



FAR REACHES BOTANICAL CONSERVANCY



Trifolium macrocephalum

2023 Annual Report

A letter on behalf of the FRBC Board of Directors



Sometime in the Spring, pre-Covid, I remember clearly walking through one of the greenhouses at Far Reaches, absolutely floored by the variety and quantity of unusual flora. My eyes couldn't rest, there was too much to take in. My fingers had to brush up against every fern leaf and every fuzzy surface. I didn't know most of what I was looking at (being a plant amateur) but like any plant lover, I knew magic when I saw it.

Never would I have imagined that 6 years later, I'd be lucky enough to work with the incredible folks at FRBC. Fast forward to becoming the newest board member and as such, the person who gets to introduce this year's annual report!

What I will be zeroing in on as a board member is the clarification and prioritization of the Conservancy's efforts, so that we all can focus on execution. With that in mind, let me tell you about two tasks in particular: Plant propagation, and getting our collection management into the digital realm.

The overall mission of the Conservancy is to acquire and introduce rare plants to both researchers and gardening enthusiasts. To that end, this year, we are fortunate to have Silas Zoeller join us as our new Collections Manager. He of course immediately jumped in on propagation of our extensive collection of *Heptapleurum* (*Schefflera*) species.

Normally with a diverse collection of this size, a collection manager would have several support staff assisting in the myriad facets involved in this position. We too would love to have that level of staffing, and it is absolutely our goal to increase the staff size by at least 2 over the next five years, so that we can truly give the attention to these plants that they deserve.

Getting our collection into IrisBG, our botanic garden database, is another goal. In order for us to share our efforts with other gardens and arboreta, we must catalog information like origin and taxonomy into a database. This project has really gained momentum with the addition of Silas, and you can read more detail later in this report. It is this sort of effort that is funded by your donations!

Finally, we have to call out that Sue, Kelly and Cody went to Argentina for our first FRBC tour! Nine FRBC members traveled with them across much of Neuquén, Santa Cruz, and Rio Negro provinces, for 15 days of incredible hiking and plant sightings. We hope you are enjoying the detailed accounts by Cody in the FRBC newsletters.

I feel very honored to be a part of this team. With your support we will continue to develop, propagate and distribute our unique collections. And for those of you who can make it to an open garden day at Far Reaches, I look forward to meeting you!

-Holly Hirzel, Board Director

Conservation Programs Year in Review



Plant conservation is at the core of the FRBC's mission and is reflected in almost all our activities and programs. Our approach to conservation involves these key aspects:

Acquisition: We seek out plants that are rare or absent in cultivation - both wild plant species threatened by habitat loss, human activity, and climate change, as well as cultivated plants grown by only a select few—often a single individual or horticultural entity. We collect seeds, cuttings, or small plants (following sustainable procedures ensuring no negative impacts to wild populations) and bring them back to our nursery for cultivation.

Introduction & cultivation: Newly acquired plants are established in our nursery and often planted out in permanent installations in our onsite gardens as well.

Distribution: Ultimately, FRBC plants are distributed to partner botanical institutions, researchers, and gardeners. Distributing these plants is a cornerstone of our conservation practices—getting them into diverse and geographically separate permanent collections and gardens is our principal strategy to insure against their loss.

☞ Hired Silas Zoeller as the Collections Manager, a completely new but very necessary position

☞ The first round of FRBC plants were placed in their permanent home in the Collector's Garden

☞ Bonnie Berk stepped down as a Board Director after 5 productive years with us, and we wish her all the best in the world!

☞ Holly Hirzel was elected as a Board Director, after some months of volunteering her time helping with project management and outreach.

☞ Founders Sue and Kelly attended the 4th International Rock Garden Conference in Czechia, speaking on the FRBC Crevice Garden and its role in conservation, made great international connections and brought home 37 new plants.



