

NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN



The National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG) is a not-for-profit institution, dedicated to discovering, saving, and studying the world's tropical plants and to sharing what is learned. Support comes primarily from donations from individuals and grants from public and private foundations. NTBG receives no governmental budget allocation.

NTBG is the only tropical botanical garden with a charter from the United States Congress. Federal charters for private nonprofit entities, such as the NTBG charter, have been granted by Congress only rarely and then only in the circumstance that a compelling case has been made to the Congress that the proposed organization will serve an important national and public need.

In August 1964 the legislature enacted Public Law 88-449, chartering and incorporating the institution by Act of Congress.

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NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our Mission



The mission of the National Tropical Botanical Garden is to enrich life through discovery, scientific research, conservation, and education by perpetuating the survival of plants, ecosystems, and cultural knowledge of tropical regions.

Our mission is achieved through:

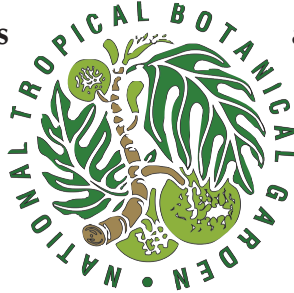
- A network of diverse gardens and preserves in Hawai`i and Florida, each with significant biological, cultural, and historical resources.
- Conservation, research, and reference collections (living, library, and herbarium) assembled through discovery and collaboration.
- Research in botany, ethnobotany, horticulture, conservation biology, and restoration ecology through programs and institutes.
- Educational courses, publications, lectures, and visitor programs.
- Facilities and infrastructure necessary to conduct this work.

Adopted October 25, 2005 by the Board of Trustees, National Tropical Botanical Garden

NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Collections & Resources

The National Tropical Botanical Garden's combination of nearly 2,000 acres in five botanical gardens and three preserves with extensive living collections, a herbarium with over 60,000 specimens,



and a research library containing over 40,000 books, journals, and illustrations results in an unparalleled resource for protecting tropical plant diversity.

While all gardens feature plants, the focus of a botanical garden is quite different from that of a display garden. The plants in a botanical garden are collected into specific categories, or living collections, determined for example by plant families, the flora of a specific region, or the conservation status of a particular genus or species. Display gardens are usually what the name implies; they contain plants chosen for their exhibit value. While some plants in a display garden may have research, conservation, or education value, such consideration may be secondary to a plant's display quality.

The living collections in a botanical garden must be meticulously documented. Information about identification, origin, and habitat is fundamental. This and other facts or observations are recorded for long-term use; often this data is stored in computerized databases to facilitate access.

Although living collections are primarily comprised of plants growing in the gardens or in the nursery, at some botanical gardens, including NTBG, they include seeds as well. Seed banks serve as germplasm repositories, affording opportunities for future propagation.

A herbarium collection, in contrast, is made up of specimens of dried, pressed, or preserved plants. This is also a carefully documented collection. Herbarium specimens or "vouchers" are used for plant classification and as a reference for research.

Another important resource for a botanical garden is a research library. Such libraries contain books, journals, and monographs (publications that focus on a single topic, such as the description of a species). Some libraries contain botanical illustrations or photographic documentation as well.

Plants grown in gardens are growing *ex situ*, which means they are growing out of their natural habitats. In order to be able to grow native plants *in situ* (in their natural habitats), some botanical gardens may establish preserves which can serve a variety of purposes. First, and foremost, they allow endemic species to grow in their natural environment. Conservationists can then take steps to protect these plants by halting further degradation of the habitats, and restoring them so that at-risk species have a better chance to survive. Preserves also allow researchers to develop and test conservation protocols in a range of ecosystems.

Facilities, each designed for specific functions, provide the essential space for scientific research, conservation, and education. These include laboratories, propagation houses, classrooms, and other structures necessary to perform this work.

NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutes & Programs

All of NTBG's programs in conservation, education, and scientific research have the common goal of ensuring the survival of tropical plants, their ecosystems, and cultural knowledge.



The living collections within the gardens provide safe havens for many imperiled plant species, laboratories for scientists to study them, and resources for a wide range of educational courses.

