



DESERT
BOTANICAL
garden

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

Press Kit | Fall 2025

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 2024)



634K+
TOTAL ATTENDANCE



28,826
MEMBERS AND
DONORS



608
NEW ACCESSIONS
ADDED



548
RARE, THREATENED &
ENDANGERED TAXA



100,000
TOTAL HERBARIUM
SAMPLES

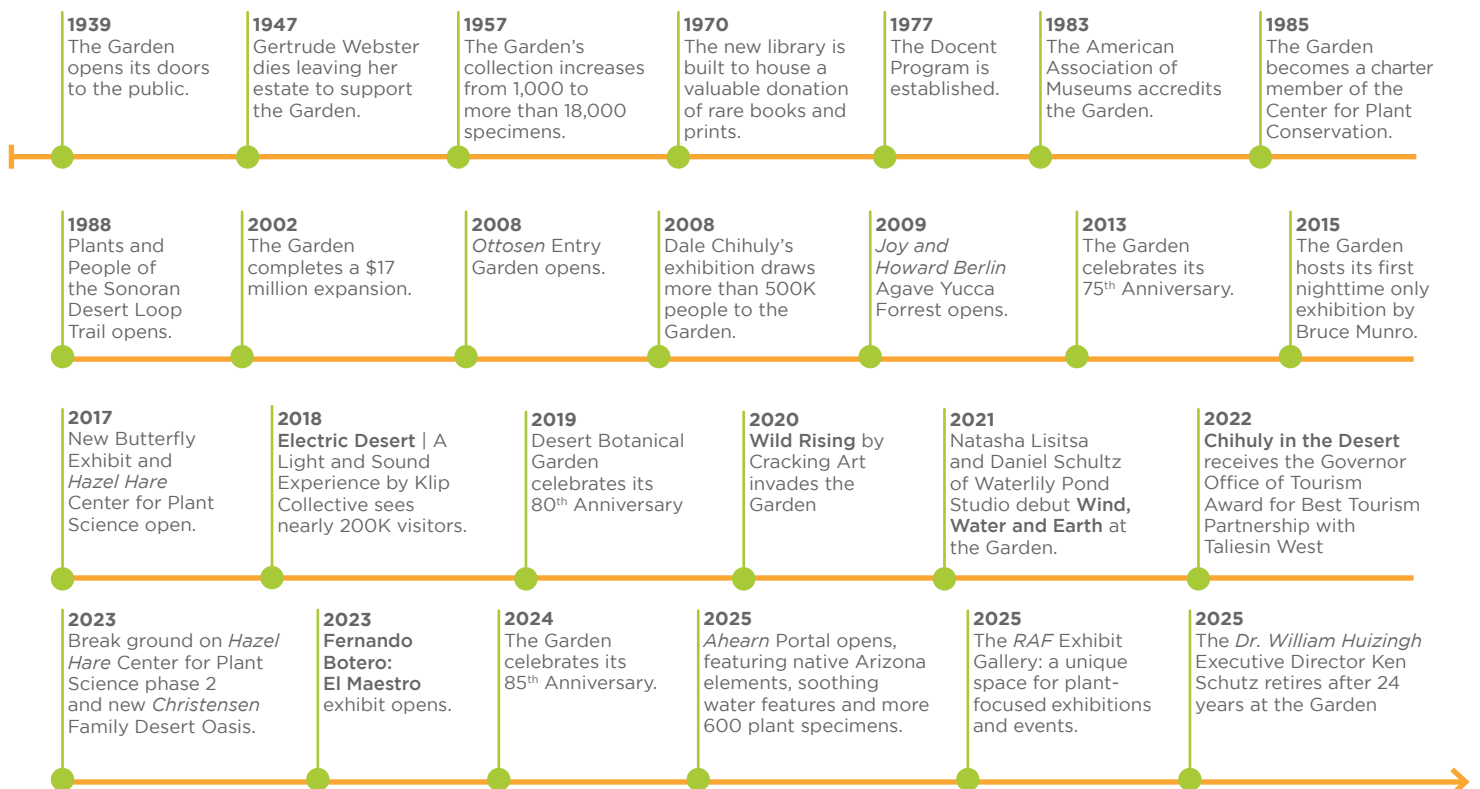


770+
VOLUNTEERS



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.



