YEAR IN REVIEW:

BY THE NUMBERS

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021

TOTAL ADMISSIONS

REVENUE

$1,229,039 from fees paid
by nonresident visitors – a 25% increase from the prior year

VISITATION

470,112 visits to the Garden, a new record for annual visitation, 72% of which were free of charge

LIBRARY

276 books checked out through Children’s Books To Go program

PLANT SALES

7,587 plants sold to the community

YOUTH EDUCATION

6,441 children served through experiential school, summer, and family programs

MEMBERSHIP

5,469 households—a 22% increase year over year

VOLUNTEERS

365 volunteers who come individually or participate in corporate, school, and service organization projects

11,148 hours contributed by volunteers to virtually every aspect of the Garden’s operations

LIVING COLLECTIONS

12,176 accessions in the Garden’s living collection, comprised of 7,774 different kinds of plants, 11% of which are of wild collected origin

DOCENTS

3,895 visitors engaged

Cover image: Baby Wilson’s first visit to the Garden with his dad William. Photo courtesy of mom, Phoebe Ye.

Photos courtesy of Garden visitors via Instagram: @loveleelizzy @sarahrophotography @donnatorinn @nick.derenz
Dear Garden Supporters,

Thank you for your investment in San Francisco Botanical Garden over the past year. Your generous commitment has made it possible for us to thrive during a very challenging year. We are emerging out of the pandemic stronger with new members, donors, visitors, and volunteers!

Fiscal year 2021 brought record-breaking visitation to the Garden—the highest recorded in our history. Given the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, we wanted to do more to ensure access to the Garden and that no one was turned away for lack of funds. In partnership with the Japanese Tea Garden and Conservatory of Flowers, and with the leadership of Mayor London Breed, we joined the national and local Museums for All programs. This means that low income families can visit all three gardens in Golden Gate Park free of charge. In addition, and to further our partnership with the Japanese Tea Garden and Conservatory of Flowers, Botanical Garden members can now gain free entry to the three Gardens of Golden Gate Park.

We also launched a new popular after-school program that provided children with much needed outdoor activity and social development. In its third year, Garden Camp was proud to be part of the Summer Together initiative which allows 30% of our campers to participate through a scholarship program.

In June 2021, at the American Public Gardens Association annual conference, we were awarded the Dorothy E. Hansell Marketing Award for our Everybody’s Garden campaign. Featured on bus shelters and digital platforms, this multi-lingual campaign reached new audiences and expressed our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Having received all necessary public approvals and reached our challenge match goal, the long-awaited new plant nursery is now under construction. This new facility will enable us to expand our conservation partnerships and advance our mission to connect people, plants, and the planet.

Despite being an online virtual event for a second year, our annual fundraiser, Garden Feast, was a huge success and we were thrilled to have Abby Meyer of Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) as our keynote speaker. Through BGCI, we are working to protect and expand our extraordinary Magnolia collection, along with other collections for future generations.

While not the circumstances we hoped or planned for, our new private event rentals program is off to a great start! The Garden was in high demand for micro masked outdoor wedding ceremonies, and we are now booking all kinds of special events.

The return of Flower Piano in September 2021 was especially poignant. After all we have been through collectively, the magic of Flower Piano was truly cathartic.

We are deeply grateful for our community who supported us through this remarkable year.

Thank you for your investment in San Francisco Botanical Garden.

Stephanie Linder, Executive Director
Matthew Stephens, Garden Director
SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN
SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION & PARKS

MISSION
San Francisco Botanical Garden connects people to plants, the planet, and each other.

VISION
San Francisco Botanical Garden will be cherished and supported locally and recognized internationally for beauty, diversity of plant collections, educational programs, and inspiring conservation.

VALUES
San Francisco’s unique Botanical Garden inspires visitors with the extraordinary diversity of rare and unusual plants that can be grown in coastal California. Through its programs and displays, the Garden cultivates the bond between people and plants and instills a deeper understanding of the necessity to conserve Earth’s biological diversity. As a public/private partnership between a community-based nonprofit organization and the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department, and a beloved San Francisco institution, we are committed to transparency, cultural diversity, inclusion, and environmentally responsible practices. We are proud to be a public garden, accessible to all and grateful to the funders who help sustain us.

SAN FRANCISCO BOTANICAL GARDEN SOCIETY
San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum
Golden Gate Park
1999 9th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122
415.661.1316
sfgbg.org

501(c)(3) non-profit organization, tax ID 94-6050168

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Matthew Stephens, Garden Director

Annual Report Production
Brendan V. Lange, Editor & Project Manager
Sarah Katsikas, Designer

This publication is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.
NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP

DR. VANESSA HANDELEY
The Garden’s Board of Directors welcomed new board member Dr. Vanessa Handley, a conservation biologist with active field and research projects around the globe.

