Summer IS Coming

Gardeners should always be planning at least one season ahead. So while you’re busy with your spring planting, you should be planning for the summer. Watering is the main focus of most Tucson gardeners in the summertime and spring is a good time to prepare. While the weather is still relatively cool, start digging to put in passive water harvesting basins and drip irrigation. Drip irrigation doesn’t have to be buried deep in Tucson, a few inches under soil with a few inches of mulch on top is sufficient and will make the inevitable repairs easier. Also, drip irrigation doesn’t have to break the bank. While state-of-the-art systems can be very pricey, lower tech options (like an end that attaches to a garden hose or faucet) are very affordable and will make your summer watering more efficient in water, time, and labor. And, of course, a 2-3 inch layer of mulch over your root zones will also increase watering efficiency.

-Adam Farrell-Wortman
TBG Horticulture Manager
“What’s that?”

When walking around the Gardens with Adam, our Horticultural Manager, I sometimes feel like a three-year-old. Adam is infinitely patient with me as I point and ask, “What’s that?” “Is that a weed?” “Can we plant more of those? I love violets!” “Adam, Adam, did you see that our first Hellebore bloomed, and the spring flowers are coming up behind the Floral and Kitchen Ramadas?!” “What are you doing? Planting native grasses? Can I help?”

When Michael, our Butterfly Curator, mentions that he would really like a designated greenhouse space for orchid care and cultivation, the three-year-old inside me bubbles up and says, “I want one, too!” Off I send him to measure, research, and scout for a location. (We’ll figure out how to pay for it later—another three-year-old response.)

If you allow it, nature brings out the wonder and curiosity of your inner child, but eventually, the adult must take over, especially as we plan for change:

• The upcoming Grant and Alvernon Road construction begins in June. When completed, we’re confident that you’ll love the improvement as much as we will. During the process, we encourage you to adopt our staff mantra, “The road to success is always under construction!”

• This past September, thanks to a grant from TEP, the Gardens hired Landscape Architect Tres Fromme from 3Fromme Design to create a holiday master plan for TBG. Building on the tradition of Luminarias, the staff is working with local artisans to create a massive, garden-wide, curated, one-of-a-kind display—more on that later!

• A new 25-year master plan is about to be made public. Addressing expanded garden spaces, parking, a better-equipped Butterfly and Orchid Conservatory, the master plan is a blueprint for the future of your public garden. Again, the road to success is always under construction.

While we’re always thinking one, two, or 25 years ahead, today it’s all about Spring at the Gardens. A time to plan your garden (see Juliet Niehaus’ article on page 4), squeeze in a class (pages 8-9), simply enjoy the visual delights of the art throughout the gardens, or meet friends for lunch outdoors at Edna’s Eatery in the Xeriscape Garden.

While you may not have the pleasure of a personal walk-around with Adam, there’s always a gardener on property. So, the next time you get a whiff of grape Kool-Aid* near the Sensory Ramadas, or you see an unknown plant popping through the soil, let your inner three-year-old loose, and don’t be afraid to ask, “What’s that?”

Michelle Conklin
Executive Director
When I first came to Tucson from the east, I eagerly surveyed all the new planting options available to me now that I didn’t have to spend my winters perusing garden catalogues and doing my best to coax seeds to grow under fluorescent lights. The first plants I gravitated toward were salvias, also known as sages. I’d known about culinary and herbal sage, of course, but, as an eastern dweller, when I otherwise thought of “sage” I saw rolling tumbleweeds (sometimes, but not always, dead salvias), or Riders of the Purple Sage (the book by Zane Grey, not the country rock band). In short, I thought of ranches and cowboys and the dry, dry desert, not the wonderful genus of nearly one thousand plants that offer landscape and container interest throughout the year.

Salvias are members of the Mint (Lamiaceae) Family and like their relatives, most have square stems, a distinctive tubular, two lipped flower, and fragrant, volatile oils in the leaves. Often the fragrance itself, a sharp, strong, almost hypnotic smell, will shout that a plant is a likely salvia.

Not all of the myriad species and cultivars of the genus Salvia can be grown in Tucson, but those that are native to the southwest deserts, as well as many that originate in desert areas of the world, can do well in our region. Most are dry tolerant but like partial shade and some supplemental watering during the summer. Some can serve as perennials in warmer areas of our region but are best used as annuals in colder spots.

Perennial sages are often bushy, woody plants that can grow tall and wide. They’ll need a bit of space to show off their best. Here are some favorites for Tucson.

Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandia), with gray-silver leaves, clustered purple flowers, and a very strong fragrance that can infuse the air around the plant, is a wonderful pollinator plant. The small, gray leaves can substitute for culinary sage in cooking, but should be used sparingly as its flavor is quite strong.

Autumn Sage (Salvia greggii), typically red, also comes in a variety of other colors like white, pink, and peach. Though its common name is “autumn” sage, this salvia can bloom all year round, when hard freezes are rare. Red cultivars include ‘Sparkle,’ ‘Ruby Slippers,’ and ‘Red Velvet.’

