



85

1939 YEARS 2024

DESERT
BOTANICAL
garden



DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN
Press Kit | Fall 2024



The Garden

Discover the tranquil vibrancy of 50,000 desert plants nestled amid the red rocks of the Papago Buttes at Desert Botanical Garden. Visitors can stroll through five thematic trails to explore plants, including towering cactus, alluring succulents and brilliant desert wildflowers. Delve deeper to experience world-class art exhibitions, festive events and so much more.

By the Numbers (as of 2023)



550K+
TOTAL ATTENDANCE



28,876
MEMBERS AND DONORS



768
NEW ACCESSIONS ADDED



50,000
PLANTS IN THE COLLECTION



99,930
TOTAL HERBARIUM SAMPLES

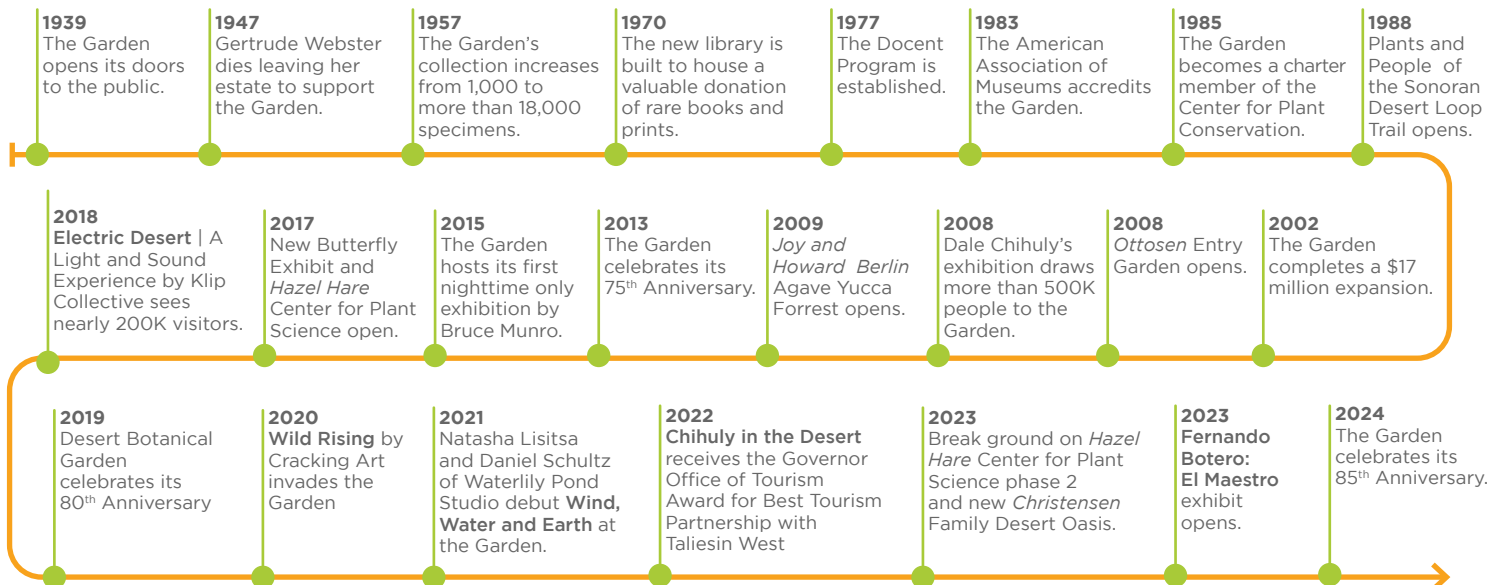


650+
VOLUNTEERS



History

In the 1930s, a small group of passionate local citizens saw the need to conserve the beautiful desert environment. One was Swedish botanist Gustaf Stark, who found like-minded residents by posting a sign that said “Save the desert,” with an arrow pointing to his home. More than eight decades later, thanks to leadership and investments from many individuals, Desert Botanical Garden has blossomed from a dream into a living museum unlike any other. See how the Garden has grown during its history into a compelling attraction and desert conservation pioneer.



Trails

Desert Botanical Garden provides a world-class experience for every visitor. Through permanent trailside exhibits, temporary art installations and seasonal experiences, the Garden ignites discovery about the desert and the plants that have adapted to this fascinating ecosystem.



DESERT DISCOVERY TRAIL

Explore the Garden's main trail and discover the many ways desert plants from around the world have adapted to the environment. Featuring a diverse array of cactus and succulents as well as historic plant collections, this core trail takes you on a journey to celebrate the beauty of the desert.



Harriet K. Maxwell DESERT WILDFLOWER TRAIL

Stroll along this meandering trail where you'll encounter brightly colored blooms as well as the pollinators they attract, like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Find out how flowers, insects and birds play an essential role in thriving desert ecosystems.



CENTER FOR DESERT LIVING TRAIL

Fragrant herbs, vegetable beds and shady spots to relax make this trail a delight for the senses. Come see what's growing this season and discover tips for creating a lush, water-wise home garden.



SONORAN DESERT NATURE TRAIL

Take our nature trail to learn how plants and animals survive in the desert with so little water. Watch for wildlife on your way to the top and take in mountain vistas that will change your point of view.



PLANTS AND PEOPLE OF THE SONORAN DESERT TRAIL

Wander through five diverse desert habitats and discover the variety of ways indigenous people have used native plants for food, fiber and shelter.



Ahearn Portal

The *Ahearn* Portal is a sanctuary at the Garden amidst the mesmerizing Sonoran Desert. With a serene fusion of native Arizona flagstone and boulders, a captivating display of agaves and striking rock formations, this thoughtfully-designed space is a harmonic convergence of rustic charm and pure elegance. Essentially, the *Ahearn* Portal doubles as a pivotal doorstep leading into the Garden's East Campus, which includes *Hazel Hare* Center for Plant Science, *Dorrance* Center and the new Exhibit Gallery. The *Ahearn* Portal serves as a gateway to research, conservation, exhibition and education.

