

GROW WITH  
THE UA

# Arboretum



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®









Alabama has a rich heritage of abundant biodiversity and natural resources. Conservation and education are key to passing that heritage to future generations of Alabamians. The 60 acre University of Alabama Arboretum has shared in this vision since its establishment over 50 years ago. The Arboretum provides unique opportunities for teaching, research, and outreach, all central goals of the University's mission. A ten-minute drive east of campus, the Arboretum has grown to become a cherished part of the University and the Tuscaloosa communities.

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UNIVERSITY AND TUSCALOOSA COMMUNITIES.**



THE ARBORETUM AIMS  
TO ENHANCE ITS PLACE  
ON THE LOCAL AND  
NATIONAL STAGE.







## OUR MISSION

The University of Alabama Arboretum is a scientific institution that engages in teaching, research, and service with primary emphasis on the ecology and biodiversity of Alabama. The Arboretum maintains a plant collection containing native species and their exotic relatives, educational reference specimens, and plants of global conservation concern. The Arboretum's programs promote management, conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources and appreciation of nature through recreational activities and artistic endeavors.

## FROM SEEDS TO SAPLINGS

The Arboretum resources include 2.5 miles of walking trails through native piney woods and oak-hickory forests, a wildflower garden containing more than 200 species, exotic trees, greenhouses, a sustainable garden, a children's garden, a 50-seat outdoor amphitheater, and a 30-foot-tall tree platform. These resources support University research and academics, field trips for pre-K through 12th grade students, and outdoor recreation for the Tuscaloosa community. Sponsored by the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Arboretum is an affiliate of The University of Alabama Museums and coordinates with museum staff on education and outreach programs.

