San Francisco Botanical Garden Strategic Framework
2018-2020

Mission
The mission of San Francisco Botanical Garden is to create, sustain and interpret a distinct, documented collection of Mediterranean, mild temperate and tropical cloud forest plants displayed in designed gardens and to provide a place of exceptional beauty and natural sanctuary. San Francisco Botanical Garden Society builds communities of support for the Garden and expands people’s understanding and appreciation of plants.

Values
San Francisco’s unique Botanical Garden inspires visitors with the extraordinary diversity of rare and unusual plants that can be grown in coastal California. Through its programs and displays, the Garden cultivates the bond between people and plants and instills a deeper understanding of the necessity to conserve Earth’s biological diversity. As a public/private partnership between a community-based nonprofit organization and the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department, and a beloved San Francisco institution, we are committed to transparency, cultural diversity, inclusion and environmentally responsible practices. We are proud to be a public public garden, accessible to all and grateful to the funders who help sustain us.

Vision
San Francisco Botanical Garden will be cherished and supported locally and recognized internationally for beauty, diversity of plant collections, educational programs and inspiring conservation.

Core Programs
To achieve our mission, we focus on five main program areas: Visitor Experience, Learning & Engagement, Collections & Curation, Facility & Garden Improvements, and Development & Membership.

1. Visitor Experience
In 2017, San Francisco Botanical Garden (“the Garden”) welcomed 434,321 visitors from around the world - up 73% from 2013. The Garden will welcome and serve more than 500,000 visitors annually by 2020 with an enhanced visitor experience that will encourage repeat visits.

Garden entrances will be more enticing. Visitors will immediately know that this is a special place that is cared for with exceptional attention to detail. Every visitor will be provided with personalized guidance
by staff. The Garden’s **redesigned website** will go live in 2018, enhancing the visitor experience beyond the Garden visit and strengthening connections with physical and virtual visitors. The Garden’s brand and communication tools will be more accessible, engaging and relevant.

**New and upgraded amenities** will serve all visitors while maintaining a sense of calm, peace and sanctuary. Food and beverage will be available for purchase in the Garden—offerings will be casual, sustainable and local, supporting the Garden’s sense of place, core beliefs, brand and purpose. Improved interpretative signage and other relevant interpretative tools will be available to all Garden visitors in multiple languages.

The **Garden Bookstore** will offer carefully curated mission-related, locally sourced and sustainable items to enhance the visitor experience and generate earned income. The adjoining retail **Plant Arbor** will provide visitors with an opportunity to take a piece of the Garden home with them.

### 2. Lifelong Learning & Engagement

In 2017, the Garden served 12,658 children through school-based, summer and family programs. We also provided fee-based workshops and 891 free docent tours and interpretation stations, reaching over 11,800 visitors. We engaged 1,883 volunteers who contributed 46,680 hours across all Garden programs and areas. Our goal is to attract even more children, youth, families, adults and seniors to come to learn about plants and the importance of biodiversity. In 2019, we will provide 1,000 free docent tours and interpretation stations and reach 15,000 visitors through free and fee-based programs.

**The Garden’s unique contribution to the Bay Area’s rich network of environmental education programs is developing people’s deep understanding of plants using our outdoor classroom.** Plant-literate people *see, understand and value* plants as critical in sustaining life on Earth and know that all living things are interconnected. Eco-literacy cannot be achieved without understanding the role plants play in sustaining life on our planet.

**New early childhood programs** will promote exploration and discovery and introduce children and caregivers to the “ABC’s” of plant-literacy. Outdoor programs will develop comfort with being and learning outside.

**An enhanced Children’s Garden with the revitalized John Muir Nature Trail** and nature play space will encourage children and families to visit the Garden regularly. Engaging self-guided materials for **elementary school groups** will help teachers facilitate meaningful field trips that help develop the plant-literacy of their students. New out-of-school programs, serving ages four through eight, will align with California science curriculum standards, providing children with active learning experiences that develop understanding of grade-appropriate science concepts.

In summer 2019, we’ll launch **Garden Camp**, an all-outdoor educational camp for grades K-2 that engages children in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics).