Fundamental to each of the gardens are their **Living Collections**. While all of the gardens are beautiful, of primary importance is that the collections serve research, conservation, and educational purposes. Thousands of species have been gathered from throughout the tropical world to form an exceptional resource. Among NTBG's living collections is the largest assemblage of endemic plants from Hawai'i and the Pacific region, as well as the most comprehensive collection of breadfruit cultivars in the world.

Conservation initiatives include collecting expeditions throughout Hawai'i and the Pacific region to identify plant species that are at risk of extinction and to collect seeds and plant material for propagation and conservation in the living collections. Other projects focus on ecological restoration of degraded habitats, protecting the endemic species that still exist, and reintroducing species which have not survived on their own.

Scientific Research underlies all of the NTBG programs. Its focus is on identifying, documenting, understanding, and conserving the rich diversity of tropical plants and their habitats. The collections — living, herbarium, and library — provide rich resources to NTBG staff, as well as to researchers and students around the world.

The **Breadfruit Institute** incorporates both the conservation of germplasm, and horticultural and nutritional research. Varieties of breadfruit that no longer exist on their native islands are being preserved in NTBG's gardens. Protocols are being developed to mass-produce plants *in vitro* for distribution to tropical countries where hunger is a critical issue.

Education programs reach out to a wide audience — from young children to adults; from college, university, or graduate students to teachers and college professors; from professionals in medicine or environmental journalism to the general public. Through a combination of targeted courses, work-study programs, public presentations, and visits to the gardens, the NTBG promotes understanding of tropical plants and their ecosystems, which is the first step in protecting them.



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutes & Programs - Scientific Research

The world's plants and their habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate, many even before they have been named or studied. Discovering, identifying, and documenting species through scientific inventory is imperative if the Earth's biota is to be rescued from extinction and its habitats preserved. Through its research efforts the NTBG is participating in the global effort to establish a scientific basis for ecological conservation and develop methods for sustainable plant utilization that benefit people while protecting the environment.

The first step in protecting botanical biodiversity is to inventory the existing plant species and determine their status through exploration, discovery, and documentation. This knowledge provides the basis for setting priorities and developing programs for local, regional, national, and international conservation efforts.

Scientific research is fundamental to the mission of NTBG and to all aspects of its conservation, horticulture, and education programs. The focus of research is on identifying, documenting, understanding, and conserving the rich diversity of plants and their habitats in the tropics, with particular emphasis on the plants of Hawai'i and the greater Pacific region. The results of NTBG research in systematics (classifying and naming biological organisms and studying their relationships to each other) and floristics (the study of the plants or flora of a defined geographic or political region) contribute important knowledge of the world's inventory of plant species. In conjunction with systematics and floristics, staff research focuses on plant propagation, economic plants and ethnobotany, paleoecology, invasive species, and restoration ecology.

Botanical fieldwork and collection of plants and genetic material are closely integrated with the development and curation of the living and herbarium collections, which are used for research, conservation, and educational purposes. Specimens and living plant material collected during fieldwork enrich and augment these collections. The research library provides an essential resource that is complementary to the other collections and is used in conjunction with them by staff, students, and visiting researchers.

Disseminating and sharing research results is accomplished through NTBG's journal *Allertonia*, as well as in peer-reviewed scientific journals, popular articles and books, and electronically on the Internet. This information is indispensable to staff scientists and outside researchers, and is used in NTBG's Education programs.

The objectives of scientific research at the NTBG are to:

- Assess and document plant diversity through field surveys, collecting, and identification
- Contribute to, support, and undertake evaluations and assessments of threatened plants
- Prioritize regional conservation efforts for all plant life
- Identify and target important areas for plant diversity
- Establish methods for sustainable use of plant diversity
- Build capacity for conservation of plant diversity
- Share scientific knowledge and awareness of plant diversity through publications and education



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutes & Programs - Conservation

Because of their geographically isolated locations, the plant species that evolved in Hawai'i and many other tropical areas over millions of years are highly endemic (found only in one location). In Hawai'i, nearly 1,300 endemic species have been described. Of these, more than 100 today are considered to be extinct, with an additional 273 classified by Federal standards as Threatened and Endangered, and 85 as Candidate species. The situation is similar throughout the Pacific and in many other tropical regions. The underlying cause of the decline of endemic plant species is destruction of their habitat and the introduction of alien invasive species by human beings.

