* 'Harry Bush' deserves mention for the huge blue flowers and one of the all-time great names which honors a Scottish plantsman.

Partnerships: We developed an ongoing arrangement to donate FRBC plants of wild origin to the United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. The initial shipment of 20 trees and shrubs was sent in July to become part of its permanent collection.

Additionally, FRBC donated plants to the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Hoyt Arboretum, and University of British Columbia Asian Garden, among others. We also sold 350 plants to gardeners and public gardens across the U.S.





Educational Programs Year in Review

At FRBC, we increase public participation in horticulture and gardening by providing education on how our plant collections contribute to understanding and preserving global biodiversity.

We teach a variety of workshops on how to use these scarcely-known plants in the garden and introduce the world of rare ornamental, heritage, and scientifically important ornamental plants to a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds.

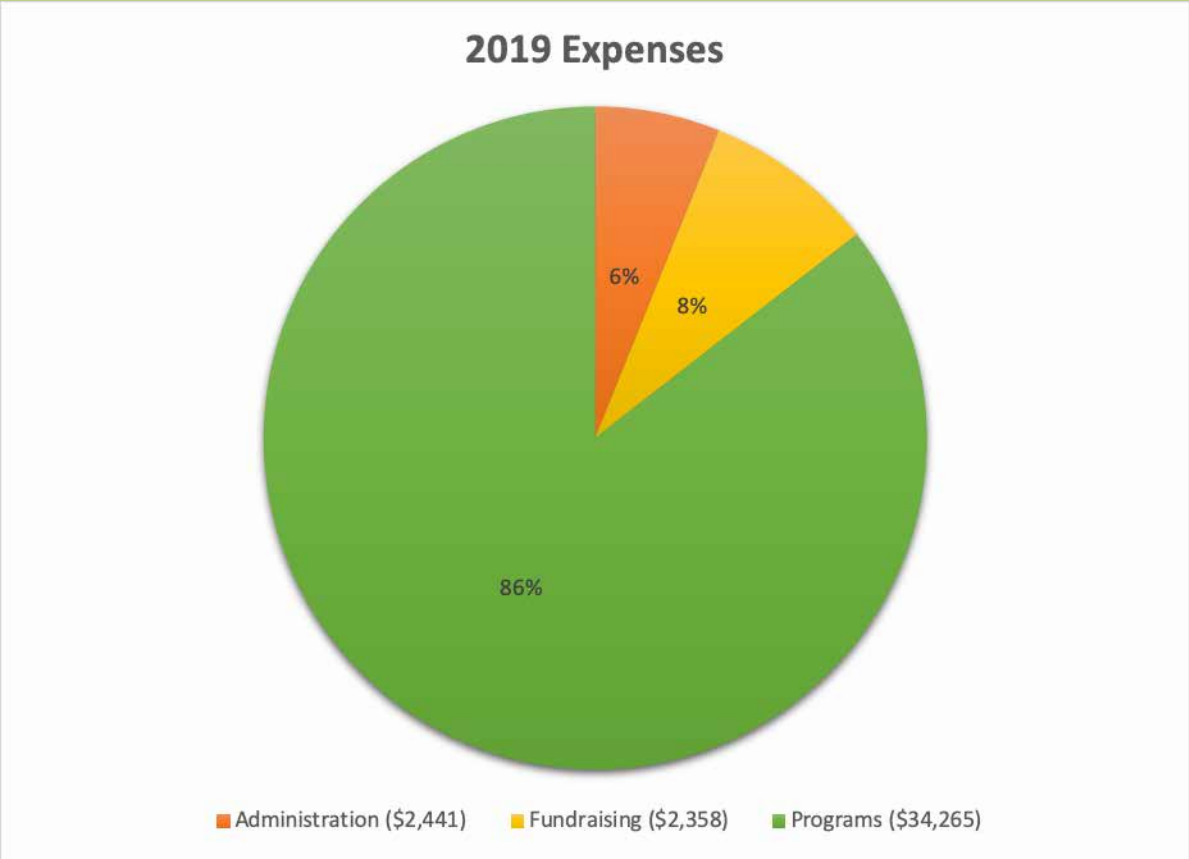
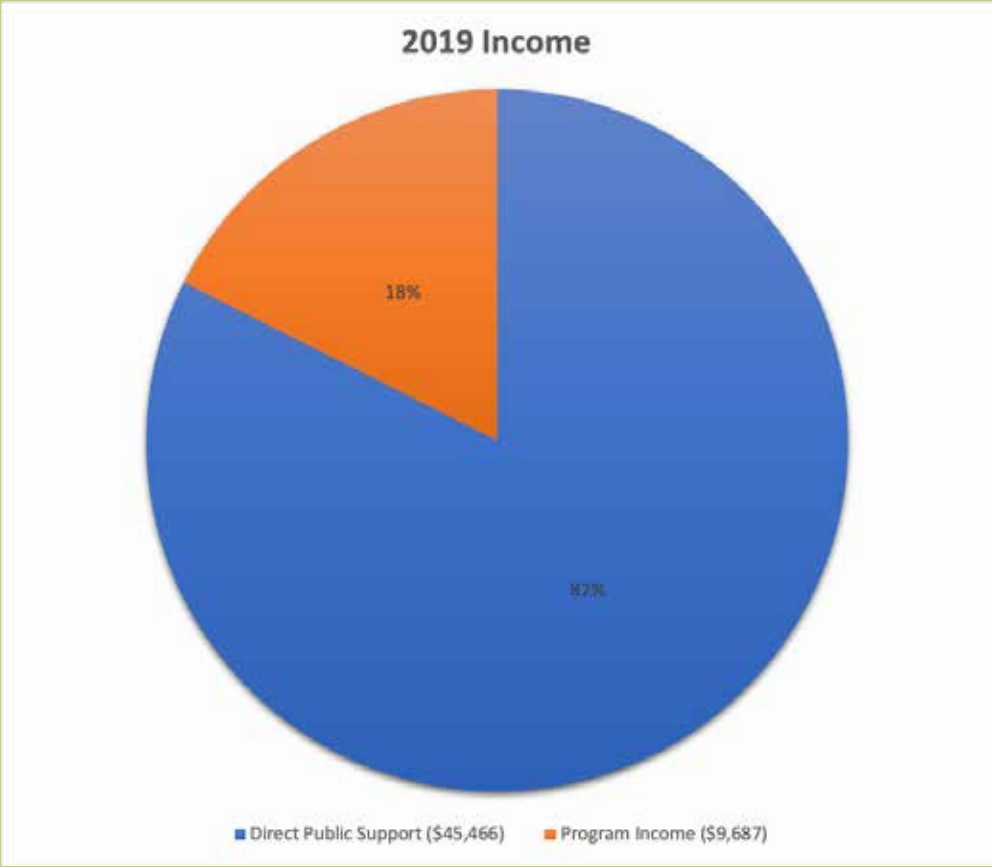
We also incorporate the knowledge gained from both our horticultural expeditions and the documentation of our collection into plant descriptions, articles and lectures.