Czech Garden of Zdenek Zvolanek



The Collector's Garden

The Collector's Garden is an intimate room enclosed within a very large lath structure, and will house detailed plantings of extraordinary and rare FRBC plants. Groundwork and lath house for the Collector's Garden were completed in the fall of 2022, and in 2023 was planted with the first round of noteworthy plants from the FRBC permanent collection.

One such plant is *Fatsia polycarpa*, a second generation seedling from seed that we had collected in Taiwan some years ago. Our plants flowered and were hand-pollinated, producing seedlings, and this was the only one showing very exciting variegation. *Fatsia polycarpa* has been perfectly hardy outside here and we expect this one to be a star for many years in the Collector's Garden.



Aralia wangshanensis

Aralia wangshanensis, formerly *Pentapanax henryi*, is a very rare plant in cultivation, if you can find it at all. It has the typical inflorescence of clustered little white flowers indicative of the Araliaceae or ivy family. The hornets and yellow jackets all love these flowers!



Fatsia polycarpa



Hedychium spicatum

Hedychium spicatum. From a 2003 collection and we've been wanting to get this in a proper garden bed for 20 years.

Ardisia species A beautiful, vertical plant that grows about 3.5' high in a light open canopy, ideally in San Francisco.



Ardisia species

Rohdea pachynema. A rhizomatous evergreen perennial with long narrow leaves with a thick yellow line down the middle. Hardy here in the PNW with no problem.



Rohdea pachynema



Once the pathways are finished, they will be topped with crushed hazelnut shells, a recycled product we source in the Pacific Northwest. As there are no pesticides used onsite, this is an organic way to reduce weed growth in unwanted areas.

The Crevice Garden

In the spring of 2022, we brought in crevice garden maestros Kenton Seth, Paul Spriggs, Chris Dixon and Ty Danylchuk to double the size of our existing crevice garden. Kenton and Paul built our original crevice garden in 2019, a joint project between FRBC and Far Reaches Farm, which has allowed us to successfully grow some of our very highest alpine Olympic endemic plants such as *Viola flettii*, and *Campanula piperi*, down here in the lowlands. We're even featured as a case study in Kenton and Paul's new book, *The Crevice Garden*.

Packing the crevices with gravel will still take some considerable time to complete, and we have been limited by our own personal availability to travel to Montana to gather chinking rock. However we have been able to plant parts of it with some new plants, and here is a partial list:

Daphne × *juraseki* JJH1
Rhamnus pumila
Globularia cordifolia 'Alba'
Oxalis latifolia
Trifolium macrocephalum
Polygala calcarea 'Czech Sky'
Campanula fragilis

Myriopteris rufa
Edraianthus serbicus
Edraianthus sutjeskae
Edraianthus jugoslavicus (syn. *graminifolius*)
Townsendia florifer
Gentiana clusii - Violet Form
Sabulina basaltica

Viola flettii bloomed for the first time this year in the original portion of the crevice garden. This is an alpine endemic to our Olympic Mountains and is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the Watch List of Vascular Plant Species from the Washington Natural Heritage Program. This species only grows in rock cracks above treeline and their populations will be severely impacted by climate change in the coming decades.

This was grown from seed that Sue and Kelly collected in the Olympic mountains, where it was growing next to another endemic, *Campanula piperi*. Seedlings were planted out in 2021. It's a plant with very specific requirements and this flowering shows the crevice garden is a viable and important tool in successful ex situ cultivation.



Viola flettii

Distribution of FRBC Plants



In May we shipped several *Bergenia* species and cultivars, including a collection we made of *Bergenia purpurascens* from Yunnan in 1997, to a researcher in Scotland. He is doing taxonomic studies of the genus and developing an evaluation trial for the numerous accessions he has accumulated.

We also sent flowers for pollen extraction of rare *Vaccinium* species (Blueberries) and related genera to the USDA Blueberry and Cranberry Research Center in New Jersey for use in novel breeding applications.



Aralia wangshanensis

For the future:

We are in the process of sending live specimen samples of key species for molecular analysis to a team from multiple universities that is studying the evolutionary relationships of specific genera within the Lamiaceae or mint family. Studies such as these often have access only to dried herbarium specimens which are not nearly as good as live plant samples when it comes to DNA work.

