



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**'WE DIG OHIO' UNEARTH'S URBAN GARDENING TRENDS, TIPS**

Columbus, OH— The annual "We Dig Ohio!" summit, the largest community gardening conference in the state, returns March 24 at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. This all-day event explores trends in urban gardening with a focus on growing the next generation of farmers – including a sneak peek tour of the highly anticipated Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden.

We Dig Ohio is part of the Conservatory's commitment to instilling positive change in communities through gardening. This summit began as part of our Growing to Green outreach program, which has seen entire communities transform by supporting more than 300 gardens in central Ohio.

"We Dig Ohio is a time to share stories and successes about the power of community gardening," said Bill Dawson, Growing to Green program manager at Franklin Park Conservatory. "With the opening of The Children's Garden this spring – a project focused on providing more outlets for green time instead of screen time – we wanted to use this summit to recognize young people and inspire their continued involvement with the community. That's why, for the first time in We Dig Ohio history, we have invited young gardeners to be the keynote speakers."

The keynote panel includes **Maggie Griffin** (21), who created the UNITY Fridge Program at Ohio State University to deliver fresh produce for free to those in food deserts; **Te'Lario Watkins II** (10), who has gained success and levels of fame from operating his own business growing and selling artisan mushrooms; **Sitiah Hodge** (16), a committed volunteer at Mid-Ohio Foodbank's Clarefield Farm and a role model neighborhood champion; and Nasir Groce (10), a dedicated participant in the Urban GEMS program. Fitting with the youth gardening theme, the lunch will be provided by Urban GEMS students.

Also unique to this year, the summit will offer sneak-peak tours of **The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden** – the largest horticulture project in Conservatory history, which does not open to the general public until May 19. It will also include admission to the Conservatory's three spring exhibitions: *Blooms & Butterflies*, *Spring Dreams*, and *Field*.

"Growing the next generation of leaders who will work to better their communities through gardens is important," said Lindsay LaSala, community and foundation relations manager for The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company. "We're honored to partner with Franklin Park Conservatory to nurture these future gardeners and farmers."



The day will include national and regional experts covering such subjects as classroom gardens, slow food farming, food deserts, health benefits of gardening, immigration integration through gardening, container and vertical gardens, how to start a garden plot, and more. Participating organizations include The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, KidsGardening, Cornell University, Ohio State University, Franklinton Farms, Columbus Public Health, Slow Food Columbus, Central State Extension, Toledo GROWS, Technology for the Poor, Highland Youth Garden, Grove Patterson Academy's Garden of Smiles, and Franklin Park Conservatory.

We Dig Ohio is part of the Conservatory's Growing to Green program and is made possible through sponsorship from The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, Kurtz Bros., and The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Registration is required. Seat prices are \$60/person or \$45/student. For details or to register, please visit the [We Dig Ohio event page](#). Follow the conversation on social media with #WeDigOhio2018 on Instagram and Twitter, or via the [We Dig Ohio Facebook event page](#). The Conservatory is on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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*Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers botanical collections, art and nature-based exhibitions, plant shows, and educational programs for all ages. Situated in an 88-acre urban park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House and 83,000 square feet of glasshouses, classrooms, and meeting and event spaces. The Conservatory owns a signature collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly. Light Raiment II, a permanent installation by internationally recognized light artist James Turrell, illuminates the John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn.*