MISSION STATEMENT
The Tucson Botanical Gardens connects people with plants and nature through art, science, history, and culture.

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Visit us at TucsonBotanical.org

Tucson Botanical Gardens publishes this newsletter quarterly and mails it as a benefit to members. All photos by Gardens staff and volunteers unless otherwise noted.
Designer: Theresa Reindl Bingham
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Duplicate Mailings?
Please contact Membership at (520) 326–9686, ext. *25.
Summer Rejuvenation

Welcome to summer at the Gardens, when we get busy addressing leaky roofs, irrigation systems that may reveal new drips, tree limbs that may snap in a monsoon, and then ... there’s the heat. Our gardeners and volunteer gardeners have their hands full with watering and pruning.

But it’s all good. Truly.

Worry and stress are a part of all of our daily lives. Yet inherently, we understand that by taking in the scent of monsoon rain or preemptively averting a safety hazard by pruning tree branches and checking irrigation lines before they start to break, the level of anxiety can be reduced to a manageable level. (See Adam’s article on page 4.)

Summer at TBG is a time to look at the Gardens with fresh eyes and check off tasks on our summer to-do list.

• In 2007, when the parking lot center island was constructed, the original light poles were yanked and replaced. Knowing they were hand-fabricated by a local metal worker, we couldn’t bear to toss them, so they sat in our work lot until Facility Manager Rob, along with one of our angel volunteers, pulled them out, rewired, and refreshed them. Today they beautifully flank the Porter Reception Patio and add needed light for evening events.

• This summer, you’ll see us continue caring for our trees. The Aleppo Pine in the Zen Garden and the Monterey Cypress on the northwest side of the Porter Garden are next in the summer pruning rotation plan.

• In July, the Garden Railroad will be moved to a new location. This opens up a new planting area in preparation for “what’s next.”

• Planning for the holidays begins today as we collaborate with local artists and designers to create one-of-a-kind, larger-than-life artistic props for the new LightsUp! Holiday Show at the Gardens. A steady stream of volunteers will arrive next week and continue through the summer to help organize over a million lights.

• Our Education Department will be spending their summer creating text for new outdoor interpretation for the Harrison Yocum rock and minerals collection in the Cactus and Succulent Garden.

• Now that school groups have returned, it’s time for Youth Education volunteers and staff to work on a new curriculum and programming for our next generation of nature appreciators.

• And finally, we welcome back our four-legged members (Dog Days), unveil our summer-themed VW Bug (page 7), fill our galleries with quilts and fiber art (page 6), and offer special evening events in August.

As you can tell, it’s going to be a great summer at TBG, even when there’s the threat of ... I’ll stop right here and remember the words of naturalist John Burroughs, “I go to nature to be soothed and healed and have my senses put in order.”

It’s all good. Truly.

Michelle Conklin
Executive Director
Stress Management

Adam Farrell-Wortman
TBG Director of Horticulture

One of my hopes is that the Gardens provides moments of respite for our guests. The smell of jasmine or the sound of wind rustling leaves can melt away the stresses of the day. Mountains of research have shown that being in greenspaces is a great way to improve one’s mental health.

Perhaps one reason stress is relieved in a greenspace is that being surrounded by life we are reminded that we are not alone in our struggle. All forms of life experience, and must cope with, stress. It’s one of those unavoidable aspects of being. A main driver of evolution is stress events on species. And we now know that stress can even change an individual’s genetics.

When we are in a state of stress more stressors can start piling on, the phenomenon known as, “when it rains, it pours.” A plant in stress is susceptible to many pests and diseases because the plant’s natural defenses are down. Many damaging insects are actually attracted to a plant exhibiting signs of stress. Often a plant’s cause of death is attributed to a pest when, in fact, a stress condition is the underlying factor.

Overcoming small adversities can make a plant stronger. A tree free to blow in the wind develops a sturdier trunk. Lack of nearby water sends roots out exploring, creating a larger root zone. However, not everything that “doesn’t kill us, makes us stronger,” and the same is true for plants. If the stress is significant, it forever changes the individual. Too harsh a wind can break a trunk and turn a tree into a bush, or too much water stress can forever stunt a plant’s development.

