

The image features a close-up of several purple orchids with intricate white and purple patterns on their petals. The flowers are set against a dark, textured background that resembles a geometric lattice or a dome's structure. The lighting highlights the delicate texture of the petals and the vibrant purple color.

Past, Present & Future
of Mitchell Park and their
Conservatory, the Domes

The Mitchel Park Conservatory, the Domes are a Wisconsin icon thanks to their unique structure, plant collections and memories hundreds of thousands of visitors have made over the years. But years of uncertainty and concern had many wondering and worried about their future. But thanks to new investments and innovation, the interest, support, membership and programming are growing and the future looks bright.

Joining me is **Christa Beall Diefenbach**, CEO of Milwaukee Domes Alliance who will share the past, present and future of this Wisconsin icon. She is an innovator and seasoned nonprofit leader who has helped transform countless nonprofit organizations. Fueled by her love of nature and mid-century architecture, Christa joined Milwaukee Domes Alliance as the CEO just over 4 years ago. She is leading the team that is working to ensure our city's most iconic national landmark is here for us today, and for generations to come.

In the original charter for the Domes, Milwaukee County stated:

"Let us provide for the public the ultimate in experiencing nature in the city. Plant life of many kinds must be sustained throughout all seasons. There must be adequate space, including enough height so that such giants such as Royal Palm trees can mature to their majestic 70 feet.. We want people who may never have the chance to travel to see a representative world-wide variety of plants."

Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) a 60+ year old specimen that reaches the ceiling of the tropical dome. Zones 9 to 11, Indoors in bright light, allow the soil to dry slightly between watering, easier options for those of us growing indoors.

TROPICAL DOME

Amanda Garchow, Horticulturist for Tropical Collection

- Plants in the Tropical Dome
 - 1,200 plant species
 - Forest Floor, Understory, Canopy & Emergent Layers represented
- Something's Always Blooming
 - **Orchids** - *Paphiopedilum* hybrid shown
 - **Blue Ginger** (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*) - native to Brazil
 - **Coral Aphelandra** (*Aphelandra sinclairiana*) - native to Panama & Costa Rica
 - **Cardinal's Guard** (*Pachystachys coccínea*) - native to the West Indies & Northern South America

Milwaukee Domes Alliance

Milwaukee Domes Alliance is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to connecting the community to nature in partnership with the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory – locally known as The Domes. Established in 1989, the Alliance helps make possible many of the educational, cultural, and visitor-experience programs that animate this iconic Milwaukee landmark.

Their mission is to **inspire meaningful connections to nature and community** through immersive, restorative experiences for people of all ages.

Through the collective support of members, volunteers, and donors, Milwaukee Domes Alliance plays a vital role in ensuring The Mitchell Park Domes remain a vibrant, world-class horticultural destination in the heart of Milwaukee.



- **Golden Shrimp Plant** (*Pachystachys lutea*, Zones 10 & 11) with **Fringed Hibiscus** (*Hibiscus schizopetalus*, Zones 10 & 11) - these are often grown as popular container plants for full sun, summered outdoors where not hardy
- **Vase Plant** (*Aechmea* 'Blue Tango', Zones 10 to 12) - native to Tropical America, type of Bromeliad, epiphyte
- **Starburst Bush** - *Clerodendrum quadriloculare*, Zones 9b to 11) - native to Africa & Pacific Islands

PLANTS YOU MAY GROW AS HOUSEPLANTS

- **Flamingo Flower** (*Anthurium*) - native to Central & South America and Caribbean, epiphyte, easy care, bright indirect light location, high humidity, water enough to keep roots from drying
- **Lipstick Plant** (*Aeschynanthus* spp.) - native to Southeast Asia, bright indirect light, high humidity; moist, well-drained soil, tends to bloom spring - fall
- **Variegated Peace Lily** (*Spathiphyllum wallisii* 'Domino') - low light tolerant, better variegation with a bit of indirect light, consistently moist soil
- **Croton** (*Codiaeum variegatum*) - native to tropical Asia & Western Pacific, bright light, warm location free of drafts, keep soil moist when actively growing a bit drier in winter
- **Chinese Evergreen** (*Aglaonema* spp.) - native to Southeast Asia & New Guinea, bright indirect to low light, better color with bright indirect light, avoid overwatering
- **Ti Plant** in bloom (*Cordyline fruticosa*, Zones 10 to 12) - native to Southeast Asia, Australia, Western Pacific Islands, dappled sunlight; moist, well-drained soil, sensitive to fluoride
- **Philodendron** (*Philodendron* 'Jungle Boogie') - moderate to low light, allow soil to dry between waterings

