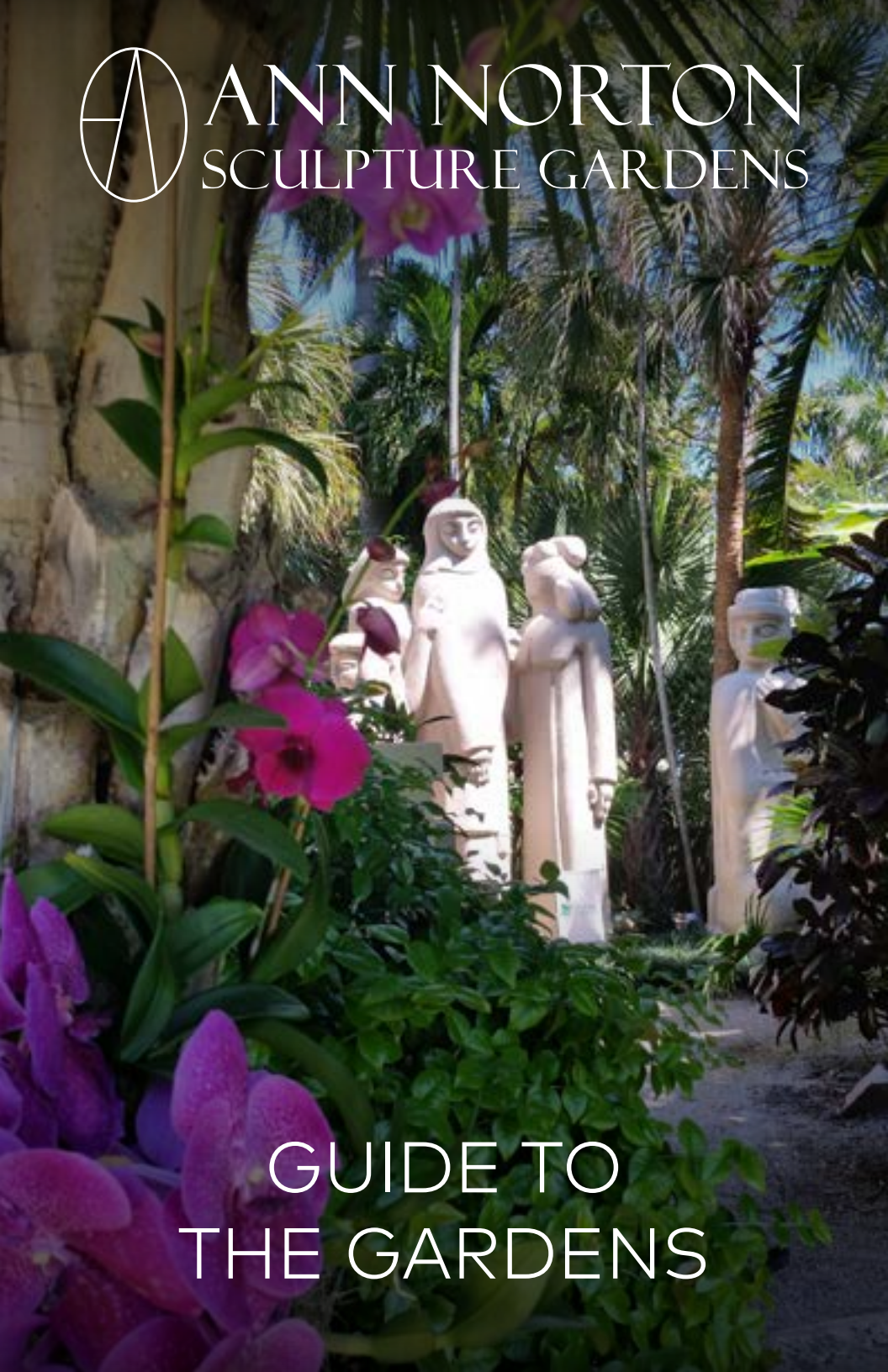


# ANN NORTON SCULPTURE GARDENS

# GUIDE TO THE GARDENS

# DEDICATION

The Gardens Conservancy gratefully dedicates this Guide to the vision of Ann Weaver Norton. The unique educational opportunities offered by the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens have inspired many thousands of nature lovers, art enthusiasts, environmentalists, families and students. We thank you for embracing the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens for the generations yet to experience its magic and beauty.

