Ganna Walska

LOTUSLAND

NEWSLETTER | WINTER-SPRING 2026

Cycads on the Move

***MACROZAMIA JOHNSONII* COMES TO LOTUSLAND**

2026 at a Glance

EVENTS FOR EVERY SEASON

Revitalized Greenhouse

DESIGNED BY GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH

JOIN US IN SAFEGUARDING THE GARDEN'S FUTURE

LOTUSLAND *Forever*

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

As we enter a new season at Lotusland, I am filled with gratitude and optimism for what we have accomplished together and for what lies ahead.

The past several years have marked a period of extraordinary progress for Lotusland. Thanks to the generosity and belief of our community, the *Lotusland Forever* campaign is nearing its successful conclusion, securing transformational support for Garden grounds and restoration projects, innovative water resilience construction, and new and improved pathways and gathering areas to enable all to access more of the Garden.

Behind the scenes, we advanced financial systems, invested in our staff through competitive compensation, leadership development, and added new roles to strengthen the organization and our community impact.

Education and community engagement remain central to our mission. In 2025, we updated our fourth-grade education program model with refreshed curriculum, hired Explore Ecology environmental educators, and began redesigning training platforms to keep pace with best practices in learning and technology. These efforts reflect our commitment to welcoming volunteers and visitors of all backgrounds with excellence, care, and purpose.

Looking ahead, we are planning thoughtfully for the future in all its forms—stewarding our living collections through long-term plant succession planning, documenting institutional knowledge with a focus on archival preservation, rejuvenating the Pink Wall, and tending to evolving volunteer and workforce needs. These initiatives ensure that Lotusland remains not only beautiful, but resilient, relevant, and ready for what comes next.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, Board, and supporters. Your belief in Lotusland fuels the essence of this unique and beautiful place.

As the Garden reopens for the season, I invite you to return and experience Lotusland anew.

Thank you for being part of Lotusland's story—past, present, and future.

With gratitude,

Rebecca Anderson, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer,

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LOTUSLAND'S MISSION IS TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE DISTINCTIVE BOTANICAL GARDENS AND ESTATE OF MADAME GANNA WALSKA. LOTUSLAND EDUCATES AND INSPIRES VISITORS WITH ITS COLLECTIONS, SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE PRACTICES, AND PLANT CONSERVATION.

Ganna Walska LOTUSLAND®

695 Ashley Road
Santa Barbara, California 93108
805.969.3767 | lotusland.org

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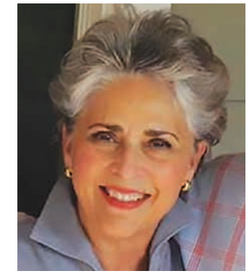
DEAR LOTUSLAND COMMUNITY,



On the ground, signs of spring are already emerging.

As we welcome the gentle renewal of a new year, I am filled with gratitude for the dedicated individuals who have shepherded our beloved Garden through another remarkable year.

This year, we bid farewell to two outstanding Board members whose wisdom and commitment have been instrumental to Lotusland's continued success: Ron Caird and Rachael Douglas. Their countless hours of service have provided thoughtful guidance, strengthened our mission, and enriched this community. While we will miss them at the Board table, we know that their love for this extraordinary place endures.

At the same time, I am thrilled to welcome our new Board members: Graciela Carrasco, John P. Margolis, and Julie Morley. They bring fresh perspectives, varied expertise, proven service, and enthusiasm for the Garden. Their arrival marks an exciting new chapter, and I look forward to working together as we continue to advance Lotusland's vision.

On the ground, signs of spring are already emerging. Our horticulture team is busy preparing for next month's reopening with continued care of our prized specimens, while also taking full advantage of our winter break to move us forward with long-planned improvements. Meanwhile, the splendor of the Garden is everywhere, whether through the coral and crimson hues of aloe winter blooms, in the quiet serenity of the Japanese Garden, or wherever you find your happy place, you cannot miss the splendor.

As we move forward together—honoring those who have served while embracing new leadership—I am confident that Lotusland's future is as vibrant as the Garden itself.