Dr. Handley’s overarching objective is to advance regional conservation efforts via collaborative, community-based approaches, deploying tools that range from practical horticulture to next generation sequencing.

In addition to her role as Director of Conservation Science at The Red List Project (a plant conservation nonprofit), Vanessa is Coordinator of the Global Conservation Consortium for Cycads at Montgomery Botanical Center and a Research Associate at California Academy of Sciences and UC Berkeley.

Vanessa holds a Ph.D. in Plant Biology from Berkeley and previously served as Director of Collections & Research at the University of California Botanic Garden and Associate Professor of Biology at Holy Names University. Vanessa’s conservation activities extend to voluntary service as a Specialist within the IUCN Species Survival Commission, participation in various scientific advisory boards and conservation consortia, and mentorship of underrepresented and non-traditional students in the conservation field.

Welcome, Vanessa!

FAREWELL, MATTHEW!
During his more than five years of service to the gardens of Golden Gate Park, Matthew Stephens, Garden Director at San Francisco Recreation & Parks, made a tremendous contribution to these cherished institutions. At the Botanical Garden, he led the efforts to create the new Celebration Garden and new plant nursery, now under construction. During his tenure, horticultural maintenance improved significantly and many critical projects were undertaken such as: the damaged old perimeter chain-link fence was replaced with attractive and secure fencing, the irrigation systems were upgraded, and three stream sustainable waste management was implemented. Those of us who had the pleasure of working with Matthew will always remember his passion for “crisp edges” along planting beds and paths. As the director of the Conservatory of Flowers, he addressed numerous infrastructure issues in this iconic historic structure, increased visitation, and launched very popular private and public events such as the winter “Night Bloom.” More recently, he took the helm at the Japanese Tea Garden, where a beautiful renovation of the Pagoda is nearing completion. While we are sad to see Matthew leave the gardens of Golden Gate Park, we congratulate him on his well-deserved new role as the President & CEO of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA.
When the Garden reopened to the public on June 1, 2020, the Children’s Garden had become a lush but almost impenetrable acre of greenery. Staff immediately set to work to renovate the space, recognizing it as a critical resource for San Francisco children and families. In July we launched a reimagined version of the Bean Sprouts Family Days program, sponsored by Kaiser Permanente, following San Francisco health and safety guidelines for the pandemic. Expanding to four days a week over the course of the year, the free Bean Sprouts program offered opportunities for children to stay active in a safe outdoor environment with their families. Parents appreciated the freedom children experienced to explore and engage with the natural world, describing the Children’s Garden as a “Yes Space” that children desperately needed. They also appreciated the sensory and interactive nature of the program, the large variety of activities to enjoy, and the feeling of safety and community during the pandemic. This creative adaptation of the original Bean Sprouts program engaged 6,102 Children’s Garden visitors, nearly double the participation of the previous year. Overall, we saw deep appreciation on the part of caregivers, tremendous joy and healthy engagement from the children, and a sense of purpose and hope among the volunteers and staff involved with the program. In addition to the physical health benefits of being active outdoors, adults—volunteers and caregivers alike—regularly reported a sense of improved mental health due to their time spent in the Children’s Garden. Numerous San Francisco families were introduced to an outdoor resource available to them even during a time of crisis, and the Children’s Garden is now seeing significantly increased visitation throughout the week. Garden Camp resumed in 2020 as well, serving 91 children with all-day, all-outdoors education between June and August 2020. The return to school, which for most meant the return to all-day, all-indoor screen time, presented the Learning and Engagement Team with a new challenge: launch our first ever after school program. From August 2020 through May 2021, the After-School Program served 197 total students. Many students attended for multiple sessions filling a total of 329 program spots. Participants were frequently overheard referring to the program as “school” and parents expressed relief to have a reliable, safe, and enriching program during a school year that was challenging for kids and families, alike. The pandemic also brought about new and expanded partnerships with the Mexican Museum and SF Children and Nature Collaborative. In partnership with the latter, the Youth Education team along with enthusiastic program participants, helped prepare “garden kits” which were distributed to over 10,700 students in the San Francisco Bay Area.

“Even before Covid there were so few spaces dedicated to the needs and interests of children (free spaces, public spaces), and now there are even fewer. It was tremendously meaningful to both of us that you are cultivating a space for children and their families right now.”

—Bean Sprout Family Days Program Participant

launched the Children’s Books-to-Go program to help keep the library’s circulating children’s collection moving and young readers exploring. Children’s book circulation increased by 86% over the previous year.

