



SAN DIEGO
BOTANIC
GARDEN

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PLANT SCIENTISTS

The Rare Plant RaMP (Research & Mentoring for Postbaccalaureates in Biological Sciences) network was developed to further biodiversity science while also broadening experiences for individuals historically excluded from the STEM workforce. SDBG RaMP mentees are conducting research projects alongside our Science & Conservation team, including studying the plant genus *Eriodictyon* as part of our Medicinal Plants Project.

LETTER FROM OUR CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

On behalf of the entire team at San Diego Botanic Garden, we are thrilled to present our 2023 Annual Report, which demonstrates our unwavering commitment and enthusiasm for our natural world. This past year saw continued growth in visitation, educational programming, and conservation efforts. World-class exhibitions included the return of our beloved *World of Orchids* showcase, along with compelling new additions like *Savage Gardens*, and the blooming of a fabulously rare and potent Corpse Plant. Our dazzling winter showcase, *Lightscape*, was reimagined for its second year, far surpassing attendance goals and allowing visitors to experience the magic of the Garden in a whole new light. Our outstanding educational offerings inspired curiosity for people of all ages and backgrounds, encouraging authentic and lasting connections with nature.

We are incredibly proud to see significant growth in our Science, Conservation and Horticulture programs. Community partnerships with leading research institutions, non-profits, and tribal governments have been strengthened through initiatives such as our Medicinal Plants Project, and we continue to contribute to plant conservation efforts on local and global scales.

We are also thrilled to have added more than 1000 linear feet of ADA pathways showcasing spectacular garden and ocean views that ensure our Garden remains an inclusive and accessible place for all.

These achievements would not have been possible without the steadfast dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors, and supporters like you. Your passion for plants, education, and conservation fuels our mission and inspires us to reach new heights each year.

With gratitude,



Ari Novy
President & CEO



Randi Coopersmith
Chair, Board of Trustees

SDBG BY THE NUMBERS

Membership Households:

Average member households by monthly totals: 6,839



Guest Attendance:

265,000 (+2%)



Employee Growth:

Number of employees 56 (+9.8%)



Museums for All:

3,658 (+122%)



Volunteer Community:

Total number of volunteers 182

Volunteer Hours:

18,914



Online Reach:

Email subscribers: 74,281

Website Visitors:

619K (+6%)



FB Page Likes:

38.9K (+11%)

FB Page Reach:

2.1M



Instagram Followers:

63.3K (+27%)

Instagram Reach:

1.1M (+10%)



EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS



World of Orchids
March 11- April 9
Attendees: 18,592



Summer Nights
July 13, 20, 27 / August 3, 10, 17
Attendees: 834



Savage Gardens
July 1 - October 29
Attendees: 12,030



Corpse Plant Bloom
July 2 - 5
Attendees: 4,526



Teacher Resource Fair
October 10, 2023
Attendees: 180+



Lightscape

November 17, 2023 -
January 7, 2024

Dazzling **nearly 120,000 visitors**, *Lightscape* made its highly anticipated return for a second year in 2023. Attracting guests from 116 cities around the world, this unique winter experience exceeded all performance metrics and attendance goals, and increased new visitation with 52% of event survey respondents reporting they were new visitors to the Garden.

Shining Our Light

Lightscape by the Numbers:

 **119,976** attendees (+8%)

 **39** nights of show (+5%)

 **673,212** pageviews of landing page (+257%)

 **411** press articles (+19%)

Over 2 billion impressions with national and international coverage in USA Today, The Weather Channel, and Cosmopolitan Mexico, along with consistent placement in all major local media outlets including ABC 10 News, CBS 8, FOX 5, KPBS, KUSI, NBC 7, San Diego Union-Tribune, San Diego Magazine, and more.

SCIENCE & CONSERVATION

Our commitment to advancing science and conservation continue to make strides at the Garden and further afield, as we actively work to address our biggest local and global challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change, malnutrition, and environmental degradation. With a focus on native plants, medicinal plants, and food and agricultural plants, in 2023 the Science and Conservation team took part in 30 projects with regional and global impacts.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:



Investigating the global decline of plant biodiversity while broadening opportunities for post-graduates historically excluded from STEM fields via participation in the Rare Plant Research and Mentorship for Postbaccalaureates in Biological Sciences (RaMP) Network.



Building on our collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to survey, conserve, and propagate 19 native rare plant taxa found on BLM lands for restoration.



Advancements in our Medicinal Plants Project, including ongoing facilitation of the 16- institution research consortium, and the addition of more than 600 newly acquired medicinal plant taxa to the Garden's living collection.

These projects are innovative in their approach, bridging efforts that are conventionally done in isolation – conservation combined with education, habitat protection with horticulture, and wild plant botany with food security. Moreover, they foster collaboration across sectors, including local, state, and national agencies, like-minded community and nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and industry partners to work for people and the planet.



