



**FAR REACHES
BOTANICAL CONSERVANCY**

2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends of the FRBC,

A letter from the Founding Directors:

Our work continues to feel increasingly urgent as new research suggests that species extinction related to climate change is less of a gradual decline, and more like a series of sudden sharp cliffs with large losses of populations. Most sobering, some models suggest this could start occurring in as little as ten years. Similarly, our efforts to introduce plants from overseas specialty collections has been drawn to sharper focus by the pandemic. Many small nurseries and collections rely on spring sales to remain solvent and with these sales canceled by the virus, the viability of these enterprises going forward is murky. We are acting now and with your help, we can do even more.

Our mission at FRBC is driven by the urgent need to preserve the genetic resources of threatened species as well as the equally threatened ornamental cultivars found in foreign collections. All research into climate change, human resource exploitation and economics points definitively to adverse pressure increasing exponentially on these plants. Many of these plants are grown in display gardens to showcase attributes of FRBC plants, which also serve important research functions as well as providing a safe haven for plants in the FRBC collection.



Kelly and Sue in Argentina



Lilium henrici



Lilium primulinum



Clematis montana var. *montana*

Mission

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.

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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Facebook: www.facebook.com/FRBC.ORG/

2021 Highlights



- ☞ **Conservation Highlights:** Propagation of extremely rare *Cornus wardiana* and *Carpinus viminea*, distributed 650 plants of 67 different species to other Botanic Gardens, Universities, Arboreta, and other repositories focused on conservation.
- ☞ **First Flowerings:** *Polylepis hieronymi*, *Lillium henrici*, *Lillium poilanei*, *Hedychium* sp., and many *Roscoea*s
- ☞
- ☞ **Virtual connections:** 4 webinars hosted in 2021, 228 webinar attendees, 13 e-newsletters sent in 2021 and 96 new subscribers, 509 new social media followers
- ☞ **Expansion:** 24.32% increase in individual contributions from 2020, 236 new and returning members



Cardiocrinum cathayanum

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 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.

As you can imagine, the pandemic threw a considerable wrench into our expedition plans in 2020, and then continued to throw wrenches with each variant surge. However, that left a considerable amount of our budget leftover for other projects which made great progress in 2021.

☞ **The Collection** - To the best of our knowledge, we had the first flowering in cultivation of the South American shrub-to-small tree of *Polylepis hieronymi*. The flowers are apetalous (without petals) which seems a keen irony for a plant in the Rosaceae but the beautiful evergreen foliage clad in silver hairs and gnarled trunks with peeling bark more than compensate. We had quite a number of first flowerings for us in the Collection but the *Polylepis* wins top prize.

A couple of key propagation successes were from the recent acquisition of three new clones of the extremely rare and newly-described (2021) *Cornus wardiana* to go with our one earlier clone. This is key for genetic diversity and for controlled pollination among the clones. It is always concerning when we have but a single plant of an accession as you have no room for error. Losing a plant like this represents the loss of irreplaceable genetics as well as a loss to botany and horticulture. One such plant is the Vietnamese *Carpinus viminea* via botanist Dr. Aaron Floden. All *Carpinus* or Hornbeams are very worthy and this had handled tough zone 6 winters in Tennessee so we were delighted to receive it. Transplanting had set it back but we have a few cuttings potted up and breaking bud so we can relax a bit now that we have backups!



Cornus wardiana

☞ **Distribution** - A key tenet of our conservation strategy is distribution so that all of these botanical eggs are not being held in one basket. We have seen FRBC plants distributed far and wide to botanic gardens, public gardens and private gardeners. Examples of the geographic of this green diaspora include the University of Florida to JC Raulston Arboretum in North Carolina, to Coastal Maine Botanic Garden to Greater Des Moines Botanic Garden, to Atlanta Botanic Garden, to USDA Germplasm Repository in Texas, to Denver Botanic Garden to San Francisco Botanical Garden to University of Washington Botanic Gardens and the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way WA.

☞ **The Collector's Garden** - We are in the process of building a new shade garden for strictly FRBC plants which will be used for display, education, comparative research, and propagation. The Collector's Garden will be an intimate room enclosed within a very large lath structure, housing detailed plantings of extraordinary and rare FRBC plants, including our many ferns of wild provenance. The Collector's Garden will be a necessary setting for growing and displaying our extensive collections of selected key genera, which is essential for these to be recognized as a Nationally Accredited Plant Collection. The requirements of being a Collection Holder dovetails perfectly with the FRBC's core mission of germplasm preservation, distribution for research, and ex situ conservation.



