

United States Botanic Garden

If you will be traveling to Washington, D.C. this summer, be sure to visit the United States Botanic Garden (USBG). It is located next to the U.S. Capitol Building so it is very central to all the normal tour sights. The Garden is open daily and admission is free. Go to the [United States Botanic Garden](#) website for more information on bus routes, parking, current events, and hours.

The Garden was established by Congress in 1820 and the first greenhouse was constructed in 1842. It currently maintains about 20,000 plants ranging from cacti to orchids. An adjoining National Garden is under construction, with scheduled completion in 2006. It will feature native plants, a rose garden, and the First Ladies' Water Garden.

The USBG consists of separate conservatories, each with a specific focus, such as world deserts, medicinal plants, orchids, jungles, rare and endangered plants, a reconstructed Jurassic landscape, and a children's garden, to name a few. They are all lush, well maintained, and the signage is good. You can take a quick tour in about an hour, or easily spend several hours at a leisurely pace. It is a great place for children to experience all kinds of plants up close and personal.



The USBG is entered through this sun-filled Garden Court.



The orchids (about 200 on display at any time) are stunning.



This is one of the educational displays showing how plants work. This bulb plant is made of heavy fabric and looks very realistic.