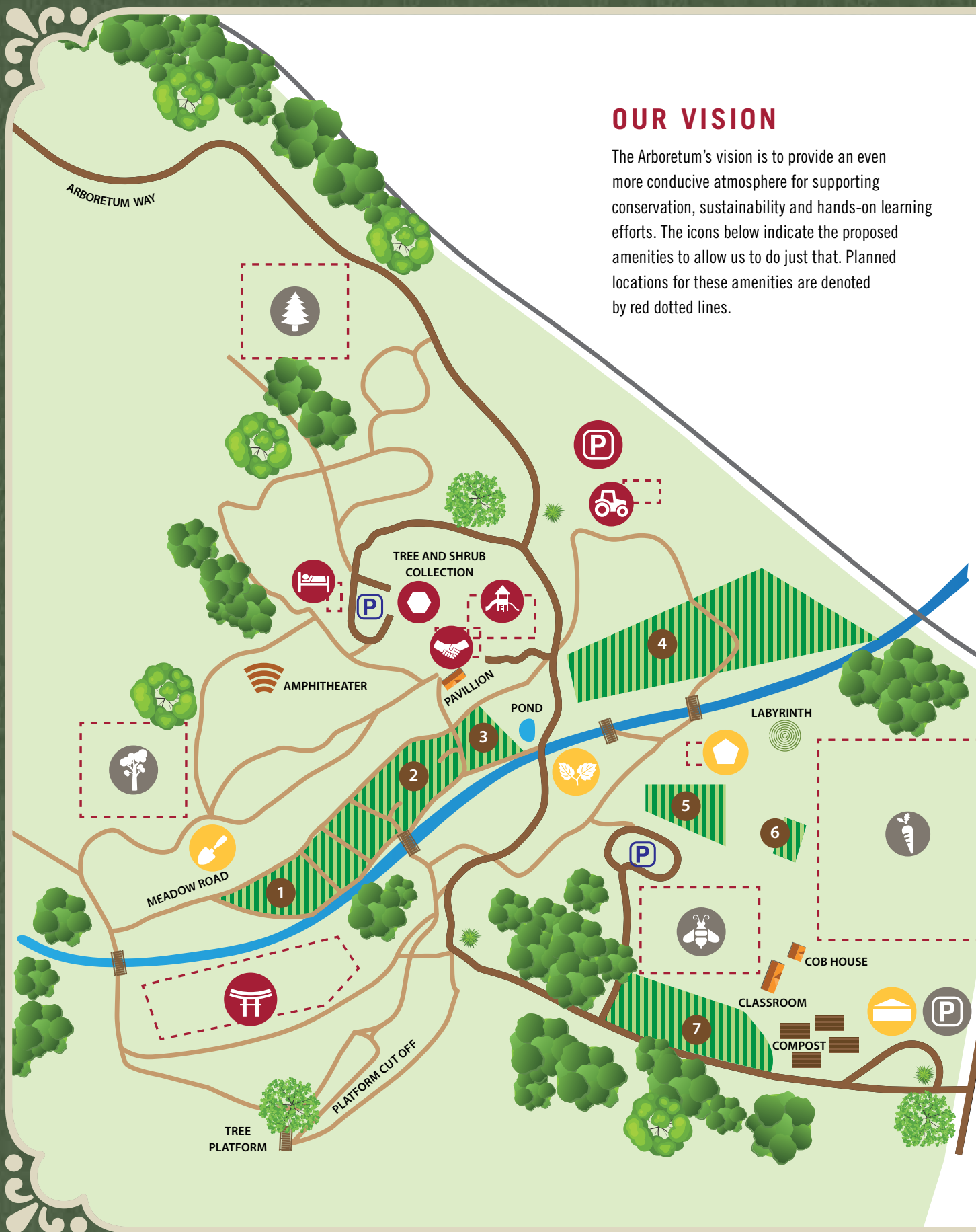
## PUTTING ON NEW GROWTH

The Arboretum aims to enhance its place on the local and national stage. In keeping with the University's tradition of leadership and excellence, the Arboretum aspires to achieve national recognition as a leader in hands-on science education, teacher training, and plant conservation. Teaching, research and outreach programs will be expanded, while maintaining the Arboretum's special character as a nature preserve. Our vision is for the University and the local community to be partners in Arboretum activities and programs. The Arboretum will model best practices in natural resource management, conservation, and sustainability. Enhanced opportunities for appreciation of nature through the arts and recreation will attract a broader audience. The Arboretum will conserve plants native to Alabama and participate in national and international plant conservation projects. These efforts will be rewarded with the distinction of earning the highest level of accreditation through ArbNet, an international organization of arboreta.



## OUR VISION

The Arboretum's vision is to provide an even more conducive atmosphere for supporting conservation, sustainability and hands-on learning efforts. The icons below indicate the proposed amenities to allow us to do just that. Planned locations for these amenities are denoted by red dotted lines.





## Existing Amenities

-  RAILROAD
-  DIRT ROAD
-  TRAILS
-  STREAM
-  BUILDING
-  BRIDGE

## GARDENS

1. RHODODENDRON GARDEN
2. WILDFLOWER GARDEN
3. BOG GARDEN
4. 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GARDEN
5. CHILDREN'S GARDEN
6. COMMUNITY GARDEN
7. BLACKBELT PRAIRIE GARDEN

## Timeline

-  Immediate Concerns
-  Short Term Goals
-  Long Term Goals



### Invasive Species Removal

An experienced contractor will bring invasive species to a level that can be maintained by Arboretum staff with assistance from students and volunteers.



### Garden Shed

A new, larger garden shed is required to store tools used by students and volunteers to maintain the children's and community gardens.



### Pollinator Garden

The Arboretum will participate in University efforts to establish a habitat for bees and butterflies by planting native wildflowers.



### Sustainable Garden Partnership

As the sustainable community garden outgrows its current space, this area will be available to continue efforts with additional partners from campus and the Tuscaloosa Community.



### Visitor Center and Conservatory

To support growth in our programs, the Arboretum requires an indoor space with exhibits, large meeting labs, larger restrooms, and offices. An attached conservatory will house plants on public display.



### European Garden

The new themed garden inspired by Tuscaloosa's connection to its Sister Cities will attract additional visitors and provide a unique experience.



### Bunkhouse

Students will have a place to spend the night when conducting evening field studies. Visiting scholars will enjoy the tranquility of the Arboretum and the convenience of being in town.



### Trail Erosion Control

Arboretum staff and University Facilities will develop a plan to repair and maintain the Arboretum's trails with the assistance of an experienced contractor, students and volunteers.



### New Greenhouse

A modern climate controlled greenhouse will replace the existing worn and outdated greenhouses to better support research and conservation efforts.



### Pine Forest Citizen Science Research Plot

A research plot will be established in the existing pine forest. Students and members of the public will learn about the environment by collecting and comparing ecological data.



