

## Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Philadelphia's public gardens.

WHEREAS, Public gardens have rich histories and are home to vast collections of plants for the purposes of public engagement, enjoyment, and health and wellness, in addition to research, conservation, and informal and formal learning. They are open to the public and managed by professionals trained to maintain these beautiful greenspaces in our City and neighboring counties; and

WHEREAS, American Public Gardens Association recognizes these lush greenspaces in a diversity of ways from botanical gardens, arboreta, cemeteries, zoological gardens, sculpture gardens, college and university campuses, historic homes, urban greening organizations, natural areas, and city/county/state/federal parks; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is America's Garden Capital with a tradition of horticulture dating back 300 years. Today, there are more than 35 gardens within 30 miles of the City of Philadelphia's center, welcoming more than 3 million people a year. Many of these gardens are located outside of the landmark City yet enhance the City's vibrancy, educational and tourism status, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is home to a vast array of public gardens, including the Morris Arboretum, the Arboretum at Laurel Hill and West Hill Cemeteries, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Awbury Arboretum, Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, James G. Kaskey Memorial Park, and Bartram's Garden; and

WHEREAS, The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, founded in 1887 by John and Lydia Morris, inspires an understanding of the relationship between plants, people, and place through education, research, and horticultural display. A vital part of one of the great research universities of the world, the Morris Arboretum is renowned for its science aimed at understanding and conserving plants and ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Listed on The National Register of Historic Places, the Morris Arboretum is an interdisciplinary resource center for the University, and is recognized as the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Science, art, and humanities are pursued through a variety of research, teaching, and outreach programs that link the Arboretum to a worldwide effort to nurture the earth's forests, fields, and landscapes; and

WHEREAS, Laurel Hill Cemetery was established in 1836 as the second garden-designed cemetery in the United States, and the nation's first National Historic Landmark cemetery. John Jay Smith, the site's founding visionary, had planned for Laurel Hill to be a school of instruction in architecture, culture, landscape gardening, arboriculture and botany. By 1844, Smith had planted 2,400 trees on the cemetery's initial 32-acre tract; and

WHEREAS, Today, Laurel Hill along with its sister cemetery West Laurel Hill constitute the Arboretum at Laurel Hill and West Laurel Hill Cemeteries and house a combined collection of nearly 600 carefully selected and well-maintained species of trees and shrubs that benefit the native wildlife and enhance the natural beauty of each site; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), founded in 1827, believes in the power of horticulture to improve health and wellbeing. Driven by a diverse community of more than 300,000 supporters, volunteers, and gardeners, PHS uses all its activities to advance four impact priorities in neighborhoods across the City and region: creating healthy living environments, increasing access to fresh food, expanding economic opportunity, building meaningful social connections; and

WHEREAS, PHS partners with residents to plant trees, tend community gardens, green vacant lots, and create green jobs; provides gardens in parks and public spaces; and produces the Philadelphia Flower Show; and

WHEREAS, Awbury Arboretum is a vibrant landscape with a rich history. Tucked away in the historic Germantown neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia, Awbury Arboretum was once the private enclave of an extended Quaker family; and

WHEREAS, Awbury Arboretum has been open to the public free of charge as a public park and arboretum for over 100 years. Its 56-acre historic landscape now stands as a green oasis in a densely populated urban environment; and

WHEREAS, Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura, was built in Japan in 1953 using traditional techniques and materials. It was shipped to New York and exhibited in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art in New York before moving to West Fairmount Park in 1958; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, international artist Hiroshi Senju, inspired by the garden's waterfall, donated 20 contemporary murals to Shofuso, which are permanently displayed inside the house. This historic site and museum includes a hill and pond garden with a tiered waterfall, island, and koi fish, a tea garden featuring a traditional tea house, and a courtyard garden leading to a bathhouse; and

WHEREAS, The James G. Kaskey Memorial Park, created in 1897, honors its past as the first Botanic Garden of the University of Pennsylvania. Known for bolstering research and educational opportunities within the Department of Biology, James G. Kaskey Memorial Park enriches community well-being by creating a verdant oasis for plants and people; and

WHEREAS, James G. Kaskey Memorial Park's three and a half acres of naturalistic gardens are home to over 450 species of plants. This diversity is found throughout the Park, but highlighted collections include the hardy fernery, woodland garden, the South Lawn herb and pollinator garden, Levin rain garden and the Goddard rock garden. The canopy of mature shade trees in partnership with smaller understory trees and shrubs is the backbone of the Park; and

WHEREAS, Bartram's Garden is a public park and 50-acre National Historic Landmark, operated by the non-profit John Bartram Association in cooperation with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and welcoming an estimated 100,000 visitors each year; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the John Bartram Association is to create equitable relationships among people and nature through immersive, community-driven experiences that activate the Bartram legacy, Garden, and House, on land and on the Schuylkill River, in Southwest Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia Public Gardens continue to beautify our city and enrich the experience of all citizens of Philadelphia by exposing them to all the natural world has to offer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor and recognize Philadelphia Public Gardens.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of this resolution be presented to the American Public Gardens Association and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.