Salvia farinacea, commonly called Mealycup Sage, is native to Texas and Mexico. It is a shrubby, clump-forming, tender perennial that is often sold and cultivated as an annual because of its blue spiky flowers. Cultivars are available in various shades including ‘Victoria Blue.’

One of the great fall bloomers is Salvia leucantha, Mexican Bush Sage, which has a graceful arching habit and velvety spikes of purple flowers. This sage will often die back with freezing temperatures and return in spring, but it can remain evergreen during warm winters.

Garden Sage (Salvia officinalis) is best known as a culinary herb. However, with purplish flowers in late spring, this bushy plant is also a charming perennial landscape plant.

Two species of salvia, both commonly referred to as Scarlet Sage, are the basis for a number of cultivars that serve as particularly nice annual plants. Salvia splendens, a native of Brazil, has dark green compact leaves at its base and bright spike flowers that do well in both beds and containers. You’ll often find cultivars at big box stores, the most common being ‘Saucy Red,’ ‘Grandstand Red,’ and ‘Salsa Purple.’ Salvia coccinea, native to the southeastern United States, is a great attractor of pollinators. The flowers are more widely spaced along the spike than those of Salvia splendens. Salvia coccinea cultivars, such as ‘Lady in Red’ and ‘Summer Jewel Red’ have been named All America Selections in past years. Other popular cultivars are ‘Coral Nymph’ and ‘Snow Nymph.’

Growing salvias can become a habit or perhaps even an obsession. If you’re looking for a plant that’s desert friendly, strong on color, beloved by pollinators, mammal resistant (though one can never predict what a javelina will eat), here’s a genus of plants that can keep you busy for a lifetime.
Art on the Grounds, and in the Galleries, at the Gardens

PORTER HALL GALLERY

All Things Nature
The paintings of David Conklin, on view through May 29, 2022

LEGACY GALLERY AND FRIENDS HOUSE GALLERY

Abundant Future: Cultivating Diversity in Garden, Farm, and Field

BACK PORCH GALLERY

Glory in the Gardens
Watercolors of Donna Helms
On view through May 29, 2022

IN THE GARDENS

Glass in Flight
Steel and Glass sculptures by Alex Heveri
On view through May 29, 2022

All works are for sale. A percentage of the proceeds supports the mission of the Gardens.
To learn more about the artists, visit https://tucsonbotanical.org/events/
Are you a young professional interested in expanding your network?
Do you want invitations to exclusive events with other people who share similar interests?

Join the 2150 Club!

The 2150 Club is a social and philanthropic club for young professionals with an interest in environmental sustainability, gardening, community stewardship, and supporting the mission of TBG.

For more information, please visit https://tucsonbotanical.org/2150-club/

### Upcoming Events

**Chicken Coop and Compost Demonstration Site Renovation with TANK’S**

We’ve partnered with local composter TANK’S to visit community gardens and parks- creating new gardens and water harvesting installations and bettering pre-existing ones!

This Spring, we’re going to be working together to give our Compost Demonstration site and the Chicken Coop some TLC and a paint job!

**Honey & Mead Cocktail Hour**

**Thursday, March 17 @ 5:30 p.m.**

Join us after work for mead cocktails and honeyed hors d’oeuvres in our beautiful Reception Garden. As you sip and snack, we’ll talk a little bit about our favorite pollinators’ roles around the Gardens including our partnership with local bee farm Fitz & Gentry Farms!

**Lunch and Learn with Head of Horticulture Adam Farrell-Wortman**

**Sunday, April 10 @ 1:00 p.m.**

Our Head of Horticulture will join us to discuss one of a selection of sustainability topics, from integrated pest management to what it means to run a fully organic public garden.

**Sustainability Tour of Borderlands Brewery**

**Saturday, May 21 @ 4:00 p.m.**

Tucson staple Borderlands Brewery will give us a tour of their brewing facilities (including some taste testing along the way!) They’ll show us how they brew some of the favorites, like the Noche Dulce Vanilla Porter and the Prickly Pear Wheat Ale, while keeping their water consumption and waste low.

**Tour of the World-Class Bayer Facilities in Marana**

**Saturday, August 11 @ 1:00 p.m.**

One of the largest companies in the world is growing corn for seed production for farmers around the globe using robotics and automation. Join us and learn about modern agriculture and the sustainability practices in their operations.
All TBG Community Classes are moving to a hybrid format, with select IN-PERSON classes here at the Gardens, and many virtual classes offered online via Zoom. Virtual class participants will receive a Zoom link via email for each live class two hours before the class begins. Virtual classes are recorded and participants receive a video replay that is available to enjoy at your convenience for two weeks after the date of the class.

We hope to offer more IN-PERSON classes in Summer 2022, please stay tuned!

TBG Members receive a 20% discount.

