

**HOUSTON  
ARBORETUM &  
NATURE CENTER**

**Special Project Wish List**

This list contains projects or items that are desired by our education and conservation teams. These wish list items will help us fulfill our mission by improving the educational experience for our visitors, helping us make the Arboretum habitat more diverse and welcoming for native plants and animals, or improving internal efficiency. Thank you in advance for your interest and support.

<i>One-Time</i>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Approximate Cost</b>
Playscape Enhancement – Shade Sails	\$75,000 (2 opportunities)
Playscape Enhancement – Bird blind Thermory Wall	\$12,000 (Ruth & Dan Flournoy)
Playscape Enhancement – Bird blind Interpretative Signage	\$50,000
Playscape Enhancement – Bird blind Metal Pergola, Benches and ADA Enhancements	\$36,000
Student Conservation Association 12-week Crew Invasive Removal	\$75,000
Polaris Ranger Crew 6-seater UTV	\$17,000 (Liz & Louis Weisberg)
Hurricane Beryl and Derecho Response	\$15,000
Goat grazing	\$10,000 (2 opportunities)
Create, fabricate, and install signage for Sensory Garden	\$7,500
Create, fabricate, install signage for Emmott Circle Bird Drip	\$7,500
Mushroom Bells for Playscape	\$7,500
Hands Free Door Control of Nature Center Entrance Doors	\$6,500
Zero-Turn Mower	\$6,000 (Ruth & Dan Flournoy)
Tree Care Fertilization	\$5,000
Native Seed	\$3,000
Thermal Scope for educational programs and wildlife monitoring	\$3,000
Multi-tiered Plant Sale Shelving	\$2,500
Custom-built outdoor habitat for Discovery Room turtles	\$1,500
Bat Detectors for educational programs and wildlife monitoring	\$1,500
Garden Carts	\$1,000
Literacy Program Expansion	\$1,000
Irrigation Equipment	\$500
Acopian Bird Savers curtains for Egret Classroom	\$500
Laptop/Chromebooks	\$300 (10 needed)

**Playscape Shade Sails (\$150,000)** – The shade sails will provide protection from weather elements such as sun and rain, make the Playscape more inclusive for people who have heat-related conditions, protect the equipment from sun damage, and prevent heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion, sunburn, and cramps.

**Playscape Enhancement: Bird Blind, ADA Enhancements & Interpretive Signage (\$100,000)** – The newest addition to our Playscape is a birding area for children! It will be located along the Wetland Boardwalk just past the Caterpillar Tunnel entrance to the Playscape. The goal is to transform the existing boardwalk into a more engaging, interactive, and accessible destination. The boardwalk will be upgraded to improve wheelchair accessibility, and the bird blind elements were designed pro bono by a renowned local landscape architect to ensure access for people with disabilities.

**Student Conservation Association 12-week crew for Invasive Species Removal (\$75,000)** – Without natural fire and herbivory, the Arboretum's woodland understory has been growing unchecked for decades, forming a dense thicket that is choking out native diversity. Removal is imperative to ensure future generations experience the Arboretum as a healthy, diverse and sustainable landscape for native plants and wildlife. This crew will eradicate Chinese tallow and other invasive species within 45 acres of the Arboretum's woodland habitat. The Student Conservation Association engages the next generation of land stewards by completing conservation projects for public benefit, and current Conservation staff are alumni of this organization.

**Storm Response (\$15,000)** – Hurricane Beryl hit us just three days after staff finished cleanup from the derecho, starting the whole process over again. Both storms toppled and broke countless trees - blocking trails, creating unsafe conditions, and even directly hitting and damaging the Administration Building. Staff tirelessly worked long, hot, humid and mosquito-filled summer days to quickly and safely open the grounds for summer camp attendees. Contractors were necessary to tackle extremely unsafe tasks such as large tree removal that required climbing. Given the scale of the storms, cleanup is still ongoing.

**Goat Grazing (\$10,000)** – The Arboretum has led the region in returning the once common and natural occurrence of grazing into an urban landscape. This technique has proved to be successful in removing overgrown thickets of undesirable species from the forest floor and improving species diversity. In addition to their ecological benefits, the 150 goats that visit are always a crowd-pleaser, and draw many visitors over the days that they spend with us.

**Mushroom Bells for Playscape (\$7,500)** – The Arboretum's Playscape provides a place for children of all ages to engage their imaginations as they crawl, climb, build and explore the natural world. In an effort to be more inclusive, we are adding new sensory elements to an accessible area of the Playscape. A set of three mushroom-shaped bells combine a touch of whimsy, along with the sensations of vibration and sound, for a fun music-making experience. The bells are at wheelchair accessible height and provide auditory, visual, and tactile opportunities for children.

**Automatic Swing Door (\$6,500)** Addition of an access management system that would allow for a new device featuring automatic opening of the Nature Center entrance door. This upgrade to the Nature Center's main point of entrance will provide barrier-free access for people with disabilities to be able to enter and exit the building independently.