With deep appreciation,

Mari Mitchel
President, Board of Trustees

Lotusland Celebrates Garden Gala—Page 13

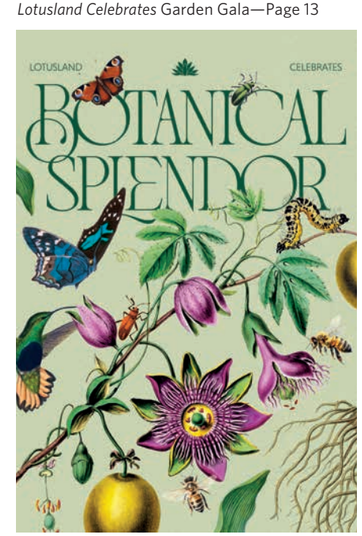


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PHOTO: J. R. EYERMAN

Feature

Lotusland Forever

JOIN US IN SAFEGUARDING THE GARDEN'S FUTURE

JOIN US TODAY TO COMPLETE THE $25 MILLION FOR THE *LOTUSLAND FOREVER* CAMPAIGN—AN ENDURING INVESTMENT IN THE GARDEN'S BEAUTY, RESILIENCE, AND LEGACY, NOW AND *Forever*

Lotusland has always been sustained by a community that cares deeply about its beauty, its history, and its future. *Lotusland Forever* was launched on the 30th anniversary of the Garden, with that shared spirit in mind, as a long-term commitment to steward this extraordinary place for generations to come.
Now that the campaign has entered its final phase, progress across the Garden is already visible. To date, $24.8 million in gifts and pledges have been secured, bringing the campaign within $200,000 of its overall goal. Please consider joining us with your own commitment to caring for Lotusland as a living landscape, one that balances beauty, ecology, and resilience.

Recent significant contributions from **The Nora McNeely Hurley Foundation; The Hind Foundation; Belle Hahn and Lilian Hahn-Shining; Patrick and Sandra Crotteau; Cyndee Howard and Lesley Cunningham; The Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation; Patricia and Gordon Feingold; J. Scott Francis and Susan Gordon, Francis Family Foundation; The Hind Foundation; The Estate of Wanda Livernois; Montecito Bank & Trust; The Sarena Snider Foundation; Van Cleef & Arpels;** and **several anonymous donors** have helped advance critical Garden and infrastructure projects to make the Gardens more accessible and functional, preserve and protect our natural resources, and restore artifacts and Garden follies that define Lotusland's signature style.

Together, these efforts support the careful stewardship required to protect Lotusland's landscapes, plant collections, and prepare the Garden for the challenges of a changing climate.

Lotusland Forever reflects a shared commitment to stewarding the Garden for generations to come.

THE SYCAMORE CANYON CORRIDOR: WATER CONSERVATION IN PROGRESS

One of the most significant transformations now underway is occurring along the Sycamore Canyon corridor, supported by an extraordinarily generous grant from **The Hind Foundation**. This work represents a major investment in conservation, safety, and long-term ecological health.

A central component of the project has been the removal of a grove of eucalyptus trees as part of a broader fire-mitigation strategy. This work is clearing the way for the creation of an oak woodland, new hedgerows, and a riparian habitat that will provide screening and biodiversity. This planting along Sycamore Canyon Road will feature threatened oak species from California and Mexico, native plantings along the interior of the pink wall in areas not on public view, and a new reservoir and bioretention basins to slow and infiltrate stormwater while expanding habitat-friendly green spaces.

Accessibility is also a central focus of our current work. New pathways and gathering areas in the Cycad and Tropical Gardens will create a more continuous and navigable route through key areas of the Garden, improving ease of movement and expanding access to Gardens landscapes that historically have not been reachable to visitors with mobility challenges.

(Continued)

This work balances fire mitigation, promotes habitat, and supports areas and walkways for education, guest comfort, and access—strengthening the Garden's long-term resilience.

Lotusland recognizes the generous support of

HIND FOUNDATION
Preserving our Cultural Heritage

Preliminary rendering of the new bioretention area designed to capture and filter stormwater into the new underground reservoir, supporting habitat restoration and ensuring long-term water security for irrigation.

