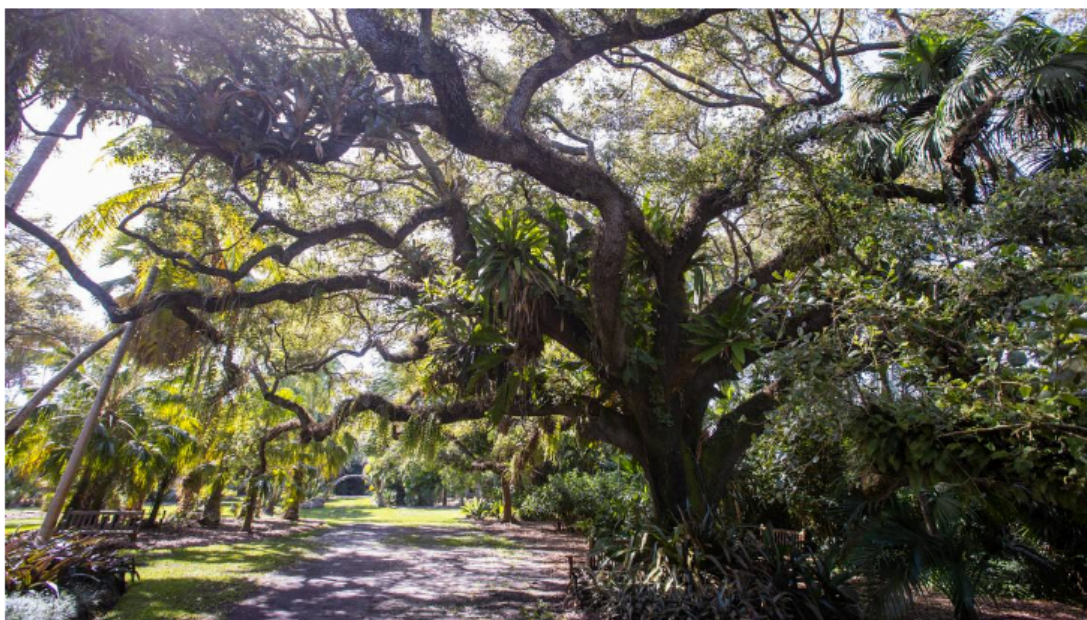


Need some fresh air? Fairchild Tropical Garden is reopening — but there are new rules

BY CONNIE OGLE

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Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden has a list of new rules to protect guests.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is reopening after shutting down for coronavirus quarantine, with new social-distancing strategies in place — and new rules about who's allowed in.

The 83-acre garden in Coral Gables reopens May 6, but this is not the same old Fairchild.

First of all, you can't just walk up and buy a ticket like you did in olden times; you buy a ticket online. Visits are limited to two-hour blocks starting at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Only 100 visitors are allowed in at a time, and all visitors must wear a mask (don't be like [those people in South Pointe Park](#)).

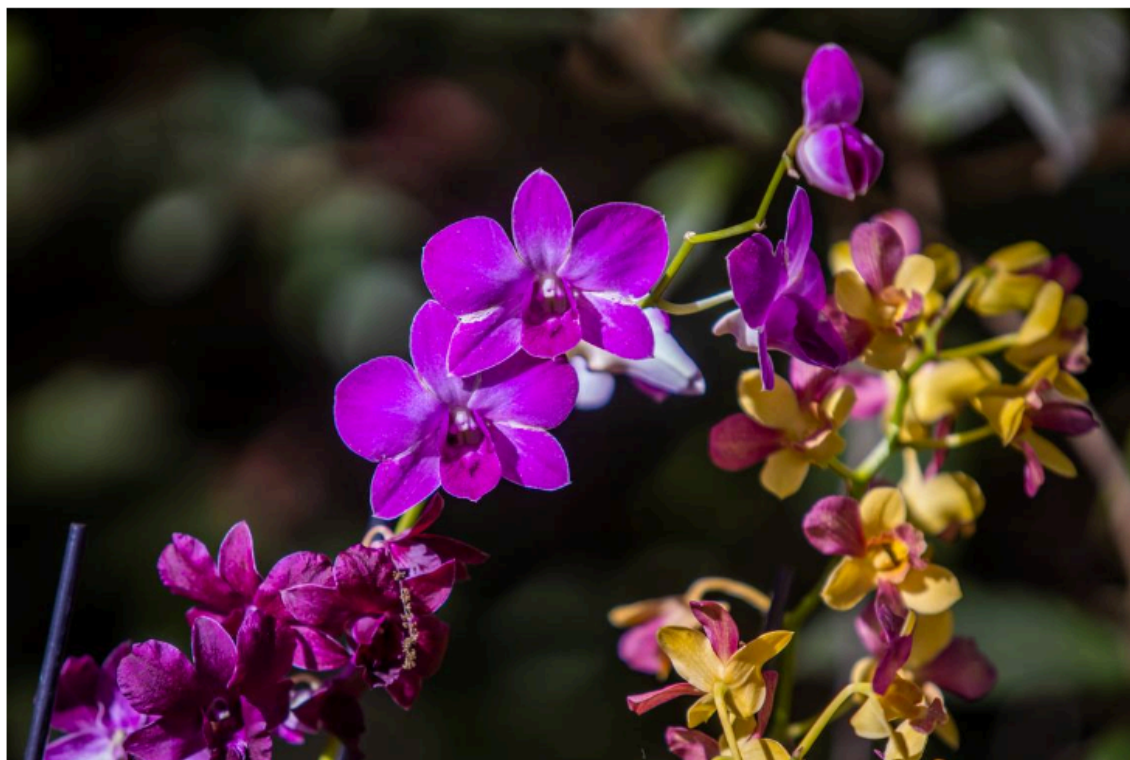
Seniors and others who identify as vulnerable can reserve spots during the special early hours from 7-9 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The two-mile route around the garden will be one-way, and the butterfly gardens will remain closed, as will the cafés, picnic areas and other indoor exhibits. Prepare to walk, too — the trams won't be running — and many seating areas are gone. Happily, some restrooms will be open, with attendants making sure people go in one at a time or with their quarantine group.

At this time, Fairchild is only allowing garden access to members before it eventually opens up to everyone; no word on when that will happen. This is a benefit to members, says chief operating officer Nannette Zapata, adding that easing into opening is easier with people familiar with the gardens.

But make no mistake: Visitors will need to follow the rules or the garden will shut down again, she says.

“If rules are broken, if we find we have to police too heavily and remind people over and over and they're not wearing masks, we're going to shut it down,” she says. “People have to be responsible for their actions.”



Orchids at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

The new hours and rules aren't the garden's first adjustment to the coronavirus quarantine. Last month it held its [popular annual spring plant sale online](#) and delivered purchases to buyers' homes. The sale was so successful, Zapata says, they restocked four times, and there are still plants for sale on the website.

Fairchild is also selling fruit on its website — after all, it's almost mango season — and will ship nationwide. It has also started a Virtual Wedding program where couples can marry at the garden and guests can attend virtually.

Zapata hopes the reopening is as successful as the garden's other quarantine programs — and she thinks a walk in the garden can be beneficial.

"There are scientific benefits to being outdoors," she says. "Miami is so beautiful this time of year. The weather is stunning. I think people are really craving to be outdoors."

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Where: 10901 Old Cutler Rd, Coral Gables

Hours: Daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Ticket reservations (for members only at this time): Available online only at www.FairchildGarden.org

Become a member: www.fairchildgarden.org/support-join/join-or-renew