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**CBG Hosts Premier Fundraiser with Nationally Known Tastemaker and Chef Alex Hitz**  
*10<sup>th</sup> Annual Garden Gala supports Garden's Daily Operational Expenses*

**Columbus, Ga., September 28, 2018** – Columbus Botanical Garden (CBG) proudly announces its signature fundraiser, **Garden Gala** with presenting sponsor Synovus. This year's Gala will feature Alex Hitz, an award-winning chef, TV personality, author, tastemaker, hospitality consultant, lecturer, columnist, event designer, and master host christened "the very best host in the world" by The Wall Street Journal. The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala will feature a new event, **Dinner with Alex**. Held Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at Green Island Country Club from 10:30 to 1:00, the Gala luncheon will feature a Market Place in the Bunker Room at 10:30 am while Dinner With Alex will begin at 6:00 pm at the preferred private club on the Chattahoochee River at 1300 Big Eddy Court starting with a cocktail hour.



Alex's reputation as "The Ralph Lauren of food and wine" is backed by a lifetime of entertaining and cooking. He draws on an encyclopedic knowledge of the world's upscale culinary classics as inspiration, as well as six generations of Southern tradition and hospitality. Alex will prepare a three-course meal of some of his well-loved recipes. During the evening, guests will also enjoy another special treat as they dine with the Garden's new Executive Director Stefan Bloodworth, formerly senior curator at one of the nation's top ten public gardens, Sara P. Duke Gardens at Duke University. Stefan has enjoyed a stellar career working in landscape design and will be able to share and interact with garden supporters.

CBG Interim Director Bruce Howard said, "For ten years Gala has been our lifeblood. Simply put, it generates the necessary funds for the daily operation of the Columbus Botanical Garden. We have been able to keep this Garden growing through donors' generosity and great programming like Gala. With our recent expansion, these operating funds are even more critical than ever before."

Tickets for all events may be purchased at <https://columbusbotanicalgarden.org/events/garden-gala-2018/>



### **About Alex Hitz**

Alex's down-to-earth food philosophy is firmly grounded in his mother's Atlanta kitchen as well as his childhood family home in France. As a teenager, his first job was in an Atlanta restaurant, The Patio by the River, which he later co-owned with one of his mentors, Mary Boyle Hataway. He trained at Le Cordon Bleu, Paris and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School, which became the Institute of Culinary Education. As a cooking student, he apprenticed in the kitchens of Andre Soltner at Lutèce in New York, and Michel Guerard at Eugenie- Les-Bains in France. Alex's first book, MY BEVERLY HILLS KITCHEN: Classic Southern Cooking with a French Twist, garnered editorial raves from The Wall Street Journal, Vogue, Vanity Fair, Departures, Southern Living, O, House Beautiful, and The New York Times. Alex has been a frequent guest on TODAY, The Chew, Access Hollywood, CBS Morning and more than 40 local television broadcasts. As a consultant to leading hotels, restaurants, non-profit organizations, and country clubs, Alex collaborates with clients to define, design and deliver a signature guest experience. Alex travels 40 weeks a year: cooking, lecturing, and entertaining for parties of 5 to 5000. When he is not traveling, he lives between New York City and Los Angeles. He is writing his second book.

### **About Columbus Botanical Garden**

Nestled in North Columbus amid shopping and eateries, Columbus Botanical Garden operates as a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to develop gardens, protect woodland, and provide educational programs that stimulate the imagination and deepen our understanding and appreciation of nature. This preserved jewel of pine and hardwood forest is a remnant reminder of the native Central Georgia landscape that is becoming more scarce as the region continues to develop. Since its founding in 1999 with a gift of acreage and buildings from the children and families of Lillie Belle Kimbrough Adams and later approved by the Columbus City Council, Columbus Botanical Garden (CBG) has been the steward of a 23-acre rolling property located about 6 miles northeast of downtown Columbus. With its recent expansion to 36 acres, CBG now encompasses four developed acres, with exciting plans for tremendous development over the next three years as a result of its current \$10 million *Growing Towards Greatness* Campaign.

For more information on how you can participate in programming, volunteer or donate, please visit [www.columbusbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.columbusbotanicalgarden.org), follow us on Instagram @Columbus\_Botanical\_Garden, like us on FaceBook at [www.facebook.com/columbusbotanicalgarden](http://www.facebook.com/columbusbotanicalgarden), contact our offices at 706.327.8400, email us at [contactus@columbusbotanicalgarden.org](mailto:contactus@columbusbotanicalgarden.org) or visit our offices at 3603 Weems Road, Columbus, Ga. 31909.

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