Rendering of the future *Outdoor Classroom* generously sponsored by the John C. Mithun Foundation, nestled within the *Oak Woodland*, and designed to support education and gathering within a restored conservation landscape.

Nora McNeely Hurley

The generous support of the *Lotusland Forever* campaign by the **Nora McNeely Hurley Foundation** has advanced the Garden's Water Security Initiative with a challenge grant that was enthusiastically met by a handful of committed donors.

NEW SPACES FOR LEARNING, GATHERING, AND CONNECTION

Within the evolving Sycamore Canyon corridor, campaign support is also making possible the construction of a new ***Outdoor Classroom***, supported by the **John C. Mithun Foundation**. Designed as a gathering place within a restored landscape, this space will expand education programs and offer new opportunities for learning and connection within the Garden.

The campaign has also received personal contributions that reflect lasting connections to Lotusland. **Louis Scolnik and Joy Masoff's** generosity have sponsored the naming of the ***Geranium Terrace***, while past Trustee **Harry Kolb** is dedicating the ***Fern Garden Pool*** in memory of **Karen Kolb**, a beloved docent and longtime Garden volunteer. These gestures underscore the many ways individuals and families help shape the Garden's future.

New spaces made possible by generous donors are being created for education, reflection, and the promotion of nature.

NORA McNEELY HURLEY
FOUNDATION

SECURING WATER FOR LOTUSLAND'S FUTURE

At the heart of Lotusland's extraordinary Gardens, there is a need for water, and we have created a plan for resilience in times of drought. Through the campaign, Lotusland has embarked on a comprehensive Water Security Initiative, including the construction of a 200,000-gallon underground reservoir, along with new cisterns, bio-filtration, and irrigation systems along the Sycamore Canyon corridor.

With the support of **The Nora McNeely Hurley Foundation**, matched by other generous anonymous donors, this infrastructure will allow Lotusland to capture and reuse rainwater and recycled water that would otherwise be lost as runoff. Once operational, the system is expected to reclaim roughly 12 million gallons of runoff water annually, reduce aquifer draw, and strengthen the Garden's resilience in the face of drought and climate change.

Construction related to the water project will take place during the winter and spring of 2026. To allow this work to progress safely and efficiently, Lotusland has postponed public tours to resume on March 11, 2026.

As the *Lotusland Forever* campaign nears completion, the impact of stakeholder's investments is already strengthening the Garden's ecological health, expanding access to the Cycad, Tropical, Australian, and soon the Aloe, and Water Gardens, ensuring that Lotusland continues to inspire and endure.

This next chapter for Lotusland is being shaped now, and our community is part of this exciting future. Learn more about how to be involved lotusland.org.

Water is vital for any garden, and by safeguarding it in innovating new ways for Lotusland is essential to protecting the vitality and beauty of this garden: a living masterpiece.

Phase 1 of the Water Security Initiative for the Tropical Garden & Riparian Corridor.

- **A Existing Main Drive**
- **B Outdoor Classroom**
- **C Garden Deck Paths**
- **D Gathering Space & Viewing Space**
- **E (2) Bio-Retention Basins**
- **F Buffer Screen Planting**
- **G Tropical Garden Viewing Deck**

Hydrology and Horticulture:

A BRIEF STORY OF WATER AT LOTUSLAND

By Paul Mills, Director of Conservation, Curator of the Living Collection

The story of California is one of drought, deluge, and the ongoing challenge of managing water. Cities, agriculture, and horticulture all depend on this precious resource and much time and ingenuity have been spent on using it efficiently and responsibly.

Santa Barbara has a measure of resilience to drought thanks to its unique geography; The east-west orientation of the Santa Ynez Mountains helps maximize rainfall from winter storms. These mountains trap moist southerly flow ahead of cold fronts, creating orographic lift—air cools and expands as it rises, producing precipitation. Beneath the surface, aquifers and springs further support the region's water supply.