Experiences



THE LEAF CONNECTION

Aug. 24, 2024 - Sept. 25, 2025

The Leaf Connection showcases the vibrant plant diversity of the Phoenix metro area through an intricate display of hand-made, ceramic leaves at Webster Center. With more than 1,000 ceramic pieces, each leaf's design is influenced by observations community scientists record on iNaturalist, an established online platform where nature lovers share information on biodiversity. During the course of the exhibit, local artist Mary Meyer will periodically add new ceramic leaves as more people contribute observations on iNaturalist. The Garden invites guests to engage with this distinctive art installation, offering a captivating opportunity to reconnect with nature. Exhibition unavailable during private events.



DOG DAYS AT THE GARDEN

Sept. 28, Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23

Grab your pup and a leash and hit the Garden trails Saturday mornings. Expect a day of nature-filled adventure and irresistible photo moments.



GUELAGUETZA

Oct. 5-6

Join us as we revel in Oaxaca's rich tradition of Guelaguëtza. Delight in an explosion of music, dance, culinary wonders and more.



LIGHT BLOOM

Oct. 12, 2024 - Jan. 20, 2025

LIGHT BLOOM by HYBYCOZO is a limited-time exhibit where nature and light converge. This mesmerizing display invites you to explore the Garden transformed by stunning geometric light installations that illuminate the beauty of the desert landscape in a new way. As the sun sets, Light Bloom comes to life, casting intricate shadows and vibrant hues across the Garden. Wander the trails and let the enchanting installations transport you to a magical realm where the natural world meets the abstract.

Experiences Continued



FALL PLANT SALE

Oct. 17-20

Bring the magic of the desert into your garden or green space. Explore our expansive collection of 30,000 desert-adapted plants at the Fall Plant Sale. Expert advice and a picturesque outdoor shopping experience await. Give your landscape a dreamy makeover this fall.

Free Admission. Reservations required.



DÍA DE MUERTOS

Nov. 2-3

Día de Muertos returns to the Garden with a stunning community altar, vibrant procession, food, music and more. Starting Nov. 1, a community altar centered on the legend of the Cempasúchil flower (marigold) and the story of Xóchitl and Huitzilin will be on display in Ottosen Gallery.

The romantic tale of Xóchitl and Huitzilin unfolds in this ofrenda exhibit through dramatic visuals including monumental flower sculptures and handcrafted silver hummingbirds made by artisans from Taxco de Alarcón.



Celebrating 85 YEARS

1939 - 2024

What started in 1939 as a dream to save the desert, has blossomed into the living museum you see today. Now, as we celebrate our 85th anniversary, we are excited for what the future holds. Join us for special programming every month.

September 2024 | Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

October 2024 | Celebrate the Fall Butterfly Exhibit

November 2024 | Plants & People of the Sonoran Desert Celebration

December 2024 | Celebrate Las Noches de las Luminarias with new LIGHT BLOOM experience

January 2025 | New Year, Commitment to Conservation


February 2025 | Looking Ahead 85 Years

Research & Conservation

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identified cactus as one of the most threatened groups of living organisms, but the Garden is working to protect and conserve these treasured desert plants and many others. The Garden's researchers often collaborate internationally, as well as with federal and state agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Parks Service, to protect Arizona flora and habitat.



544
Rare and Endangered Plants



4,821
Taxa (includes plant and seed)



26
Scientists
Doing Work in
9 Countries and
4 Continents



Garden scientists are fulfilling our mission through projects in arid regions around the world.



Here We Grow Again

Desert Botanical Garden recently broke ground for the Phase 2 *Hazel Hare* Center for Plant Science. This \$17 million project will advance the Garden's vision to become a global leader in desert plant conservation and the most sophisticated center in the Southwest for cactus and agave horticulture, conservation and research. Expected completion date is 2025.

Phase 2 will include:



Ahearn HORTICULTURE CENTER

A unified, energized workspace designed to inspire the passion and dedication of the Garden's horticulture team.



GREENHOUSE EAST

Doubling the amount of climate-controlled areas to propagate and nurture region-specific plants.



EXHIBITION GALLERY

This space is designed to showcase the Garden's living collections and temporary art exhibits, as well as insight to research and conservation practices.



TEACHING GARDEN HOUSE

Premier local resource for Sonoran Desert gardening and landscaping education, and will amplify the impact of the Garden's community educational programs.



SHADE PAVILION

The Shade Pavilion will be a 10,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility that redefines the care of desert plants and other succulents that require shade, humidity and temperature controls.



Expected Impacts

The work made possible by the completion of HHCPs will enable the Garden to not only identify and study threats to our ecosystem, but to also mitigate those threats and improve conditions for desert plant species. The capacity of these new facilities will accelerate the Garden's efforts to cultivate and preserve flora from arid deserts in Arizona, North America, and across the globe. Additionally, greater access to enhanced tools, technology and workspace will advance our comprehensive plant propagation program – the cornerstone of our conservation work.



These state-of-the-art spaces will also be fully equipped with conversation features such as:

- The Solar & Shade Canopy will continue our efforts in creating sustainable solutions that allow the Garden to be a part of this community for generations to come.
- Energy-Efficient Site Improvements will include additional micro solar collectors, rain water-harvesting systems and temperature and light management technology.



Mission:

The Garden's commitment to the community is to advance excellence in education, research, exhibition and conservation of desert plants of the world with emphasis on the Sonoran Desert. We will ensure that the Garden is always a compelling attraction that brings to life the many wonders of the desert.

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