**Zero-Turn Mower (\$6,000)** – Current John Deere lawn mower is 15 years old, leaking oil and has numerous other repair issues. This new mower is zero-turn and can also handle the required terrain and vegetation better. Jim and Theo would use it mowing the lawns and edges of trails. Model: Bad Boy ZT Elite; 48" Deck - Kohler Pro 7000 26HP

**Tree Care Fertilization (\$5,000)** – Houston's weather over the past few years has hit hard with back-to-back hard freezes and intense summer droughts. These extreme fluctuations have taken a toll on the Arboretum's trees, and though resilient, actions can be taken to improve their health and survival toward future events. This donation will provide specialized root fertilization and pest protection to enhance the survival of thirty of the Arboretum's most prominent mature trees, including the Courtyard Live Oak.

**Native Seed (\$3,000)** – The Arboretum’s newly restored savanna and prairie habitats are indicative of the landscapes that Houston’s first settlers encountered, and these emerging ecosystems require ongoing diligent restoration and management. Supplementing these areas with native seed is necessary to jumpstart biodiversity and buffer against invasive species encroachment. Over 60lbs of seed, including local native grasses and wildflowers, will be purchased and broadcast over 20 acres of the Arboretum’s restored savanna and prairie ecosystems.

**Thermal Scope (\$3,000)** – Wildlife viewing technology has advanced, and we want to keep up! Thermal scopes use infrared to detect the body heat of mammals and birds, allowing us to spot them behind cover or even at night. We would like to purchase a model that connects to an app so we can livestream the image to a tablet. This will allow a whole group of people to see the image at once instead of having to use the scope one-at-a-time. A thermal scope would allow us to spot far more wildlife on night hikes and during our monthly bird surveys, improving the experience for our visitors and our monitoring efforts.

**Multi-tiered Plant Sale Shelving (\$2,500)** – The Arboretum’s bi-annual Plant Sale has introduced many Houstonians to going native with their own yards. It has become so popular that the Conservation Team can hardly keep up with demand and are running out of space in their in-house nursery. Multi-tiered shelves would expand display and storage space in the Plant Sale area by 150%, increasing the number of plants able to be propagated for both the Plant Sale and on-ground restoration efforts.

**Outdoor Turtle Habitat (\$1,500)** An outdoor enclosure will offer our reptiles greater space to roam while allowing them access to sunlight and fresh air, ultimately enhancing their quality of life. It will not only benefit the reptiles but will also enrich the experiences of all who visit. Guests will have the chance to observe and learn about these animals in a setting that mirrors their natural habitat, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of their role in the ecosystem.

**Bat Detectors (\$1,500)** – The Arboretum has greatly expanded our bat-related programs, and our single bat detector is no longer sufficient. We would like to have a selection of bat detectors to use in different settings; not only will this allow us to reach wider audiences, it will also demonstrate different techniques used by bat researchers and hobbyist bat enthusiasts. We would like to purchase one model with loudspeakers for large group demonstrations, one small but tough model for passing around groups of children, and one model that attaches to a phone for automatic bat species identification.

**Literacy Program Expansion (\$1,000)** – The Naturalist team is expanding our program offerings to be more inclusive and welcoming to people of all ages, cultures, and abilities. As such, we are updating our literacy program to include nature-themed children’s stories in Spanish, boardbooks for infants, books that feature people with disabilities, and stories showcasing ways different cultures connect with nature.

**Garden Carts (\$1,000)** – New Garden carts are always needed to replace old ones that are falling apart.

**Irrigation Equipment (\$500)** – This previous summer we’ve learned that there is no such thing as having too much help when it comes to irrigation. These funds will be used to purchase new and replace damaged hoses, sprinklers, and spigots that can tie into the existing reclaimed irrigation system.

**Acopian Bird Savers curtains (\$500)** – Window collisions are one of the major causes of death for birds in North America. The Acopian Bird Savers we installed on select Nature Center windows have worked incredibly well to prevent bird strikes: we’ve only had one fatal strike on a window with curtains this year. We would like to add more curtains to increase our protection for birds. Based on data collected this year, out of 14 strikes, 8 have been on the windows of Egret Classroom. Adding Bird Savers curtains to Egret Classroom will help save birds – especially hummingbirds – as they pass through on migration.

**Laptops/Chrome Books (\$3,000)** – Teenage Students in our new Project Nature Class will be working on video projects that will require them to have access to a computer. Currently we have 8-9 laptops on sight, with 7 already assigned to a classroom. Having a devoted set of computers that students could all log on to together and use during a class would be extremely helpful. Students will be using the computers to organize their footage, zoom with our guest speakers, and edit their video projects. Having reliable and ready access to computers/chrome books will help them get the most out of the class.

## RECOGNITION

All wish list gifts will be acknowledged with a permanent medallion on the grounds. Corporate partners are recognized as appropriate to the program/project, including logo on printed materials, website, social media and our e-newsletter. For on-site support, such as ecosystem maintenance or planting, temporary (or, if appropriate depending on gift level, permanent) signage can be placed in the landscape to notify guests of your company's generous support. Customized opportunities are also available.

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Houston Arboretum & Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission of nature conservation and education. All gifts are fully tax deductible. Recognition will be provided as appropriate. For more information, please contact Debbie Markey, Executive Director, at [dmarkey@houstonarboretum.org](mailto:dmarkey@houstonarboretum.org)