Lotusland sits within one of the planet's five Mediterranean climate zones, where seasonal drought dominates most of the year. Rainfall is concentrated in winter, and long-term drought cycles often bring consecutive years of below-average precipitation. For more than a century, efficient water use has been essential to sustaining the living collections.

The story begins with Ralph Kinton Stevens and Tanglewood—the property that would later become Lotusland. In the 1880s, Stevens cultivated palms and citrus and founded California's first nursery dedicated to subtropical plants. His greatest challenge throughout was securing enough water.

Stevens' windmill-powered well could not meet irrigation demands, so he built a concrete reservoir at the top of the property (still in use today, although now on a separate property) to store well water to later be gravity-fed to the Garden. He also excavated a lower reservoir and constructed an earthen dam to capture rainwater and tap into a natural spring. Today, Stevens' original, turn-of-the-century, lower reservoir forms the Japanese Garden Pond, and his dam is now the main drive along the south side of the Japanese Garden. Despite these efforts, water is always scarce during the long dry season.

In the 1880s, Stevens cultivated palms and citrus and founded California's first nursery dedicated to subtropical plants. His greatest challenge throughout was securing enough water.

Following Stevens' example, Lotusland is looking towards innovation to meet future water needs amid uncertain climate realities thanks to its property-wide water capture project, designed to harness rainfall during storms. The soon-to-be installed 200,000-gallon subterranean reservoir and two bio-retention ponds in the southeast corner of the property will work in conjunction with filtration systems to store and integrate captured water to fill the Garden's irrigation needs.

Water has always been central to horticulture at Lotusland—from Stevens' pioneering reservoirs to today's cutting edge resiliency projects. By honoring this legacy and investing in sustainable solutions, Lotusland ensures its Gardens will continue to thrive.

Ralph Kinton Stevens' reservoir would later become the pond in the Japanese Garden

PHOTO: KIM BAILE

Left: Dr. Phil Wyatt and son Clifford Wyatt pose in front of the large *Macrozamia* making its way to Lotusland.

Right: The massive cycads were carefully boxed and transported by Esau's Landscapes.

Macrozamia johnsonii Comes to Lotusland

By Paul Mills, Director of Conservation, Curator of the Living Collection

Over the years, we have received many significant plant donations including the recent arrival of two massive plants of *Macrozamia johnsonii*, a striking and sculptural cycad from Australia. These cycads have been growing at a horticultural wonderland in the foothills of Santa Barbara belonging to Dr. Phillip Wyatt, an avid plant aficionado and longtime supporter of the Garden. Dr. Wyatt donated these specimens to flank the recently completed Wyatt Family gathering area in the Cycad Garden, putting the final stamp on this phase of the Cycad Garden renovation.

The property where these cycads have grown for the last 50 years has a storied history and a deep connection to Lotusland.

It was initially acquired by John and Mary Bleck in the early 70s, who promptly constructed a greenhouse on the property. This greenhouse is believed to be the last large residential greenhouse permitted in Santa Barbara and is still standing and functioning today. Knowledgeable in both botany and horticulture, John would later take charge of the UCSB greenhouses and assist Lotusland in accessing the plant collections after Madame Ganna Walska passed away. This year Lotusland received the majority of his personal collection after his passing at 91 years of age. (See Lotusland Newsletter Fall 2025)

The property was later transferred to leading plant experts Bob Foster and Charlie Glass. Bob and Charlie's acquisition of the property coincided with the time they were personally hired by Madame Ganna Walska to work at Lotusland, in 1973. Bob worked for a few years at Lotusland while Charlie continued until 1984 as garden director under Madame Ganna Walska. In 1975 Charlie began work on what he would consider his "greatest achievement"—designing and constructing the Cycad Garden at Lotusland. Around the same time, the two *Macrozamia johnsonii* were being planted at his own foothill property, unknown then that they would someday find themselves among the myriad of other cycads at Lotusland.

We are privileged to now house these two plants of *Macrozamia johnsonii* at Lotusland, where they hold a prominent position alongside the newly created gathering area adjacent to the Cycad Pond and in the Australian Garden cycad section. Finishing this project with these two plants, has been a full circle experience.