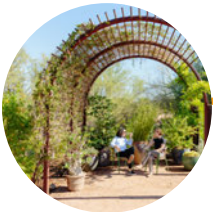
DESERT DISCOVERY TRAIL

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.



ScanLAB Projects

FRAME | RATE Desert Pulse

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

Now – May 10, 2026



FRAMERATE: Desert Pulse, a multi-sensory art exhibit by ScanLAB Projects, invites visitors into the visual and emotional energy of the Sonoran Desert. Through photography, LiDAR scanning, motion and sound, it reveals new ways of seeing and deepens appreciation for our vibrant ecosystem. **Learn more at desertpulse.org.**



Desert Pulse Experiences



BAR FLIES: LIVE AT DESERT PULSE

Oct. 23 & Nov. 20

In partnership with Bar Flies, each night storytellers will share impactful stories that build upon and reflect the messages of Desert Pulse.



DESERT VIEWS: A CONVERSATION SERIES EXPLORING DESERT PULSE

Nov. 6

Learn about the behind-the-scenes of the 3D scanning technology and conservation work that makes Desert Pulse come to life. Join us for an interactive panel discussion and conversation about capturing change in the natural world with a photographer, a research botanist and an ASU professor.

Desert Pulse Experiences Cont.



PULSE PARTIES

Nov. 7

Inspired by Desert Pulse, a dynamic multi-sensory art exhibit that captures the visual and emotional energy of the Sonoran Desert, these themed Garden parties are designed to ignite your senses and elevate your spirit. Move to the rhythm of the desert with immersive experiences featuring music, movement, creativity and more.



DESERT STUDIO: EMERGING ARTISTS SERIES

Nov. 14

Experience a fresh pick of entertainment in our new series. We will feature emerging artists, never-before heard music and the occasional album release that is sure to excite Garden members and guests.



Experiences Continued



MAJESTIC MARIPOSAS

Now – Nov. 16

Step into a world of enchantment and beauty this fall at our *Cohn* Family Butterfly Pavilion. Witness more than 1,000 Southwestern butterflies, including the stunning monarch. Don't forget to capture a moment in front of our stunning butterfly mural, and delve deeper into the fascinating lifecycle of these beautiful creatures. Relax and let the world of pollinators around you come alive.



CACTUS CLUBHOUSE

Now – May 10

Cactus Clubhouse is an engaging, hands-on nature play space designed especially for kids 12 and under. Bursting with opportunities for curiosity and discovery, it's the perfect place for young explorers to let their imaginations run wild! Join us on the weekends too for fun hands-on activities and crafts.



STRANGE GARDEN

Oct. 24-25

Explore the boo-tanical wonders of our Garden at Strange Garden. Revel in live music, immersive experiences and meet intriguing creatures. Perfect for all ages, it's spooky, fun and fascinating. Plus, kids get a free pumpkin- hurry while the stock lasts.

Experiences Continued



DOG DAYS

Oct. 25 | Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22

Kickstart your weekend with a paw-fect day out! Enjoy a scenic stroll with your furry friend Saturday mornings at the Garden and capture those adorable moments together.



DÍA DE MUERTOS

Altar On View Oct. 31 and Nov. 1-3 | Festival Nov. 1-2

Día de Muertos returns to the Garden with a stunning open-air community altar featuring the work of Oaxacan artisans in an authentic and moving display honoring lost loved ones. Visitor will enjoy face-painting, crafts, food and a moving sunset procession through the Garden.



LAS NOCHES DE LAS LUMINARIAS

Nov. 28-30 | Dec. 5-6, 12-14, 18-23, 26-30

Experience the magic of the season with glowing luminaria paths, sparkling lights, live entertainment and festive treats. Plus, be captivated by Framerate: Desert Pulse for an immersive Sonoran Desert holiday like never before.

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.



548
Rare and
Endangered
Plants



4,818
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:



Now Open

Ahearn HORTICULTURE CENTER

Opened June 2025

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.



Now Open

The RAF EXHIBITION GALLERY

Opened Feb. 2025

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 equipment 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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