



THEN: Lyon was once a private research facility. **NOW:** Some 40,000 people visit the garden each year.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Honolulu's Lyon Arboretum

➤ It's the most idyllic surprise in Hawaii—a palmy Eden five miles from Waikiki. And this year, it turns 100.

A lush wonderland today, Lyon Arboretum had humble beginnings. Back in 1918, when Honolulu was a city of 80,000, farmers felled trees on the slopes above town to graze their cattle. During rainy season, torrents of water raced down the newly bare hillsides, depriving the sugarcane fields of groundwater. To stop this costly calamity, botanist Harold Lyon proposed that the sugar growers buy some mountain acreage and reforest it.

A century later, the garden named for Lyon holds 13,000 plants, from wide-canopied Hawaiian koa trees to showy Malaysian torch ginger blossoms. “We have plants from all over the world,” says Rakan Zahawi, the arboretum’s director. Now managed by the University of Hawaii, the garden

preserves rare local plants and safeguards seeds from native species.

Even if you aren’t a plant scientist, Lyon will enchant you. Step onto the Great Lawn and, before you, the long, intensely green Manoa Valley extends into the mist-softened Koolau mountains. Trails lead to 10 individual gardens, each one an epiphany. Enter Fern Valley, and you’ll be enveloped in leaves of all shapes and sizes. In the Herb and Spice Garden, scents of clove, allspice, and mint fill the air.

Zahawi loves to follow the main path up the valley to ‘Aihualama Falls. Then, he suggests, take a slight detour to pause at Inspiration Point. “It’s a beautiful lookout, and it shows the whole valley. A great spot to sit and contemplate the world.” —PETER FISH

LEFT: ANN CECIL / PHOTO RESOURCE HAWAII; RIGHT: COURTESY LYON ARBORETUM