We gratefully acknowledge the new Cycad Garden Terrace, made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Wyatt Family.

New Insectary Plantings at Lotusland

By Chris Ziliotto, Sustainability Program Manager

A pillar of Lotusland's sustainable plant health care program is promoting beneficial biology to manage less desirable organisms in lieu of pesticides. We accomplish this by developing native insectary areas throughout the property, which are also an effective way to activate underutilized space. Fall and winter are ideal planting times for natives in Southern California, allowing them time to establish with winter and spring rains before summer drought.

Our most recent insectary installation at the base of the Great Lawn was completed prior to a large storm in November. The area had weed-prone annual grasses growing and was previously a storage area—a well-suited location for a native perimeter planting. It is now planted with natives including chaparral currant, hummingbird sage, pitcher sage, California fuchsia, and coffeeberry.

When choosing a plant palette for a new insectary planting, we consider site conditions such as sun exposure, soil texture, and drainage. We also aim to ensure that something is in bloom throughout the year, and that there are multiples of each plant type, providing habitat for a variety of pollinators. Once established, these areas help support the Garden ecosystem with minimal maintenance.

Weedy area prior to site prep and planting.

Newly installed insectary plantings.

waterwise IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

PROMOTING WATER-WISE GARDENS WITH LOTUSLAND

Lotusland is proud to partner with Santa Barbara County's WaterWise program to champion sustainable water practices in our community. Together, we're inspiring resilient, water-efficient gardens that thrive in harmony with our environment.

If you're a dedicated gardener or landscape professional committed to conserving water, consider entering for the Santa Barbara 2026 WaterWise Garden Contest. This program celebrates those who prioritize sustainable practices, from efficient irrigation techniques to drought-tolerant landscaping.

Showcase your garden and inspire others to join the effort toward a greener future.

Find more details and contest openings at WaterWiseSB.org. This initiative is part of Lotusland's ongoing commitment to water stewardship. Let's work together to create gardens that not only thrive but also preserve our precious resources for generations to come.

Visit the WaterWise website to learn more and join this meaningful movement!

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL IMPACT:

Junior Botanist Program

Since 2005, Lotusland's Junior Botanist Program has welcomed fourth-grade students from across Santa Barbara County into the Garden, offering a free immersive field trip experience designed to inspire curiosity, observation, and a lasting connection to the natural world. For more than two decades, the program has introduced tens of thousands of students, many visiting a public garden for the first time, to plant science, ecology, and environmental stewardship.

Rooted in experiential learning, the Junior Botanist Program transforms Lotusland into a living classroom. Students explore diverse garden landscapes while engaging with concepts that align with California's fourth-grade science standards, fostering both scientific understanding and a sense of wonder. Many former participants recall this experience years later as a formative moment in their relationship with nature.

In late 2025, Lotusland introduced a new method of teaching with Explore Ecology, a Santa Barbara–based environmental education nonprofit, to strengthen curriculum delivery and program evaluation as the Junior Botanist Program enters its next phase.

Environmental educators from Explore Ecology began working with the Garden to develop and deliver the Junior Botanist Program, drawing in its early phase on the support of volunteer docents. Today, the program is led fully by Explore Ecology's professional education staff, who bring deep experience in hands-on, inquiry-based learning for the Garden's youngest guests. Through guided exploration and storytelling, they introduce children to the beauty of the natural world while fostering an early understanding of plants, ecosystems, and the conservation values that shape Lotusland's mission.

As the Junior Botanist Program continues to develop, it welcomes young learners to the Garden, where curiosity is encouraged, connections take root, and awareness of the natural world begins to take shape.

This program is made possible by a generous grant from the **Manitou Fund** with additional support from the **Mithun Foundation**, and the **Coeta and Donald Barker Foundation**.

Community Access Days at Lotusland

Beginning in 2026, Lotusland will offer monthly Access Days throughout the year as a way of welcoming and celebrating Santa Barbara County residents. We invite locals to experience the Garden at half-price admission during regular tour times.

Each month, 30 Community Access tickets are available online, on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are open exclusively to Santa Barbara County residents and may be redeemed once per household per year.