We provided information on what members of the Araliaceae family we are growing to the incredibly useful and monumental project, Trees and Shrubs Online. Notably, our three introductions of *Aralia wangshanensis* (syn. *Pentapanax henryi*), *Dendropanax proteus* and the first introduction of the cutleaf form of *Heptapleurum* (syn. *Schefflera*) *delavayi*, will be of particular interest.

Educational Programs



One of our strategic goals is to increase public participation in horticulture and gardening by providing education on how our work and plant collections contribute to understanding and preserving global biodiversity. Each year we provide programs in the form of educational webinars and greenhouse tours related to rare and imperiled plants of the world, the collecting and stewardship of our collection, or other aspects of ex-situ conservation like crevice gardening.

- 🌀 99 Greenhouse Tour attendees
- 🌀 11 e-newsletters sent and 280 new subscribers
- 🌀 368 new social media followers

Behind the Greenhouse Doors

We hosted 10 very popular onsite greenhouse tours during the spring and summer, which provided the opportunity not only to share some exciting new happenings in the FRBC collection, but also some valuable in-person time for members to bond and reconnect over our shared love of fabulous plants. Founders Sue and Kelly led the tours with assistance from fellow Director Dr. Cody Hinchliff. This was a big increase from the 4 tours given in 2022, and we raised the number of attendees from 10 to 15. This allowed us to make the tours more accessible by lowering the ticket price as well as having more available time slots.

The tours took members and guests through the Collector's and Crevice Gardens as well as our propagation greenhouse (named after our late, great friend Steve Doonan, who could get roots on a broomstick). Sue and Kelly discussed many special FRBC plants of interest, including stories of how they were acquired, and why they're important. It was a great opportunity to meet our members face-to-face, answer their questions, and showcase the projects that their donations have made possible.

We will be offering eight tours this coming year, with slightly different programming each time so that any repeat guests can experience different topics, plants, or areas of the site.



Guest Lectures

Kelly and Sue gave a number of lectures, both in person and virtually, for horticultural societies and botanical gardens in North America during 2023. They donate 100% of their lecture fees back to FRBC.

FRBC Crevice Garden - Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society

Far Reaches: Exploration and Conservation Inform Garden Design - Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center, Bronx NY

Building Crevice Gardens to Conserve (& Enjoy) Alpine Plants - Four Seasons Garden Club Maryland

Conservation Gardening with Rare Plants from Near and Far - Coupeville Garden Club Whidbey Island WA

Praise and Protection: Why you should care about endangered plants - Northwest Flower and Garden Festival Fine Gardening Seminar

New Botanical Beauties from the Far Reaches - New England Chapter NARGS

Rare Companion Plants at Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy - American Rhododendron Society District One British Columbia

Nerd-worthy Plants from the Far Reaches - Plant Nerd Nite Portland OR

Meconopsis at Far Reaches and North America - Meconopsis Group AGM and Group Meeting Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Far Reaches Farm and Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy - Garden Master Class Thursday Garden Chat

FRBC Crevice Garden and its Role in Conservation - 4th International Rock Garden Conference Pruhonice Czechia

Crevice Garden at Far Reaches - Orcas Island Garden Club

Sikkim - A Paradise of Plants (and a fern or two) in Northern India - Hardy Fern Foundation Annual Meeting

Rare Plants in the Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy Collection - Sequim Prairie Garden Club



Dispatches from the Far Reaches

We also hosted 3 webinars in 2023. We were very excited to feature virtual lectures from three international phenoms of modern plant exploration: Vojtěch Holubec of Czechia, Harry Jans of the Netherlands, and returning speaker from Ireland, Seamus O'Brien. In combination, these are prolific travelers, authors, extraordinary gardeners, and top-tier plantsmen. Normally a lineup like this would form the basis for a major international conference, so we were very lucky to have them as guests. With the new FRBC crevice garden beckoning to be planted, we wanted to feature some alpine-heavy lectures as this type of ecosystem is one of the most threatened from climate change.