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MAGNOLIA GRAFTING PROJECT

Magnolias are the Garden’s signature collection represented by over two hundred specimens comprised of over fifty species and an additional and almost fifty different cultivars and hybrids. This exceptional diversity places our collection as one the most diverse ex-situ Magnolia collections globally and positions the Garden as a contributor to broader conservation efforts.

The work is never ending to engage researchers and other gardens to acquire new taxa furthering the collections development, along with the important responsibility to maintain and perpetuate our current collection. This is a challenging task while awaiting the opening of the new nursery, so the collections team at the Garden got creative.

Preserving documented wild genetics is a key part of conservation, so collecting seed from our Magnolias is not an option due to the high probability of hybridization or inbreeding. Propagating clonally is the best method, but many of these rare species are challenging to grow and there is often little to no research on how to propagate successfully. Grafting has been a successful method for propagating Magnolias for hundreds of years, but as both an artform and a science, careful consideration and trialing of rootstock combinations, techniques, and seasonality need to be executed in perfect combination for success.

This past year the Garden was awarded funding from Botanic Gardens Conservation International’s Global Botanic Garden Fund to pursue a Magnolia grafting project. This project was envisioned to send cuttings of just the Garden’s rare and wild collected species to expert grafter, Leanne Kenealy with the JC Raulston Arboretum to trial grafting methods, and then share successful plants and their propagation information with other interested botanical gardens across the country. However, through additional private funds from Garden supporters, this project was expanded to include taxa from the Atlanta Botanical Garden, UC Botanical Garden, and the JC Raulston Arboretum to create a piloted propagation consortium. This projected created new partnerships allowing for 27 wild collected accessions comprised of 21 taxa to be trialed, many of which having no known record of clonal propagation success.

Now a year later, some amazing successes and learnings were made because of this project. Nine taxa were successfully propagated with some surprising root stock combinations, and 34 plants will be shared between the partner gardens and other interested institutions. New taxa coming to the Garden’s collection include *M. kwangsiensis*, *M. changhongtana*, *M. pacifica*, and *M. obovalifolia*, along with beloved *Magnolia ‘Darjeeling’* collected in Sikkim, India. With the additional funds and the knowledge gained this past year, we are hoping to pursue this project again to trial unsuccessful species and include other gardens with significant Magnolia collections.
MAGNOLIA QR CODE PROJECT

Each year thousands of visitors flock to the Garden to see our Magnolia collection in bloom. Before the pandemic, this time of the year was a flurry of activity to engage our visitors with the collection through highlighted maps, and docent and staff led tours. Since gathering people in groups was not a possibility, the Garden needed to pivot and find a way to share the unique stories about these species with the public.

Activated by a gift from Garden supporter, Norman Goldfarb, the Garden was able to pilot a Magnolia tour with QR codes. A map featuring 25 Magnolias gave visitors the opportunity to find the bright pink signs placed at the base of each specimen and use their phones to access the QR code linked to the Garden Explorer page on our website. Profiles for each of the species allowed for visitors to learn about their horticultural, taxonomic, and conservation status, and images of the plants gave the opportunity to see the flowers if not in bloom.

While visitors learned about the plants, we learned about how they used this new offering. Information such as which plants were visited most, or if they were in flower at the time provides us with useful data to develop similar experiences more effectively in the future. In total, more than 2,000 users accessed the QR codes, and we discovered that Magnolia ‘Royal Crown’ was the most visited as it was in flower for the entire duration of Magnolia season.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT MEADOW

Through the hard work of staff and volunteers the meadow in the Arthur L. Menzies Garden of California Native Plants is making a comeback. Over the past year nearly 2,000 plants were planted in the meadow, starting the first phase of establishing a California coastal prairie collection. This unique and beautiful plant community is found along the coast ranging from Central to Northern California and is dominated by long-lived bunch grasses and annual wildflowers. Many of the species planted are locally sourced Bay Area ecotypes, helping provide an added layer of significance to this collection.
After five successful years, and a pause in 2020 due to the pandemic, we were excited to bring back Flower Piano to transform San Francisco Botanical Garden once again into the city’s own alfresco concert hall where everyone is invited to play and listen. “We’ve really missed our collaboration with the Botanical Garden, bringing to the community our unique interactive music festival, Flower Piano. After everything we’ve all been through, we were so excited to bring back a safe and joyous musical experience in the Garden for all to enjoy this September” says Dean Mermell, co-founder, together with Mauro ffortissimo, of event partner Sunset Piano.

