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Phipps Accepts Building Museums® Buildy Award for Innovative Tropical Forest Conservatory

Pittsburgh public garden receives national recognition for landmark green building achievement.

Pittsburgh, Pa. On March 6, 2012, Richard V. Piacentini, executive director of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, attended the Building Museums® Symposium in Philadelphia to accept the 4th annual [Buildy Award](#) from the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums. Bestowed upon the public garden for its [Tropical Forest Conservatory](#), this honor recognizes the most outstanding recent museum construction project with the purpose of raising awareness of the value of museums, as well as the need for their rehabilitation and expansion to serve future generations.

Part of the three-phase master plan for expansion at Phipps that includes the 2005 LEED® Silver [Welcome Center](#) and the forthcoming [Center for Sustainable Landscapes](#) (CSL), the Tropical Forest Conservatory debuted in 2006 as the most energy-efficient structure of its kind in the world. Showcasing an innovative design and employing a variety of conservation strategies, the exhibit space boasts an unconventional shape that incorporates energy-saving insulated roof glass, while still maintaining proper light levels for growing plants all year round. In the summer, a passive cooling system couples a venting system that opens half of the roof with earth tubes and a computer-controlled shading system to provide a cooler interior climate without the use of HVAC systems. And, although the 12,000-square-foot conservatory has a large south facing glass wall, there is no greenhouse effect and it is always cooler inside than outside. Additional energy savings are achieved with energy blankets, root-zone heating, thermal massing, and a sophisticated integrated building monitoring system.

“As part of our mission to reconnect people with nature, Phipps is deeply committed to making our buildings and operations as sustainable as possible, setting a new standard for museums worldwide,” says Richard Piacentini, “We are very honored to accept the Buildy Award for the Tropical Forest Conservatory, which has been both a key accomplishment for us, and an important precursor to the Center for Sustainable Landscapes, opening this spring as one of the greenest buildings on Earth.”

Currently housing [a new exhibit celebrating India](#)—one of the most botanically rich regions of the world—the Tropical Forest Conservatory, open daily to the public, now features an Ayurvedic healing garden, spice and tea market displays, field research station, and a colorful temple façade on Phipps’ [Special Events Hall](#). Guests can also step out onto the terrace to view the rapidly evolving CSL, which will become yet another community space for guests to explore later this spring.

ABOUT PHIPPS

Built by Henry W. Phipps in 1893 at the height of Pittsburgh's industrial prowess, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has evolved from the nation's first teaching conservatory to a distinguished eco-champion among America's 500 public gardens.

Phipps' mission is to inspire and educate visitors with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and worldwide biodiversity through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse.

Phipps is open daily from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fridays until 10 p.m. Adults, \$12; Seniors 62 and older and students with valid ID, \$11; children 2-18, \$9; children under 2, free.

For more information, call 412/622-6914 or visit phipps.conservatory.org.

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