While the challenges of protecting endemic species are enormous, the NTBG is also very concerned about preserving culturally important plant species. Many of these are cultivars that were developed over thousands of years by indigenous people living on the islands of Oceania. Scholars are only now beginning to understand the importance and value of many of these ethnobotanical plants, some of which may even hold promise for solving global crises such as world hunger and disease.

Protecting ethnobotanical plants and endemic plants call for very different strategies. Preservation of ethnobotanical plants requires a thorough understanding that can only be achieved through in-depth surveys of the indigenous people who are knowledgeable about the plants and who are willing to help botanists identify and collect them. Once identified and collected, the plants can be grown in *ex situ* collections, which serve as germplasm repositories that can be drawn on in the event these cultivars are lost in their native countries. NTBG has several important conservation collections of ethnobotanical species and cultivars, some of which include the world's largest collection of breadfruit and smaller collections of taro, banana, coconut, and sugar cane.

The most effective long-term response to preserve endemic plant populations in Hawai'i and elsewhere is to protect their habitats and to manage threatened plants in those habitats. However, for many species this response cannot be implemented quickly enough to prevent extinction. For this reason, conservation activities necessarily extend beyond *in situ* habitat management to incorporate a coordinated strategy that integrates conservation with education, scientific research, curation of living collections, and propagation of at-risk plants *ex situ*.

Discovery of rare endemic species and collection of seeds and other materials for propagation and *ex situ* conservation has been a core part of NTBG's effort since the Garden was founded. Our staff of field botanists have made thousands of collecting expeditions throughout Hawai'i and other Pacific Islands. Adapting to the sometimes extremely challenging habitats in which they work, our field biologists have pioneered rough-terrain and high-cliff climbing techniques to gather seeds of rare species, some of them now extinct in the wild, for use in reintroduction efforts.

Over the past 20 years, species that were previously unknown to science have been discovered by NTBG botanists and roughly two dozen species in Hawai'i that were thought to be extinct have been rediscovered by these intrepid scientists. The discovery of unknown species is central to conservation efforts, as species cannot be saved if we do not know that they exist, where they are located, and that they are endangered.

The work of the conservation staff includes a wide range of activities that support its primary plant conservation strategies, including projects to control alien species, watershed management, ecological monitoring, and conservation education. Since it was established on Kaua'i in 1970, the National Tropical Botanical Garden has been a leader in the conservation of plants in Hawai'i and the greater Pacific area. (Data as of August 2006.)



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutes & Programs - Education

Tropical plants provide unique examples of biological processes and they also hold important keys to future discoveries in medicine, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, and resource management. Understanding of these plants lays the groundwork for their preservation. It is through the process of learning that connections are forged between human beings and their environment. NTBG's Education Program is multifaceted and multileveled, reaching out to wide audiences. Underlying each of the components of the Education Program is a commitment to promote public understanding of tropical plants and their ecosystems, as well as traditional knowledge and practices.

An important aspect of NTBG's commitment to education is training future botanists, ethnobotanists, and horticulturists. College- and university-level horticultural interns participate in a 10-12 week work-study program for students intending to pursue careers in horticulture, botany, conservation, and other related fields. Many past graduates of NTBG's horticulture programs now have leadership positions in all of these areas. An ethnobotany course for graduate-level students explores the role of plants in indigenous societies and provides training in practical techniques for ethnobotanical research.

Innovative courses have been established that are specifically designed for school science teachers and college professors. The course for science teachers provides instruction in tropical biology and helps them to develop approaches to be used in their classrooms to stimulate their students' interest in science and promote learning. College professors as well benefit from new approaches to enliven their introductory biology courses for undergraduates. Given examples of how plants can be used to illustrate concepts of form and function, evolution, and conservation, they develop innovative teaching modules to be shared and implemented in their classrooms.

