



Interim Strategic Plan – 2017-2018

November 2016

Vision

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden envisions a world where society understands the interdependency between people and plants, and acts to preserve the natural world.

Mission

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden fosters the conservation of California native plants through our gardens, education, and research, and serves as a role model of sustainable practices.

Introduction

At 90 years old, our mission is more relevant and urgent than ever. This is especially true given the high rates of “nature deficit disorder” and “plant blindness,” unprecedented drought, climate change, and continued development pressures on the California landscape.

In 2016, the Garden completed the work funded by the successful \$14 million Seed-the-Future Comprehensive Campaign including opening the Pritzlaff Conservation Center and creating/renovating five new gardens. Most of the other objectives of the previous five-year strategic plan were also achieved. Over the next two years, we will learn how to best use and maintain this new and improved infrastructure. After the intense focus that was required to execute a major campaign, the Garden will now refocus, with our increased capacity, on delivering our three core programs: Education, Horticulture, and Conservation Research. For the most part, this two-year interim plan continues on the same path as the previous five-year strategic plan. In 2017, we will begin a robust and comprehensive strategic and business planning process to develop a five-year plan for 2019-2023.

Staff will develop annual work plans of specific activities with measureable desired outcomes for each strategy described below, to the extent possible.

GOALS 2017-2018

- 1. Conduct research to understand, protect, and restore California’s native plants**
- 2. Promote and demonstrate how native plants can be used to improve aesthetics and achieve sustainability goals**
- 3. Be a leader in California native plant horticulture and ecological education to inspire action**
- 4. Ensure the Garden’s financial and organizational capacity to achieve our mission**
- 5. Fully evaluate and assess our performance and effectiveness as an organization and prepare for a longer term strategy to begin in 2019**

GOAL 1 - Conduct research to understand, protect, and restore California's native plants

California's flora includes 6,515 taxa of native plants; 2,250 of these are found nowhere else in the world, and ~1,000 are considered to be threatened or endangered. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden strives to ensure the perpetuity of all California native plants and their habitats. Our area of exceptional expertise is the Central Coast and Channel Islands.

Strategies

- A. Undertake biogeographical, taxonomic, and genetic studies to better understand the nature and evolution of California's plant diversity.**
- B. Perform monitoring, research, restoration, and germplasm banking to conserve and recover the Central Coast's most imperiled plants.**
- C. Work to improve techniques and tools for the conservation and restoration of Central Coast species, habitats, and food webs.**
- D. Research the use of native plants in planned landscapes and agriculture to provide ecosystem services.**

GOAL 2 – Promote and demonstrate how native plants can be used to improve aesthetics and achieve sustainability goals

We imagine a world where there are native plants in every garden, providing beauty and a range of ecosystem services to benefit our communities and wildlands. We will work to increase the public's appreciation of native plants and increase both the demand and supply for them while simultaneously decreasing the public's use of invasive plant species. Our garden exhibits will celebrate the beauty of native plants, foster the conservation of California's flora in the wild, increase the appreciation of native plant gardening, and serve as an example of sustainable practice. The Garden will be renowned for its living collections and horticultural beauty to inspire the use and conservation of native plants.

Strategies

- A. Continue to improve the aesthetics of Garden and demonstrate how native plants can be used to create remarkable planned landscapes.**
- B. Expand the range of landscape design styles exhibited on the grounds while preserving and highlighting the Garden's historic character and natural beauty.**
- C. Increase the diversity of California native taxa grown at the Garden.**
- D. Demonstrate sustainable practices in our gardens, facilities, and operations.**

- E. Collaborate with other organizations to stimulate the use of native plants in horticulture and increase their availability in the nursery trade.**
- F. Use outreach, interpretation, and education to promote the use of native plants in planned landscapes and partner with like-minded organizations to encourage sustainable gardening practices.**
- G. Work with professionals (landscapers, designers, architects, landscape architects, engineers, city planners) to improve their application of native plants and sustainable practices in planned landscapes.**

GOAL 3 - Be a leader in native horticulture and ecological education to inspire action

Introduce the public to California's native plants, ignite concern about their survival, and inspire action for their conservation by providing engaging experiences to a diverse audience. The Garden's living collections, cultural landscape, and professional staff and volunteers serve as a resource and provide a broad range of formal and informal education opportunities, as well as informal interpretation for our visitors.

Strategies

- A. Ensure a positive visitor experience of the aesthetic richness of the garden through beautiful, well-maintained gardens and ample opportunities for self-directed interpretative experiences that inspire further learning and a love of native plants.**
- B. Provide exceptional directed education opportunities, such as engaging classes and field trips, for all ages.**
- C. Utilize the Garden's collections to enhance understanding and appreciation of California native plants and landscape design.**
- D. Advocate at local, state, and national levels for the protection and restoration of native plants.**
- E. Utilize new and established communication methods to educate the public about the importance and utility of native plants.**

GOAL 4 - Ensure the Garden's financial and organizational capacity to achieve our mission

We recognize we cannot achieve these ambitious goals on flat or declining funding. We also know that we need the right people and tools to implement this plan.

Strategies

- A. Grow the Garden's diverse revenue streams - including philanthropic donations, earned revenue, and the liquidation of peripheral property - to provide reliable core support and build our endowment.**
- B. Attract and retain excellent staff by offering salaries and benefits that are aligned with other gardens in California and the nonprofit sector in Santa Barbara.**
- C. Recruit and retain engaged volunteers by offering quality training, positive work experiences, and other benefits.**
- D. Provide professional development and the tools necessary to attract and retain high-performing staff and volunteers.**

GOAL 5 - Fully evaluate and assess our performance and effectiveness as an organization and prepare for a longer term strategy to begin in 2019

To improve our programs and realize our vision, we recognize the need for more meaningful information and data about our performance and the larger community in which we operate.

Strategies

- A. Through the Museum Assessment Program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, assess the Garden's strengths and weaknesses.**
- B. Prepare to renew our museum accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums.**
- C. Gather additional data that will help us prepare for our longer term strategic planning process.**