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The Gardens relies on your generosity to flourish. Your gift is needed to care for the plants and animals all season long. Please give at TucsonBotanical.org/Donate.
Building a New Tradition

If you were to ask the staff how long we’ve been working on the new LightsUp! holiday event, they’d probably roll their eyes like a teenager and say, “forever.” Forever may be a bit overstated, but not so far off.

The process began in 2019 when we considered taking the route many gardens and zoos choose – lease a packaged light show. But after making a promise to honor and build on the legacy of Luminaria Nights, create a design that would emphasize the culture of the southwest, and highlight the true star of the Gardens - our trees, we decided to invest in ourselves and in our community by creating a one-of-a-kind show that reflected the culture of Tucson and work directly with local artists and vendors.

In September 2021, Tres Fromme, public garden landscape architect and holiday light designer, along with his team met with staff and Garden friends to conceptualize and create a curated experience. In August of 2022, artists began delivering oversized fabricated features that just months before were mere sketches on paper.

Running six-nights-per-week until January 15th, LightsUp! ticketholders will walk a one-mile-long path under canopies of lights and luminaria chandeliers, through a tunnel of shimmering lights, and enjoy a grove of dancing cypress trees, all while drinking hot chocolate and nibbling on seasonal treats. On selected nights, enjoy a 5-course dinner, or grab a s’more bundle, and enjoy toasting marshmallows over a fire in Edna’s Café.

While the Gardens will light up at night, it shines just as bright during the day. In February, we are very excited to welcome Sean Kenney back to the Gardens to debut his newest exhibition of sculptures made with LEGO bricks. Nature POP! is the perfect way to launch the new year. Porter Gallery will feature the paintings of Stevie Mack and Gail Roberts. The Phoenix chapter of the Colored Pencil Society of America will display their colored pencil botanicals in the Legacy Gallery, and Lex Gjurasic’s botanical paintings will hang in the Friends’ House Gallery.

While our minds are filled with strings of lights, winter classes, orchid chandeliers, and butterflies in the Cox Butterfly and Orchid Pavilion, the real work of the Gardens continues. Meticulously cared-for seasonal plantings have been installed, roses are getting pruned back, irrigation lines are being regularly checked and turned down so our trees can benefit from deep and slower watering, and we’re taking inventory of frost cloth in preparation for cold nights.

Package all of these seasonal offerings, and I’ll top it off with a wish for a happy holiday season and offer my gratitude to you for being part of this growing garden. Your time and philanthropic investment in the Gardens are deeply appreciated.

I hope to see you at the Gardens.

Michelle Conklin
Executive Director
Growing Edible Flowers

Are you one of those gardeners who loves to spend winter afternoons contemplating a patio exploding with bright orange calendulas, magenta and violet pansies, and ruby snapdragons? Or, maybe you prefer to spend your time nurturing a few of the many vegetable and herb plants you can grow here in winter? The truth is that you don’t have to choose. Growing edible flowers allows you to both admire the bright colors of a winter garden and expand your palate at the dinner table. And December and January are great months to select your edible flower seeds and get them growing. Here are some simple steps to follow.

Make sure your flowers are safe to eat. While you can find many “edible” flowers at their perky best at local garden centers, most will have been raised using chemicals and pesticides. These obviously aren’t good choices for a healthy dinner, nor are flowers you’ve snatched from the roadside where they may have been exposed to pesticides, herbicides, or auto fuel residue. Foraging flowers from the wild is a no-no since many wildflowers are endangered or have poisonous look-a-likes. And, of course, public garden flowers are off your radar, right? What’s left? Growing from seed, of course.

Choosing what to grow. Many seed companies now list their edible flower seeds separately and the seed envelopes will indicate the flowers are edible. You’ll want to select seed that’s organic, if possible. Nasturtiums, calendulas, marigolds, pansies and violets are all great options for the Tucson winter gardener. And you’ll want to opt for hybrids that have shorter growing seasons (around 60 days) to maximize your harvest before the heat of summer.

Many seed packets will discourage you from starting your plants indoors, telling you that seedlings will not transplant easily. That said, you buy them as transplants at the nursery, so why not go for it at home, too? If you are game to try, you can find ways to make biodegradable pots online from newspaper. And be sure to handle your seedlings carefully so as to not disturb the root when transplanting.