NTBG education programs for Hawaii's schoolchildren endeavor to promote interest in science through an appreciation of the plants that surround them and the importance of these plants to their cultural heritage. The programs are designed to interface with the established school curriculum standards. The Junior Restoration Team program introduces conservation education to middle and high school students. Through their hands-on participation in restoration projects, students develop a compelling understanding of the threats posed to endemic plants and their habitats while promoting environmental stewardship. The hope is that in addition to the contribution these students make, some of them will be inspired to pursue careers in horticulture or conservation.

NTBG education programs also reach out to professionals working in fields in which knowledge of tropical botany can equip them with tools that will enhance their ability to practice their profession. Environmental journalists in all media are provided with a deep background in tropical ecology that augments their understanding of science and environmental issues, enabling them to report on these issues with greater accuracy. Physicians and other medical professionals increasingly treat patients who use herbal remedies. NTBG imparts understanding of the herbal products their patients may be using in conjunction with other medical treatments, which allows healthcare providers to be vigilant for potentially harmful interactions.

Public lectures and workshops allow us to reach a large cross-section of the local community, as well as visitors to the area. Speakers include Garden staff and visiting scientists. Hands-on workshops teach participants a particular skill or art — from pruning to traditional weaving with plant materials.

Tours of NTBG's gardens offer another opportunity to reach out with information on tropical plants and their threatened state. While providing an enjoyable experience in a beautiful setting is always a distinct objective, education forms the basis of our public tour offerings. Interpretive materials facilitate individual understanding of plants, ecosystems, and cultural or modern uses, with the outcome being a deeper appreciation for plant life overall.



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Institutes & Programs - Breadfruit Institute

The Breadfruit Institute's mission is to promote the conservation and use of breadfruit for food and reforestation. More than 80 percent of the world's hungry live in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Imagine a plant that produces nutritious flavorful fruits and is easy to grow in a small space without hard labor or chemical fertilizers. The Breadfruit Institute of the National Tropical Botanical Garden is engaged in a program to supply tropical nations with just such a plant.

NTBG's Breadfruit Institute is developing methods to distribute breadfruit plantlets to countries for food security, sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, and income generation.

The extensive breadfruit collection at NTBG's Kahanu Garden on Maui is at the core of this process. This germplasm collection was started in 1978, when the first 30 varieties were planted. The collection dramatically grew by incorporating plant material collected during fieldwork in 1985 and 1987. It now represents the world's largest repository of breadfruit species and varieties, with more than 200 accessions and 120 varieties from 18 Pacific nations, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Seychelles Islands. Some of the varieties in the collection are rare or extinct in their home islands.

Research on the collection has been underway for two decades. This work includes molecular studies (DNA fingerprinting) to assess genetic diversity and taxonomic relationships, and evaluating and describing tree and fruit characters (e.g., size, weight, yield estimates, and seasonality). Twenty varieties were chosen for more in-depth study based on time of year of fruit production, desirability in island of origin, types that are widely distributed, and potential for commercial application. These were analyzed for fruit quality and nutritional composition and efforts to successfully propagate all 20 varieties using tissue culture (*in vitro* propagation) are underway.

Breadfruit is a versatile food. From a nutritional perspective, it is high in carbohydrates, a good source of dietary fiber, and low in fat. It is a good source of calcium, copper, magnesium, potassium, thiamin (B1), Vitamin C, and carotenoids (Vitamin A). Fruits can be prepared and eaten at all stages of development, from small and immature (when it is similar to artichoke hearts), to starchy mature, to ripe, soft and sweet for desserts. At the mature stage, fruits are similar to potatoes and can be roasted, baked, boiled, or fried. Dried as a cereal, or mashed into a purée, it is a nourishing food for infants and young children.

Breadfruit trees require little attention, do well under a wide range of ecological conditions, begin bearing fruit in three to five years, and are productive for many decades. More food can be produced in less space, because of the verticality of production, than other tropical starchy staple crops such as sweet potato, cassava, plantain, taro, or rice. A similar-sized plot of land planted in plantains or root and tuber crops will produce less food with greater needs for labor and materials. Breadfruit requires only initial soil preparation (digging a hole), planting, mulching with leaves and other organic material, and protecting the young tree from foraging animals. Once the tree is mature and producing fruit, occasional pruning and shaping are needed to optimize tree structure and to keep it low, making harvesting easier.