SCIENCE & CONSERVATION BY
THE NUMBERS

New collections from the wild -

- **464** - accessions (+248%)
- **1,359** - maternal lines (+17%)

Number distributed and out-planted native plants:

- **55** - To botanical gardens, universities and other partners
- **600** - At restoration sites
- Peer reviewed scientific articles published: **12** (+33%)
- Active science and conservation projects: **34** (+79%)
- Collaborating partners/organizations: **100+** (+52%)
- Rare plant occurrences surveyed in the wild: **105** (+24%)
- Days in the field: **132** (+10%)
- Federal Grants: **17** (+240%)

HORTICULTURE & FACILITIES

- **1,112** linear feet of ADA accessible pathways added
- **65** yards of decomposed granite to maintain pathways
- **2,300** yards of green waste composted
- **750** yards of mulch added to beds
- **250** yards of new top soil applied

COLLECTIONS BY THE
NUMBERS

- Current living accessions - **11,807** (+3%)
- **14,750** current living individual plants in collection (+2%)
- **4,529** propagated plants for sale at our Plant & Gift Shop (+20%)
- **8,301** total plants mapped
- **5,355** total unique taxa
- Introduced **172** new taxa and cultivars never planted or recorded at SDBG (+136%)
- **223** wild collected plant accessions added to collection (+502%)



ROOTED IN RESILIENCE

In partnership and unity with Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH), the Garden held a special ceremony on August 5, 2023 marking the addition of a new *Ginkgo biloba* (gingko tree) descended from a mother tree that survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima more than 70 years ago. The result of a multiyear collaboration with GLH, San Diego Botanic Garden is one of 25 partners in the U.S, and received its ginkgo as a seedling from Shukkeien Garden in Japan in 2020. The Survivor Tree Ceremony featured representatives from GLH, along with a community wish-writing activity encouraging visitors to express written or drawn representations of wishes for the future. A symbol of global collaboration, resilience, and peace, SDBG is proud to continue the legacy of the survivor tree for years to come.

EDUCATION

With a goal of empowering people of all backgrounds and ages to follow their curiosity and learn about the world through plants and nature, educational programming for children and adults continued to be a key pillar of focus and growth in 2023. By fostering relationships with schools throughout San Diego County and developing impactful curriculum for grades K-6, the Garden saw increases in the number of schools, youth groups, and students served, effectively offering immersive outdoor learning experiences to help create authentic connections to the natural world. Important community programs like Access Afternoons, which offers free visits and interactive activities to impacted and underserved community members, continued this year to ensure our Garden remains an inclusive and accessible place for all to enjoy.

SDBG's roster of adult programs attracted more than 1,000 participants with an array of educational offerings, including our monthly Science Seminar Series with guest speakers from around the world; workshops to hone plant knowledge and skills; and wellness classes to relax and reconnect with nature.



BUDBURST & ACCESS AFTERNOONS:

- **1,499** Participants **(+58%)**
- **34** Community Events
- **6** Community Partners

ADULT CLASSES AND PROGRAMS:

- **1,132** Total participants
- **150** Adult classes
- **73** Yoga classes
- **11** Public Butterfly Walks with **245** participants
- **11** Public Bird Walks with **236** participants



SCHOOL GROUPS AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

(students served and participated)

- **57** Schools and youth groups onsite **(+36%)**
- **48%** Title 1 schools **(up from 42% in 2022)**
- **339** Participants in self-guided tours
- **1,986** Students visited the Garden **(+46%)**
- **2,054** Students served overall (onsite and offsite) **(+12%)**
- **146** Days of SAPLinGS children's programming
- **15,271** SAPLinGS participants **(+1%)**



NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY

Consistently among the most popular seasonal programs each year, the “Grow Food, End Hunger, Save the Planet” workshop hosted by Healthy Day Partners Founder and CEO Mim Michelove invites community members to learn about the numerous benefits of gardening to create a more resilient local food system. Over six months from January to June, the workshop drew 75 participants and offered hands-on gardening experiences along with tips for growing food in spaces of all sizes to increase yields and reduce waste at home. Sponsored by the City of Encinitas, the workshop was free for attendees with a refundable deposit to encourage people of all economic backgrounds to participate. SDBG is also proud to be a dropoff location for the **Homegrown Hunger Relief program** developed by Healthy Day Partners. Through this important initiative, the **Garden collected over 500 pounds of produce** from staff and visitors last year to help nourish neighbors in need, growing a healthier and more resilient community.

THE SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING LARABEE SOCIETY MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED \$1,200 - \$10,000.
THANK YOU TO OUR 6,000+ MEMBERS OF ALL LEVELS WHO ENSURE OUR BEAUTIFUL GARDEN THRIVES DAILY.

Torrey Pine

Patrick Anderson & Ron Koren
Mark & Karla Deetjen
Martin & Carol Dickinson
Mark & Jenny Dowling
Paul Ecke & Julie Hampton
Tyler & Diane Miller
Tom & Cathy Staver
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FINANCE (Reported for FY July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

- Total revenue - **\$8,781,912 (+55%)**
 - Contributions: \$2,004,689
 - Earned income: \$6,494,598
 - Other: \$282,622
- Total Expenses - **\$8,918,319**
 - Programs: \$7,201,343
 - Management/General: \$1,058,249
 - Fundraising: \$658,727



THANKS TO OUR MAJOR DONORS AND CORPORATE PARTNERS WHO HELP US BUILD A FUTURE FOR THE GARDEN THAT BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITY, REGION, AND PLANET.

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\$100,000+

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City of Encinitas



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