Your in-home set up. For home growing, you’ll need some simple grow lights and a heating mat to replicate the warm soil most seeds need to germinate. Plenty of books and websites discuss the nuances of indoor lighting for your seedlings. In short, fluorescent T5 bulbs are often cheapest. While they don’t provide full spectrum lighting, they are fine for seedlings and cuttings. LED lights are increasingly affordable, vary in size, and give you the broad spectrum of light for use with flowering plants as well.

Heating mats preferably come with a thermostat to control the soil temperature. They range in size and price. You won’t need the lights until you have seedlings, so if you’re short on shelf space, you can move your new plants from mat to light and make room for new seeds as you go. Lights and mats can easily be found at hardware and garden centers or online.

Use a simple organic seeding soil or light weight planting mix. Forego extra chemicals and fertilizers in your soils. You can buy trays with plastic covers to keep the seedlings in a simulated greenhouse environment if you have a particularly dry home, but be sure to give them plenty of air time as well. Too much watering and humidity can cause moldy soil or fungal infections like damping-off.

When to start your seeds. You’ll want to think at least three months ahead for most flowers. The holidays are a great time to tell family and friends that you’d welcome a nice light or small heating mat for your holiday gift! Starting your seeds in late December or early January should have your seedlings ready to harden off outdoors in late February or March. Keep that seed packet so you have basic guidelines on depth of planting and growth. Some flowers will require longer times to germinate and grow to a good size for setting outside.

As always, start small so you can learn as you go. But if you give your seeds good attention, before you know it, you’ll be brightening up that salad of winter lettuces with some spicy marigold petals or peppery nasturtiums.
Early bird ticket sales have begun for the 8th Annual SAVOR Southern Arizona Food and Wine Festival. The event gives the public a chance to experience the rich diversity of cuisine, culture, and agricultural history that make the Sonoran Desert and Tucson a famed UNESCO City of Gastronomy.

The SAVOR Southern Arizona food and wine festival will celebrate the largest local gathering of restaurants, chefs, breweries, wine, and specialty food purveyors at the lush and historic Tucson Botanical Gardens.

Presented in partnership with the Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Local First Arizona, and Tucson Botanical Gardens, all three nonprofit organizations strive to educate and promote the beauty and culture of Southern Arizona in their unique way.

“‘This spectacular community collaboration has truly grown to become the largest annual showcase of Southern Arizona’s rich and diverse culinary talent, and native foods,’” said Kate Marquez, Executive Director of the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance. “‘We look forward to highlighting our regional cuisine, and providing an opportunity for our community to come together to spend a day experiencing local foods and recipes in one of our region’s most serene settings at the Tucson Botanical Gardens.’”

The Festival will bring together stars of Tucson’s culinary scene with acclaimed regional chefs, wine and spirits experts, and local Heritage Foods movement leaders. Festival programming will include interactive cooking stations, the opportunity to engage with local chefs, live music, art experiences, a signature event raffle, and admission to the Tucson Botanical Gardens. Attendees will stroll the gardens while visiting local restaurants and exhibitors offering their signature dishes and premiere wine and cocktail samples, experiencing an intersection of place and palate.

Now in its eighth year, after taking a 2-year break due to COVID, the SAVOR Southern Arizona Food and Wine Festival will continue to highlight the distinctive cuisine of Tucson has developed from a culturally layered history and a variety of heritage food ingredients.

Tickets for the 8th Annual SAVOR Southern Arizona Food and Wine Festival are now available at https://www.saaca.org/savor.html. General admission tickets are $100 each and include menu and libations samplings from local chefs, restaurants, wineries, breweries, distilleries, and food purveyors. VIP tickets include early entry into the event, a special welcome cocktail and preferred parking for $150. This is a 21+ event. Event participants will be announced on a rolling basis beginning January 2023.
Southern Arizona Food & Wine Festival

When: Saturday, January 28, 2023

Where: Tucson Botanical Gardens, 2150 N. Alvernon Way

Cost: General admission $100 (12:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.)
VIP Tickets $150 (11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.)

Online: https://www.saaca.org/savor.html

Phone: (520) 797-3959
Art on the Grounds and in the Galleries, at the Gardens

Flower Mounds
Lex Gjurasic
January 13 – June 11, 2023

A cohesive series of verdant, undulating, biomorphic work, Lex Gjurasic’s works are an expression of her exuberance for life, and a love letter to the natural world. Her work aesthetically alludes to the folkloric floral motifs of her Slavic heritage, and the joie de vivre manifested as she connects deeply to ritual, to nature and to the Queer virtues of radical happiness and celebration as a sacred act of grieving.

