



Let's Botanize

**2023
Annual
Report**

Contents

2 [Reflection](#)

3 [Board of Directors](#)

4 [Highlights](#)

6 [Social Media Impact](#)

7 [Financial Report](#)

8 [Looking Ahead](#)





Reflection

It was an exciting year for Let's Botanize! If we could summarize 2023 into a single theme, it would be *growth*. **We started the year having just incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit** and were eager to expand the work that we do. On social media, we found our stride with video production, conveying depth and specificity all while keeping our audience engaged. We developed collaborations with creators and institutions who we really admire including Fluent Garden, Ike's Birding Hikes, Arbor Day Foundation, Science IRL, and the UConn Botanical Conservatory.



As a newly-minted nonprofit, one of our goals for the year was to diversify the way we interact with our audience beyond social media. To this end, **we started writing popular science articles**. The first was published in The Conversation and championed the nature-based hobby of botanizing as an accessible way to improve both individual health and our relationship with the planet. The second was an article in the Plant Science Bulletin, which explained how art and science converge in the photograph. We also delivered **more in-person and virtual presentations**: at the City Club of Ithaca meeting, the Center for Historic Plants at Monticello, and during the Wild Wonder Nature Journaling Conference. And we continued to bring rigorous botany into the classroom as visiting assistant professors in Pratt Institute's Masters of Landscape Architecture program.



A new collaboration with Dr. Ash Heim (postdoctoral research fellow at Cornell University) allowed us to enter the world of Discipline-Based Educational Research (DBER), and Dr. Heim presented on Let's Botanize at the Society for the Advancement of Biology Education Research (SABER) conference. In July, **Jacob announced his new position as a tenure track faculty member at University of Tennessee Knoxville** and is excited to integrate the work of Let's Botanize into his lab. Lastly, we honed in on a vision for spreading the hobby of botanizing as core to the mission of Let's Botanize. We are also very excited to announce that **we will be writing a book with Storey Publishing** that will provide an accessible entry point into the hobby of botanizing!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Let's Botanize this year through likes, donations, t-shirt purchases, word of mouth, and more. **Your support makes this work possible!**

Board of Directors



Jacob Suissa, PhD *Co-Founder/Director*

I grew up romping around the humid wetlands of Maryland. While I didn't know it at the time, my passion for plants had already germinated. I migrated to New England where I completed my B.S. in Plant Biology at The University of Vermont, and then my Ph.D. in Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University. As a classically trained botanist and evolutionary biologist, I ask how plants build their bodies, how they function, and how they have evolved across time. Given their impressive diversity and long evolutionary history, I focus group on the ferns. In addition to my research, I am passionate about outreach, education, art, and creating a more equitable and inclusive field of science. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee Knoxville.



Ben Goulet-Scott, PhD *Co-Founder/Director*

I am a curious naturalist raised in the forests of the northeastern US (New Jersey and Massachusetts), where I learned to fish, birdwatch, and identify plants. I studied Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as an undergraduate at the University of Rochester before earning my Ph.D. in Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University. During graduate school, I discovered that the abundance and importance of plants makes them an ideal focal group to combine my passions for research, conservation, and environmental education. I currently design and manage higher education programming at Harvard Forest, and I also serve on the board of directors for the Mamoni Valley Preserve in Panama.



Sylvia Kinoshian, PhD *Director*

My interest in plants started when I was an undergraduate studying forestry at the University of Vermont. I grew up hiking and canoeing in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State and initially wanted to pursue a career in land management. However, I became more excited about plant identification, ecology, and ultimately how processes of evolution shape biodiversity. I completed my PhD at Utah State University studying fern systematics and population genetics. I'm currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Arizona working to better understand the evolution and structure of fern genomes. Let's Botanize is a way for me to share my interest in plants with the public, and I hope it helps more people enjoy the beauty of our natural world.

2023 Highlights

JAN.

Collaboration with Fluent Garden (@fluent.garden) about [Chilling & Forcing](#)

FEB.

Collaboration with Ike's Birding Hikes (@ikesbirdinghikes) about [Birds & Winter Fruits](#)



Virtual lecture on plant adaptations for the Pratt Institute Masters in Landscape Architecture program

MAR.

Launched first series of [Let's Botanize merchandise](#) based on botanical illustrations from the Biodiversity Heritage Library



APR.

