



DESERT
BOTANICAL
garden

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN
Press Kit | Spring 2026

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



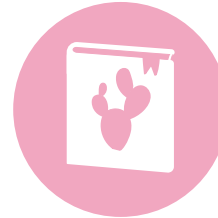
28,826
MEMBERS AND
DONORS



608
NEW ACCESSIONS
ADDED



548
RARE, THREATENED &
ENDANGERED TAXA



100,000
TOTAL HERBARIUM
SAMPLES

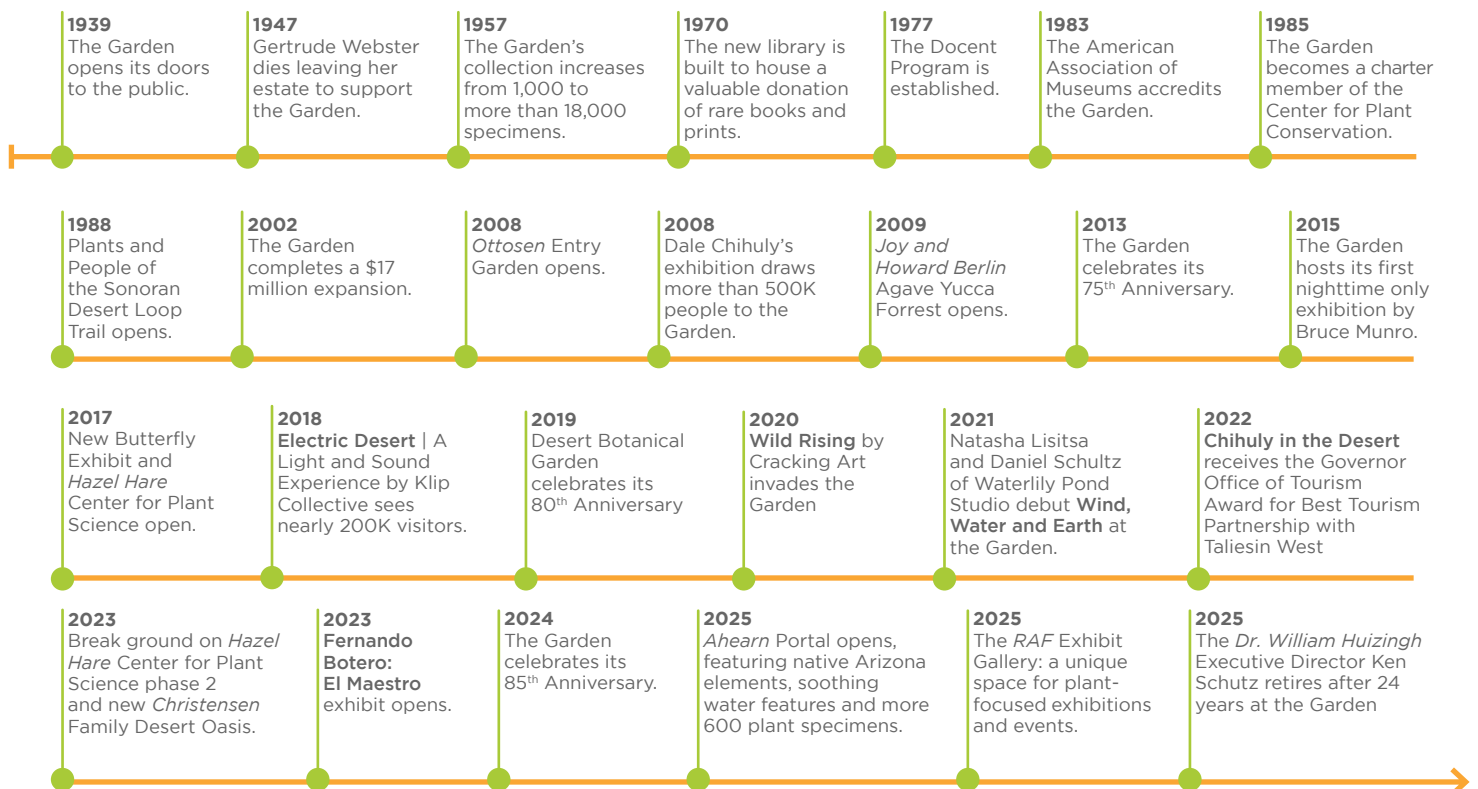


770+
VOLUNTEERS



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, motion, and sound, it reveals new ways of seeing and deepens appreciation for our vibrant ecosystem. **Learn more at desertpulse.org.**



Desert Pulse Experiences



PULSE PARTIES

Jan. 23, Feb. 13, March 13, April 10, May 1

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

Jan. 30, Feb. 27, March 27, April 17, May 8

Discover the next wave of talent with our new series—uncover emerging artists, never-before-heard music and album drops designed to spark excitement for Garden members and music lover alike! All ages event.

Experiences Continued



LAS NOCHES DE LAS LUMINARIAS

Select Dates | Now – Dec. 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.



DOG DAYS AT THE GARDEN

Select Saturdays | Jan 3. – May 9

Enjoy a weekend excursion with your four-legged friend through the Garden's trails. A paw-fect place to enjoy the outdoors together with some great photo opps.



LOTERÍA NIGHTS

Jan. 15, Feb. 12, March 12, April 9

Feel the pulse of Lotería Nights and FRAMERATE: Desert Pulse this spring. Gather your friends for a night of excitement, amazing prices and a colorful, immersive experience. Food and drinks are available for purchase.

No infants or children permitted.

Experiences Continued



MAJESTIC MARIPOSAS

Feb. 27 - May 10

Celebrate the arrival of spring at the Cohn Family Butterfly Pavilion, where hundreds of colorful Southwestern butterflies fill the air with life. Watch the monarchs and other stunning species dance from flower to flower and discover their incredible lifecycle up close. Snap a photo by our vibrant butterfly mural or simply pause and experience the serene world of pollinators surround you.



SPRING PLANT SALE

March 13-16

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



BALLET ARIZONA: AN EVENING AT DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN

May 13 - May 30

By popular demand, An Evening at Desert Botanical Garden is back and better than ever before! Surrounded by the magnificent desert landscape with the setting sun as its backdrop, this audience favorite now features two ballet experiences as a double-feature event.

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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