$2 Million Gift to Boost Plant Conservation Efforts

SAN FRANCISCO – San Francisco Botanical Garden is preparing to step into a new role of guarding the world’s plants from extinction with a $2 million gift to help fund a modern nursery, replacing a 50-year-old facility.

This challenge gift comes from longtime garden volunteer and Board Chair Delle Maxwell and her husband, Patrick Hanrahan. Of the $6.7M fundraising goal, $5.4M has already been committed. All contributions received by June 30, 2020 will be matched dollar for dollar.

“We are thrilled and grateful to receive this generous matching gift that will inspire others to support this critical project for the Garden’s future,” says Stephanie Linder, Executive Director, San Francisco Botanical Garden Society.

The new nursery will allow the Botanical Garden to nurture and exchange rare plants from around the globe with other botanical gardens, governments, and nonprofits with the goal of preserving these species and saving them from extinction.

The Garden worked with award-winning design firm Siegel & Strain to develop the new nursery and maintenance facility concept design. Scheduled for completion in Spring 2022, the new facility will be approximately 40,000 square feet including outdoor growing space, a climate-controlled greenhouse and sanitary areas for plant propagation. As an additional benefit from this consolidation, nearly 20,000 square feet in the current upper nursery will be re-purposed to house a new Afromontane collection.

Funding to date includes a contribution from the City of San Francisco through the Recreation and Park Department representing 22% of the total cost.

“As the Garden celebrates its 80th year and Golden Gate Park its 150th anniversary we must ensure future generations can enjoy, be inspired by, and learn about the rare and endangered plants in the Garden,” says Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

A functional nursery is critical to maintaining and growing a thriving living plant collection. Worldwide, botanical gardens play a crucial role in protecting the world’s plant biodiversity in the face of the extinction crisis. As habitats are destroyed, botanical gardens are working to conserve and protect species that may otherwise be lost forever by cultivating, documenting and sharing rare and iconic species.

The new nursery will lead to changes with the Garden’s popular plant sale program. Before construction begins, there will be a large spring plant sale on the weekend of May 2-3, 2020 and daily sales at the Plant Arbor beside the Bookstore inside the Main Entrance near 9th Avenue and
Lincoln Way will continue indefinitely. Once complete, the new nursery will allow the Garden to better offer noteworthy plants that are not commercially available.

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**About San Francisco Botanical Garden**

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum is a living museum within Golden Gate Park, offering 55 acres of beautiful gardens displaying nearly 9,000 different kinds of plants from around the world. The Garden features nationally accredited collections of high elevation palms, Mesoamerican cloud forest plants, and *Magnolias*. San Francisco’s mild climate allows the Garden to grow plants from six continents, making the San Francisco Botanical Garden unique in the U.S. The collections also include many other species that are rare or endangered in the wild.

The Garden is open 365 days of the year and is free for city residents and members. Easily accessed by public transport, the Garden welcomes more than 400,000 people annually – 60% of whom experience the Garden free of charge. The Garden also offers dozens of free programs for our communities. Most notable of these are the youth education programs, which engage 13,000 children every year, and Flower Piano, which attracts more than 50,000 visitors in just 12 days.

Established in 1940, originally as Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco Botanical Garden is a public/private partnership between San Francisco Botanical Garden Society and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

**About the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department**

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department currently manages more than 220 parks, playgrounds and open spaces throughout San Francisco, including two outside city limits—Sharp Park in Pacifica and Camp Mather in the High Sierras. The system includes full-complex recreation centers, swimming pools, golf courses, sports fields and numerous small-to-medium-sized clubhouses that offer a variety of sports- and arts-related recreation programs for people of all ages. Included in the Department’s responsibilities are Golden Gate Park, Coit Tower, the Marina Yacht Harbor, the San Francisco Zoo and Lake Merced.

In 2017, San Francisco became the first and only city in the nation where all residents have access to a park within a 10-minute walk, a direct result of the Department’s commitment to increasing and improving parkland in the city.