Workshop on plant form at Brooklyn Botanic Garden for the Pratt Institute MLA program



Collaboration with Arbor Day Foundation (@arbordayfoundation) about [How Trees Grow](#)

MAY

Collaboration with UConn Botanical Conservatory (@uconnbotanicalconservatory) about [Living Collections](#) and [Gnetum](#)



Presentation about the hobby of botanizing for the City Club of Ithaca

JUNE

Collaboration with Science IRL (@science_irl) about [Living Stones](#)



JULY

Panelists for the Boyce Thompson Institute Summer Research Program science communication workshop

Ash Heim presented research on the educational impact of Let's Botanize social media at the Society for the Advancement of Biology Education Research (SABER) conference

AUG.

Jacob [announced his new faculty position](#) at University of Tennessee Knoxville



Virtual lecture on ecological drivers of plant evolution for the Pratt Institute MLA program

SEP.



Presented on the hobby of botanizing at the Center for Historic Plants at Monticello

OCT.

Led a virtual expedition to Panama as part of the Wild Wonder Nature Journaling Conference

Published an article promoting the hobby of botanizing in [The Conversation](#)

NOV.

Workshop on plant diversity at Brooklyn Botanic Garden for the Pratt Institute MLA program



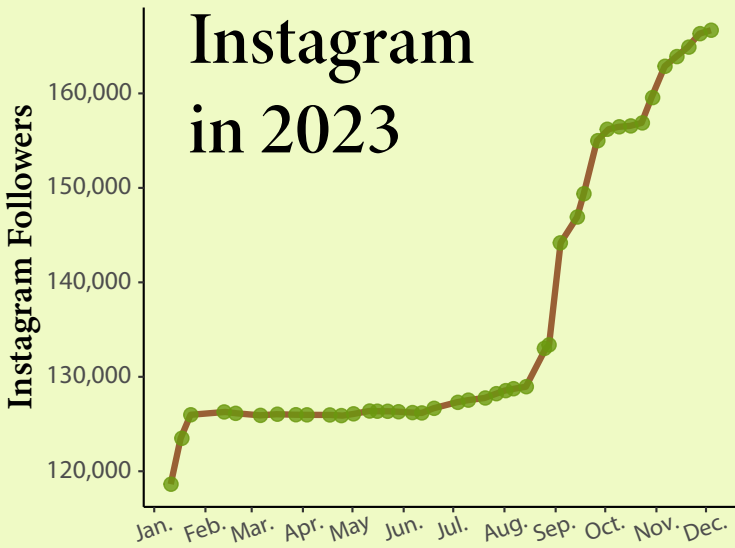
Interviewed for the [Growing Greener podcast](#)

DEC.




Published article on "[Science, Art, and the Allure of Photographs](#)" in the Plant Science Bulletin

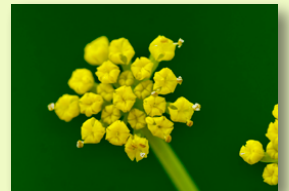
Social Media Impact



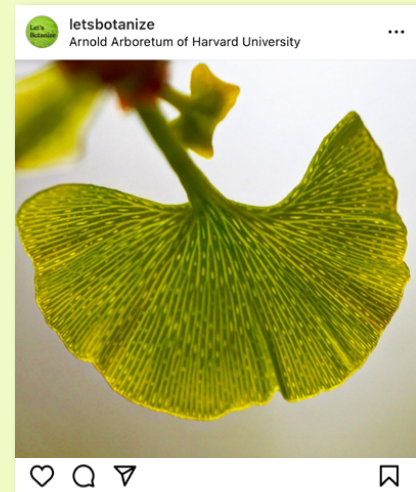
Instagram
in 2023

167,081 
Instagram Followers
50.5% increase in 2023
3,142,800
video views on IG

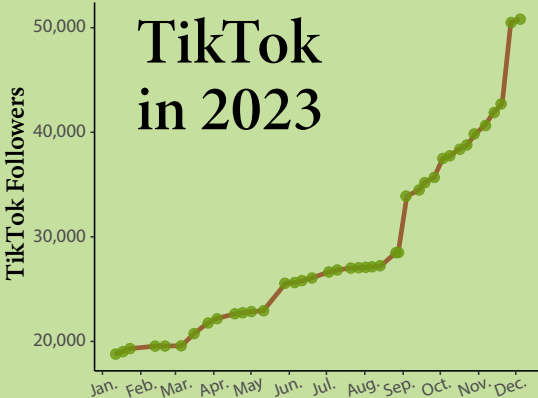
45 new videos published & **47** photos posted




