

[Click here to view plants for home gardeners featured in Bartholdi Park](#)



Just across Independence Avenue from the U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory is a favorite "secret" garden of many Washingtonians. Part of the U. S Botanic Garden since 1932 when it was created, Bartholdi Park is a two-acre garden that showcases innovative plant combinations in a variety of styles and design themes.

In warm weather, enjoy the centerpiece of the Park, the *Fountain of Light and Water*, commonly called the Bartholdi Fountain in homage to its creator, Frederick C. Bartholdi. This cast-iron fountain weighs more than 15 tons and stands 30 feet tall. The lights surrounding its basin are illuminated at night.

Bartholdi Park is a refuge from the stresses of the city. Secluded benches offer quiet shade in the summer and sheltered sunlight in the winter. Every type of plant is featured in the Park - deciduous trees, evergreens, shrubs, perennials, annuals, vines, ground covers, roses and bulbs. In every season, the colors and textures of the plants are exhilarating.

Bartholdi Park was redesigned in 2016 as a Sustainable Sites Initiative(tm) pilot project. The focus is different garden styles and plant options that all can be used in the guidelines. Each demonstration area is a synergistic solution for dynamic and holistic systems that can be interpreted for the home gardener, helping improve maintenance practices nationwide.







The renovation of Bartholdi Park at the United States Botanic Garden (USBG) is complete, and the new garden is a showcase of sustainable gardening. Bartholdi Park has served as a demonstration garden for more than 80 years and until 2016 had not undergone a complete renovation since its original construction. This renovation provides an opportunity to increase accessibility, showcase the Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) principles in action, and demonstrate USBG's commitment to sustainability.

USBG and Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) are proud to announce that Bartholdi Park has achieved SITES Gold certification for its sustainability. This project in Washington, D.C., to be certified under SITES version 2. SITES is the most comprehensive system for designing, developing and maintaining sustainable landscapes as a guide for sustainable landscaping and land development in a similar way to the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED green building program. The development of SITES along with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin and the American Society of Landscape Architects.

"USBG has championed SITES since our initial work in helping develop the program more than a decade ago. We are excited to now have Bartholdi Park as a sustainably designed garden right in the middle of Washington, D.C.," said Saharah Moon Chapotin, executive director, USBG. "This allows us to showcase that sustainable gardening can be beautiful as well as provide benefits for both humans and the environment."

"Bartholdi Park's sustainable development serves as a model for communities looking to build a healthy and prosperous future for residents and visitors," said Sarah S. Hines, president and CEO, USGBC and GBCI. "Through the use of SITES, certified projects are creating ecologically resilient communities, reducing water demand, and connecting people to nature. Bartholdi Park at the U.S. Botanic Garden is teaching us about the countless benefits we can achieve when sustainable design informs our landscapes."

Renovation plans focused on SITES's key areas: water, soil, plants, materials, and human health:

- **Water:** Ten rain gardens capture 100 percent of rainfall on the site and allow it to soak into the ground, diverting runoff from D.C.'s combined sewer system. The rain gardens can accept up to 4,000 cubic feet of water in a 24-hour storm event - equivalent to 256 bathtubs of water. The project also used permeable paving to reduce the amount of impervious surface.
- **Plants:** The gardens in Bartholdi Park showcase plants native to the Mid-Atlantic region and a collection of edible plants in permanent and seasonal kitchen garden. The project team was able to save multiple large trees and shrubs on site; other plants were reused on Capitol Hill and in D.C.
- **Soil:** During the renovation, topsoil was removed and saved off-site, amended with organic compost and returned to the park for the new plantings. Where possible, trees were saved, the soil was also protected from compaction.
- **Materials:** Existing concrete sidewalks were crushed and then used as the base layer under the new sidewalks. Previous stone walls were dismantled and the stones were reused in the new walls for the raised kitchen garden. Flagstone from previous pathways was also salvaged to create new paths. Furniture was sourced locally, a Virginia company built seating and tables from white oaks that had fallen naturally during a storm.
- **Human Health:** The park connects people to nature through programming that includes yoga and nature-in-motion walks. Additional seating, a bicycle parking were added. Tours and signage explain the sustainable features, providing inspiration for how to apply these principles at home. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial next door to the park presented an opportunity to collaborate with the National Park Service, and new educational and therapeutic programs for veterans and active duty soldiers were developed and now use this space.

The story of the renovated Bartholdi Park is shared through new interpretive signage throughout the park. A new Field Journal, an interactive booklet for youth, was developed that focuses on the park's plants and sustainability. It can be picked up free-of-charge at the Conservatory's Information Desk. Tours of Bartholdi Park and other programming occurring there can be found at [www.usbg.gov/Programs](http://www.usbg.gov/Programs).