



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GROWING TO GREEN HARVEST AWARDS CEREMONY CELEBRATES CENTRAL OHIO'S COMMUNITY GARDENS AND GARDENERS**

COLUMBUS, OH — On Thursday, October 5, 2023, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens hosted the annual Growing to Green Harvest Awards Ceremony. The harvest awards are a tribute to individuals, organizations and communities who participate in community gardening and city beautification projects in Central Ohio.

The Growing to Green Harvest Awards honors the dedication and hard work of many Central Ohio communities and individuals while furthering Growing to Green's objective of promoting participation in city beautification and community gardening.

Growing to Green program coordinator, Sean McKay and Conservatory President & CEO, Bruce Harkey made remarks about another successful year of Growing to Green. This year, there were over 65 nominations. Finger foods and large charcuterie tables were provided and supplemented courtesy of Franklin Park Conservatory's Women's Board. There was an elegant performance by Urban Strings, which recruits and supports underserved, urban, African American and Minority Youth to become string musicians. This year's Growing to Green Harvest Award Ceremony was also made possible by the generous support of the Conservatory Women's Board's Growing to Green Awards Planning Committee. The Flower Initiative, a local non-profit, provided a live flower backdrop for photo opportunities for all of the nominees and supporters.

Nominations for the eight award categories were open to the public. A panel of 15 judges reviewed the nominations for each award category and selected the following winners:

### **The Boyd W. Bowden Garden Impact Award for Education and Leadership**

The Boyd W. Bowden Garden Impact Award for Education and Leadership is presented by the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Bowden Family to a community garden that has shown a significant and sustainable impact on the health and vitality of the community through children's education, job training and/or celebrating culture. An award of \$750 will be given to further impact the community and garden project.

This award is one of two that honor Dr. Bowden's love of gardening as well as his life-long commitment to improving community health and the quality of life for citizens in central Ohio.

*Winner: Mezzacello Urban Farm*



### **The Boyd W. Bowden Garden Impact Award for Wellness and Health**

The Boyd W. Bowden Garden Impact Award for Wellness and Health is presented by the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation and the Bowden Family to a community garden that has shown a significant and sustainable impact on the health and vitality of the community while developing connections to nutrition, wellness and/or food production. An award of \$750 will be given to further impact the community and garden project. This award is one of two that honor Dr. Bowden's love of gardening as well as his life-long commitment to improving community health and the quality of life for citizens in central Ohio.

*Winner: Friends Garden*

### **Community Garden of the Year Award**

The Community Garden of the Year Award is announced by the President/Founder of Greenscapes Landscape Company, Bill Gerhardt, to a neighborhood gardening project for beautification and/or food production. An award of \$500 will be given to the top garden in this category.

*Winner: Van Buren Community Garden*

### **Bill Dawson Community Gardener of the Year Award**

The Bill Dawson Community Gardener of the Year Award is announced by GreenScapes Landscape Co. to an individual who is exceptionally dedicated to their neighborhood garden and/or the movement of community gardening in central Ohio. An award of \$250 will be given to the winner to be applied toward their community gardening project.

*Winner: Victoria Johnson, CCS Georgian Heights Elementary*

### **Education Garden of the Year Award**

The Education Garden of the Year Award is announced by Columbus City School Farm to School Manager, Katie Young, to a school or other organization that utilizes garden projects for educational purposes. An award of \$500 will be given to the top garden in this category.

*Winner: Columbus Early Learning Centers*

### **Paul B. Redman Youth Leadership Award**

The Paul B. Redman Youth Leadership Award is presented by the Conservatory Women's Board President, Stephanie Stephanson, to an outstanding youth gardener aged 18 or younger. An award of \$250 will be given to the winner to further their education and interest in gardening or to make improvements in their community.

*Winner: Addison Helon, Bexley Love Your Alley*

### **Neighborhood Improvement Project of the Year Award**

The Neighborhood Improvement Project of the Year Award is announced by Karima Samadi, City of Columbus Public Health Food System Analyst, to a community garden, urban farm, park, gateway, streetscape, school or other community beautification or food project. An award of \$250 will be given to the project that has done the most to benefit its surrounding community.



*Winner: Berwick Alternative Community Garden*

### **Sustainability Award**

The Sustainability Award is announced by Chad Anderson, Executive Director of the Urban Farmers Coalition, to a garden that is utilizing sustainable community gardening practices, including community-building activities, sustainable garden design and utilization of green practices (e.g. rain barrels) and/or has proven sustainable over the long term. An award of \$250 will be given to further advance the sustainability of the community garden.

*Winner: Upper Arlington Lutheran Church Community Garden*

Growing to Green was founded over 20 years ago and has since supported over 300 community gardens throughout the central Ohio area. Growing to Green and the Awards are supported this year by GreenScapes Landscape Co., Hinson Family Trust, Osteopathic Heritage Foundations in cooperation with the Boyd Bowden Family, Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Franklin Park Conservatory Women's Board.

For more information, please visit [fpconservatory.org/growing-to-green](http://fpconservatory.org/growing-to-green), and follow the Conservatory on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

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*Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers world-class horticulture, art & nature-based exhibitions and educational programs. The 13-acre indoor and outdoor facility—situated two miles from downtown Columbus—features glasshouses including the historic John F. Wolfe Palm House; botanical gardens including the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden and Scotts Miracle Gro-Foundation Community Garden Campus; and event venues. The Conservatory is home to the largest collection of Chihuly glass in a botanical garden and Light Raiment II by internationally renowned artist James Turrell. Committed to the community, the Conservatory strives to provide an accessible and welcoming experience to all.*