"I use everything – the cracks in the wood, the knots and the gnarls. I like my work to flow together with nature."

Ann Weaver Norton, 1905-1982

---

"As I worked in the garden I came to feel that there was a strong affinity, much more than I expected, between the palms and the sculptures. . . . It is the bold and noble simplicity of design that gives the palms their grace and their majesty. It is the same boldness that gives Ann's complex sculptures their beauty and their nobility."

Sir Peter Smithers, 1913-2006
Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens
Landscape Architect

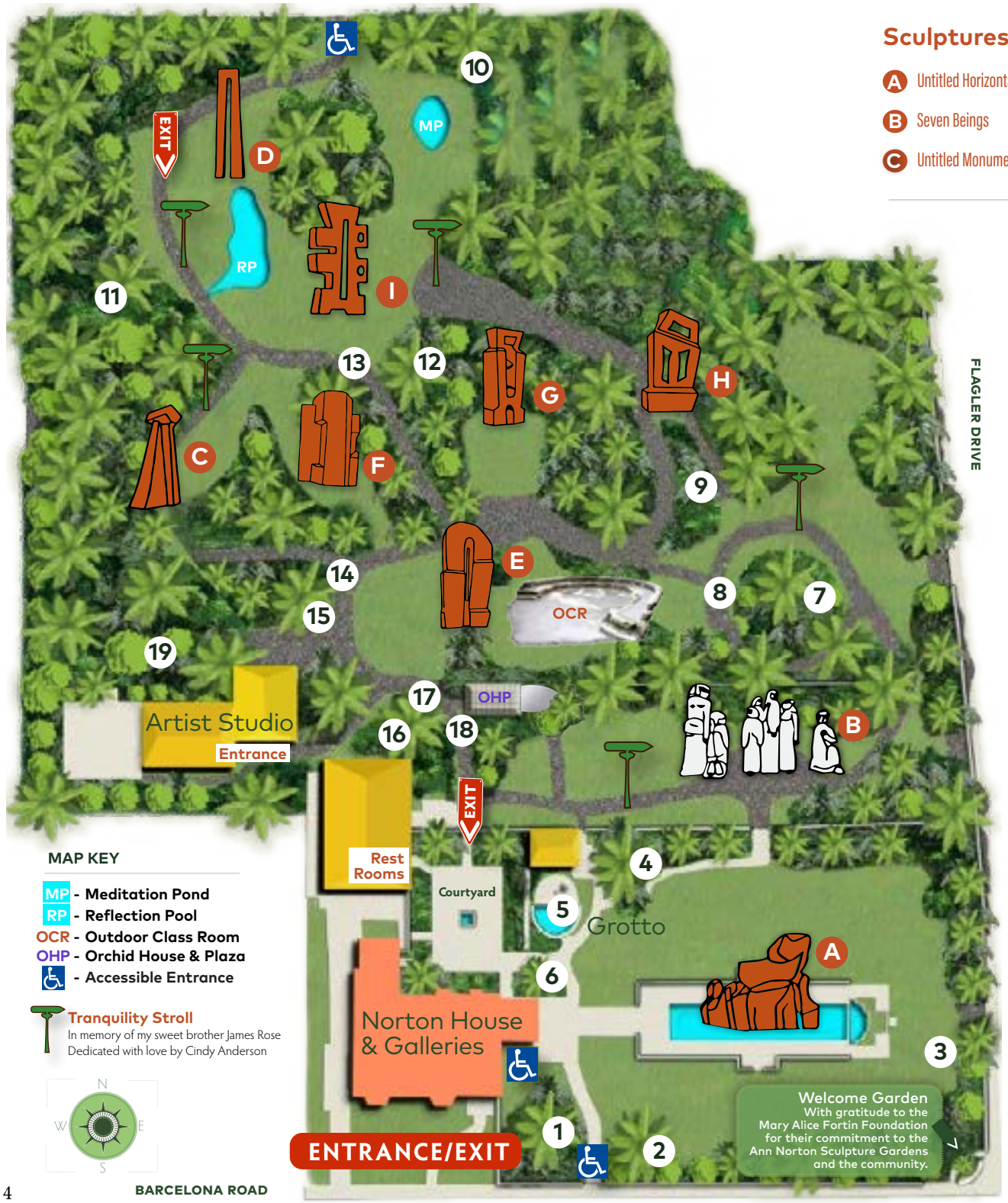


# HISTORY OF THE GARDENS

Ann Weaver Norton (1905-1982) left her hometown of Selma, Alabama, to attend Smith College, from which she graduated in 1927. Later, in 1930, she settled in New York City, resolved to become an artist. Mentored by eminent sculptors such as Alexander Archipenko and William Zorach, Weaver became a successful sculptor in her own right. Her artistic vision was shaped by Cubism and the Art Deco style, but also by the architecture and sculpture of Romanesque and Gothic churches which she studied on trips to Europe (1935 and 1940). During her lifetime her works were exhibited frequently in New York and Florida but also in France and Italy, where they are found in the collections of national museums. In 1942 she became the first instructor of sculpture at the new Norton Gallery and School of Art and in 1948 married the museum's founder, Ralph Hubbard Norton (1875-1953). Over the next three decades she planted the magnificent gardens of the Norton estate on Barcelona Road in West Palm Beach and created the monumental sculptures which inhabit them.

