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The North Carolina Arboretum's Savage Gardens Carnivorous Plants Exhibit to Conclude Labor Day Weekend; Hosted Nearly 100,000 Visitors During Summer Season

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (August 25, 2015) – The North Carolina Arboretum's widely-popular *Savage Gardens* traveling exhibit will conclude this Labor Day weekend on September 7, 2015. Over the past three months, nearly 100,000 local residents and out-of-town visitors have explored the nationally-known exhibit and discovered the many wonders of carnivorous plants, including how they lure, catch, kill and digest insects as part of their feeding process. The seasonal exhibit, developed and created by Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens and Tork, Inc. offers both real and interpretive plant examples, such as a giant-size sculpture of the Tropical Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes*) and the infamous Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*).

"We have been extremely pleased with the strong interest and turnout during our *Savage Gardens* exhibit," said George Briggs, executive director of The North Carolina Arboretum. "Due to *Savage Gardens*' unique educational and interactive elements, it has helped us reach a different group of people who may not have a great knowledge about plants and horticulture but are curious about carnivorous plants like Venus flytraps."

Savage Gardens is well suited for children and adults and combines science, botany and hands-on activity to demonstrate carnivorous plants' unique feeding habits. The American Pitcher Plant, for example, offers a narcotic nectar causing intoxicated patrons to take a clumsy tumble into a pool of digestive enzymes. The similar approach of some larger varieties of the Tropical Pitcher Plant has been known to even capture small mammals.

"Carnivorous plants may seem exotic, however, many of them, such as the Venus flytrap, are native to North America, explained Briggs. "Unfortunately, more than 95 percent of the original carnivorous plant habitats along the coastal plain have been destroyed. We hope that *Savage Gardens* will educate visitors about carnivorous plants and inspire them to help contribute towards their conservation and protection."

As an addition to the traveling exhibit, the Arboretum has live carnivorous plants on-site in its Baker Exhibit Center Greenhouse. Venus flytrap plants will also be available for purchase at the Arboretum's Connections Gallery gift shop. The indoor exhibit is open daily from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. inside the Arboretum's Baker Exhibit Center and its outdoor components are located on the upper-level grounds outside of the Exhibit Center during regular visiting hours. For more information, visit www.ncarboretum.org.

Exhibit support provided in part by The North Carolina Arboretum's Community Partners: B.B. Barns Garden, Gift & Landscape Company; Smoky Mountain Living Magazine; iHeartMedia Asheville; Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park; MOSAIC Community Lifestyle Realty; and PSNC Energy.

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The NC Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Visit www.ncarboretum.org plan-a-visit for parking fees, property hours and building hours. For general information call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

About The North Carolina Arboretum

Each year more than 500,000 visitors experience the Arboretum's gardens, trails, exhibits, shows and expos, educational programs, demonstrations and lectures. The Arboretum's ability to meet its mission and enrich the visitor experience is made possible by a community of supporters—from members, volunteers and staff to state and local funds, tribute gifts, grants, and community partners.

The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, is to cultivate connections between people and plants. Shows and events are free for Arboretum Society members or with the standard parking fee (\$12 per personal motor vehicle). Special events and after-hours activities may require additional fees. For more information, please call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

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