In 2021, Flower Piano was especially healing and restorative after an unprecedented year of the pandemic, social isolation, political and racial violence, and catastrophic wildfires. Flower Piano is a musical event and attraction that provides open access to music and pianos within the natural, outdoor environment of San Francisco Botanical Garden. Free for San Franciscans, for families receiving SNAP or CalFresh benefits, and for everyone else following $3–12 general admission, Flower Piano is truly accessible and encouraged for all. More than 60,000 visitors attended Flower Piano this year over the 5-day event, a slight increase from the 2019 12-day, 3-night program—75% attended.

“It was great! I had an absolutely amazing experience. Because I’d been playing on the open pianos for the past five years, it made performing even sweeter. I was utterly surprised by the amount of people that showed up! I have never seen the Garden that busy. Overall it was just so fun.”  —Oscar Cervarich, performer

“After the long solitary months of the pandemic, my eleven-year old pianist was overjoyed to attend Flower Piano. Meeting so many other musicians and playing for others in the exquisite beauty of the gardens was nourishing, inspiring, and confidence-building for him.”  —Cindy Wheeler
this year for free. “We were thrilled to have music back in the Garden,” says Stephanie Linder, Executive Director. “Flower Piano brings the Botanical Garden to life like nothing else we’ve ever seen.”

Participants are invited to explore the Garden’s global living plant collections as they seek out the pianos. At each of the pianos, there were scheduled professional performances, open play time for participants, and community partner performances - reflecting a range of genres, ages, and cultures. The experience brings joy, hope, awe, and a deep sense of community. The most common word used to describe Flower Piano is “magical.” “Flower Piano is beloved in San Francisco. It returned at a perfect time, allowing our community to heal together through the combination of music and nature,” says Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, San Francisco Recreation & Park Department.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

SFJAZZ
SF Symphony
SF Conservatory of Music
Community Music Center’s Marco Diaz & Eduardo Corzo
Harlem of the West authors, Elizabeth Pepin Silva and Lewis Watts + Sam Peoples Jr., Bayview Opera House, and African American Historical and Cultural Society

Ensemble SF
Rabbit Hole Theater
Messy Art Lab
Noe’s Garden
Little Mission Studio
Elizabeth Dorman
Martin Luther McCoy, member of the SFJAZZ Collective

All Flower Piano photos courtesy of Travis Lange.
GREEN TEAM

Previously, the Green Team was a group of volunteers who rotated among horticulturists to support regular maintenance of the Garden, including weeding, mulching, moving soil, planting, pruning, and more. In response to the pandemic, we created 12 different Green Teams, each of which would support a different horticulturist or part of the Garden. Though small, these volunteer teams, in addition to several volunteer Gardener’s Assistants, have provided consistent, dedicated assistance over the past year, with 166 individuals contributing 7,189 hours of service in FY21.

BEAN SPROUTS FAMILY DAYS

As families and kids returned to the Children’s Garden, seeking a safe place to play and be in nature, so did our need for volunteers! It was with great enthusiasm that more than 40 volunteers made their way to the Children’s Garden, seeking a connection both with the Garden and with the community, contributing nearly 1,000 hours. Volunteers who had been involved with the school field trip program now welcomed families and small groups to Bean Sprouts Family Days, encouraging them to touch, smell, dig, water, and otherwise explore this ‘Yes!’ space for kids.

BOOKSTORE & PLANT ARBOR

As many Garden patrons know, the Bookstore and Plant Arbor returned to their schedule of being open daily in spring of 2021. This shift would not be possible without the volunteers who signed up to support these important locations. We welcomed returning volunteers as well as new faces, all of whom were excited to be part of this vibrant and friendly scene.

EVENT HOSTS

Another new volunteer role which emerged during the pandemic is that of Event Host. Here, volunteers greet visitors who are attending special events at the Garden, including many micro-weddings held last fall. The joy of this role is meeting folks who are celebrating their special day and guiding them through the beauty of the Garden.
Volunteers and staff were thrilled to return to the Garden in June 2020, after the Garden’s 11-week closure due to the pandemic. We adapted existing programs to meet safety requirements, and discovered new ways for volunteers to engage with the Garden.

**DOCENTS**

Volunteer docents also stepped up to the challenge of engaging with visitor while following pandemic safety guidelines. Instead of leading group tours, docents became Rovers, spending up to two hours per day moving throughout the Garden or standing at key locations, available to answer questions as well as to educate visitors of some of the more extraordinary plants in the collections. In May 2021, docents began leading public and private tours. Currently tours are offered Mondays & Wednesdays at 1:30pm, and Fridays & Saturdays at 10:30am & 1:30pm.