In 1977, Mrs. Norton set up a foundation for the perpetual maintenance of the property, its buildings, and her works. It was her intention that the two-and-a-half-acre site should become a permanently "green oasis," a refuge for art lovers and a habitat for subtropical trees, plants, and wildlife (especially birds and butterflies) in a pesticide-free environment. In the last years of her life, Norton was ably assisted by her friend, Sir Peter Smithers, a former British diplomat and a renowned landscape architect, not only in the design of the gardens but also in the formulation of the philosophy which was to direct their future growth and development. Their collaboration resulted in "guiding principles" which have directed the management of the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens since the founder's death on February 2, 1982.

In 1990, the Norton House was added to the National Register of Historic Places. To enhance visibility, patronage, and its public service role, the ANSG created the Gardens Conservancy in 2014. This advocacy and stewardship committee is dedicated to the preservation of the property, honoring Ann Norton's vision for art and gardens in a symbiotic, urban sanctuary. As an enduring witness to that vision, Norton's colossal sculptures preside over a bountiful landscape which constantly evolves in the south Florida sunshine. In 2019, Ann was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame and the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens became a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Artists' Homes & Studios Program. In 2020, her tropical gardens were officially designated as a national arboretum.




# GARDEN MAP

## Sculptures

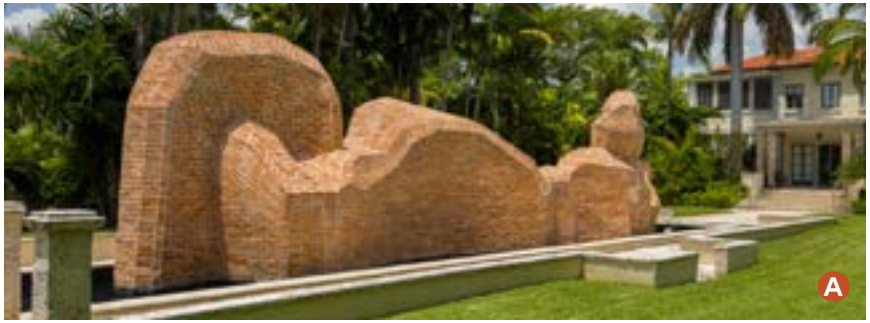
- A Untitled Horizontal Sculpture
- B Seven Beings
- C Untitled Monument Number 8
- D Gateway to Knowledge
- E Gateway 1
- F Gateway 2
- G Gateway 3
- H Gateway 4
- I Gateway 5

