

Frequently Asked Questions About Garden Admission

The Fort Worth Botanic Garden thanks you for your questions and wants to ease your concerns with open dialog and transparency. If you have any additional questions please email us at BGstrategicplan@fortworthtexas.gov. For more information on the Strategic Plan please visit FWBG.org

What is the difference between a park and a Botanic Garden?

A park is a recreational area with picnic grounds and playing fields. A Botanic Garden is a living horticultural museum of plants used for education, conservation and display.

Do members have to pay admission fees to get into the Garden?

Members receive unlimited access to the Garden during regular business hours.

What does a membership cost?

An individual membership costs \$50 per year. A Family membership costs \$80 per year and covers two adults plus all children (17 years and younger) who live in the same household.

Do I still have to pay a separate fee for the Japanese Garden or the Rainforest Conservatory?

No, the new admission will give you access to the entire Garden.

Why is the admission \$12?

It includes the previous admission for the Japanese Garden and Rainforest Conservatory (\$9) plus \$3 for the Garden's additional 100 acres.

What about people who cannot afford to pay the admission fee?

The task force, garden staff, City Manager's office and City Council took great steps to make sure the residents of Fort Worth would still be able to visit the Garden. The Garden's accessibility options are:

- Lone Star Card Discounts (individuals with SNAP/WIC receive discounted family membership - \$30; and with SNAP/WIC through Museums4All program - \$1.00 adult admission and children under 15 are free).
- MusePass (free family passes available to check out in all City of Fort Worth public libraries with your valid Fort Worth Library card. Other municipal library cards not accepted)
- Sponsored Field Trips Program (one grade level at FWISD and other local schools admitted free as determined by school district.) Return ticket to the Garden for field trip students on free and reduced lunch.
- Blue Star Program (free active military admission between Memorial Day and Labor Day.) Active military personnel (with military ID) plus five family members receive free admission.
- Family Community Pass Program (4,500 admission passes distributed through non-profits to distribute to their clients ensuring transportation is also available).
- Free after-hour family and cultural events at least quarterly, growing to monthly over time.
- 2nd/4th Monday: free first hour in morning and last hour in afternoon, Fort Worth residents only.
- Last Saturday of every month – Access the Garden for the first three hours in the morning (8:00 am – 11:00 am) for half-price admission. Adults \$6, children 6-15 \$3, seniors 65+ \$5, Fort Worth residents only.
- Children under age 18: free 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm every school day, Fort Worth residents only.

Why can't I drive my car in the Garden anymore?

It partly pure logistics as managing hundreds of thousands of visitors in cars while charging admission is difficult. But more importantly, botanical gardens are pedestrian oriented by nature. Their primary purpose is to provide opportunities to genuinely interact with other living things and get away from everyday stress and frustrations. Admiring flowers from inches away and watching butterflies fluttering overhead allows children to learn and make memories in a way you can't replicate from a vehicle. Guests who walk also experience many of the Garden's 23 different venues that are missed when driving directly to highlights such as the Rose Ramp and Japanese Gardens. Getting cars out of the garden makes for a safer, quieter, more relaxing, and altogether better experience for everyone. For those who need assistance, a free tram is available.

Is there a parking fee?

No, there is no parking fee for the Garden.

Do I have to pay admission on days I come to volunteer?

GROW volunteers do not have pay to enter the Garden on days they are volunteering.

Why are you making this change?

After much research and consideration of options, the task force determined that a multifaceted approach (including bonds, philanthropy and increased generated revenue) needed to assure the Garden is always available to Fort Worth residents and guests. With an estimated annual operating shortfall of \$1.2 million and estimated maintenance needs of \$17 million, an admission fee was the only option that generated enough revenue to meet the long-term needs of the Garden.



If I register for a class or program, will I have to pay an admission fee on top of the program fee?

No, Garden admission will be included with the registration fee for the program.

What about prom, bridal, quinceanera and other photos?

If you are coming to the Garden to use it as a backdrop we ask that you pay the photography fee. You can find out more at FWBG.org

How is the Garden funded?

The Garden receives a significant portion of its funding from the City of Fort Worth, admissions previously collected at the Japanese Garden and Rainforest Conservatory, rentals of meeting and garden spaces and other revenue streams. Compared with peer gardens, our membership and philanthropic support needs to grow substantially to keep the Garden in good financial health. Admission fees drive membership and membership drives philanthropy, so this change will help diversify garden funding in multiple ways.

Why does the Garden now have opening and closing times?

As the Garden begins charging admission, it needs to staff entry points at all times, but also avoid overtime and provide reasonable work schedules for our employees. It also allows private events to be scheduled after hours, thus improving the guest experience for our regular visitors.

If I rent an indoor room will my guests have to pay for admission?

No, there is no charge to attend private meetings or events held in Garden Center facilities. Admission is only charged when leaving the building to visit the Garden.

If I have my wedding in the Garden, will my guests have to pay to attend?

No, guest admission cost is included in the rental fee.

Will our school have to pay admission for a field trip?

Students on free and reduced lunches and classes from Title I schools may be eligible for free or reduced admission. FWISD classes also receive special discounts. There are several options available for school groups including professionally led science lessons in the Garden. Contact the GROW program for more information at info@brit.org.

Can I visit my tribute bench or tree?

A membership makes it easy to visit and remember friends or family members as often as you'd like. Special arrangements for free family visits on a limited basis can also be arranged by contacting the Garden Director's office.

Can we picnic in the Garden?

Small groups (under 10) are welcome to picnic in the Grove or Vistas. We ask that large groups picnic in Trinity Park across the street.

Why can't you take money from other city projects such as the arena, Panther Island, bond packages?

Money for those projects has already been awarded. It is almost impossible to shift funding after budgets have been created. Bond funding would help the Garden initially, but we would still need an admission fee to solve the yearly, chronic underfunding of the Garden.

Why can't an influential family pay for the changes?

The Garden operating budget currently has a \$1.2 million dollar deficit. Donors generally do not want to give to something that can't sustain long term operation.

Why don't you use more volunteers and less staff?

We currently use more than 1,000 volunteers yearly who contributed 27,969 hours last year. However, highly specialized subject matter experts (our garden staff) must work with volunteers for the best benefit to the Garden.

Why can't the city give you more money?

The city already provides 53% of Garden funding. The City of Fort Worth is generous in what they provide most gardens throughout the U.S. average 12% from municipal funding.

Don't my taxes already pay for the Garden?

The Botanic Garden receives a yearly general fund subsidy of a little more than \$3 million. This equates to .05% of total Fort Worth tax dollars given or \$3.50 per person.

Why don't you have a membership program and keep admission free?

The membership program alone could not create a consistent \$1.2 million dollar revenue stream to make the Garden sustainable.

Don't weddings, Concerts in the Garden and special events make enough revenue to support the Garden?

Admissions, CITG, rental revenue and special events equal \$1.9 million each year or 36% of our total budget, and funds 30 plus positions for the Botanic Garden that are not covered by General Fund tax dollars. With this revenue the Garden will still have a \$1.2 million dollar deficit.

Why does the garden need different management?

The garden presents unique challenges that make city management difficult. For example products and services the garden needs change daily. Non-profit/private management will allow for more flexibility in responding to Garden needs.

