

DESERT OASIS



Summer at the Garden

Press Kit | Summer 2026



**DESERT
BOTANICAL
garden®**

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 2025)



650K+
TOTAL ATTENDANCE



28K+
MEMBERS AND
DONORS



820
NEW ACCESSIONS
ADDED



520
RARE, THREATENED &
ENDANGERED TAXA



100,000
TOTAL HERBARIUM
SAMPLES

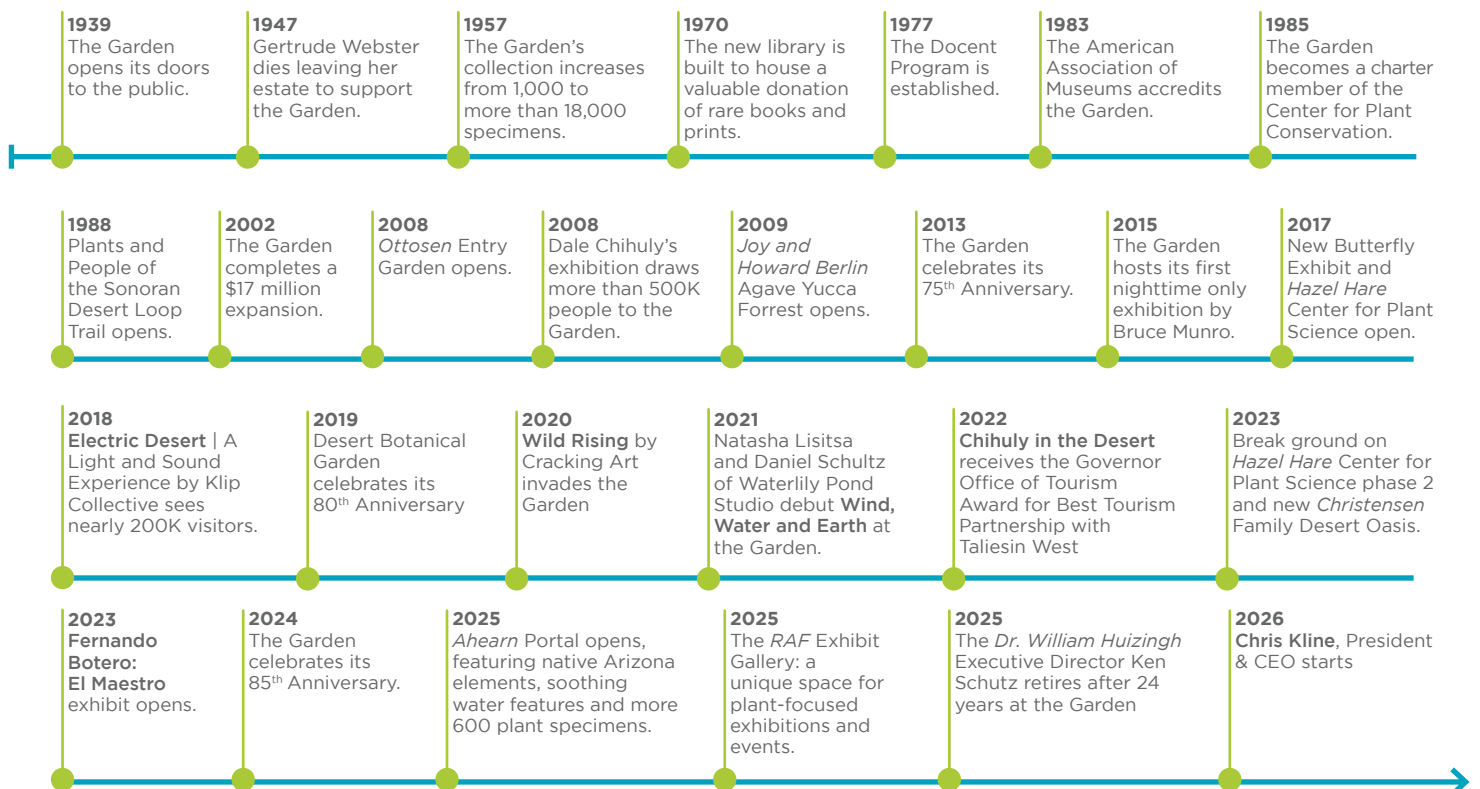


550
VOLUNTEERS



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.



A New Kind of Summer Season

Cool nights, bright mornings and endless reasons to explore the desert's most surprising season.

Desert Oasis: Summer at the Garden is structured as a season-long experience with weekly rhythms and signature events to give guests reasons to come back:

- Wellness Wednesdays (Wednesdays) – Yoga and meditation to start and end the day
- Sonoran Sippin' (Fridays) – evenings with music, drinks and social energy
- Flashlight Nights (Saturdays) – family-friendly, and date night nighttime exploration and activities
- Dog Days of Summer (Saturdays) – early morning access for guests and their dogs
- Monthly Pay What You Can Community Days – access for all guests

Experiences



DESERT OASIS GARDEN AFTER DARK

Now – Sept. 30

Enjoy this made-for-summer Garden After Dark experience as more than 12 light installations take over the trails. This shimmering display creates a playful break from the summer heat with cooling colors and designs inspired by the monsoon season.

Weekly Soundtrack:

- Monday: Throwback 80s
- Tuesday: Classical Under the Stars
- Wednesday: Chill Desert Jazz
- Thursday: 90s / 2000s Throwback
- Friday: Latin Nights
- Saturday: Today's Hits
- Sunday: Soundless Socials (Quiet Night)



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

Saturdays, Now – Sept. 26 | 6-10 a.m.

Beat the heat with your four-legged best friend. Early mornings are made for wagging tails and cool trails, and the Garden opens its paths for pups and their people to explore the desert together.

Experiences Continued



FLASHLIGHT NIGHTS

Saturdays, Now – Sept. 26

As the sun sets, the desert transforms—revealing new sights, sounds and surprises after dark. Wander the trails with a flashlight in hand, gaze at the stars through telescopes and get up close with fascinating desert animals. Each visit offers something new, with themed activities that change weekly.



WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays, Now – Sept. 30

Together, in a Sonoran Desert oasis, breathe, stretch and embrace the cooler morning air whilst enjoying Garden views with outdoor **sunrise yoga**.

Let the soothing melodies of singing bowls and gongs transport you to a state of pure relaxation and meditation with indoor **sunset sound meditation**.



SAGUARO & SKATE

Sept. 4 (21+) | Sept. 5 All Ages | Sept. 6 (21+)

Roll into the last days of summer with Saguaro & Skate, a three-day outdoor roller-disco celebration at the Garden. We're turning up the glow, the music and the desert views for one unforgettable sendoff to the season.



SUMMER SEASON FINALE WEEKEND

Sept. 4-6

Experience summer's last glowing moments with a weekend of your summer favorites. Each daily experience included in Garden admission or membership.

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.



520
Rare and
Endangered
Plants



4,847
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.

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

Opened June 2025

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.



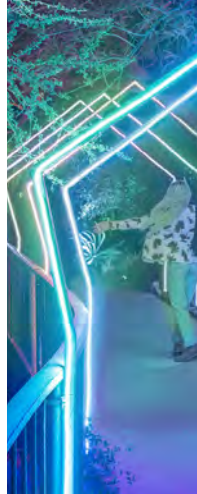
Expected Impacts

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:

Bring people together to protect and celebrate the unique wonders of the desert.

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