## Palms

1. Old Man Palm
2. Key Thatch Palm
3. Borhidi's Guano Palm
4. Petticoat Palm
5. Lipstick Palm
6. Emperor Sago
7. Lillie Cycad
8. Princess Palm/Hurricane Palm
9. Enecphalartos whitelockii
10. Giant Windowpane Palm
11. Spanish Small Cycad
12. Fan Palm
13. Mulanje Cycad
14. Vonitra Palm
15. Coco de Mer
16. Vilaito Palm
17. Grand Leaf Sea Grape
18. Bentham's Fountain Palm/Bentham's Fan Palm
19. Pollinator Garden

# SCULPTURES IN THE GARDENS

**A Untitled Horizontal Sculpture, 1979**
Handmade Mexican Brick | Length 48 feet
This enigmatic sculpture with its undulating profile—which seems to bulge upward and outward due to unseen, internal pressures—was the last sculpture whose construction was supervised by Ann Norton. Its silhouette may recall that of the Himalaya Mountains, seen by the artist on her trips to India and Nepal.

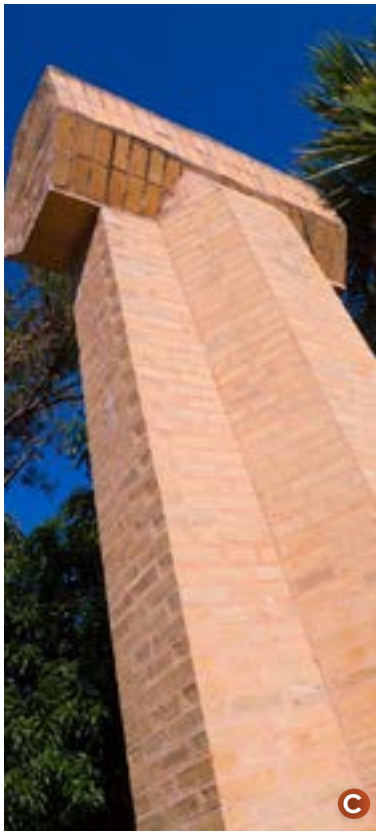



**Restoration courtesy of Cynthia Sulzberger and Steven Green.**

**B *Seven Beings*, completed 1965**
Pink Norwegian Granite | Height 15 feet, length 21 feet
These colossal sculptures evoke the sandstone formations Ann Norton observed in Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, where she "saw thousands of figures in the rock." Many visitors are reminded of Moai – the monolithic human figures carved many hundreds of years ago by the Rapa Nui people of Easter Island, in eastern Polynesia. While the figures are neither obviously male or female, most of their faces resemble those of Mayan women.


**Restoration courtesy of Samuel Lehrman.**



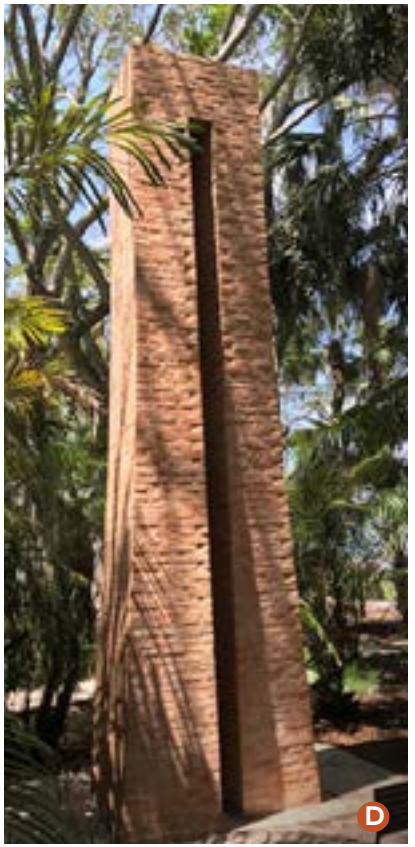



**(C) Untitled (Monument Number 8), 1980-82**
Handmade Mexican Brick
Height 28 feet
Many preparatory drawings testify to the great care Norton took with the curious design of this untitled work, for which she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1981. Yet of all her monumental brickworks this is the most mysterious, with respect to design, for the various components do not seem to be configured in a manner that recalls any particular architectural prototype.