The Tien Shan and its Flowers with Vojtěch Holubec

The Tian Shan is a very remote 1500 mile mountain range running east-west from Mongolia and northern China to Tajikistan, encompassing incredibly diverse habitats from desert to high snow-covered peaks. In between these two extremes, are vegetation zones of steppe, broadleaf forests, coniferous forests, exuberant moist meadows and rich alpine ecology. The combination of amazing plants and stunning scenery is mesmerizing. Vojtěch, researcher for the Czech Gene Bank, the National Coordinator for plant genetic resources, discussed the flora of the Tian Shan and the ecological conditions in which they grow.



Alpines Down Under with Harry Jans

This was a close look at plants in Australia and Tasmania, an unknown area for many of us but with a wealth of very attractive alpines (and other plants of interest as well). Harry Jans organizes botanical tours and/or leads them to various corners of the world like China, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Armenia, Iran, Yemen, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina and many European countries. In 2000 he received an Award of Honour from the Alpine Garden Society and in 2014 he received the prestigious AGS Lyttle Trophy.

A Summer Visit to the Deserts of Ladakh with Seamus O'Brien

The third lecture in our series marked the return of explorer and author Seamus O'Brien who gave such excellent talks for us in our previous webinars. In *A Summer Visit to the Deserts of Ladakh*, Seamus recounted the adventures of a trip he led in July 2022 to the mountains of Ladakh in the Kashmir region. Ladakh has some of the greatest glaciers in all Asia, which provide water to the deserts on the mountain slopes and valleys below, giving rise to a rare ecosystem rich in flora. He and his group studied its high-altitude desert flora, which is being threatened by climate change.

Financial Report



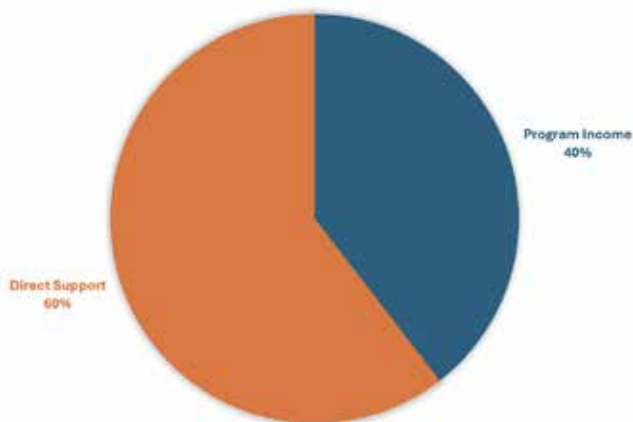
We would like to acknowledge three members who provided outstanding support this past year. Susan Eggers gave us the best surprise of last summer when she presented us with a check for \$50,000 during one of our Behind the Greenhouse Doors tours of the FRBC collection. She explained that she strongly believes in saving plants and in our efforts to make rare plants available to gardeners, which perfectly summarizes our mission statement. We were also very touched by a gift of \$10,000 from long-time friend Darrell Probst, who is perhaps best known for revolutionizing the genus *Epimedium*, although his breeding work across other genera might well be found in your own garden. Finally, we would like to thank the Anonymous donor, who through contributions, including matching donations from our Membership drive, gifted us with just shy of \$15,000.

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. which resulted in \$7,651 and \$6,406.95 respectively. Our donations for GiveBIG increased by 6.7% from 2022, and GivingTuesday donations increased by a whopping 24%. We were especially grateful for this increase as it was right on the heels of a very successful Membership Drive.