### Hardwood Forest Citizen Science Research Plot

A research plot will be established in the existing hardwood forest. Students and members of the public will learn about the environment by collecting and comparing ecological data.



### Tractor Shed

The current storage shed does not meet the expected needs for additional equipment necessary for our expanded programs. Relocation of this shed will improve visitor access to and aesthetics of the Arboretum.



### Playscape and Gazebo

A playscape for children inspired by and immerse in nature built for crawling, jumping, climbing, and splashing. The former shop foundation will be reused for a gazebo looking out on the playscape.



### Asian Garden and Sculpture Trail

Inspired by gardens of Japan, this area will feature native southeastern and exotic Asian "sister" species of the plants. Concrete footings for exhibition of student and professional sculpture.

PELHAM HEIGHTS ROAD



NEW PARKING

Please note: This map is for conceptual purposes only and does not represent approved and funded projects. A detailed master plan will be developed in the next year to finalize improvement, timelines, and costs.



## SPREADING OUR LIMBS

As the Arboretum continues to serve the University and Tuscaloosa communities through its facilities and programs, changes are underway to enhance visitors' experiences and the Arboretum's contributions to teaching and research.

By focusing on upgrades in technology, experiential learning, and environmental sustainability, the UA Arboretum will modernize its facilities, broaden its outreach to the University and Tuscaloosa communities, and create the infrastructure necessary to accomplish its goals for the future.

Long anticipated designs of a sustainable demonstration garden and educational space will be completed. The outdoor classroom will be powered by a new solar array, and rainwater will be collected from its roof. Plans for a restroom with a composting toilet will take shape as native solitary masonry bees are relocated from the cob house to an adjacent wall made with local materials.

- **MODERNIZE** sustainability through new technologies
- **RENOVATE** existing facilities

As the Arboretum expands its plant collection, the existing greenhouses will be replaced with a new building designed to meet the needs of contemporary researchers.



To demonstrate UA's dedication to sustainability, a new education, conference, and visitor center will be built using the latest sustainability standards. By providing a space for events, classroom and research areas, exhibition and gallery spaces, and a plant conservatory, the Arboretum will continue to act as a gathering place and an educational destination.

- **CREATE** an atmosphere supportive of community education
- **BUILD** new features spotlighting native flora and fauna

The conservatory will house another new Arboretum feature: insects (bees, butterflies, and ants), reptiles, and amphibians will be on display in habitat exhibits. A soil window, or rhizotron, will be constructed in the facility's basement to allow visitors to view life underground, including tree roots and invertebrates—a feature unique for its size and availability to visitors. Together with the





existing Arboretum tree platform, the soil window will give visitors hands-on experience in both above- and below-ground ecology.

