

**Agency: University of Alaska****Project Title:****Project Type:** Planning and Research

# Research Survival Georgeson Botanical Garden

**State Funding Requested: \$100,000****House District:** Fairbanks Areawide (7-11)

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

Provide funding for salaries to continue the education, plant conservation, and research programs at the Georgeson Botanical Gardens through the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$100,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$100,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The loss of Federal Hatch funds have put the Georgeson Botanical Gardens in jeopardy of closing. These funds would help ensure the program has more time to find and evaluate other funding sources.

The Georgeson Botanical Garden (Garden) is an educational and research facility doing horticultural research in areas of interest to Alaskans, as well as providing education in horticulture and agronomy. Because the Garden is not just a "garden" that is open to the public, funding staff faces specific challenges when research dollars are not available to maintain the traditional research of the Garden. The perception by the public that there are no 'flowers' planted is an example of this dilemma. The annual flowers were part of an ongoing research project for which the funding was eliminated.

There is no money available within the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station budget, which receives Hatch funds (federal dollars matched with state dollars), to continue the funding for flower and vegetable research. As a result, that research project ended in 2011 and there are no plans to renew it.

In anticipation of staffing reductions both in permanent staff and student interns as well as up to 50% annual reduction in unrestricted revenue, the Garden administrator made management decisions to preserve the core mission of the horticulture program, which is horticultural research and outreach to Alaskans. Staff examined all programs in terms of labor requirements and value to the mission. As a result, the changes to the botanical garden in the next 2 years will be as follows, unless additional revenue streams can be secured:

1. Elimination of annual flower trials and demonstration gardens (completed in 2011); in 2012, half of the beds will be planted in wildflowers; half will remain fallow;
2. Elimination of vegetable variety trials and demonstration family food garden; two beds will be used for a graduate student research project; two beds will temporarily hold plant materials received from the defunct USDA ARS gene bank in Palmer; the remainder will be fallow; after 2013, all beds will be fallow because of lack of funds for student workers;
3. Elimination of all perennial ornamental trials, with the exception of one demonstration trial on peonies; one demonstration trial on wild blueberries; and one demonstration trial on overwintering of roses;

4. Elimination of all maintenance for the Rotary shelter and areas used for public gatherings; possible transfer to Physical Plant;

5. No new gardens; construction will finish projects in the Babula Children's garden; projects in Ohlsen food garden, and Beistline garden will be maintenance only;

6. Elimination of garden classes for K-12 students; ASRA will hold a summer academy for 2 weeks; and

7. No new signage, pathways, or edging; one perennial garden constructed from funds donated by the Willow Garden Club.

Summary: the Garden has had tiny operating budgets, the biggest component being salaries. The Garden has been able to make do with small amounts of growth each year as long as salaries were covered by Hatch funds. Without that support, and because of the need to use endowment funds for these salaries instead of student internships, the Garden will remain in a bare maintenance mode for the next 2 years.

**Project Timeline:**

FY 13

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

University of Alaska

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Name: Carol Lewis  
 Title: Dean, School of Natural Resources  
 Address: PO Box 757200  
 Fairbanks, Alaska 99775  
 Phone Number: (907)474-7188  
 Email: fysnras@uaf.edu

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No