The plants in this will be growing in our native soil amended with 130 yds of various materials such as bark, sand, and compost - but we are most excited about the 30 tons of fine basalt chips and flour. Recent research has pointed to the use of powdered basalt as an effective modality for carbon sequestration.

The overhead irrigation system and lathe structure are nearing completion. We hope to share videos and tours during the ongoing planting process as it extends into spring and summer, and a possible in-person or virtual grand opening for our members.

☞ **The Crevice Garden** - We will expand the existing FRBC Crevice Garden very soon this spring. We are thrilled by the success of some of our local Olympic Mountains alpine endemics in this display garden, such as *Campanula piperi* and *Viola flettii*. The latter is quite difficult to grow as it favors rock cracks above treeline, and is one of the plants most at risk from climate change. This is rarely cultivated if at all, and it is wonderful to see that this can be saved when grown in the crevice garden.

This coming year we will once again bring in crevice garden masters Kenton Seth and Paul Spriggs to double the size of our existing garden. They are authors of a new book titled "The Crevice Garden" and are literally international rock stars, having built gardens in New Zealand and Scotland. We will host a concurrent installation workshop which will only be available virtually.



☞ **Database** - A huge step forward in our collections management has been the purchase of the botanic garden-standard software, IrisBG. This is used by many botanical and public gardens and will provide us with a much needed platform to manage plant information, such as collection data and subsequent observations, while making it easier to share this data with various institutions and researchers.

The eventual goal is a comprehensible database of all our collection plants that can be searched easily on our website. Before we could make our purchase of the IrisBG database we needed to upgrade our internet connection, as the database will hold a lot of data. The initial purchase was a major capital investment and will be well worth it. We will refine the procedures for integrating IrisBG Database into our operations this year, with the goal to have 50% of collection accessioned at minimum information level.



Educational Programs Year in Review

We shifted from our usual programming of educational, on-site workshops on how to use these scarcely-known plants in the garden to programs of the virtual sort. We hosted four webinars in 2021 about our own plant hunting expeditions and those of historical fame:

1. Botanical Bright Spots in 2020: A look back at some of the highlights in the FRBC collection in 2020. We celebrated many first flowerings and a lot of new acquisitions showing exciting potential - a nice slice of the wide range of plants we introduced for conservation.



2. The Amazing Plants of Southern China: In the fall of 2019, FRBC Directors Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken were part of a small team exploring for plants in southern Yunnan and Guangxi. Some of these areas have rarely, if ever, been visited by westerners and the rich flora was amazing, ranging from Begonia to gesneriads, Arisaema to Shortia, Rhododendron to Schefflera, to towering old-growth trees of Schima, Rehderodendron, Rhodoleia and the rare Abies yuanbaoshanensis.

3. Plant Hunting in the Pandemic: Argentina March 2020: FRBC Directors Dr. Cody Hinchliff, Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken explored the complex geography and diverse habitats of NW Argentina that are home to a bewildering array of very cool plants. From cactus desert to lush subtropical-temperate rainforest to windswept, high elevation grassy steppe, this was a barrage of botany of the very best sort.

4. In the Footsteps of Joseph Dalton Hooker and Augustine Henry with Seamus O'Brien: Guest speaker Seamus O'Brien discussed the subject of his two biographies, the Victorian plant hunters and explorers, Dr Augustine Henry and Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker. Both collectors are associated with the National Botanic Gardens of Ireland, which O'Brien manages, and he retraced the routes of each of these intrepid plant hunters.

☞ **Kelly and Sue** have done a number of virtual talks for horticultural societies and botanical gardens in North America, with all guest speaker fees going to the Conservancy.

