

SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN

THE GARDEN

A newsletter for staff & volunteers



South African Garden

Weeds & Wildflowers

As the promise of new hope begins to emerge, our Garden continues to be a place of blooming joy.

We are all eager to return and feel a part of the beauty we have worked so hard to encourage. We hope that some images and words of what Spring has sprung at the Garden will bring you a sense of peace and hope.

A Message from Ari Novy, PhD

President & CEO



Dear Garden friends,

We find ourselves in unusual times. Our Garden is closed as we all do our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. Our thoughts are first and foremost on the health and safety of the community. But we can't help feeling sad that you are not able to enjoy this beautiful spring season in the Garden. We eagerly await the day when the authorities deem it safe to reopen the Garden.

In the meantime, I've been thinking about the staying power of botanic gardens. This year is San Diego Botanic Garden's 50th anniversary. We are an impressive institution after our first half century. We are only beginning to write our story.

Botanic gardens are resilient. The world's oldest, and first, botanic garden is the Orto Botanico di Padova (Botanic Garden of Padua) in Italy. It was founded in 1545 by the Venetian Republic as a place for the study of medicinal plants. It's still there today, in virtually the same configuration as when it was born. Once a botanic garden is well established, it seems to become immortal. Virtually every major botanic garden ever created, still exists.

Two years ago I had the privilege of speaking at a conference hosted at the Warsaw Botanic Garden in Poland. That garden was founded in 1818 and survived some tremendous challenges. It was virtually reduced to rubble in World War II. Its great conservatory and buildings were all destroyed and its collections severely damaged. But as Poland recovered from the tragedy of the war, the community built it back in its exact location, stronger than ever before. I was awed to visit during its 200th anniversary. No matter the challenge, botanic gardens survive and thrive so they can continue to serve their communities.

These are challenging times. But I have confidence we will get through them. San Diego Botanic Garden, like its sister institutions throughout the world, will continue to be there for us. Once the coast is clear, and we can all feel safe venturing out again, the Garden will continue to welcome all and provide a place of solace, learning and beauty.

In the meantime, we are taking good care of the Garden for the community. We're working on more distance learning and virtual tours. We're taking the occasion of this challenge to learn new skills and ways of communicating. We're also hard at work renewing our facilities and completing a few building projects.

Every cloud has its silver lining and spring comes to every garden. I look forward to celebrating spring in the Garden with you all, even if we have to postpone spring a little. Wishing you health, well-being and resilience.

Stay safe and well,

Ari Novy, PhD
President & CEO



Photo by Brandi Eide



Photos by Brandi Eide

Leucospermum x 'Blanche Ito'

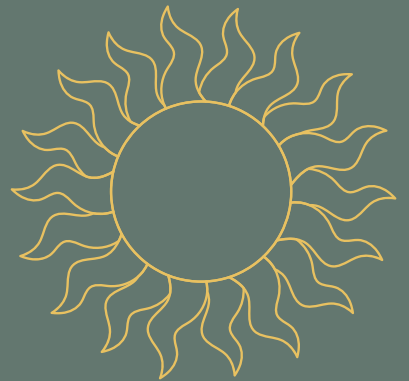
Brandi's Message

Managing Director

Hello everyone! We hope this finds you well and enjoying spring from your own yards and neighborhoods. The Garden continues to bloom and flourish, making a grand entrance into spring. The continuing rains are welcomed, and will give our plant collection a strong boost prior to the heat of summer. These rains also lessen the load on staff and supplemental irrigation, and we have taken this opportunity to continue making irrigation improvements.

Many of the staff have been busy working remotely, and there are staff working onsite maintaining our plant collections, infrastructure and construction projects. The new Horticulture and Facilities buildings are nearing completion, the Lawn House roof is finished, as is roof repair on the Gift Shop, and concrete repair to several paths. We wish you could be here for the spring floral show, but there will be plenty to appreciate when you're able to return.

Take care of yourselves and each other, consider checking in on those you can't see regularly right now. We miss you and are so thankful for each of you. To keep track of what's happening daily, follow along with what's going on in our social media feeds where we feature photos, activities and updates.



Fun at Home!

Sarah Morgan Sickler
Education Manager

All of this rain means happy plants, including weeds. In your home garden or neighborhood, you may have noticed some plants that look like shamrocks with pretty yellow flowers. Those are actually an invasive species called *Oxalis pes-caprae*.

Originally brought to the area for ornamental landscaping, Oxalis now out-competes many of our native wildflowers. They are very difficult to control because they multiply by underground bulbs instead of seeds.

You can find this out for yourself and many other fun things. Pull some weeds and try one of the 18 things to do with Oxalis!



18 things to do with Oxalis

Why do you think they are so plentiful here? What makes a weed a weed?	Dig up the plant and use it to identify the different parts. Can you find the tuber, stem, leaves, and flowers?	Count how many plants are in one area. Mark out 1 square foot. Oxalis are excellent at taking over areas.	Use the leaves to create a heart collage by gluing them to paper.	Weave or tie the flowers on their stems to make a crown or jewelry.
If you are brave and have permission, nibble on the stem or leaves to see why it is called "sourgrass" (don't eat too much!*)	 		Make your own yellow dye! Briefly simmer, (or just soak in water with a little salt in the window or fridge) flower petals in water. Dip paper or pieces of cotton cloth/string and let dry.	
What is the biggest leaf you can find?	<p>Oxalis pes-caprae, also known as sour grass or Bermuda buttercup, is an invasive species in the US. Originally from South Africa, this weed is plentiful in San Diego right now. You can identify it by its tall yellow flowers and heart-shaped leaves with purple spots. Unfortunately, it takes up the space that our native wildflowers would grow in. Do you see any growing in your yard or neighborhood? Pull some weeds and try one of the 18 things to do with Oxalis! (*The leaves and stem of Oxalis are edible, but please get permission first and do not eat too much).</p>		Find the tallest stem. How are the flowers different early in the morning and midday?	
Can you dig up the tubers? How deep are they? What do they look like? Have your parents help you cut one open.	Look for seeds or seed pods.	Can you find any other plants that have similar looking leaves?	Press the plant and flowers in a magazine or large book. Use paper to protect book pages.	How many petals does the flower have? What other parts of the flower can you find?
Create a flower bouquet for your home.		If you have permission, wash and add some to a salad for dinner*!		



San Diego BOTANIC GARDEN SDBGarden.org



A Note from Tony Gurnoe

Director of Horticulture

The San Diego Botanic Garden has been stewarding a small natural population of *Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia* and working to conserve this species *ex-situ* for decades, but seedlings in a nursery are still exceptionally rare to witness.

This species, which is also commonly known as Del Mar manzanita, only grows in a narrow strip along the coast in San Diego's southern maritime chaparral. Human development has so severely disrupted the natural environment of Del Mar manzanita that it was put on the federal endangered species list in 1996 and today more than 95% of that habitat no longer exists. It also happens to be an extremely technical and under-researched plant when it comes to knowing how to germinate and grow them in a nursery setting.

All of this makes us extremely excited to see seeds collected by SDBG's team in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and San Diego County germinating in our nursery! The only hope for the conservation of species like Del Mar manzanita is through work being done at gardens like ours, and for this particular local poster child, the future is looking a bit brighter.



Photo by Tony Gurnoe

South African Garden



Photo by Brandi Eide



I recently received an email from our dear Thelma Montag, via her daughter Terri. It shared lovely photos of "The Tenacity of Trees," showing that when we are determined to survive and persist, despite impediments, we can do it.

You can Google similar images.

Jill Gardner

Photo credit unknown