CULINARY ARTS
Nixtamal: Homemade Tortillas de Maíz – IN-PERSON in the TBG Education Classroom
Hosted by Chef Minerva Orduño Rincón
Thursday, April 21, 1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.
$75 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

ART
Watercolor Butterflies
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, March 16, 2:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Botanical Art in Watercolor: Herbs
Hosted by Adela Antoinette
Wednesday, March 23, 5:30 p.m.—7:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

GARDENING
Summer Container Garden Design for Easy-Care Desert Living
Hosted by Marylee Pangman
Saturday, March 5, 11:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.
$36 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Spring Tree Pruning 101
Hosted by Jason Isenberg
Wednesday, March 9, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Marylee Pangman of The Potted Desert
Marylee Pangman founded The Contained Gardener in 1998 as a niche business in the desert community of Tucson, Arizona. Since then, Marylee has been compelled to share all that she has learned about container gardening over three decades of blistering summers and record-breaking winters. Marylee sees container gardening as a way to have an oasis garden while conserving water as the demands of pots are far less than heavily planted areas and beds. You can find Marylee’s book, *Getting Potted in the Desert* in the TBG Gift Shop. This excellent resource includes a month-by-month planning guide, ideas for creating and caring for potted gardens, advice on container selection, and much more. More information at [thepotteddesert.com](http://thepotteddesert.com).

You’ll find Marylee’s classes listed in the Gardening classes on these pages denoted by a ▶.
City Nature Challenge 2022

Save the Dates & Participate!

TBG is partnering with Pima County Master Naturalists for the 2022 Pima County City Nature Challenge (CNC). This event provides opportunities for people to observe and learn about our local flora and fauna, while building a wider community around nature. Additionally, the data collected will be available to use for education, science, management, and conservation.

Please join us on April 29 – May 2nd to support community citizen science here in our Gardens or anywhere outside in our beautiful natural world of flora and fauna.

About the City Nature Challenge

Started in 2016 as a competition between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the City Nature Challenge (CNC) has grown into an international event, motivating people around the world to find and document wildlife in their cities. Run by the California Academy of Science and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the CNC is an annual four-day global bioblitz to work toward a common goal, and to engage in friendly competition to see which city can gather the most observations, find the most species, and engage the most people.

Goals of the City Nature Challenge:

• Connect people in urban/metro areas to their local nature
• Connect people to each other: build community in person and online around local nature
• Collect urban biodiversity data available to use for science, management, and conservation
• Grow volunteer biodiversity documentation globally
• Have fun through some friendly competition!

How to participate:

1. Create an account on the iNaturalist app on your smart phone
2. Join the Pima County CNC project for updates: https://pimamasternaturalists.org/community-science/
3. Part 1, April 29 – May 2:
   Observe WILD plants, animals, fungi, lichen, etc.; take photos using your smart phone, and upload your observations to iNaturalist app.
   You can make your observations here at the Gardens or anywhere outside in nature.
Thank You

MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES

The following donors, who made contributions between October 16, 2021 and January 15, 2022, wished for their friends and loved ones to be remembered amid the Gardens’ natural beauty. We are inspired by their generosity and honored that they chose the Gardens.

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Thank You

... to our new and renewing Saguaro, Ocotillo, Agave, Cholla, and 2150 Club members from October 16, 2021 to January 15, 2022.

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Our organization earned a 2021 Platinum Seal of Transparency! Now, everyone can see our strategy, metrics, and achievements. Check out our updated non-profit profile on Candid: https://www.guidestar.org/profile/23-7037310
Donors whose gifts have enabled the Gardens to flourish. It is our privilege to recognize these families, individuals, organizations, and businesses for the contributions that we received between October 16, 2021 and January 15, 2022.

$1000 & ABOVE

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© Rosa ‘JACarch’ (Lace Cascade)
The Gardens’ story began with a bequest over 50 years ago. When Bernice Porter imagined her family’s legacy in Tucson, she envisioned her beautiful home as a public garden. She loved sharing the lessons and joys of desert gardening. She set a plan in motion and now, decades later, we all are the beneficiaries of her generosity.

Since then, other caring people like Mrs. Porter have had a lasting impact on this historic public garden through bequests, trusts and other estate gifts. They were proud to continue their legacy in our community and provide vital support for the Gardens.

Estate gifts can touch every department and program from Horticulture to Butterfly Magic to teaching new generations about gardening in the desert. These future, planned gifts will be essential to maintain the Gardens and help it grow.

Currently, we know of 25 members who have planned a legacy at the Gardens. Their generosity will help ensure that the Gardens will not only endure but flourish.

One member wrote, “Anyone who has lived in Tucson for any length of time has seen many of the special places we’ve so loved erased by neglect or development. ‘It’s just economics,’ we are told. But I am unwilling to let our beloved Gardens become vulnerable to future economic trends.”

While the inspiration for each legacy gift is personal, one theme is shared by all. The Tucson Botanical Gardens is a precious community asset, to be cared for and protected for future generations.

If you would like information about the Gardens’ future, recognition in the Penstemon Society, or how to include the Gardens in your plans, please contact Sue Sirkus, Vice President for Development at development@tucsonbotanical.org.

Thank you!
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