



Gloria Ciaccio  
(847)835-6819  
[gciaccio@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:gciaccio@chicagobotanic.org)

Michelle Benson  
(708)907-5301  
[michelle@createmomentum.com](mailto:michelle@createmomentum.com)

**For Immediate Release**

**Chicago Botanic Garden Plants Largest Farm-to-Fork  
Rooftop Garden in Chicago and Midwest**

*- 20,000 Square-Foot at McCormick Place West Provides SAVOR Foodservice with Produce*

**GLENCOE, IL.** (Aug.6, 2013) -The Chicago Botanic Garden has planted the largest farm-to-fork rooftop garden in Chicago and the Midwest as part of its ongoing mission to promote local sustainable agriculture and train city residents for careers in urban agriculture. The site's soil-based garden is located at McCormick Place West, part of the largest exhibition and meeting facility in North America. The new garden will provide SAVOR...Chicago, the convention center's food service provider, with fresh produce for McCormick Place catering and restaurant operations, reducing their need to transport produce to their operations.

The phase one 20,000 square-foot vegetable and herb garden is expected to yield up to 4,000 pounds of fresh produce, equivalent to 5700 servings, during the first year of production. In following years, yields from that location are expected to reach 8,000-12,000 pounds of produce.

"The partnership with SAVOR...Chicago is an unprecedented opportunity to both reduce our environmental impacts and also meet economic goals," said Sophia Siskel, president and CEO of the Chicago Botanic Garden. "This rooftop garden will have positive ripple effects as it expands our local agriculture production capabilities, saves harmful gas emissions by eliminating the need to transport some of our food needs, creates additional hands-on training and job opportunities for our Windy City Harvest students, and serve as a local source of fresh produce to a major convention center catering provider. All of this from a single rooftop garden."

The garden has been designed and planted by staff from the Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest (WCH) urban agriculture program. Over the past five years, WCH has planted and maintained five acres of vegetable gardens at six locations in Chicago. WCH offers the state's first accredited urban agriculture certificate - the nine-month instructional and internship

program utilizes greenhouse and outdoor growing space at Daley College's Arturo Velasquez Institute. The Chicago Botanic Garden plans to add the McCormick Place rooftop garden to the certificate program's living laboratory, offering hands-on experience to WCH students who wish to earn an additional certificate in roof-top gardening, further advancing their urban agriculture expertise.

"This new workspace adds to the Garden's ability to serve the citizens of Chicago," said Angie Mason, director the Chicago Botanic Garden's urban agriculture programs. "Our workforce training programs offer a model that successfully engages career changers and underemployed individuals, providing professional development that leads to job placement. The WCH program has placed 89% of graduates in part-time or full-time positions in the green collar sector in the Chicago area," Mason said.

Crops and herbs grown during the first season at the McCormick Place West roof include: kale, collards, carrots, radishes, green and red romaine lettuces, peppers, yellow, red and green bush beans, golden beets, cherry tomatoes, bulb fennel, garlic chives, dill, cilantro and parsley. These staple ingredients in SAVOR...Chicago's kitchens were selected because they can easily be grown in a rooftop garden setting and also grow rapidly, giving SAVOR...Chicago's patrons a steady supply of fresh, local produce.

"Partnering with the Chicago Botanic Garden underscores SAVOR...Chicago's commitment to support efforts to grow and source products locally on the city's largest rooftop farm, right here on McCormick Place West," said Connie Chambers, General Manager, SAVOR...Chicago at McCormick Place. "We share the Garden's passion for hands-on job training and are excited to help Chicago residents prepare for jobs in the agriculture industry while helping us serve the nearly three million visitors we feed annually," Chambers said.

The first harvest of vegetables and herbs is expected in early August. The Garden's staff will also plant a second, late summer round of cool season crops, that will be harvested, weather permitting, through late fall.

Interact with the Garden for this and other Garden events and programs:

- App: [chicagobotanic.org/app](http://chicagobotanic.org/app)
- Blog: [my.chicagobotanic.org](http://my.chicagobotanic.org)
- E-news: [chicagobotanic.org/enews](http://chicagobotanic.org/enews)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/chicagobotanicgarden](https://facebook.com/chicagobotanicgarden)

- Flickr: [flickr.com/groups/chicagobotanicgarden](http://flickr.com/groups/chicagobotanicgarden)
- RSS: [chicagobotanic.org/feeds.php](http://chicagobotanic.org/feeds.php)
- Strategic Plan: [strategicplan.chicagobotanic.org/](http://strategicplan.chicagobotanic.org/)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/chicagobotanic](http://twitter.com/chicagobotanic)
- YouTube: [youtube.com/chicagobotanicgarden](http://youtube.com/chicagobotanicgarden)

###

**Editors, please note:** The Chicago Botanic Garden's newsroom is online at [www.chicagobotanic.org/pr](http://www.chicagobotanic.org/pr). For digital images, contact Adriana Reyneri at (847) 835-6829 or at [areyneri@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:areyneri@chicagobotanic.org).