Community Access Days reflect Lotusland's belief that the Garden is not only a place to visit, but a place to belong. We're proud to share it with our neighbors and to welcome regional residents into the landscapes, stories, and seasons that make Lotusland part of this special community.

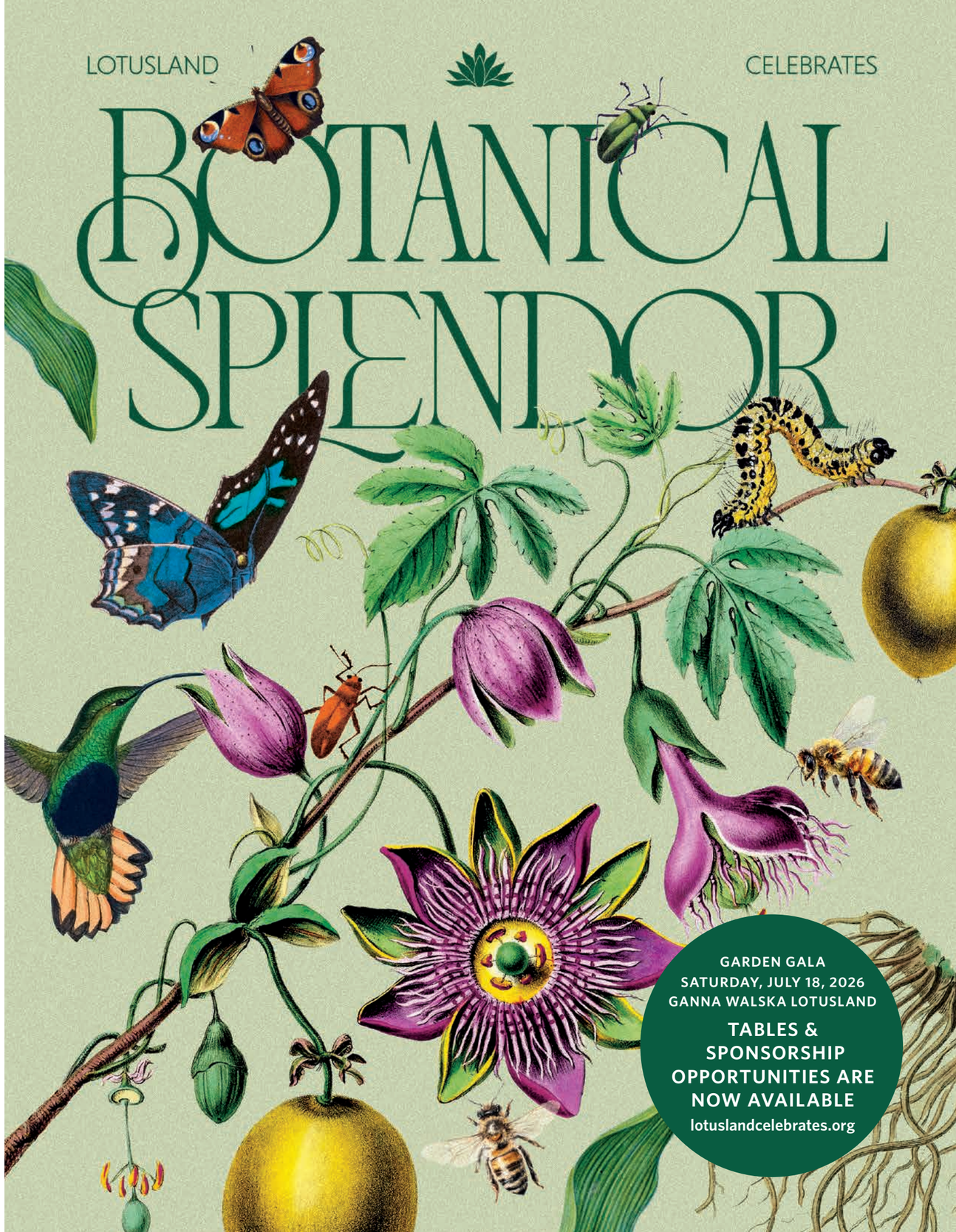
2026 COMMUNITY ACCESS CALENDAR

Tickets Release Dates:

January 20, 2026	**May 5, 2026**
March 3, 2026	**August 4, 2026**

Visit the event page for more information. Reservations can be made online at lotusland.org/calendar/events

*The 2026 Community Access Program is generously made possible by the **George H. and Olive J. Griffiths Charitable Foundation** and **Montecito Bank & Trust**, whose support helps Ganna Walska Lotusland offer opportunities for local residents, particularly those for whom standard admission pricing may be a barrier.*



Join Us!