These attractive trees also create forest cover. The trees grow well on hillsides, providing erosion control and protecting watersheds. They form a protective overstory creating shade, mulch, and a beneficial microclimate for other useful plants. Cultivating breadfruit trees replaces slash-and-burn agriculture and field cropping with a permanent tree cover.



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Institutes & Programs - Living Collections & Horticulture

The living collections are at the very core of the NTBG's mission. While the collection focus varies from garden to garden, there is some overlap, which widens their conservation, research, and education value. Each collection at each garden site plays an important role in the overall objectives of the institution.

The initial step in the process is to determine which plants are to be included in the collections. Guidelines established based on research, conservation, and education initiatives consider any adverse consequences that could result from the introduction of species from other regions. Plant records are maintained that document the origins of plant material and its status in the collections.

The categories of collections in NTBG's gardens are diverse, requiring a wide range of expertise. For example, many native Hawaiian species had never before been cultivated, making it necessary for horticultural staff to pioneer new propagation protocols. The staff has access to a wide range of facilities, including the state-of-the-art nursery facilities in McBryde Garden and smaller greenhouses in the other gardens; a micropropagation laboratory where *in vitro* trials are being conducted; and a seed bank, which serves as a repository for genetic resources. All techniques are considered when determining how to give the most at-risk plants their last and best chance for survival.

The collections in the McBryde Garden constitute NTBG's largest holdings at any one location. McBryde contains plant species from the Old and New World Tropics, some of which are extinct in the wild. The emphasis is on wild-collected specimens, particularly those endemic to Hawai'i and other Pacific islands. Intensive field collecting efforts have resulted in the world's largest assemblage of native Hawaiian plant species. These collections are located on the southern shore of the island of Kaua'i.

At-risk native species are also a major component of the collections at Limahuli Garden and Preserve. Limahuli complements the drier McBryde Garden, since its location on the island's north shore contains microclimates better suited to rain forest plants. A preserve adjacent to the garden serves as an excellent resource for restoration ecology. Collections in the garden and in the lower preserve also include plants recognized for their ethnobotanical value by the ancient Hawaiians.

Kahanu Garden, on the eastern shore of the island of Maui, focuses its living collections on plants of value to Pacific Island peoples. These contain not only endemic Hawaiian species, but also species of other Polynesian islands, as well as Micronesia and Melanesia. This includes the world's largest collection of breadfruit, once a food staple in these tropical areas.

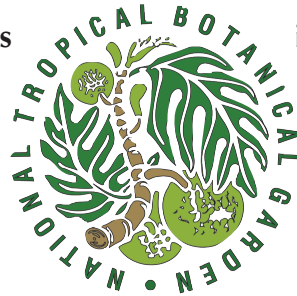
Living collections at NTBG's Florida garden, The Kampong, contain heritage plants primarily from Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Many were collected and planted by famed horticulturist and plant collector Dr. David Fairchild. These collections provide an invaluable resource for the study of horticulture and botany.

The plants in the Allerton Garden were selected for their visual interest. Most were brought to this south Kaua'i location by the Allertons. In the process, a number of tropical species of scientific interest were added to the plantings. These species, particularly when considered with the plants in the adjacent McBryde Garden, increase the collection's value for research, education, and conservation programs.

