



A view of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens in Miami. Travel guide voters recently selected Fairchild as the best botanical garden in North America. (Sillan Cain/Dreamstime/7762)

TRAVEL

This Miami Attraction Was Named Best in North America by Travel Guide Voters

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By *Connie Ogle*
From *Miami Herald*

Miami—The voters have spoken: Miami's garden is the greatest.

The 83-acre Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables won in the best botanical garden in North America category, beating out similar attractions in Cincinnati, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, California, Arizona and other places.

"The warm climate of Coral Gables allows tropical plants to be grown outdoors year round at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden – one of the only places in the continental United States where this is possible. Exotic butterflies fly freely within the Wings of the Tropics Conservatory, while the Rare Plant House displays 450 species of rare and endangered tropical plants from around the globe," a statement by the voters said.

The garden, which was created in 1938, is also well known for its rotating exhibits, like the current Nature Connects by Sean Kenney, which includes 30 sculptures made of giant Lego bricks, and special events, like the annual Mango Festival, which runs July 9 and 10 and celebrates all things mango-related.

One Thursday each month, the garden hosts a Sip & Stroll evening with live music, specialty cocktails and food (the next Sip & Stroll is June 9).

"We're so proud to, yet again, be named the best botanical garden in North America," said Nannette Zapata, chief operating officer of Fairchild. "The support of our members, scientists, countless volunteers, and our friends, who we call the Fairchild Family, reinforces the important work we do, the beauty of our plant collections, and the joy of being Miami's garden."

"The fact that we're now back-to-back winners tastes as sweet as our delicious mangoes," Zapata said.

A few other Florida attractions were mentioned in the 10Best list. Lion Country Safari in Loxahatchee was voted No. 5 on the Best Safari Park List, while The Florida Aquarium in Tampa was named No. 3 on the Best Aquarium list.

The Brevard Zoo in Melbourne was voted No. 4 on the Best Zoo List, while "Land of the Tiger" at Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens was named No. 5 in the Best Zoo Exhibit category.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

Where: 10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables

Hours: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily

Tickets: Adults \$24.95; seniors \$17.95; students (with ID) \$15.95; children 6-17 \$11.95; 5 and under and members free.

More information: fairchildgarden.org

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