Winter-Spring Events

For more information and to event reservations, visit: lotusland.org/events

Ganna Walska LOTUSLAND

SPECIAL EVENTS

VALENTINE'S DAY

Saturday, February 14
9:00–11:00 am, 12:00–2:00 pm, or 3:00–5:00 pm

Invite your special someone and let the Garden provide the romantic atmosphere—champagne and live music included.

Patron Circles $30 / *Supporters* $60 / Non-Members $95

SPRING EQUINOX SOUND BATH

Saturday, March 21, 1:30–4:00 pm

Welcome spring growth and align with nature's cycles through a meditative Sound Bath with Kymberly Marciano on the Great Lawn.

Patron Circles $30 / *Supporters* $60 / Non-Members $95

MUSIC IN PARADISE: PIANO CONCERTO

Thursday, May 7, 3:00–5:00 pm

Piano concerto by Katya Grineva in the Theatre Garden.

Members $125 / Non-Members $175

Sponsorship at the $2,000 level includes access to our May 7 *Gardens in Paradise* tour and dinner reception. (See page 16)

GARDEN TO GLASS: COCKTAIL CLASS

Friday, May 15, 4:00–6:30 pm
A Santa Barbara Culinary Experience Event

Learn how to concoct the perfect botanical cocktail in this workshop offered as part of the Santa Barbara Culinary Experience. Tickets available through sbce.events

PHOTO: KIM BAILE

WELL-BEING WEDNESDAY SERIES

Benefit from the restorative power of nature and enjoy the Garden with a fresh perspective. Each session explores a different practice and connects you to the natural environment.

POETRY OF NATURE MEDITATION

April 15, 11:30 am–1:00 pm

JAPANESE MUSIC MEDITATION

June 17, 11:30 am–1:00 pm

Extend your experience by reserving an afternoon tour at the time of booking.

Members $50 / Non-Members $90

TWILIGHT IN THE GARDEN

Enjoy a self-guided twilight stroll through the Garden and delight in the changing light as the sun begins to set, the heat of the day begins to cool, and dusk calms the the Garden.

Saturday, April 4, 4:30–6:30 pm
Saturday, May 23, 4:30–6:30 pm
Friday, July 3, 4:30–6:30 pm

Complimentary for Patron Circle members.
Supporter Level $30 / Non-Members $75

ART IN THE GARDEN

BOTANIC ART: GEL PRINTING CLASS

Saturday, April 11, 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Learn the art of gel printing using freshly foraged garden botanicals with Holly Woolson.

Patron Circle $100 / *Supporters* $125 / Non-Members $175

EN PLEIN AIR WITH SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART

Saturday, May 2, 1:00–4:00 pm

Inspired by the Museum's collections, explore artistic techniques guided by SBMA instructors in this outdoor art atelier for adults.

Lotusland Members and SBMA Members $125 / Non-Members $175

PICNIC ON THE GREAT LAWN

Celebrate the beauty of summer at Lotusland with a delightful family picnic on the Great Lawn.

Saturday, May 9, 2:30–4:30 pm
Live music by Connor Cherland

Saturday, June 13, 2:00–4:30 pm
Live music by Brian Kinsella Band

Complimentary for Patron Circle members.
Supporter Level $45 / Non-Members $95

PHOTO: KIM BAILE

MEMBERS EVENTS

GOLDEN HOUR WINE WALKS

4:30–6:30 pm

Friday, March 13
featuring Peake Ranch Winery

Friday, June 5
featuring Clementine Carter

A member favorite! Enjoy wine tasting and a leisurely stroll through the Garden while the late afternoon colors and textures come alive.