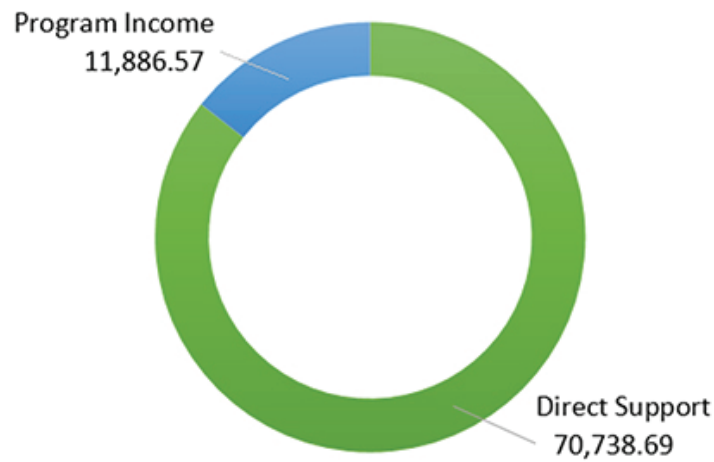


Dr. Cody Hinchliff

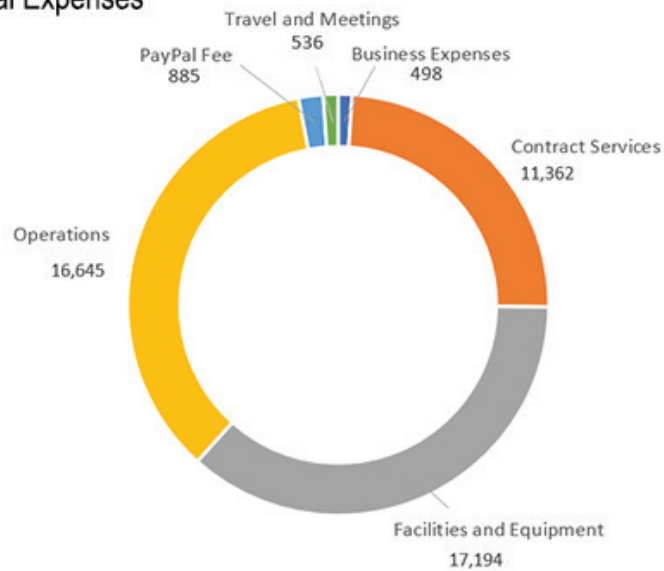
Financials

Our most important fundraising events of the year are GiveBIG in the spring and year-end giving in December which is kicked off with Giving Tuesday. The FRBC will continue to participate in these events in 2022.

2021 Total Income



2021 Total Expenses



2020 summary

Due to the beginning of the pandemic and subsequent lack of 2020 annual report, we have included some of the year's highlights and information here:

- ☞ **Argentina trip** - In March of 2020 Directors Sue, Kelly, and Cody traveled to northwestern Argentina on a plant exploration foray that was unfortunately cut short by Argentine restrictions over the COVID-19 virus.

They regrettably had a little over three days in the field but those were jam-packed and they met their primary goals, so despite being severely shortened they count it a success. A number of key species were located, and observing mature *Crinodendron tucumanum*, *Polylepis australis* and the rare *P. hieronymi* was tremendously fulfilling.



Sue in Argentina 2020 *Polylepis hieronymi*

- ☞ **We renovated the new FRBC workroom.** It serves as our fern spore propagation and microscopy headquarters, herbarium preparation room, library, and the administrative office.
- ☞ **New microscope** - A microscope was a critical aid in species identification. It's used for photographing salient details of plants in the FRBC collection, and these photos will be part of each individual plant's data records.



☞ **We distributed 580 plants of 63 different species to outside organizations, horticulturists, and gardeners.** Some highlights include gesneriads from our collection to Atlanta Botanic Garden for their permanent living collection, plants of *Vaccinium* species to a southeastern university PhD research project involving molecular analysis to determine evolutionary relationships in the genus, and delivered some larger plants from our collection to the University of Washington Botanic Gardens.



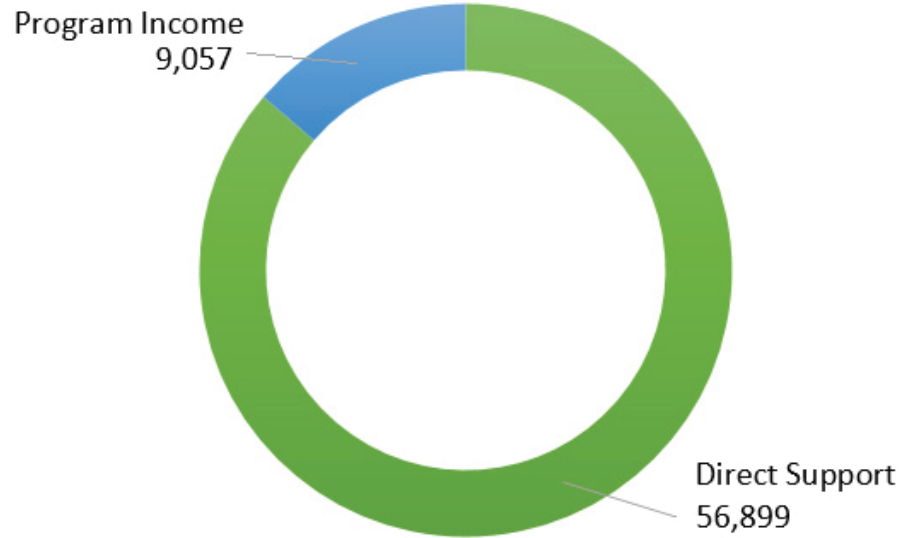
Oreocharis sp.