UNUSUAL, FUN & USEFUL PLANTS

- **Sausage Tree** (*Kigelia pinnata*) - native to Africa, night bloomer, pollinated by bats and the gardeners in the Domes, fruit is inedible for humans, but animals eat it
- **Calabash Tree** (*Crescentia cujete*, Zones 11 to 12) - Western Indian cultures use fruit-like gourd and fibers twisted into ropes, wood for tools and tool handles
- **Coffee** (*Coffea arabica*, Zones 10 to 12) - native to Africa, indoors grow in bright light, high humidity and moist, not soggy, well-drained potting mix
- **Vanilla Bean Orchid** (*Vanilla planifolia*) - native to Mexico, second most expensive spice after saffron, flowers only last a day and must be insect or hand pollinated, beans take 10 months to mature, Madagascar is the largest producer
- **Banana** (*Musa*) - ones grown for fruit are hybrids, **source and growing information**
- **Coconut Palm** (*Cocos nucifera*, Zones 10 to 12) - native to Tropical Asia & Pacific Islands
- Always Something to See
 - **White Elephant Palm** in bloom (*Kerriodoxa elegans*) - native of Thailand



About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*, the recently revised *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, and *Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy*. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" Instant Video series, including *Food Gardening for Everyone*. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, and writes a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,
melindamyers.com

DESERT DOME

Justine Miller, Horticulturist for Arid Collection

- Plants in the Desert Dome
 - 600-1,000 plants from desert regions on 5 different continents
 - Largest Indoor Madagascar Island plant collection in US, possibly the world
 - Asia Desert plant collection is newest addition
 - Arid / Desert Climate - about amount of water, not temperature, typically less than 10" per year
 - Cooler winter temperatures and drier soil stimulate winter and spring flowering
- **Jade Plant** (*Crassula ovata*) in bloom
- **Madagascar Vinca** (*Catharanthus roseus*, Zones 10 to 11) - native to Madagascar, full sun to part shade, drought tolerant
- **Tongaland Cycad** (*Encephalartos ferox*) - native to South Africa, full sun to part shade, well-drained soil
- **Golden Barrel Cactus** (*Kroenleinia grusonii* or *Echinocactus grusonii*) - native to Mexico & Southwest US, **efficient at storing water**
- **Galapagos Prickly Pear Cactus** (*Opuntia galapageia* and other spp.) - prickly stems and pads held high - adaptation to avoid being eaten by turtles
- **Monkey Tail Cactus** (*Cleistocactus winteri* subsp. *colademononis*) - native to Bolivia
- **Saguaro Cactus** (*Carnegieia gigantea*) - native to the Sonoran Desert - Dome's plants are 20 years old, these cactus do not form arms until 75 to 100 years old, flowers pollinated by white-winged dove
- **Prickly Pear** (*Opuntia* spp.) - important food source, there are *Opuntia* species native in 48 states
- **Agave** (*Agave* spp.) Blue agave (*Agave tequiliana*) for making tequila - different species of Agave used for Mezcal and each impart a unique flavor to the drink
- **Tufted Poppy** (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) - native to Western North America, annual or short lived perennial, can be grown in colder climates, direct seed in early spring in sunny, well-drained location
- **Wild Sisal** (*Furcraea selloa*) - native from Mexico to Brazil, flowers when mature (8 to 10 years), as flowers die so does the plant (monocarpic plant), offshoots form along flower stem (bulbillifera) drop to the ground and start new plants
- **Narrow Leaf Bird of Paradise** (*Strelitzia juncea*) - native to South Africa, most cold hardy of the Bird of Paradises
- **Candelabra or Octopus Aloe** (*Aloe arborescens*) - native to Africa
- **Día de los Muertos** (Day of the Dead) - yearly two day celebration that reunites the living and the dead, you can join the celebration each year at the Domes
 - Marigold's relationship to this holiday - the smell of marigold (*cempasúchil*) is said to lead souls back to their family homes

**MISS A
WEBINAR?**

Melinda's Webinars are
Available On Demand!