**Restoration courtesy of William and Sally Ross Soter.**

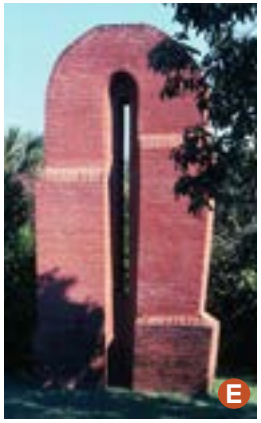
**(D) *Gateway to Knowledge*, 1983-84**
Boston Brick
Height 30 feet
This is a posthumously built replica of a sculpture commissioned from Ann Norton in 1980 by the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority and the Cambridge Arts Council near Harvard Square. The very slender portal separating the two piers suggests that the pathway to knowledge is narrow indeed.

**Restoration courtesy of The Gentlemen of the Garden.**



## E *Gateway 1*, 1972-74

Handmade North Carolina Brick | Height 26 feet



The sculpture resembles a Romanesque arch with heavy foundations, thick piers, and a rounded top. Whether in a cathedral or a castle, an elegantly slender portal in an archway such as this would have been treasured as a two-way window, admitting light from–and a glimpse into–the world beyond the walls.

**Restoration courtesy of The Gardens Conservancy in honor of Frances and Jeffrey Fisher.**

## F *Gateway 2*, 1973

Handmade North Carolina Brick

Height 23 feet

The sculpture is reminiscent of Romanesque architectural elements, in particular of buttresses which support walls, towers, and even each other. The construction is solid, without apertures or portals.

**Restoration courtesy of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art.**

## G *Gateway 3*, 1974

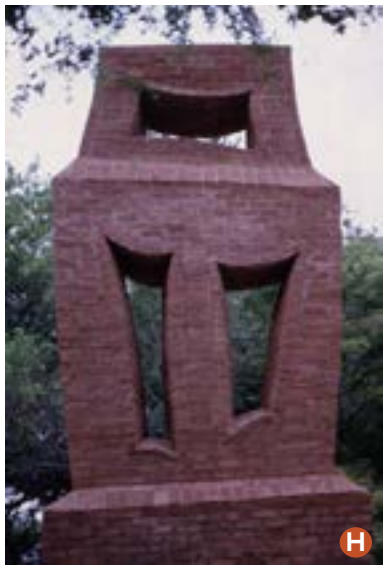
Handmade North Carolina Brick

Height 27 feet

Pierced with evocative openings, this sculpture has been characterized as "the cavity of a medieval tower rising over a submerged portal." A gateway is sometimes referred to as a "portal to eternity".

**Restoration courtesy of the Gochman Family.**



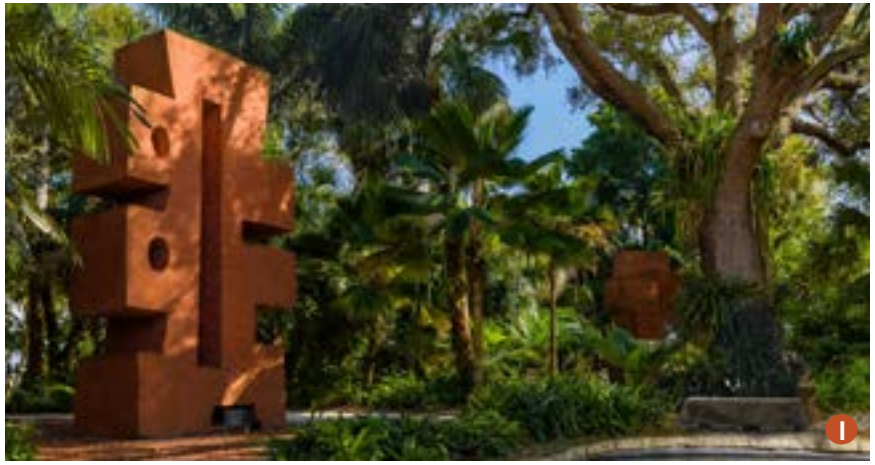


## H *Gateway 4*, 1975

Handmade North Carolina Brick | Height 24 feet

The apertures seem to recall characters in the alphabet of Sanskrit, known as "the mother of all languages." It is widely used in the ancient cultures and religions of the Himalayan countries, especially India and Nepal, which Ann Norton visited several times. Many drawings and watercolors testify to her fascination with Sanskrit.