A visual artist originally from Seattle, WA, Lex currently lives and works in Tucson. She has exhibited her work nationally, most notably in 2009 as a featured artist in at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, CA. One of her video projects was made part of the permanent collection at the Getty Institute as part of Miranda July’s Joanie4Jackie archive. She recently completed a mural with the City of Tucson’s Downtown Murals Project as well as a temporary immersive exhibition at the Scottsdale Public Library with Scottsdale Public Art.

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/
Viewpoints: A Botanical Twist
Gail Roberts & Stevie Mack
February 3 – April 9, 2023

*Viewpoints: A Botanical Twist* presents the work of local artists Gail Roberts and Stevie Mack. Using the theme “botanicals”, the artists chose to express their ideas with unique and innovative imagery. Gail’s viewpoint explores botanicals through still life. Her stylized flowers and vases are set in interior spaces that create the context for each piece. Stevie’s works are set in outdoor spaces where the abstract botanicals float freely in space or within and throughout the landscape.

Both artists invite you to explore and enjoy their unique twist on the theme.

Gail Roberts is known for her functional ceramics, sculptural Raku, mosaic art, and large-scale commissioned murals for public venues. Her work can be seen here at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, along with Reid Park Zoo, Brandi Fenton Memorial Park, and Saguaro National Monument East, to name a few.

Stevie Mack is a contemporary abstract painter in Tucson, Arizona. She received her BA in Fine Arts and a BS in Education at the University of Cincinnati and a master’s degree in Art Education from UA. Known throughout the country for her publishing company, Stevie produced award-winning art education videos and curriculum. She co-authored two books on the Days of the Dead, and led an art traveling program in the US, Mexico, and Guatemala.

Cultivating Colors
Colored Pencil Society of America – Phoenix Chapter 212
January 7 – June 4, 2023

*Cultivating Colors* is a brilliant exhibit featuring the beautiful florals and amazing plant life of Arizona.

The first colored pencils appeared in the 19th century and were used for “checking and marking” in documents. In 1834, Staedtler, a German company owned by Johann Sebastian Staedtler, invented colored oil pastel pencil. In the early 20th century, the production of colored pencils for art purposes commenced.

This exhibit highlights a wide spectrum of techniques, surfaces, and creativity that only colored pencil can offer. The Phoenix Chapter of the Colored Pencil Society of America (CPSA) is a part of a national nonprofit organization. Members of the Society exhibit their work throughout the county and conduct workshops and lectures.

There will be an opportunity to meet the artists at the opening reception on Saturday, January 7, 2023, from 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
Sean Kenney’s
NATURE POP!
Made with LEGO® bricks

February 4 – May 7, 2023
Sean Kenney’s Nature POP!
made with LEGO Bricks is set to premiere at Tucson Botanical Gardens from February 4 through May 7, 2023. This new exhibition from acclaimed artist Sean Kenney features over 40 sculptures made from more than 800,000 LEGO pieces and explores the beauty of nature through highly stylized, colorful displays that stand in striking contrast with their surroundings.

Produced by Imagine Exhibitions, Nature POP! blends art, science, and innovation in the display of the New York-based artist’s newest, never-before-seen sculptures. Known for his ability to make striking works of art using simple LEGO toys, Kenney pushes the boundaries of the medium in this new exhibition through his use of vibrant colors and a bold, graphical style. Inspired by the Pop art movement, Kenney’s work on Nature POP! plays on that movement’s principles by blurring the boundaries between austere and the everyday, and draws from a belief that everything is interconnected.

Nature POP! invites guests to consider how just as LEGO bricks are interconnected, so is everything in nature. The intricate displays explore the relationships that exist in nature, whether that be the delicate balance between predators and prey, the commonalities between species as they care for their young, or the impact that humankind has on the natural world. Supporting content enhances the experience with scientific facts about the creatures presented in the displays.

Most importantly, the exhibition allows visitors to appreciate both nature and the sculptures as something beautiful, and to inspire them to go home and create something wonderful themselves. Presenting a playful spin on traditional sculptural art, Nature POP! is an accessible experience for all ages.