“Nutlets”
562,000 views
43,200 likes
3,497 shares



“Ginkgo Leaf” 3,056 likes



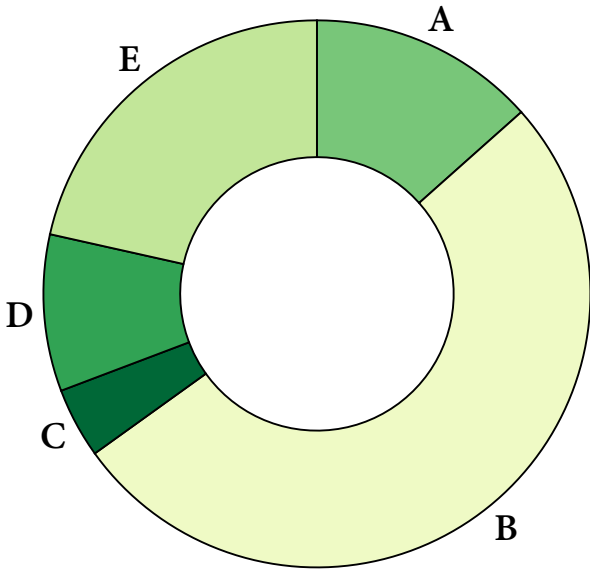
TikTok
in 2023

51,525 
TikTok Followers
175% increase in 2023
2,237,300 total views



“Ricinus” 364,700 views

Financial Report

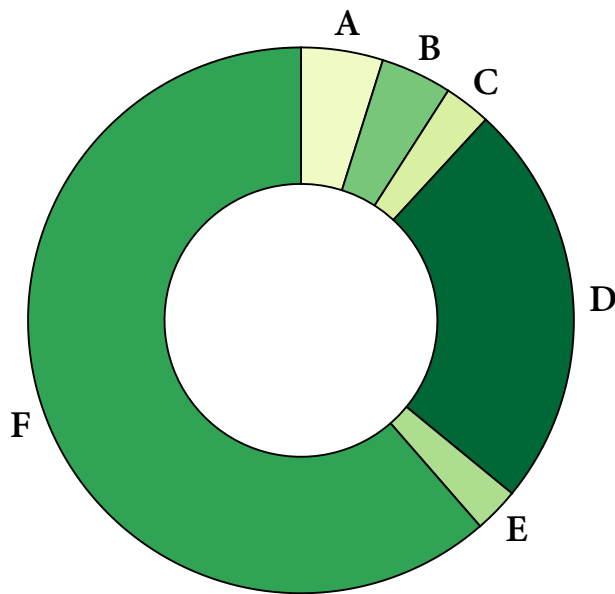


Revenue

One-time donations

^A External donations	1,429.89
^B From board members	5,500.00
^C Patreon subscriptions	442.57
^D Merchandise sales	986.04
^E Collaborations & Events	2,289.04

TOTAL REVENUE \$ 10,647.54



Expenses

Business expenses

^A Digital fees	327.82
^B State and Federal report fees	285.00
^C Equipment	187.01
^D Travel & Lodging	1,626.62
^E Merchandise for promotion	180.29
^F Research & Development	4,146.35

TOTAL EXPENSES \$ 6,753.09

REVENUE over EXPENSES \$ 3,894.45





Looking Ahead

The work we do at Let's Botanize always has been and always will be a **passion project driven by our love for plants**. This ensures that our goals and incentives align with our mission to combat the climate and biodiversity crises through botanical education. Importantly, all the funds we raise go directly towards our educational efforts, and Ben, Jacob, and Sylvia do not receive compensation for their work on Let's Botanize.

In 2024, we plan to **focus more on fundraising and development, which will allow us to expand the R&D arm of Let's Botanize** and explore new avenues for spreading curiosity and passion for plants. We will continue to broaden the ways that Let's Botanize reaches people beyond social media, seeking to increase the depth of interaction we can have with our audience. To this end, in 2024, we are more interested in writing, both digitally and in print, than in speaking engagements.

We are **cognizant of the need to increase the organization's working capacity**, and we are excited to hire a research and media intern in the near future. We also intend to bolster our educational research capability to better assess the outcomes of our work by expanding our board of directors to include an education scholar.

Finally, we are excited to develop a 5-year strategic plan in 2024, which will focus on maximizing the impact of our core message—**increasing curiosity and attention towards plant life will improve the health of individuals, communities, and our planet**. We will think creatively about new avenues of work, while renewing a commitment to our organizational strengths, and evaluate what is required over the next 5 years to meet those goals. Our primary goal remains the same: to deliver rigorous, engaging, and inspiring educational media about plant diversity to as many people as possible.

As an audience-supported organization, **our optimism, ambition, and capacity for creating positive change are possible because of the continued support of people like you**. Thank you!

Support Our Work

Let's Botanize is a qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and your donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law (EIN/Tax ID: 88-4198834). For additional information on tax deductibility, please consult your tax advisor and/or IRS publications 526 and 1771.