**DOCENT TRAINING**

Docents play an essential role in greeting and guiding visitors throughout the Garden, introducing them to beautiful and unique plants found in our collections. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 docent training was held entirely online, with virtual lectures and tours. For spring 2021, we were pleased to host a hybrid training; although the majority of content was presented online, we were also able to invite participants into the Garden for several on-site tours and opportunities to explore the Garden’s collections.

Congratulations to the fifteen participants who completed this training, held biweekly on Thursday mornings, from March through June. The next docent training is expected to be held in March 2022. Sign up for the Garden’s e-newsletter to learn more about this opportunity.

Visitors can learn more about tours at [sfbg.org/tours](http://sfbg.org/tours), where they can sign up for a public tour, or arrange a private tour for a group of friends or their organization.

**INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?**

Volunteer programs will continue to grow and evolve with the Garden. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit [sfbg.org/volunteer](http://sfbg.org/volunteer) to learn more and to complete our online application, or contact volunteer@sfbg.org.
The Garden Bookstore reopened in October 2020, after the retirement of long-time bookstore manager Dennis Gutmann and almost eight full months of being closed.

The new bookstore manager, Whitney Ochoa, was hired to focus on reopening safely and expanding the tiny store. Here are some of the upgrades that took place:

- The register area was moved outdoors so the store has an inviting, open-air feel
- We welcomed back volunteers to support day-to-day operations
- A new awning was installed
- The store’s reopening began with weekends and then steadily moved back into seven days
- The book selection expanded to include more diverse authors and new items made by local artists
- A new bookstore assistant, Amalia Laventure, was hired
- The online store was launched: store.sfbg.org
- Each month since reopening has had stellar sales

The Plant Arbor reopened in June 2020 with a bang as San Franciscans’ became re-focused on greening their homes and gardens. With long-time Nursery Assistant, Diane Glaub, at the lead, the store was able to safely conduct daily sales, as well as small, monthly-themed sales. Many nursery volunteers have come back to support and care for the Arbor, while the nursery remains under construction. The community that supports the Arbor has become known for their plant expertise and practical gardening savvy.
I love that my personal and professional passion for plants came together through the Garden’s virtual programs. Creating my own wreath with a diversity of plants from the collections in the virtual Wreath-Making Workshop and presenting a virtual program on Sydney’s wildflowers strengthened my—and I’m sure many others’—connection to plants and the Garden during the pandemic.

—Nathalie Nagalingum, Curator & McAllister Chair of Botany at California Academy of Sciences

We honor longtime staff member Bob Fiorello, who retired at the end of June, 2021. In 1998, Bob began working as a horticulturist with San Francisco Recreation & Parks throughout the Garden, focusing on Chile, the Andean Cloud Forest, Zellerbach, and New Zealand. In 2015, he became Chief Horticulturist guiding the Garden into a new era of leadership.

From managing irrigation and materials, to helping set up pianos, to cutting bamboo for the Children’s Garden, Bob has been instrumental in attending to the details that help make the Garden run.

Bob deeply cared about working with volunteers and educating the public about horticulture, integrated pest management (IPM), and other topics. You may have worked with Bob during a Community Volunteer Day, or attended his training on “Weeds in the Garden.” Bob is a natural teacher, and loves opportunities for hands-on learning.

Bob has been a champion of the Garden for more than 20 years. We want to extend a deep thank you to Bob for all his hard work. We wish Bob the best in retirement!
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**
As of June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021

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<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$ 5,161,634</td>
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**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**
As of June 30, 2020 and June 30, 2021

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<th>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</th>
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<th>2020</th>
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<td><strong>Total Support and Revenue</strong></td>
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<thead>
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<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<td>Fundraising and Development</td>
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<td>Management and General</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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| Change in Net Assets | $ 21,689,914 | $ (854,119) |

*As allocated to SFBGS by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department


**SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS**
12 months ended June 30, 2021

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**USES OF FUNDS**

Contributed Income: memberships, foundation grants, contributions, bequests, net revenues from fundraising events, and in-kind gifts

Earned Income: plant and bookstore sales, program fees, private rentals, and library art & book sales

Program Services: plant collections management, gardens, youth education, classes and public programs, library, bookstore, plant arbor, volunteer program, visitor services, and other program-related activities
The beauty and diversity of our collections and the array of programs, tours, and events at San Francisco Botanical Garden are made possible by you, our supporters. Each gift enables us to offer unparalleled opportunities for inspiration and learning. We would like to extend our gratitude to those who generously contributed to the Garden between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

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Aristolochia x hybrida ‘Indian Summer’. Photo courtesy of Saxon Holt.
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