Through our Learning & Engagement programs, we will:

- Expand volunteer and intern opportunities for **middle and high school-aged youth** to build skills and knowledge and to prepare them for professional growth.
• Connect **adults** with plants through relevant programs and events that shed light on the role plants play in sustaining life on Earth, the importance of biodiversity or uses of plants by people throughout history.

• Deliver **arts and culture events**, like Flower Piano, with key partners to introduce the Garden to new audiences. A focus on the intersection between art, culture and the environment will provide inspiring ground for visitors to realize their connection to plants.

• Create new avenues for **exploring hobbies and professions in horticulture** through training programs, skill-building workshops and volunteer opportunities. Increase the use of the Helen Crocker Russell Library through new programs, author talks and art exhibits, while also improving access through technology.

### 3. Living Collections & Curation

Throughout our 55 acres, we are defining, refining and rezoning our plant collections for greater impact.

**San Francisco’s uniquely mild and foggy climate allows us to successfully grow a wide variety of plants** that would struggle outdoors in other North American public gardens, let alone be displayed in one place. We will set specific geographic and elevation parameters for each of our collections so that we dedicate our resources, space and acquisitions to growing the most relevant species for our climate. This will be outlined along with processes and protocols in our Collections Policy, which will be completed by the end of 2019.

By the end of 2020, we aim to have duplicates propagated of all of our historic and threatened Magnolias. We also aim to identify and begin the process of propagating accessions from our Mesoamerican Cloud Forest.

As our plants sales continue to gain customers and interest, we will leverage them to reach more plant lovers with horticultural education and earn more revenue to support the Garden. We aim for a 15% increase in plants sales in 2019.

### 4. Facility & Garden Improvements

We are elevating the overall level of horticulture throughout the Garden. **By the end of 2020, the Garden will look crisper, cleaner and better maintained than it ever has.** Expanded engagement of volunteers and interns in horticulture will enable our team to have greater impact.

New Garden enhancement projects will continue throughout the Garden and will include those that allow the Garden to be maintained in a more efficient and thoughtful manner, like automating irrigation or providing our horticulturists with cutting edge tools that allow them to work safer, faster or more effectively. In addition, projects will also be completed that improve the overgrown or uncultivated parts of the Garden, including new plantings to ensure the Garden remains lush, vibrant and ever changing.

Restrooms, water fountains with a bottle refill option, three stream waste management, pathways, wayfinding signage and other basic amenities will be well maintained and accessible.
5. Development & Membership

Philanthropy is essential to delivering our core programs. **Donors, members and volunteers are the heart of the Garden.** Currently, half of the funds required to maintain, improve and expand the Garden’s operations, living collections and educational programs were raised through private gifts, grants from foundations and corporations and membership.

To thrive as a Garden, we must grow philanthropic support for ongoing operations as well as special projects. With additional funds, the Garden’s long-term sustainability will improve, and we can invest in targeted areas of the Garden and in programming where the Garden is in a unique position to fill a need. We will seek to partner with transformational funders to launch new programs and refurbish key areas of the Garden that have the potential to increase and diversify visitation, provide equal opportunities for learning, or diversify revenue streams.

By increasing revenue from private sources by approximately 20% each year, the Garden would have an additional $5 million over the next five years to invest in improving and increasing services to visitors and programming for all ages, as well as expanding and sharing the stories behind our living collections.

Priority Projects for the Future

As we deliver and improve our core programs, we are also planning for, exploring and seeking funding for the following initiatives and projects:

- Engaging key stakeholders and the public in a comprehensive strategic planning effort with a new long-term plan to take effect in 2020
- Phased redesign and renovation of the Exhibition Garden for private event rentals, Garden events and educational programming
- A basic and affordable new nursery to improve conditions for propagating plants both for sale through plant sales as well as planting in the Garden, thus increasing productivity
- **Food and beverage service** in the Garden
- Launching **Garden Camp** in summer 2019
- An exhibition and programming celebrating the **150th Anniversary of Golden Gate Park** starting on April 4, 2020 in collaboration with San Francisco Recreation & Parks, California Historical Society, San Francisco Travel, and other park partner organizations.