Those 100-year old slate-topped workbenches against the side walls offer a clue as to why this house is called the Physiology House. Built in 1902 as part of the second expansion project, this house was used for teaching plant physiology classes. Smith faculty encouraged the study of science, as Victorian-garbed young women conducted botanical experiments on these benches. The adjoining greenhouse to the rear of the complex is the Cold Storage House, where plants that are adapted to colder conditions are stored during the winter months. Since the 1970’s, both of these greenhouses serve as home to a couple of Smith traditions that date back to the early 20th century. The Spring Bulb show in March and the Fall Chrysanthemum show in November. The events keep Botanic Garden staff members on their toes, since they must grow plants for both shows throughout the year.

Rob: “These two greenhouses are both production houses and they’re the two houses where we set up the shows, so there’s a lot of flip-flopping going on. Things come in and out of here seasonally – as we’re growing, they’re getting bigger – so we’re always moving plants around, spacing them out in different greenhouses, and then for the weeks of the show, all of a sudden, two or three greenhouses worth of plants will come into one greenhouse and fill the whole house with color. So it’s a very intensive period when you’re putting one of these shows together because you’re drawing in plants from all the other greenhouses and setting them up into one spectacular show.”

To hear more about the variety of flowers displayed in our annual shows please press #340.