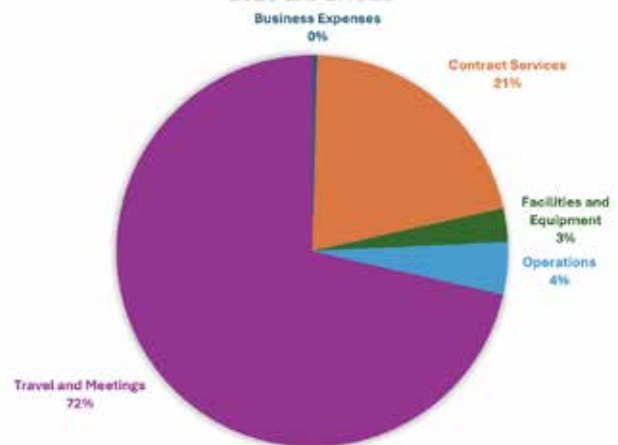
We ran a Membership Drive for the second year in a row, with an anonymous donor matching donations at 200%, capped at \$5,000. We received a total of \$32,818.25 with the matching donation, which is 34.1% more than last year's Drive. 80 people either joined for the first time or renewed their memberships during this time.

- 🌀 55.49% increase in direct donations
- 🌀 79 first-time Members

2023 INCOME



2023 EXPENSES



Thank you to our 2023 Donors!



Every attempt has been made to include all gifts received in 2023. Please advise of any omissions in an email to plants@farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org

2023 Gifts Received in

Memory of

VG Cave
Jim Harman
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2023 Gifts Received in Honor of

Holly Hirzel
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| Megan Esler | Terri Lausten | Elaine Richards | Anonymous (22) |
| J. Scotty Fairchild | Ruth Lipscomb | Carol Russo | |
| David Fueger | Kristin Lister | Victoria Ryan | * Deceased |

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 and we appreciate each and every one of you! There are many ways to give, including by check or online at our website, <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/JoinAndSupport/Donate.html>

Join or Renew membership: Please consider becoming a FRBC member today. All it takes is a \$40 donation. Find out more or renew online: <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/JoinAndSupport/Membership.html>





How You Benefit:

You can decide how much to give.

Your bequest costs you nothing now - you retain control of your assets during your lifetime. And your bequest is revocable, which means it can be changed or modified whenever you decide to change your estate planning documents.

Bequest gifts are often exempt from federal estate taxes, so if your estate is taxable, the charitable deduction may offset taxes. (But you should only rely on a tax professional in determining the tax implications of any gift or bequest.)

Ways to Support the FRBC:

- ☞ Name the Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy as a beneficiary in your will. (Sample language can be found on our website: <https://farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org/JoinAndSupport/PlannedGiving.html>)
- ☞ Make the Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or life insurance policy.
- ☞ Name the Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy as the beneficiary of a charitable remainder trust.

Ideally, your bequest is best utilized by us if unrestricted. If you wish to have your bequest go to a specific purpose, or if you wish to bequest specific personal property or real estate, please get in touch with us in advance to discuss.

Contact Us

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about how to make a bequest to the FRBC, or to request any additional information that might be helpful to you and your attorney as you consider making a bequest. If you have included a bequest for the FRBC in your estate plan, please let us know so we can thank you and recognize you for your gift if you desire.



Mission Statement



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.

Board of Directors

Sue Milliken

Kelly Dodson

Cody Hinchliff, PhD

William Winslow

Holly Hirzel

Key advisors

Aaron Floden, PhD—Consulting Taxonomist

Michael Sundue, PhD—Consulting Taxonomist

Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator at the Denver Botanic Garden

John Massey, owner of Ashwood Nurseries in England

Staff + Volunteers

Silas Zoeller, Collections Manager

Elena Smith, Administrative Coordinator

Ann Welch, Website Manager & Media Producer

Dan Post, Chief Financial Officer

Jolly Wahlstrom, Construction

Kimberly Mills, Propagation/Nursery

Beth Clark, Propagation/Nursery

Margaret Mood, Propagation/Nursery

Ruth Blyther, Propagation/Nursery

Mary Dilles, Propagation/Nursery

Donna McGaughey, Propagation/Nursery

Acquire • Conserve Educate • Share



Cardiocrinum cathayanum

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