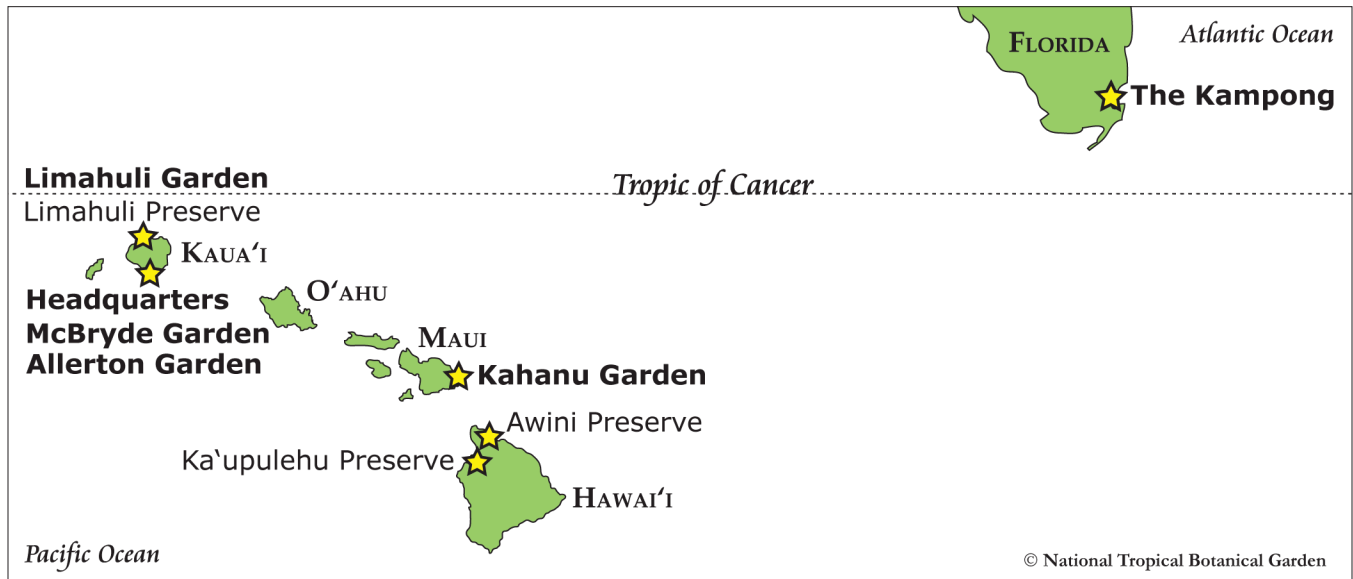
NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our Gardens and Preserves

NTBG's gardens and preserves encompass varied ecosystems and environmental conditions, which permit the cultivation and preservation of a broad range of tropical plants. These properties are located in the only tropical climate zones



in the United States. While others can grow tropical plants in greenhouses "under glass," NTBG's nearly 2,000 acres of gardens and preserves afford a natural open-air environment in which these species flourish.



They are safe havens for these imperiled plants. They are living laboratories for scientists who strive to better understand the evolution, structure, relationships, and qualities of these species. They are classrooms where students of all ages can learn about environmental stewardship and horticultural practices, and discover that science can be fun. They are museums of history and culture, where modern and traditional knowledge and practices meet, and where the story of the imprint of time on the land and the people is told.

Four of NTBG's gardens and its three preserves are in the Hawaiian Islands; the fifth garden is on the U.S. mainland in the state of Florida.

McBryde Garden - southshore Kaua'i

Allerton Garden - southshore Kaua'i

Limahuli Garden and Preserve - northshore Kaua'i

Kahanu Garden - eastshore Maui

Awini Preserve and Ka'upulehu Preserve - northern Hawai'i Island

The Kampong - southeast Florida



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our Gardens - on Kauaʻi

McBryde Garden is situated on the south shore of the Hawaiian island of Kauaʻi, nestled in the picturesque and historical Lāwaʻi Valley. The site of the first garden of the NTBG, the Lāwaʻi Valley was chosen for its diversity of climate, soils, and topography. The area affords a kaleidoscope of distinct micro-environments which are cool, hot, wet, dry, lake, cliff or meadow.

McBryde Garden has become a veritable botanical ark of tropical flora. It is home to the largest *ex situ* collection of native Hawaiian flora in existence, extensive plantings of palms, flowering trees, Rubiaceae, heliconias, orchids, and many other plants that have been wild-collected from the tropical regions of the world. NTBG's Conservation Program is based at this site and the Garden contains a state-of-the-art horticulture and micropropagation facility.