**Restoration courtesy of the Wyeth Foundation for American Art.**



**Restoration courtesy of Leslie Rose.**

## I *Gateway 5*, 1977

Handmade North Carolina Brick | Height 30 feet

This massive tower recalls 20th-century architectural masterpieces such as Frank Lloyd Wright's *Fallingwater* (1936-1939), in southwestern Pennsylvania, with its remarkable cantilevered balconies. The apertures, however, evoke the porthole-like windows favored by the English architect Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736).

# THE GARDENS

**CONSERVATION STATUS - Critically Endanged (CE), Endangered (E), Near Threatened (NeT), Vulnerable (V), Not Threatened (NT), Of Least Concern (OLC).**

**1 *Coccothrinax crinita* - Old Man Palm**
**Origin:** Cuba, **(E)**
Although native of the Caribbean, the Old Man Palm can withstand temperatures as low as 20 °F. The long fiber husk that appears on this rare palm resembles an old man's beard and is the source of its common name (crinita means hairy in Latin).

**2 *Leucothrinax morrisii* - Key Thatch Palm**
**Origin:** Antilles/Bahamas/Florida, **(OLC)**
The key thatch palm is native to the Florida Keys and much of the Carribean region where it is one of the most familiar cultivated palms; stems of the plant are used for poles and the leaves are a popular thatching material. The palm thrives in open subtropical and tropical climates.

**3 *Coccothrinax borhidiana* - Borhidi's Guano Palm**
**Origin:** Cuba, **(CE)**
The Borhidi palm is native only to a small beach area in Cuba, found on dogtooth limestone rock overlooking the sea. The palm bears a dense "skirt" of dead leaves which gives this palm a very distinctive appearance.

**4 *Copernicia macroglossa* - Petticoat Palm**
**Origin:** Cuba, **(NT)**
Macroglossa is the Greek meaning of large tongue, which is believed to describe the long, wide leaves of the palm which appears to wear a petticoat when mature. The large circular leaves have virtually no leafstalk, so they do not drop from the stem, resulting in a dense tuft of leaves.



**5 *Cyrtostachys renda* - Lipstick Palm**
**Origin:** Southeast Asia, **(NT)**
Conservation status - Not threatened
The lipstick palm is well known because of its brilliant red, sometimes orange, colored crown shaft, and grows in lowland peat swamp forest, especially in coastal areas, and is considered to be rare and exotic because of its sensitivity to cold weather and inability to survive in temperatures below 40 °F.

**6 *Cycas taitungensis* - Emperor Sago**
**Origin:** Taiwan, **(E)**
The emperor sago is representative of a cycad originating from an ancient seed bearing plants 300 million years old. The cycad is related to pine trees and has cones similar to pines.

**The primary difference between cycads and palms is their method of pollination. Cycads reproduce by pollen, cones and naked seeds, and palms reproduce with flowers and fruits.**

**7 *Encephalartos dyerianus* - Lillie Cycad**
**Origin:** Northeastern South Africa, **(CE)**
The lillie cycad is a rare blue cycad native to a single granite hill in northeastern South Africa; they are greatly sought out by garden enthusiasts because of their rarity.

**8 *Dictyosperma album* - Princess Palm/Hurricane Palm**
**Origin:** Mauritius, Réunion and Rodrigues Islands, **(CE)**
The Princess Palm's most distinguishing feature is that the newly emergent leaves stand as vertical spears, and is commonly called Hurricane Palm for its ability to withstand strong winds by easily shedding leaves to become resistant to hurricane force winds.

**9** ***Encephalartos whitelockii***
**Origin:** Uganda, **(CE)**
This giant cycad is pollinated by insects. To attract pollinators, male and female cones produce powerful pheromones which can be quite odoriferous, usually in the early morning or evening.

**10** ***Beccariophoenix fenestralis*** **- Giant Windowpane Palm**
**Origin:** Madagascar, **(CE)**
The giant windowpane palm features "windows" which can be seen at the base of young leaves where they are only partially divided from each other. Another distinctive feature of this palm is that the leaflets unfurl as they emerge.