Though not scientifically exact, I find it useful to explain how plants cope with stress by using human examples. Gardening is a little like parenting (I usually avoid this analogy because of how many plants I’ve lost). We don’t want to spoil our plants because inevitably they will face stress that they need to be strong enough to overcome. But we don’t want to put so much stress upon them that they cannot be successful. And when they do face a major hardship we need to help them overcome it.

As any good self-help book would say, first we must recognize the signs of stress in order to relieve them before they cause major problems. Since it’s summer I will focus on water stress. Too little water for leafy plants presents as leaf curling and/or wilting, yellowing and dieback starting at the leaf margins, and eventually crispy leaves that don’t drop off the plant. For cacti and succulents, water stress presents as a rubbery feel, wrinkles like a raisin, and/or an increased severity in the pleats.

Once drought-stress is recognized, obviously we water, but it’s important not to overcompensate. Careening from one extreme to the other is its own type of stress event. Stopping the cause of stress, though essential, does not necessarily stop the stress. Like a ball being pushed down a hill, one can stop pushing but the ball keeps rolling. Once the plant is rehydrated a light feeding will help stop the rolling stress ball.

Finally, it’s time to reflect on how to minimize or prevent the stress in the future. That good self-help book will also say how important it is to address the root cause of the stress in order to break the destructive pattern. Perhaps the answer is as simple as setting a calendar reminder to water or putting down a layer of mulch to hold moisture in the soil for longer. Or perhaps it’s replacing the plant with one that has lower water needs, thus relieving the stress on the gardener.
Art on the Grounds and in the Galleries, at the Gardens

IN THE LEGACY GALLERY, EDUCATION CLASSROOM, AND FRIENDS HOUSE

Quilts in the Gardens Returns
May 20–August 21, 2022

Quilt for a Cause, a summer favorite, returns to the Gardens! Enjoy a variety of handmade new and re-envisioned quilts crafted by local quilters. All sizes and subject matter have been lovingly created and are available for purchase. Proceeds support Quilt for a Cause and the Tucson Botanical Gardens.

Quilts will also be for sale in the Gardens’ Gift Shop.

IN PORTER HALL GALLERY

Rooted in Fiber
Fiber Artists of Southern Arizona
June 4–August 31, 2022

Fiber Artists of Southern Arizona (FASA) is a group of established artists committed to creating and promoting textile and fiber art. Located in Tucson, Arizona, FASA artists explore many contemporary themes in their work and employ a variety of techniques: piecing, applique, collage, hand and machine stitching. Surface design techniques include hand dyeing, rust dyeing, dye discharge, painting, printing, image transfer and photography. Embellishment techniques include beading, thread painting, stamping, foiling, felting, weaving and mixed media. 11 artists’ works are included in the show.

Works are available for purchase through the Gardens’ Gift Shop. Meet the artists on June 4, 2022, from 9 am – 12 pm, and check the website for artist demonstration times and dates.

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/
IN THE IRIS GARDEN
June 1–August 31, 2022

It’s back! After a successful show as the Cactus Car in 2021, the Gardens’ classic ‘69 Volkswagen Beetle returns as the Bug-onia! Once again acting as a groovy planting container, this time the bug is filled with hundreds of colorful begonias! Find it on display in the cool shade of the Iris Garden all summer long.

ON THE GROUNDS

Take time this summer to explore the Gardens’ collection of on-loan and permanent art on the property. You’ll find metal art throughout the Gardens by Jerry Harris, Ted Morrison, and Phillip Lichtenhan; bronze and stone sculptures in the Bird Garden and Children’s Garden by Dr. Hugh Thompson; tile art by Nina Borgia-Aberle, Gail Roberts, Chris Bubany, Colleen Conlin, and Santa Theresa Tile Works; and more!

©Nest (mixed metals/ceramic)
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.

