

2025 Annual Report



SAN DIEGO
BOTANIC
GARDEN

Blooming with Possibilities

Our cover features the striking bloom of the Firewheel Tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*), native to eastern Australia. Thriving in our mild Mediterranean climate, it reflects the Garden's ability to cultivate diverse plant collections from around the world, advancing our work in horticulture, education, science, and conservation.

Letter from our CEO & Board Chair

As we reflect on 2025, we are filled with gratitude for the community that makes San Diego Botanic Garden a vibrant and inspiring place. This year, we welcomed more than 250,000 visitors, expanded educational programs, and advanced meaningful scientific research and conservation initiatives that reach far beyond our 37 acres.

We also proudly marked the Garden's 55th anniversary—a milestone celebrated with special events and programming throughout the year. Among the highlights was a limited-edition Prickly Pear Anniversary Ale, created in collaboration with our neighbors at Fox Point Brewing Co. Inspired by the prickly pear cactus featured in the Garden's logo, the brew paid tribute to a plant that reflects the resilience and beauty of the region we call home. More than just a number, this anniversary offered an opportunity to reflect on the Garden's enduring spirit, the strength of its community, and the vibrant future still growing ahead.

New seasonal events such as Candlelit Conservatory and Sips & Science welcomed fresh audiences, while annual traditions like *World of Orchids*, the Summer Nights Concert Series, and our fourth season of *Lightscape* drew record crowds and introduced thousands of visitors to the beauty and importance of plants. At the same time, our education programs inspired curiosity among learners of all ages—from schoolchildren experiencing the Garden as a living classroom to adults exploring creative and wellness classes rooted in nature.

Behind the scenes, our Science & Conservation team advanced habitat restoration, rare plant research, and collaborative partnerships with Tribal communities, universities, and conservation organizations. Together, these efforts help protect biodiversity and strengthen ecosystem resilience across our region.

Looking ahead, 2026 marks a meaningful leadership transition as Ari concludes his remarkable tenure as President & CEO. Together with our Board, staff, and community, we celebrate the extraordinary growth and impact achieved over the past seven years under his leadership, and look forward with confidence as the Garden continues to flourish in its next chapter.

As we move forward, we remain committed to connecting people with plants, advancing conservation, and inspiring a more sustainable future for generations to come.

With gratitude,



Ari Novy, PhD
President & CEO



Randi Coopersmith
Chair, Board of Trustees

SDBG by the numbers

Total Annual Attendance
252,388

136,303
Daytime Admission

116,085
Exhibitions & Public Programs

Member Households
6,750
Average member households
by monthly total

Museums for All
5,659 (+23%)

Employee Growth
49
Number of employees

Volunteer Community
198
Total number of volunteers
18,808
Volunteer hours

Online Reach
75,217
Email subscribers

465,336
Website visitors

43,800 (+8%)
Facebook followers

8.9M
Facebook views

80,000 (+9%)
Instagram followers

836,491
Instagram reach

Exhibitions & Events



World of Orchids
May 4 – June 1
Attendees: 10,863
(+29%)

Sound Healings
Quarterly
Attendees: 518



Candlelit Conservatory
(new annual program)
February 14
Attendees: 194



Sips & Science
(new series launch)
November 11
Attendees: 122



Fall Festival
October 11
Attendees: 879
(+21%)

Summer Nights Concert Series
Thursdays in July
Attendees: 1,800
(+146%)



Teacher Resource Fair
October 21
Attendees: 314
(+113%)

Lightscape by the numbers

101,657 Attendees

8.6M Content views
across Facebook & Instagram

40 Nights of show

495 Press articles (+15%)

Over 257 million impressions
with national and regional coverage in *Travel + Leisure*, *California Live*, and *The Los Angeles Times*, along with consistent placement in all major local media outlets including FOX 5, KPBS, KUSI, NBC 7, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *San Diego Magazine*, and more.

LIGHTSCAPE

November 14, 2025 – January 4, 2026

Back for its fourth season, *Lightscape* transformed the Garden into an enchanting one-mile trail of light, sound, and imagination. Featuring more than 20 installations by international artists, the winter experience drew over 100,000 visitors from across the region. *Lightscape* continued to elevate the Garden's profile as a premier seasonal destination, welcoming new audiences and creating lasting memories for families and friends.

Science & Conservation

The Science & Conservation team continued to advance its leadership in plant research, conservation, and habitat restoration, driving more than 30 active projects with local, regional, and global impacts. Built on a foundation of interdisciplinary science, the Garden’s work spans conservation horticulture, seed banking, rare plant surveys, ecological restoration, plant chemistry and genetics, and science outreach. This year’s efforts included expanded community-based habitat restoration in public parks and open spaces; innovative genomic and metabolomic research on agricultural and medicinal plants to better understand and promote resilience in the face of a changing environment; and collaborative partnerships with Tribal communities, federal and local agencies, nonprofits, and universities to protect and propagate rare and culturally significant species across San Diego’s diverse habitats.