☞ **Board Member appointment:** Dr. Cody Hinchliff was unanimously elected to the Board of Directors on October 30, 2020. He formerly volunteered as our in-state consulting taxonomist for over two years.

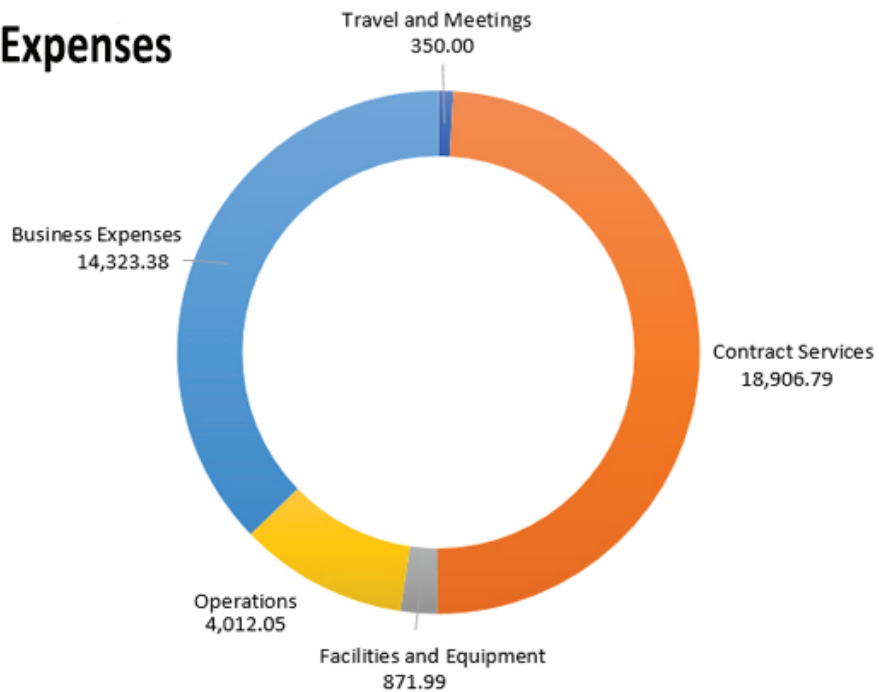


2020 Financials

2020 Total Income



2020 Total Expenses



Our Supporters

Tribute Gifts

In Honor of Ellen Reed, from Phoebe Milliken & Richard Reed
In Memory of a loved one, from Marie Willard
In Memory of Miranda Constance Browne, from Gioia T Browne
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Elisabeth Zander
Anonymous (2)
The Portland Garden Club

Donate

We are a small but very effective entity with comparatively little donation money spent on promotion or administration when contrasted to the amount going directly to the plants and our conservation efforts. All donations have a personal and tangible impact with us, especially during these difficult times of the pandemic. There are many ways to give, including by check or online at our website, <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/Donate-FRBC.html>

Planned Giving: Include the FRBC in your estate plans to leave a lasting legacy of plant protection. With just a little planning, you can help to make sure that threatened plants are conserved for generations to come. Find out more here: <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/PlannedGiving.html>

Join or Renew membership: Please consider becoming a FRBC member today. All it takes is a \$40 donation. Our Annual Membership cycle is from January 1st through December 31st each year. Find out more or renew online: <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/Donate-FRBC.html>



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Bonnie Berk, Treasurer

Cody Hinchliff PhD, Secretary

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Dr. Aaron Floden PhD, Consulting Taxonomist

Dr. Michael Sundue PhD, Consulting Taxonomist

Dr. Cody Hinchliff PhD, Consulting Taxonomist

Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator at the Denver Botanic Garden, Advisor

John Massey, owner of Ashwood Nurseries in England, Advisor

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Educate • Share



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