

CALS Chair & Directors, Sept. 20, 2016

Cornell Plantations Name Change Proposal

Recommended by:

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Proposed new name: “Cornell Botanic Gardens”

Why change the name?

- The Cornell Arboretum was renamed in 1944 to Cornell Plantations to support a broader agricultural vision which was never implemented.
- The current name does not identify the unit or place as a public garden.
- The word “Plantations” is puzzling and distressing to many and contradicts Cornell’s appreciation and respect for diversity.
- An external branding consultant conducted focus groups and online survey of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors, documenting strong (at least 70%) support for a name change.

Changing the name will:

- More clearly identify the organization as a public garden, with an arboretum and natural areas.
- Call to mind a broad diversity of plants grown for research, educational, and display purposes consistent with future strategic planning efforts.
- Open new opportunities for major philanthropic support.
- Set the stage for the 75th anniversary celebration in 2019.

Why “Cornell Botanic Gardens” rather than “Cornell Arboretum”:

- “Botanic gardens” is inclusive of current display gardens, arboretum, and natural areas.
- “Arboretum” is a type of botanic garden commonly associated with only tree collections; thus, more narrow in scope.

Recent and next steps:

- President’s executive team forwarded recommendation for discussion at the CF&PC meeting (Aug. 25, 2016) and to the Buildings & Properties Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- Unanimous support from B&P Committee (Sept. 8).
- Inform the community of proposal by reaching out to CALS Faculty Senate (Oct. 5); University Faculty Senate (TBD).
- Consideration and approval by Board of Trustees at their Fall meeting (Oct. 28).
- Announcement of new name and rebranding to internal and external audiences: following BOT.

Cost: The Provost, CALS, and unit have agreed to share costs.