Gathering of Tribes and Conservation Organizations

In February 2025, SDBG co-hosted a landmark “Gathering of Tribes and Conservation Organizations” alongside Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Flower Hill Institute, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association, and United States Botanic Garden. Over two days, approximately 100 participants—including representatives from 25 Native American Tribal Nations, 7 Indigenous-led organizations, and 25 conservation, academic, and government partners—gathered to share knowledge and perspectives on plants of cultural significance and explore opportunities for collaboration. Discussions highlighted successful partnerships and ongoing challenges while affirming our region as a biocultural hotspot shaped by deep, enduring relationships between Native communities and the natural world. The gathering fostered new connections and laid the groundwork for continued collaboration, with the potential to grow and serve as a model for other regions. SDBG continues to build meaningful community relationships to support botanical capacity building, climate resilience, ecological stewardship, and plant science respectful of traditional ecological knowledge.



Science & Conservation *by the numbers*

New collections from the wild 36 Accessions 856 Maternal lines	Peer-reviewed scientific articles published 9 Days in the field 127
Number distributed and out-planted native plants 1,600 at restoration sites	Rare plant occurrences surveyed in the wild 79



Collections *by the Numbers*

Current living accessions 9,793 12,625 current living individual plants in collection	Total unique taxa 6,059 Introduced 15 taxa and cultivars new to our collection
Total plants mapped 12,993	



Restoring Habitat & Supporting Pollinators

Working in the community, our team helped restore habitat near Park Dale Lane Elementary in Encinitas. By removing invasive iceplant and replanting hundreds of native species, the project is creating a thriving ecosystem for pollinators such as butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. As invasive plants continue to displace critical habitat across the region, this restoration work not only provides a healthy refuge for wildlife but also returns vibrant color and biodiversity to the landscape. Educational signage was installed, engaging students and teaching about the importance of pollinators. Made possible through the generous support of the Bevand family, this effort reflects the Garden’s ongoing commitment to conservation, education, and the protection of Southern California’s native ecosystems.



Education by the numbers

School Groups & Youth Programs (students served and participated)

65 Schools and youth groups onsite (+35%)

30% Title 1 schools

2,011 Students visited the Garden

143 Days of SAPLINGS

Adult Education & Wellness Programs

111 Adult classes (education & wellness)

1,848 Total participants

12 Bird Walks with 309 participants

7 Butterfly Walks with 45 participants

Expanding Access

Through the *Museums for All* program, over 5,600 visitors accessed the Garden at reduced admission in 2025, ensuring families can experience the restorative power of plants.

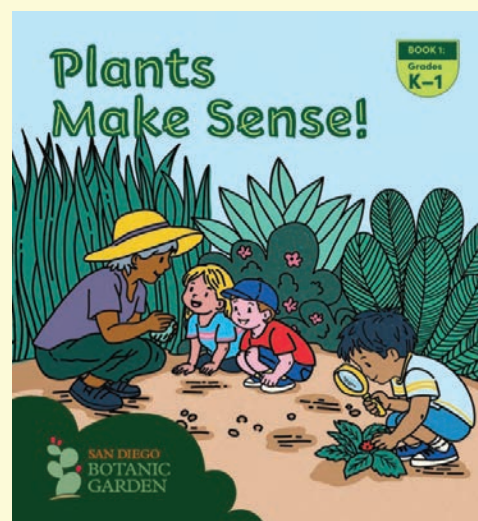
Community Connections

Education and adult programming sparked curiosity and strengthened connections with nature through expanded youth and adult offerings. New experiences, including quarterly sound healing sessions that highlight the healing power of garden spaces, along with a Sips & Science series that brings the public closer to the work of SDBG scientists, engaged participants in meaningful opportunities for wellness, learning, and discovery.

Over the past year, the Garden welcomed more than 60 schools and youth groups for onsite visits and advanced curriculum development to better support teachers and classrooms. Weekly SAPLINGS programs introduced children to the wonder of plants through hands-on exploration in the Garden helping cultivate the next generation of learners, environmental stewards, and advocates for the natural world.

Cultivating Early Learning Through Nature

San Diego Botanic Garden has reimaged its K-12 field trip experience to help students unplug and build meaningful connections with the natural world. Our new Open Exploration field trip model invites students and chaperones to follow their curiosity and discover the Garden at their own pace. Paired with grade-banded curricula aligned with Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards, and the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals, these experiences combine inquiry, exploration, and hands-on learning. With added features like volunteer-led Botanic Exploration Stations in spaces such as the Pollinator Garden, the Garden becomes an expansive outdoor classroom where nature is the teacher.



With deep gratitude, we acknowledge the 6,000+ Members, including major donors and corporate partners who sustain our mission and fuel our vision for the future. From daily care to long-term growth, your generosity allows us to shape a brighter future for our region and the planet.

San Diego Botanic Garden is proud to highlight our **President's Circle Members (\$1,200+)**, the Garden's top philanthropic supporters, for their extraordinary commitment:

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United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
West Coast Arborists

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Reported for FY July 1, 2024– June 30, 2025

TOTAL REVENUE: \$11.3M

Contributions: \$4.1M
Earned Income: \$6.6M
Other: \$600,000

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$9.4M

Programs: \$7.1M
Management / General: \$2M
Fundraising: \$250,000

NET INCOME: \$1.9M

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this report; if we made an error, please accept our apologies and contact philanthropy@sdbg.org so we may update our records.

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San Diego Botanic Garden is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. SDBG's Federal Tax ID is #95-6120581.

