

## **Essential disaster management planning and preparedness for botanic gardens**

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Botanic gardens globally are being impacted by increasingly extreme weather events. Core plant collections are being lost or compromised leaving valuable plants more susceptible to catastrophic pests and pathogens. Many gardens do not have a disaster plan or conduct drills to maintain a state of readiness. American Public Gardens Association's Disaster Readiness Initiative launched in 2021 builds resilience of gardens facing increased threats. It galvanizes garden leaders to undertake institution-wide cyclical disaster planning integrated into operations and aligned with external emergency planning at the local, state, and federal levels. Online modules help gardens get started or strengthen existing plans. Our scalable planning process provides guidance to organize resources, identify and assess risks, develop a disaster plan, then implement that plan and monitor progress. A team of disaster readiness specialists has developed an adaptable disaster management plan template and hazard vulnerability analysis tool to assist gardens. These incorporate the latest industry standards employed by emergency management systems worldwide providing a working framework for each garden to align with its local community. Regional workshops focus on key steps for disaster mitigation, hazard analysis, and disaster management plan development. Participants train together through guided tabletop exercises focused on a common hazard scenario, and then can access situation manuals to conduct exercises at their own gardens. An online forum facilitates collaboration. Technical reviews of gardens' disaster management plans provide valuable feedback. Our Association will continue to develop disaster management tools and training opportunities to advance gardens as cornerstones for resilient, healthy communities working in coordination with emergency management and other cultural stewards. Together gardens can build collective disaster readiness in the face of an unpredictable future - It's Essential.