WATCH NOW

**Sign up for my
FREE
Newsletter!**

**Get the chance to win
a seasonal prize!**

SIGN UP NOW

SHOW / FLORAL DOME

Emily Lambrecht, Horticulturist for Floral / Show Dome

- Five different Shows throughout the year
 - Train, Spring, Summer, Fall & Holiday Shows
 - Light Show

PERMANENT TEMPERATE PLANT COLLECTION

Michelle Pianola, Horticulturist for Temperate Collection & Exterior Garden

- A few of the plants
 - **Poet's Jasmine** (*Jasminum grandiflora*, Zones 8 to 10) - native to South Asia, Northeast Africa, China, & Arabian Peninsula, full sun, allow soil to dry slightly between waterings
 - **Blue Skyflower** (*Thunbergia grandiflora*, Zones 10 to 11, annual elsewhere) - native to China, Nepal, Indochina & Burma, full sun to part shade (benefits from some afternoon shade), moist, well-drained soil
 - **Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow Plant** (*Brunfelsia pauciflora*, Zones 9 to 11) - native to Subtropics of Brazil, full sun to part shade; moist, organically rich soil
 - **Bolivian Sunset Gloxinia** (*Seesmannia sylvatica*, Zones 8 to 11) - native in Ecuador to Brazil, bright light; moist, well-drained soil
 - **Society Garlic** (*Tulbaghia violacea*, Zones 8 to 10, annual elsewhere) - used as a groundcover in Florida, edible herb

EXTERIOR GARDEN

- Waterwise and Pollinator friendly
- Free for all to enjoy

GREENHOUSES

Leah Chybowski, Horticulturist / Greenhouse Grower

John Harrigan, Horticulturist / Greenhouse Grower

- Where they grow plants for shows and overwinter tropical plants for Boerner Botanical Garden

Amy Thurner, Horticultural Services Manager

Doris Maki, Director of Mitchell Park Conservatory (the Domes) - "For me, what makes the Domes a World Class Conservatory is the extensive & diverse plant collection that continues to bring people together for over 60 years to celebrate nature, culture and community."

DOMES EVENTS

Become a Member of the Milwaukee Domes Alliance, formerly Friends of the Domes. Not only will you have free year-round admission to the Domes, but also free access to over 360 other botanical gardens and conservatories across the country. It's a great way to support a beloved Wisconsin icon and save money as you explore other gardens and conservatories across the country.

2026 LIBRARY PROGRAM

WEBINARS - VIDEOS - ACTIVITIES

APRIL

Webinar April 1st

*Growing a Bountiful Harvest Even When Your Time,
Space & Budget are Limited*

How-to Video & Activity

Jump Start the Garden Season and Boost Your Nutrition

MAY

Webinar May 6th

Adding Native Plants to Any Size Gardening Space

How-to Video & Activity

Grow a Container of Native Plants

JUNE

Webinar June 3rd

Managing Your Landscape with Pollinators in Mind

How-to Video & Activity

*Incorporate a Few Eco-friendly Gardening Practices
that Make a Difference*



UPCOMING APPEARANCES & WEBINARS

Check often as more appearances and webinars continue to be added.

February 13-15th

PBS Wisconsin Garden & Green Living Expo

Webinar February 18th

Plants that Go the Distance

Webinar February 19th

How to Select Rain Garden Plants

Webinar February 25th

Flowering Houseplants

Webinar March 5th

Start New Plants from Seeds, Cuttings and More

Webinar March 11th

Save Money & Boost Your Growing Success with
Bare Root Plants

Webinar March 18th

Patio, Deck and Balcony Gardens

Webinar March 26th

Getting Started Growing Vegetable and Flower
Gardens

Webinar April 1st

Growing a Bountiful Harvest Even When Your Time,
Space & Budget are Limited

Webinar April 9th

7 Steps to Managing Water on Your Property

Webinar May 6th

Adding Native Plants to Any Size Gardening Space

*Thank You to Milwaukee Public Library
for Hosting this Webinar and to
Christa Beall Diefenbach for sharing
her expertise.*

Melinda's Garden Moment **AUDIO TIPS**
Melinda's Garden Moment **VIDEO TIPS**
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
MONTHLY GARDENING CHECKLISTS & MORE
BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR MY E-NEWSLETTER TO GET TIMELY GARDENING TIPS AND A CHANCE TO WIN



melindamyers.com



THE GREAT COURSES "How to Grow Anything"

STREAMING VIDEO

Food Gardening for Everyone
Make Your Trees and Shrubs Thrive
Your Best Garden and Landscape
Container Tips and Techniques

BOOKS

Midwest Gardener's Handbook

Small Space Gardening

Midwest Lawn Guides

Minnesota & Wisconsin Getting Started Garden Guide

Month-by-Month Gardening in Minnesota & Wisconsin

Michigan Getting Started Garden Guide

Month-by-Month Gardening in Michigan

Month-by-Month Gardening in Iowa



Birds & Blooms Magazine

CONNECT WITH ME