In March, we hosted rock garden superstars Kenton Seth and Paul Spriggs for an inspirational workshop on crevice garden construction. With over 40 FRBC members and guests in attendance, this event was a great kickoff to our own new crevice garden installation. We will now be able to grow some of the most difficult alpiners at greatest risk to climate change, including endemics from our own Olympic Mountains. Crevice gardens offer the best chance for successful cultivation of these species in a non-alpine environment.

We also held two Up Close and Personal tours in our greenhouses for another 30 members. This was an opportunity for full immersion into some of the very special plants held by the FRBC.

On the science front, our consulting taxonomist Dr. Cody Hinchliff created 58 botanical voucher specimens from our wild-origin collections. The FRBC donated these herbarium vouchers to the University of Washington Burke Herbarium where they will be digitized and available to botanists anywhere. Our goals are to raise awareness about the unique collection maintained at FRBC and facilitate partnerships with researchers who can use our plant material in scientific analysis.

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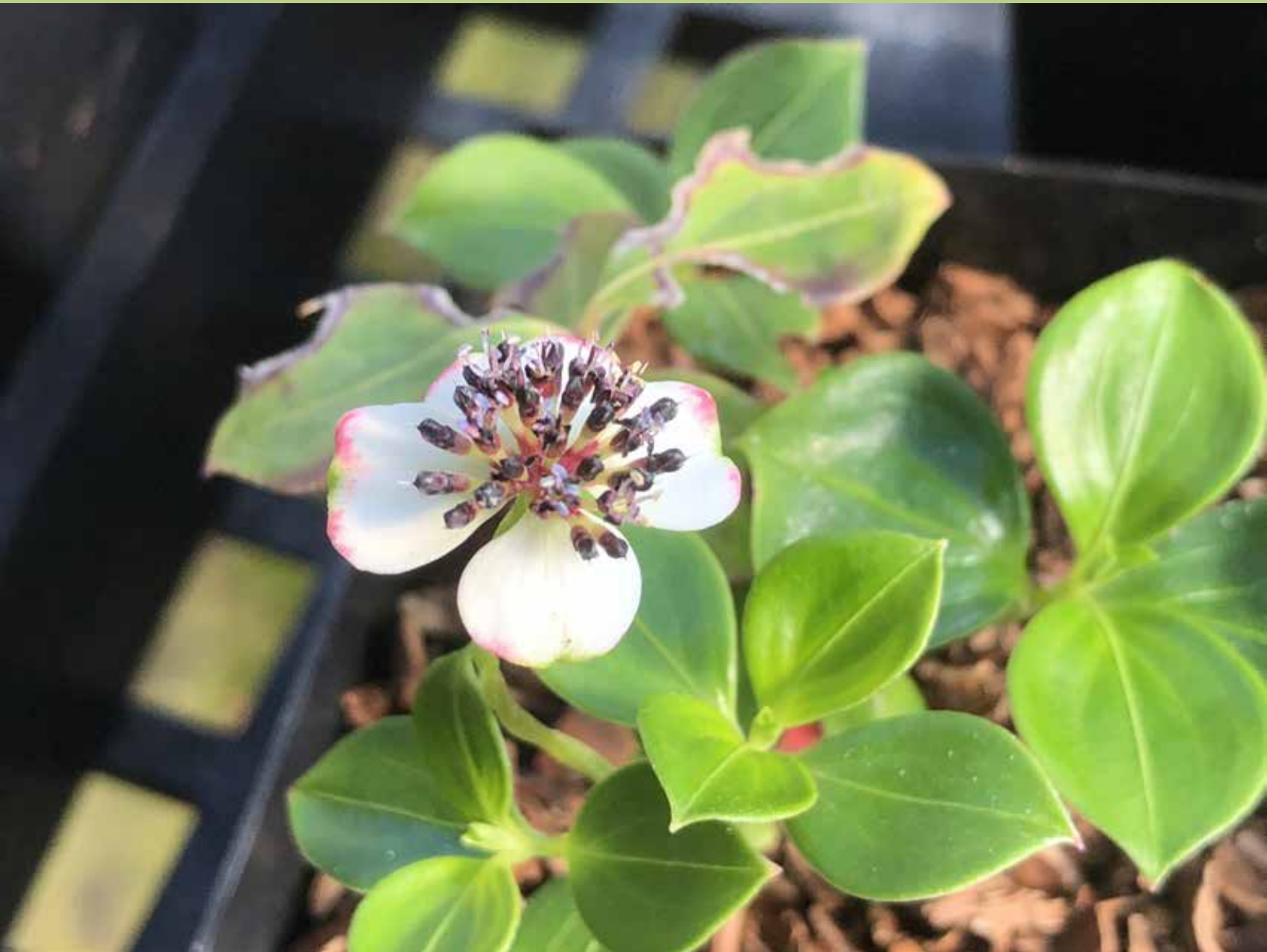
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