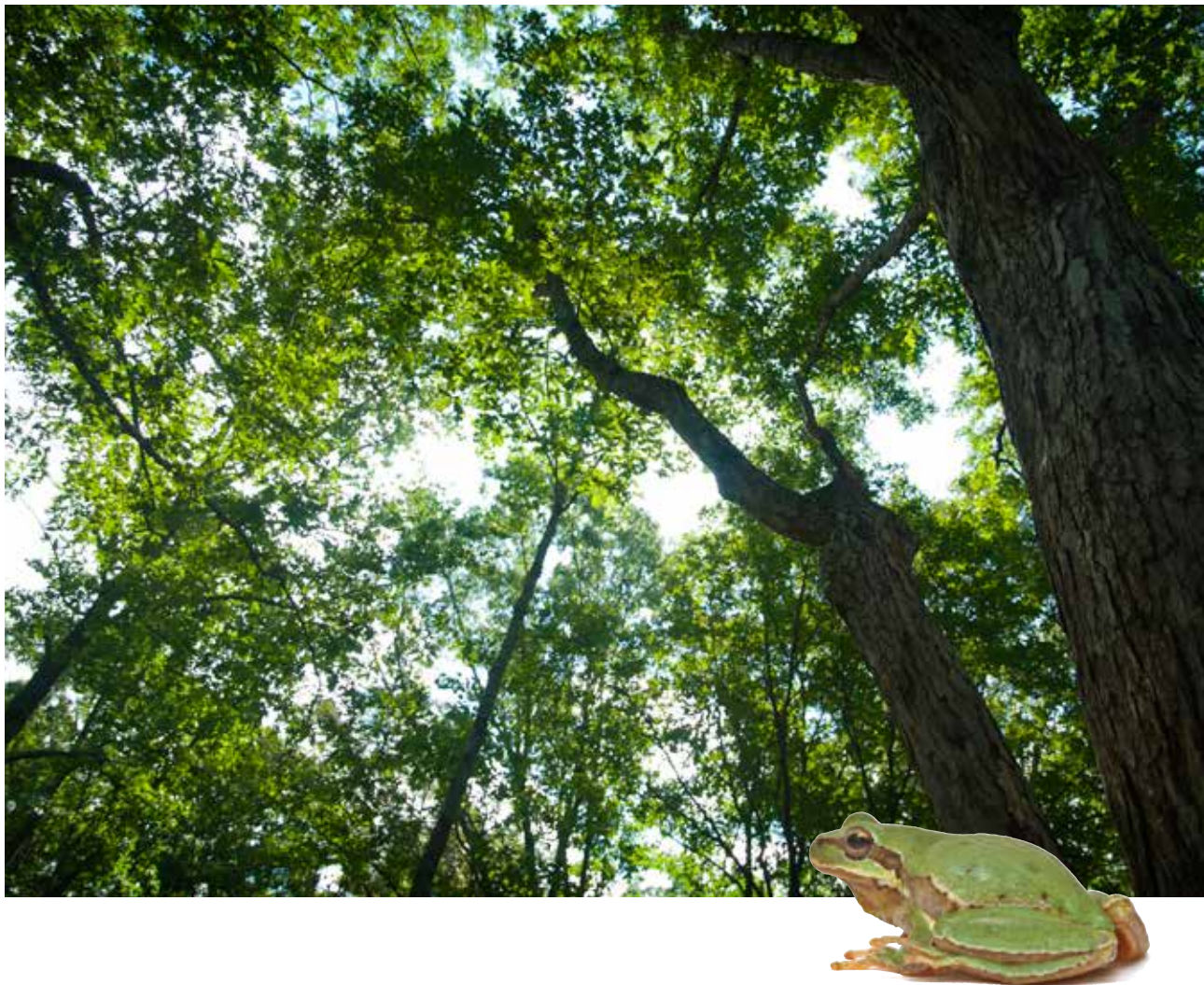
A playground, built from natural materials and designed to interpret nature education concepts, will be constructed adjacent to the new visitors center, expanding opportunities for families visiting the Arboretum.

In the short term, best practices for erosion control and maintenance will be used to enhance existing trails. Future plans include a reconfiguration of the trail network to better protect plants and wildlife and improve visitor access.

- **INVEST** in becoming a national leader for other public gardens
- **CATALOG** the wide range of plants and animals at the Arboretum

The University forester and College of Arts and Sciences faculty and staff will assist in creating a forest assessment and management plan. The Arboretum's vegetation and wildlife will be inventoried using state-of-the-art GPS mapping. With these assessments, plans can be made for forest restoration and habitat improvement to better support populations of native plants and animals. The species map produced by this inventory will be available to visitors in print, on the Arboretum website, and through an interactive mobile app.

- **MAP** the Arboretum to facilitate management and guide visitors
- **GIVE BACK** to the region with shared community projects







In collaboration with the George Wood Chapter of the Alabama Wildflower Society, improvements will be made to the Arboretum's native plant collection—for example, adding to the number of native azaleas in the Rhododendron Garden and planting more native flowers to attract pollinators in the Children's Garden.

Student volunteers from UA's Center for Service and Learning are assisting with the re-establishment of the community vegetable garden, with produce being donated to local social service agencies. In the future, the Arboretum hopes to expand this project to encompass a larger area, integrate education opportunities for UA students and local schools, and include additional partners from the community.

**AS ITS ENVIRONMENT IS ENHANCED, THE ARBORETUM  
WILL BECOME A LEADER IN CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABILITY,  
AND HANDS-ON LEARNING.**





## CONTINUING TO GROW AND MATURE

The Arboretum has become a local gem to the Tuscaloosa and University area. Families spend Saturdays there, and schools schedule Arboretum field trips. As its environment is enhanced, the Arboretum will grow and mature as a leader in conservation, sustainability, and hands-on learning, continuing the University's tradition of excellence.







Arboretum

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