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Contact:
Casey Sclar, American Public Gardens Association
csclar@publicgardens.org, 610-708-3016

Meighen Speiser, ecoAmerica
meighen@ecoamerica.org, 415-794-5449

YOUtopia: Public gardens pledge to reduce the impact of climate change and inspire visitors with positive solutions

Kennett Square, PA: A landmark leadership initiative has been launched that adds public gardens to the growing list of sectors leading on climate change solutions. Through YOUtopia, launched at the annual conference of the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), public garden leaders pledge to reduce their climate impacts and engage their visitors in climate change solutions through education and outreach.

Created in partnership with ecoAmerica, APGA is rolling out YOUtopia to all 500 APGA member gardens that enjoy over 70 million annual visitors.

With YOUtopia, public gardens will engage their visitors on climate change impacts, which pose existential threats to the flora and fauna they showcase and protect. YOUtopia empowers gardens with positive visitor education and communications that allow Americans to "see with their own eyes" the impacts of climate change, and the many things that are being done to prepare for and prevent it. YOUtopia inspires visitors by communicating current solutions for climate change globally, regionally, and locally, including simple, easy steps visitors can take in their own lives to be a part of the solution. The program will be visible within public garden exhibit signage, visitor guides, online, in garden education programs and other communications.

To show leadership by example, public gardens are making commitments to reduce their own climate impacts. These actions (such as composting, energy efficiency, green power, and the use of local food in their cafes,) will be shared nationally through YOUtopia. Casey Sclar, APGA executive director said, "This institutional commitment will present public gardens as a beacon of light that leads climate impact reductions, aligning us with the efforts of The U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and The American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment."

"YOUtopia furthers public gardens' goals of leadership and public engagement on climate change," said Paul Redman, Chair, APGA Board of Directors and Director of Longwood Gardens. "YOUtopia has the potential to be a significant influential force in engaging Americans to prepare for and help prevent further climate change."

"YOUtopia's vision is to bring the facts of climate change to life in public gardens nationwide while focusing on relevant, positive solutions, so that educators, visitors, and entire communities can understand how their personal and civic behaviors can have positive impacts on the world in which we live," concluded Sclar.

To learn more, visit: www.YOUtopia.publicgardens.org

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About YOUtopia
YOUtopia is a national program, created by the American Public Gardens Association in partnership with ecoAmerica, to elevate the leadership of public gardens through commitments to reduce their climate impact and engage their millions of visitors in climate change solutions. YOUtopia was launched on May 21, 2013. For more information, visit: www.YOUtopia.publicgardens.org

About the American Public Gardens Association
The American Public Gardens Association (APGA) exists to create a world where public gardens are indispensable. Founded in 1940, the APGA has evolved to be the premiere association for public garden advocacy, education, innovation and leadership in North America. Today, it's more than 500 member institutions are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada and many other countries. The APGA is committed to increasing the knowledge of public garden professionals through information sharing, networking, professional development, public awareness and research to empower them to effectively serve their respective garden's visitors and members. For more information, visit: http://www.publicgardens.org

About ecoAmerica
ecoAmerica is a non-profit that engages mainstream Americans in climate and environmental solutions with research, innovative partnerships, and programs. www.ecoAmerica.org