Who is Piet Oudolf?
Piet Oudolf, who is based in the Netherlands, is the number one public garden designer in the world today. He is the genius behind the Lurie Garden in Chicago and the High Line in New York. He is also a best selling author of nine books and is recognized for his plant knowledge and artistry and for creating compelling gardens that are open year round.

How big will this garden be?
Depending on the final configuration, the garden itself will be just under two acres including garden paths, seating and observation mounds sprinkled throughout the beds. It will be accessible to those with limited mobility and can accommodate strollers and wheelchairs.

Where will it be located?
The garden will be installed on the green turf in front of the Nancy Brown Peace Carillon on Belle Isle. The site is anchored by the glass conservatory to the east; the Remick Band Shell to the west; and the US and Canadian peace monument to the north with the picnic area across the road.

How much will it cost?
The overall total for the garden including its design, plants, installation and perpetual maintenance will be around $3 million. Oudolf will only design and install public gardens if there is an endowment to cover yearly maintenance costs.

How did Detroit attract Piet Oudolf?
Impressed by his work and believing it to be a great fit for Belle Isle and the city, the Garden Club of Michigan (GCM) mailed Piet Oudolf a “love letter from Detroit” in late 2016. In early April 2017 he came to Detroit for the first time and identified the Belle Isle site for his first Detroit garden. GCM raised the money for the design commission and worked with the DNR and the Belle Isle Conservancy (BIC) to secure the garden site. As the project moved into the installation phase, the fiscal sponsorship of Oudolf Garden Detroit has transferred from GCM to the Belle Isle Conservancy. The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan will serve as the fiscal sponsor for the garden's endowment.

How is the Michigan DNR involved with the garden?
Since the Michigan DNR currently runs Belle Isle as a state park, we went through a public approval process for the proposed garden. Understanding what a world-class attraction a Piet Oudolf garden would be, Michigan DNR Director Keith Creagh told Piet in April 2017, “We want you on Belle Isle”. We have a signed agreement with the DNR for this garden to be designed, installed and maintained on this site as long as funding is secured. Beginning in 2019, there will be no Belle Isle Grand Prix grandstand erected on the site. It will be secured and ready for the installation of the garden.

What is the time frame for the garden's installation?
The plants for the garden need to be ordered in September 2018 in order to begin planting in June and September 2019. We need to have raised much of the money for the installation by the end of this summer to pay for the plants. In 2018, we are focused on raising the money for the garden, finalizing Piet’s garden design and plant plan, and ordering the plants. In 2019 the garden will be installed. At that time, we need to have an approximate $2 million endowment in place to maintain the garden in perpetuity.
What kind of plants will be used?
Piet favors regional natives as well as other hardy, well-behaved perennials, grasses and bulbs. He is a renowned plantsman and former nursery owner and does not use invasive plants. Oudolf plantings are all about harmony, spontaneity, sustainability and durability year after year. Piet is renowned as a leader of the “Dutch wave” style of plant-centric, naturalistic perennial gardening. His gardens attract numerous birds, insects, butterflies and pollinators (and people too!).

How will the garden be maintained?
Oudolf and his friend Roy Diblik believe in sustainable gardening practices emphasizing ‘right plant, right place’ and healthy soil. An annual garden cut-down is accomplished with a large mulching mower that in turn provides living mulch on the garden beds. This is done in late winter just before the first signs of spring growth, and allows for our garden to be open and exciting year round. His public gardens have a paid head gardener or lead horticulturist who oversees the maintenance along with part time help and volunteers. Oudolf visits all his public gardens regularly to check in and make any needed adjustments.

How will this garden impact Belle Isle, Detroit and the region?
Oudolf’s public gardens are artistic masterpieces that draw visitors from near and far. His Lurie Garden in Chicago attracts 10 million visitors a year. His naturalistic, sustainable and approachable style is also a great fit for Detroit and the region with all of its green potential. Though small in scale compared to some other projects, this garden will have an outsized impact in terms of engagement and economic return.

What community engagement and volunteer opportunities will be associated with the garden?
To succeed, this garden project needs volunteers as well as feedback and engagement with the community. There will be events, workshops and planting opportunities associated with Oudolf Garden Detroit. Please visit our website at www.oudolfgardendetroit.org, scroll down and fill in the volunteer form.

How can I donate to the garden?
You can donate via PayPal online at www.oudolfgardendetroit.org/donate or you can mail a check made out to BIC/Oudolf Garden Detroit and mail in care of Oudolf Garden Detroit at 300 River Place Drive, Suite 2800, Detroit, MI 48207.

Is my donation tax deductible?
Yes. The Belle Isle Conservancy is a 501(c)3 and is serving as the fiscal sponsor for Oudolf Garden Detroit during the project’s installation phase.

How do I stay updated about the garden?
We are happy to add you to our information list – fill out the newsletter form on the website www.oudolfgardendetroit.org and follow us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/OudolfGardenDetroit/ and Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/oudolfgardendetroit/.

My business works in the green industry. How can I get involved?
Please share your interest or ideas with us via our website or email us at info@oudolfgardendetroit.org.

What is Oudolf Garden Detroit?
Oudolf Garden Detroit is a volunteer group dedicated to placing and maintaining a Piet Oudolf designed garden on Belle Isle in Detroit. The Belle Isle Conservancy, a 501(c)3 dedicated to improving Belle Isle for the people of southeast Michigan and its visitors serves as the fiscal sponsor for Oudolf Garden Detroit. Piet Oudolf is the internationally renowned Dutch garden designer and horticulturist who created the High Line in New York City and the Lurie Garden in Chicago. His public gardens transform urban spaces, creating compelling urban landscapes.