TBG Members receive a 20% discount

CULINARY ARTS

Recipe Writing Workshop
Hosted by Chef Minerva Orduño Rincón
Thursday, June 23, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

ART

Watercolor Birds
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, June 22, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Botanical Art in Watercolor:
Desert Globemallow
Hosted by Adela Antoinette
Wednesday, July 27, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Creating Desert Themed Cards
with Watercolor
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, July 6, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

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

Botanical Art in Pen and Ink:
Desert Globemallow
Hosted by Adela Antoinette
Wednesday, August 24, 5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

GARDENING

Desert Gardening Simplified
Hosted by Noelle Johnson
Friday, June 17, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Make Room for More: Inventory, Organize, and Eliminate Your Pots, Soils, and Fertilizers
Hosted by Marylee Pangman
Saturday, June 25, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
$36 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Monsoon Veggie Gardening
Hosted by Jason Isenberg
Wednesday, June 29, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

Bring the Tropics Home to Your Patio Garden
Hosted by Marylee Pangman
Saturday, July 23, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
$36 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

It’s Too Darn Hot—The Desert Monsoon Season in Your Container Gardens into Shoulder Season
Hosted by Marylee Pangman
Saturday, August 13, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
$36 Non-Member/Members 20% discount

TBG INSTRUCTOR SPOTLIGHT

Artist/Illustrator Devon Meyer

Devon works in watercolor, colored pencil, oil paint and pen and ink. She finds inspiration in the natural environment capturing the thoughts, ideas and beauty in the world around her. Painting and drawing in travel journals inspires Devon to notice subtle details and intricate connections and share these discoveries with others.

She teaches painting, drawing and art to children and adults. She recently participated in Arts Integration with the Kennedy Center. Her classes are offered at Scottsdale Artists School, the Desert Botanical Gardens and the Tucson Botanical Gardens and through camps, outreach and arts programs. She has shown her work in art shows including the Audubon Society, Art Intersection, the South Camelback Studio Tour, the Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale Artists School, and the Arizona Portrait Society. You can explore Devon’s artwork on her website at devonmeyerartist.com.

You’ll find Devon’s classes listed in the Art classes by a△.
Fiber Artists of Southern Arizona (FASA) Demonstrations

FREE in Porter Hall Gallery with paid admission

Shibori Wraps & Dyeing with Pinki Nutter
Surface Embellishment with Ruth Sharp
Saturday, June 25, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Paint Sticks with Joanne Kawchuck
Watercolor on Fabric with Swan Amity
Wall Sculpture Embellishment with Tamara Scott Anderson
Saturday, July 16, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Fabric Collage with Sharon Nemirov
Easy Fiber Landscapes with Trish Hastings
Saturday, August 20, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Science for science’s sake, or the pure pursuit of knowledge, doesn’t have enough champions, and has even fewer patrons. Institutions like TBG, that have unique resources, have a responsibility to lend those resources to such noble causes.

~Adam Farrell-Wortman, TBG Director of Horticulture
Yuccas – Scented Candles of the Desert Evening

Robert A. Raguso, Ph.D.  
Department of Neurobiology & Behavior  
Cornell University

Gwen Melissa Bode  
Department of Biology  
Syracuse University

Yuccas are emblematic plants of the Southwest, from the Mohave Desert’s iconic Joshua Trees to the Soaptree yuccas that line New Mexico’s highways and adorn its license plates. Desert plants face the twin challenges of marshalling enough energy to bloom in severe and unpredictable settings and attracting an appropriate pollinator to their flowers. The reproductive stakes are higher for yuccas, whose only pollinators are small, specialized moths whose life cycle is tied to the yucca plant. Yucca moths are called “obligate mutualists” because their larvae can mature only by eating yucca seeds, which in turn are produced only when adult yucca moths pollinate them. There is no “backup plan” for yuccas or their moths.

We are studying how yucca moths find yucca flowers and initiate their mutualistic relationship. When yuccas bloom, they produce hundreds of waxy white flowers with strong, soapy fragrances. These “flower towers” present impressive moonlit beacons, especially at the scale of a moth. However, our experiments revealed that yucca moths orient towards the scent of yucca flowers, which is full of volatile chemicals that are new to science. Such unique compounds may function as “secret handshakes,” ensuring that yuccas and yucca moths find each other during dark evenings.