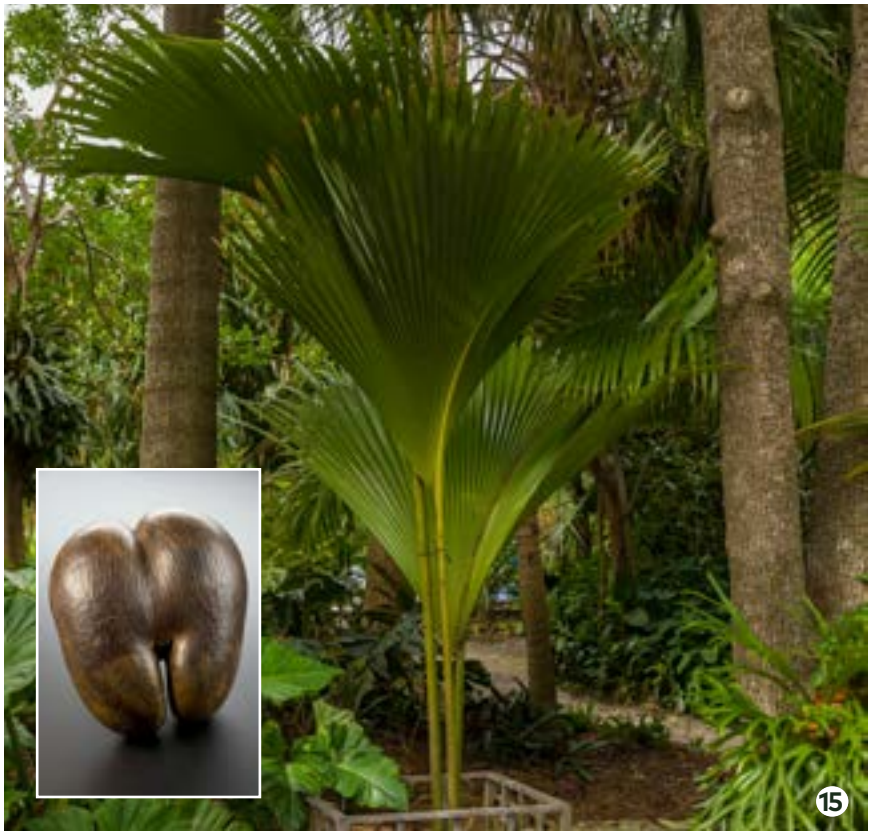
**11** ***Ceratozamia miqueliana palmita*** **- Spanish Small Cycad**
**Origin:** Mexico, **(CE)**
The Spanish small cycad is known for its wide leaflets and blue green color. The plant never attains much vertical height and is considered one of the most beautiful ceratozamia species.

**12** ***Pritchardia lowreyana*** **- Fan Palm**
**Origin:** Hawaii, **(V)**
The solid, medium height trunk of the Molokai pritchardia supports a broad crown of deeply divided, arching, fan-shaped leaves. The fronds were used by the early Hawaiians for thatching and more recently for plaiting hats and fans.

**13** ***Encephalartos gratus*** **- Mulanje Cycad**
Origin: Malawi and Mozambique, **(V)**
The Mulanje cycad was first discovered in 1899. Like all cycads, the Mulanje is toxic except for the pith, which if buried for several years, releases the toxins and then can safely be cooked into a bread-like food. It is the fastest growing species of all the Encephalartos.



**14** ***Dypsis crinita*** **- Vonitra Palm**
Origin: Madagascar, **(NeT)**
The vonitra palm simultaneously clusters and branches, a growth habit rare in palms. Because its upper stems are covered with fibers which emanate from leaf sheaths, it is thought of as Madagascar's old man palm.



**15** ***Lodoicea maldivica*** **- Coco de Mer (double coconut)**
**Origin:** Maldives/Praslin/Curieuse in the Seychelles, **(E)**
The Coco de Mer is known for having the largest, heaviest seed and largest naturally-occurring fruit in the plant kingdom, and the largest female flowers of any palm species. The Coco de Mer fruit is edible, and the jelly-like flesh was once considered to have medicinal properties.