Meandering through the garden is the Lāwaʻi Stream, transected by Bamboo Bridge in the lush greenbelt that borders it. The Canoe Garden contains plants of ancient Hawaiʻi and Maidenhair Falls area features such plants as chocolate, allspice, and ginger.

National headquarters for the NTBG organization, with major research and education facilities, overlook the McBryde Garden.

Allerton Garden lies between the Pacific Ocean and the McBryde Garden in the Lāwaʻi Valley, on the south shore of the Hawaiian Island of Kauaʻi. It is a garden paradise, transformed through time by the hands of a Hawaiian Queen, by a sugar plantation magnate, and most significantly by an artist and an architect. The endless possibilities found in this dramatic topography led to the creation of this masterpiece of garden art.

A series of garden rooms unfold between the Lāwaʻi Stream and the cliffs of the Valley. The sound of water is in abundance in pools, miniature waterfalls, and fountains. Statues grace this former estate and resonate with a European influence.

Towering rainforest trees with tall curving roots grow near bronze mermaids, a grove of swaying golden bamboo, a cut-flower garden, and tropical fruit trees. Here the focus is on landscape design, but among the plantings are botanically important species of the tropics, including varieties of palms, ki (ti), heliconias, and gingers.

Allerton Garden is managed by the National Tropical Botanical Garden for the Allerton Gardens Trust.

Limahuli Garden is set in a verdant tropical valley on the north shore of the Hawaiian Island of Kauaʻi. The Garden is backdropped by the majestic Makana Mountain and overlooks the Pacific Ocean.

In Hawaiian, the name Limahuli means "turning hands," which recognizes the ancient Hawaiians who built agricultural terraces out of lava rock and planted cultivars of kalo (taro), an important cultural food crop.

These and other plants that were significant to the early inhabitants, as well as native species, make up the Garden's collections. The property includes a plantation-era garden, as well as invasive species that were introduced by modern man. Limahuli Stream, one of the last pristine waterways left in the Islands, provides a habitat for indigenous aquatic life.

Behind the Garden is the Limahuli Preserve where conservationists and restoration biologists are working to preserve species native to this habitat.

Limahuli Garden was selected by the American Horticultural Society as the best natural botanical garden in the United States, having demonstrated the best sound environmental practices of water, soil, and rare plant conservation in an overall garden design.



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our Gardens - on Maui

Kahanu Garden on the rugged Hāna coast, along the far eastern shores of the Hawaiian island of Maui, grows in splendid isolation, nestled in the one of the largest, untamed native hala (Pandanus) forests in the Islands.

Plant collections from the Pacific Islands are the focus here, particularly plants of value to the Hawaiian people as well as to other cultures of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. At Kahanu one learns the cultural relationships between the people and these remarkable plants that were transported around the Pacific on ancient voyaging canoes. Among the different ethnobotanical collections that are housed here is the world's largest collection of breadfruit cultivars, which serves as a germplasm repository for this important South Pacific food crop.

Situated in the storied land of Honomā`ele, Kahanu Garden is the home to Pi`ilanihale, a massive lava-rock structure that is believed to be the largest ancient place of worship (heiau) in Polynesia. This awe-inspiring cultural site is registered as a National Historic Landmark.



NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our Gardens - in Florida

The Kampong located on Biscayne Bay in Coconut Grove, Florida, contains a fascinating array of tropical fruit cultivars and flowering trees.

The garden is named for the Malay or Javanese word for a village or cluster of houses. Some of the first plantings there came from Indo-Malaysia, brought there by the renowned explorer/horticulturist who introduced these species to the United States and who owned the property in the early 1900s. The collections were expanded and diversified by the next owner, who eventually gifted the garden to the NTBG.

Heritage collections from Southeast Asia, Central and South Americas, the Caribbean, and other tropical locales create a cornucopia of exotic fruit, including candle fruit, peanut butter fruit, egg fruit, cocoplums, and over 50 varieties of mango. Numerous species of palms, cycads, and flowering trees are studied by scientists from the world over.

The Kampong serves as the mainland campus for the NTBG's educational courses, as a living classroom used by universities and colleges for botany and horticulture courses, and is a popular spot for plant enthusiasts of all ages.

The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.