Tom Zaller, CEO of Imagine Exhibitions shared, “Imagine Exhibitions is proud to partner with Sean Kenney to bring the creative vision of Nature POP! to Tucson Botanical Gardens. Sean’s work is not only awe-inspiring in its artistic qualities, but it’s also an incredible demonstration of the ways that human innovation and engineering can be used to solve problems and build something amazing.”

“We are very excited to welcome Sean Kenney back to the Garden to debut his new exhibition in Tucson” said Michelle Conklin, Executive Director of Tucson Botanical Gardens. “Nature POP! is the perfect way to launch the new year.”

Admire the colorful creations on display at Sean Kenney’s Nature POP! Made with LEGO Bricks, open daily to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for a limited engagement February 4 through May 7, 2023. Free with admission and for members.
All TBG Community Classes are moving to a hybrid format, with select in-person classes in the Education Classroom 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.

Register at https://tucsonbotanical.org/class-schedule/
TBG Members receive a 20% discount

CULINARY ARTS

Holiday Tamales – Sonoran Beef Tamales in Red Chile – In-Person
Hosted by Chef Minerva Orduño Rincón
Monday, December 5, 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
$75 Non-Member/$60 Member

BOTANICAL ART

Watercolor Poinsettias
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, December 14, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Botanical Greeting Cards
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, January 11, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Botanical Art in Pen and Ink:
Claret Hedgehog Cactus & Blooms
Hosted by Adela Antoinette
Wednesday, January 25, 5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Desert Birds in Watercolors
Hosted by Devon Meyer
Wednesday, February 8, 2:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Botanical Art in Watercolor:
Claret Hedgehog Cactus & Blooms
Hosted by Adela Antoinette
Wednesday, February 22, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Fused Glass Butterflies – In-Person
Hosted by Dee Taube
Wednesday, February 22, 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.
$65 Non-Member/$52 Member

GARDENING

Butterfly Gardening in the Desert
Hosted by Noelle Johnson
Friday, January 13, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Roses: Winter Pruning for Spring Blooms – In-Person
Hosted by Terry Swartz
Wednesday, January 18, 10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Plenty of Time to Pot – Colorful Winter Living in Your Desert Garden Containers
Hosted by Marylee Pangman
Thursday, January 19, 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.
$36 Non-Member/$29 Member

Organic Vegetable and Herb Gardening
Hosted by Jason Isenberg
Wednesday, January 25, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Plant Selection: Choosing the Right Plants for Your Landscape
Hosted by Noelle Johnson
Friday, February 17, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Spring Tree Pruning 101
Hosted by Jason Isenberg
Wednesday, February 22, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

NATURE & ECOLOGY

Conifers of Western North America
Hosted by Jeff Babson
Friday, December 9, 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
$30 Non-members/$24 Member

The Sky Island Mountains: Biodiversity Hotspots
Hosted by Jeff Babson
Friday, January 20, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

Arizona Trees
Hosted by Jeff Babson
Friday, February 10, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member
Rhythms of Life – Closing of Exhibition
Artist’s Talk with Clayton Bass
Friday, December 30, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., Legacy Gallery

“These works are informed by nature, the source of life, depicting reality filtered through light, texture, and sound into Dreamscapes, representing an allegorical conversation between the natural world, the artist, and the audience. Some are traditional, some are fantastical, and all are invitations to embrace our biosphere and imagine the possibilities.”

– artist Clayton Bass

Bass has been affiliated with galleries in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Huntsville and Birmingham, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; Ocean Springs, Mississippi; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and New York City. His work is included in private, corporate, and university collections in ten states. Bass has curated more than a dozen exhibitions in various media in venues in Santa Fe and the southeastern U.S. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting from East Carolina University and completed the Empire State College (SUNY) Studio Program in New York City, where he apprenticed with abstract expressionist painter Michael Goldberg.

https://claytonbass.com/works

Marty Eberhardt, author of Bones in the Back Forty
Presentation & Book Signing
Saturday, January 14, 10:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m., Porter Hall Gallery

A gardener digs up an old skeleton on the grounds of Shandley Gardens. Volunteer coordinator Bea Rivers discovers that the victim, a man who disappeared in 1969, may be connected to a small town in New Mexico, where he’d made quite a few enemies among amateur archaeologists. There may be some connection with illegal artifacts… and with Shandley Gardens’ founders. As Bea is drawn into the investigation, she meets an ever-increasing cast of quirky suspects. What began as an intriguing puzzle becomes considerably more threatening, while Bea negotiates single parenthood, a long distance relationship, and huge new job responsibilities. She needs to untangle what is happening, for Shandley Gardens and for the safety of her own family.