Our research led us to the Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG) to study its living collection of yuccas. We wanted to sample fragrances from a group of five related yucca species whose geographic ranges appear as stepping-stones from north Texas to Chihuahua, Mexico. Such a study might require years of field work, delayed by droughts and permit requests. Instead, we used the TBG collection to sample two large, woody species (Yucca rigida and Yucca thompsoniana), and another common garden at Syracuse University to sample two smaller, non-woody species (Yucca rupicola and Yucca reverchonii). A key element of our design was having a fifth species, Yucca pallida, blooming at both locations. Flowers of Yucca pallida emit the full blend of novel volatiles typical for the genus Yucca, whereas Yucca rupicola, Yucca thompsoniana and Yucca reverchonii are noteworthy for their weak, waxy scent, devoid of the novel compounds that typify yucca scents. Most remarkably, flowers of Yucca rigida emit a sharp, plastic-like scent that combines the common precursors of the typical yucca volatiles with mushroom-scented alcohols shared only by the Joshua Tree.

These findings, made possible by TBG, suggest that moths pollinating yuccas may be more different than we think. Yucca moths were once thought to represent only a few, widespread species, but closer examination has revealed several “lookalike” species with scant distinguishing features other than reproductive organs and DNA. Indeed, if yucca fragrances function as secret handshakes for yucca moths, we may discover novel species of yucca moths that recognize unique chemical codes, hiding in plain sight. Yucca moths not only pollinate their host yucca plants, but they are surprisingly strong fliers, able to move yucca pollen several miles across dunes or desert flats before visiting a conspecific yucca flower. Such events, however rare, serve as a genetic counterbalance to increasing fragmentation of yucca populations due to sundry human activities. The emerging themes of our study – unexpected chemical and biological diversity, combined with ecological specialization – will inform plant conservation and sustainability initiatives across the USA, in which Tucson Botanical Gardens and similar organizations are crucial players.

SCENTS COLLECTED IN APRIL AND MAY 2022 BY:

Ming-Min Lee, M.S., Arnold Lab Manager, School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona  
A. Elizabeth (Betsy) Arnold, Ph.D., Professor, School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona

Jusvin Gofandi, School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona  
Adam Farrell-Wortman, Director of Horticulture, Tucson Botanical Gardens

Brooke Sykes, M.S., School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona  
Matt Adamson, Director of Marketing & Communications, Tucson Botanical Gardens
The Road to Success is always under Construction

While the City of Tucson is planning to begin road construction along Grant and Alvernon sometime this summer, we can assure our members and guests will have access into the Gardens’ parking lot. We will do our best to keep you updated as best we can via e-newsletters, social media posts, etc. Whenever construction does finally begin, we strongly encourage visitors to plan to approach the Gardens from the south to avoid the worst of construction delays. To learn more visit http://www.grantroad.info/phase-3-4

Garden Railway to be re-located over the Summer

For more than 15 years, TBG has enjoyed a wonderful partnership with the Tucson Garden Railway Society (TGRS). TGRS volunteers have lovingly built, installed, and cared for a tiny, bustling town through which locomotives, diesel engines, and trolleys have plied their trade and captivated visitors. As TBG has grown and changed through the years, the garden railway has moved to a number of locations on the grounds. Another move is in the offing! As the Gardens prepares for several new, large exhibitions and shows beginning this fall, the train will again be on the move. This summer, TGRS will move the railway to its new home in the open area immediately adjacent to the east side of the Pavilion. Be sure to stop by and check out the project!
MEMORIALS & TRIBUTES

The following donors, who made contributions between January 16 and April 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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Barbara Nixon’s Birthday ..................................Theresa Gates
Happy Birthday, Barbara!

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The following donors designated their generous contributions to the Gardens’ signature programs and projects. We are grateful for their investments which were received between January 16 and April 15, 2022.

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Dog Days of Summer
June 1 - September 30

Bring your furry friend along on your garden walks to enjoy some good smells and tasty treats from the café!

Dog Memberships:

1 dog - $20
Additional dog - $10 each

Dog memberships come with a personalized dog tag!

For more information and doggie admission prices, visit: TucsonBotanical.org/event/dogdays