***Why is Coco de Mer called the forbidden fruit?***
Strong ocean currents frequently carried the hollow germinating nuts of Coco de Mer to the coastlines of the Maldives, where they were unknown. When these nuts reached the shores, they were no longer fruitful, and no trees grew from them.


**16** ***Neoveitchia storckii* - Vilaito Palm**
**Origin:** Fiji, **(E)**
The vilaito palm has a full, leafy canopy of 12-15 fronds per crown which feature heavy leaflets and a characteristic lateral twist to 90°. Presently the wild population of the vilaito palm, is just over 200 mature plants.


**17** ***Coccoloba pubescens* - Grand Leaf Sea Grape**
**Origin:** Caribbean, **(NT)**
The grand leaf sea grape leaves can grow to three feet in diameter. This unique plant with giant leathery leaves will produce edible fruit and is harvested in the wild for its good quality wood.


**18** ***Livistona benthamii* - Bentham's Fountain Palm/Bentham's Fan Palm**
**Origin:** Australia and New Guinea, **(E)**
This rare palm is often found growing in seasonally flooded swamp forests near mangrove margins. The teeth on the leafstalks are large and very sharp. Adult plants produce flowering 'stems' carrying many hundreds of flowers, which are followed by clusters of fruit.

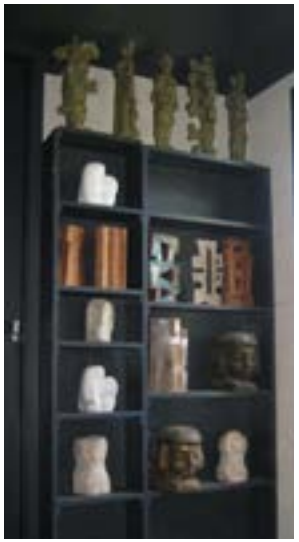
**The *Ann Norton Pollinator Garden* is a haven that protects and supports a wide variety of birds, pollinators, beneficial insects and butterflies by providing food, water and shelter in a chemical-free space all year long.**

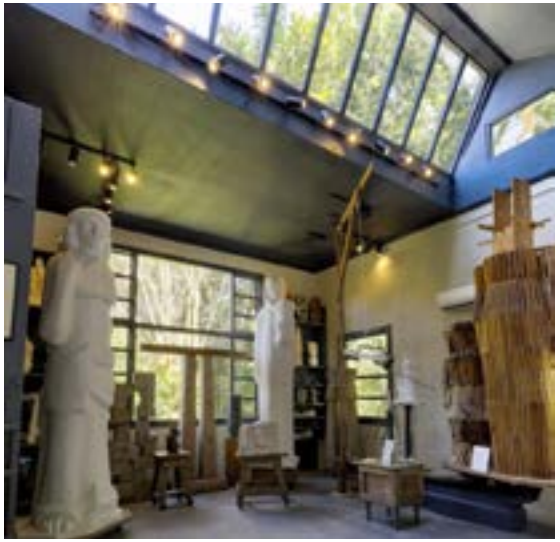
**19 Pollinator Garden**
The pollinator garden continues Ann's commitment to conservation by including many rare, endangered and threatened trees, plants and wildflowers planted in the garden. This Pollinator Garden made possible with the generosity of **The Batchelor Foundation** and **The Gentlemen of the Garden.**




# ARTIST STUDIO

Ann Norton's artist studio, built in 1948





- **Hours**
  Open Wednesday - Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm, October through June. **Closed Monday & Tuesday.**

- **While You're Here**
  Our permanent collection and visiting exhibitions are displayed in an accessible fashion throughout Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens. Please help us protect the works of art and the garden specimens by not touching.

- **Photography**
  Non-flash photography and video recording are permitted throughout the Museum. Please be considerate of others when taking photos. The use of tripods, monopods, and selfie sticks is not permitted inside the Norton House or Artist Studio. Commercial photography requires a fee and permission must be received in advance.

- **Become a Member**
  Join today and enjoy unlimited free Museum admission for one year, discounted pricing for special events and a 10% discount in the Museum Store. Become a member at the admissions desk or online at **ansg.org.**

Sponsored in part by the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Please scan here to be taken to our full list of exciting membership benefits.*