Marty Eberhardt is a former Executive Director of Tucson Botanical Gardens from 1986-2000. She now delights in using the right side of her brain to write fiction and poetry. DEATH IN A DESERT GARDEN, her first novel, won the Arizona Book Award for cozy mystery in 2022, the Firebird Award for western fiction, the silver Firebird Award for cozy mystery, and the bronze CIPA/EVRY award for cozy mystery. BONES IN THE BACK FORTY, out in January 2023, is the second in the Bea Rivers botanical garden mystery series. Marty has also published several poems and prose pieces. She divides her time between Tucson and the small mountain town of Silver City, NM, enjoying the flora and fauna of both.

Mystery Writers Workshop – In-Person
Hosted by author Marty Eberhardt
Saturday, January 14, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., Education Classroom,
$30 Non-Member/$24 Member

For mystery readers and writers of all kinds: Learn one author’s thought process about creating a botanical garden mystery series. How were the places chosen? The characters? How can you keep readers interested in a series, and provide the right amount of continuity? How can you include some serious issues in light literature? The author will illustrate these points with excerpts from the first novel in the Bea Rivers series, DEATH IN A DESERT GARDEN, her debut novel, as well as from BONES IN THE BACK FORTY, out in January 2023. There will be plenty of time for questions from participants.

This is an in-person event hosted in the TBG Education Classroom. Register online at https://tucsonbotanical.org/class-schedule/
As a child, I spent most of my free time outside. I was lucky to have a patch of forest behind my house where I spent hours playing. In addition to the physical health benefits, time spent in nature also contributed to the development of my favorite character traits: creativity, kindness, compassion, wonder and curiosity about the world around me. The research is starting to pile up - there are so many positive outcomes for kids who get outside and play! And in a world that seems all about screen time, it’s more important than ever to take advantage of any chance to get kids outdoors. This is the foundation of my approach to programs for kids here at the gardens. TBG’s beautiful Children’s Discovery Garden is an amazing spot for kids to enjoy and explore nature. In the coming months we plan to offer even more opportunities to learn through play. From digging and climbing to magnifying and music making, there will be several new sensory experiences to spark imagination and wonder. Stay tuned for fun for the whole family throughout the spring. We’re planning a special event for Earth Day in April, and starting in February we’ll have the Nature POP! LEGO sculpture exhibit with some fun activities that go along with it. But first, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, January 16th and TBG is making it “a day on, not a day off.” We’re teaming up with AmeriCorps members from ArizonaSERVE to host a service-learning adventure. Bring the whole family to engage in a hands-on project that will help honor Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy of community service. Registration is required, please email Sarah Haber at shaber@arizonaserve.org.

Please feel free to reach out to education2@tucsonbotanical.org to learn more about how the young people in your life can become involved with Tucson Botanical Gardens and thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this amazing nature community!
Please help.

Our community needs this oasis in the heart of Tucson to connect with plants and nature. Your gift to the Gardens will go to work right away to care for each garden bed, art exhibit, plant display, and butterfly.

However you choose to support TBG, thank you. Your gift means so much.

1 Cash
A gift by check or credit card is the most popular and direct way to care for the Gardens.

2 Gifts of Stock
Gifts of appreciated stock to the Gardens may provide you with significant tax benefits.

3 Retirement Assets
With an IRA Charitable Rollover gift, if you are 70½ years old or older, you can donate up to $100,000 from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as Tucson Botanical Gardens, without having to pay income taxes on the money. Send instructions to your fund administrator.

4 Donor Advised Fund (DAF)
If you have set up this tax-smart way to manage your charitable giving, it is a good time of year to make a grant to the Gardens from your DAF. Please have your administrator send a check to:

Tucson Botanical Gardens
ATTN: Development Office
2150 N Alvernon Way
Tucson, AZ 85712

Please note: all of your gifts to the Gardens are tax deductible to the full extent provided by law. Please consult with your legal or financial advisor to evaluate the giving method best suited to your circumstances. TBG’s federal tax identification number is 23-7037310.

Questions? Please call (520) 326-9686, *15 or *25 or email execdirector@tucsonbotanical.org

Thank you!
The Board and Staff are very grateful for the support of the following Annual Fund 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 July 15 and October 15, 2022.

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