*The Chicago Botanic Garden, one of the treasures of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, is a 385-acre living plant museum featuring 26 distinct gardens and four natural areas. With events, programs and activities for all ages, the Garden is open every day of the year. Admission is free; select event fees apply. Parking is \$25 per car; free for Garden members. Located at 1000 Lake Cook Road in Glencoe, IL, the Garden is smoke free. Opened to the public in 1972, the Garden is managed by the Chicago Horticultural Society, accredited by the American Association of Museums and a member of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA). The Chicago Botanic Garden is the 12th largest tourist attraction in Chicago and is the area's sixth largest cultural institution. Visit [www.chicagobotanic.org](http://www.chicagobotanic.org), or call (847) 835-5440 for seasonal hours, images of the Garden and commuter transportation information.*

*The Chicago Botanic Garden offers classes for students from age's preK through adulthood through the Joseph Regenstein, Jr. School. The hands-on learning programs are for people of all ages, abilities, interests, and backgrounds. Adult education classes include horticulture, garden design, nature studies, and botanical arts for all levels of interest. Other programs bring the wonder of nature and plants to children, teens, and teachers. The Garden's community gardening programs provide access to fresh produce in Chicago's food desert communities and training in sustainable urban agriculture for youth and adults. The Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Plant Conservation Science Center provides laboratories and teaching facilities for more than 200 Ph.D. scientists, land managers, students, and interns whose research is critical to fulfilling the Garden's efforts to save our planet by saving our plants. The Science Career Continuum serves minority students from Chicago Public Schools and throughout the region, mentoring them as they prepare for science studies in college and beyond. In conjunction with Northwestern University, the Garden offers a graduate program in plant biology and conservation with Northwestern University. The Garden is host to Botanic Gardens Conservation International-U.S., and a member of the Center for Plant Conservation.*

#### **Chicago's McCormick Place**

*McCormick Place, the largest exhibition and meeting facility in North America, is comprised of four state-of-the-art buildings, the North, South and West Buildings, the Lakeside Center, and the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place hotel. Combined, McCormick Place offers 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space, 173 meeting rooms, the 4,249-seat Arie Crown Theater and one of the largest ballrooms in the world.*

*Located on Chicago's lakefront just minutes from downtown, McCormick Place is owned by the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority and managed by SMG, a worldwide convention facility management company. For more information, please visit [www.mccormickplace.com](http://www.mccormickplace.com) or on facebook.com/mccormickplace and twitter.com/mccormick\_place.*

#### **SAVOR**

*SAVOR, a leader in convention center catering, concessions and special events, took over McCormick Place foodservice operations September 28, 2011. SAVOR is part of SMG, the largest public facilities management company in the world including McCormick Place as of August 1, 2011. In 2010, 17 convention centers where SAVOR provides food and beverage service won prestigious Prime Site Awards & Destinations. SAVOR is an industry leader in introducing green standards and programs to public facilities. As the food and beverage provider to facilities with some of the most stringent environmental policies in the world, we have researched the matter extensively and work closely with community and facility managers to develop environmentally friendly operations focused on minimizing carbon footprint by purchasing locally produced, sustainably raised product, using non-petroleum-based packaging and recycling or composting waste whenever possible.*

*[www.savorchicagomcpl.com](http://www.savorchicagomcpl.com).*

#### **SMG**

*Since 1977, SMG has provided management services to more than 220 public assembly facilities worldwide, including arenas, stadiums, theatres and performing arts centers, equestrian facilities, convention, congress and exhibition centers, science centers and a variety of other venues. Across the globe, SMG manages more than 14 million square feet of exhibition space and more*

than 1.75 million arena and theatre seats. As the recognized global industry leader, SMG provides venue management, sales, marketing, event booking and programming, construction and design consulting, and pre-opening services. SMG also offers food and beverage operations through its concessions and catering division of SAVOR, currently serving more than 100 accounts worldwide. [www.smgworld.com](http://www.smgworld.com).