Complimentary for Patron Circle members.
Supporter Level $50 / Non-Members $85

GARDEN CONVERSATIONS

Thursday, March 26, 10:00–11:30 am
Thursday, May 21, 10:00–11:30 am

Take part in an informal behind-the-scenes walking tour—a special opportunity to explore specific gardens "in conversation" with the key garden staff who maintain them.

Complimentary for Patron Circle members.
Supporter Level $40

SIGNATURE EVENTS

GARDENS IN PARADISE: HOPE RANCH

Wednesday, April 22, 9:00 am–3:00 pm

GARDENS IN PARADISE: MONTECITO ESTATE TWILIGHT DINNER

Thursday, May 7, 6:00–8:00 pm
(See page 16)

LOTUSLAND CELEBRATES: BOTANICAL SPLENDOR

Save the Dates:

ONLINE AUCTION
Wednesday, July 10–Sunday, July 19

GARDEN GALA
Saturday, July 18, 3:30 pm–Sunset

Tables and Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available!
(See page 13)

COMMUNITY EVENTS

LESSONS FROM LOTUSLAND

Wednesday, June 3, 5:30–6:30 pm

Ferns & Begonias with Anna Bower,
Associate Curator of the Living Collections and Nursery Manager

Free online Webinar with advanced registration.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY

Tuesday, June 23, 11:30 am–2:30 pm

Save the date for this annual event honoring our active volunteers whose generosity bring this Garden to life.

Registered volunteers only. RSVP required.

STATE OF THE GARDEN: THE GROWTH OF LOTUSLAND

Tuesday, March 3, 2:30–5:00 pm

Annual Meeting featuring Keynote Speaker Eric Haskell

Current and former trustees as well as Guardian level members and above are invited to join us for Lotusland's Annual Meeting. RSVP required. Learn more about this event online.

For more information and to reserve, visit: lotusland.org/events

EXPLORING HOPE RANCH'S TIMELESS BEAUTY

April 22, 2026 | 9:00 am–3:00 pm

Join us for a new edition of our exclusive *Gardens in Paradise* series. This progressive garden tour will uncover the stories behind several breathtaking Hope Ranch private gardens, guided by homeowners and experts including Marc Appleton of Appleton Partners and Puck Erickson of Arcadia Studio, who will illuminate the artistry and vision that shaped these gardens. While engaging in botanical and architectural discovery, participants will enjoy a gastronomical luncheon crafted by Duo's talented chefs, along with locally-sourced fine wines.

This experience is limited to 30 people. Transportation is included. Advance reservations are required.

April 22—$2,000 per guest ($1,750 tax-deductible).

MONTECITO ESTATE TWILIGHT DINNER

May 7, 2026 | 6:00–8:00 pm

An afternoon garden tour and exquisite alfresco dinner in conjunction with our Music in Paradise concert featuring guest pianist Katya Grineva live at Lotusland from 3:00-5:00 pm. Tickets include the concert and private garden event.

May 7—$2,000 per guest ($1,750 tax-deductible).

Series Sponsorship (both dates)—$5,000 ($4,500 tax-deductible)
Proceeds for this fundraising program benefit the care of Lotusland's gardens. For more information, please contact Development.

Telephone: 805-324-8429 | Email: development@lotusland.org | Visit: lotusland.org/events

PREMIERE SERIES SPONSOR

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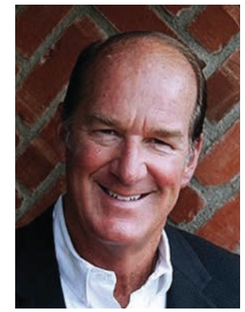
LASTING LANDSCAPES:

Ganna Walska's Life and Legacy



By Eric Haskell
Professor Emeritus of French Studies & Interdisciplinary Humanities
Director Emeritus, Clark Humanities Museum
Chevalier des Palmes Académiques
Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres
Scripps College, Claremont
University Consortium, California

It was not until half a life later, after storied forays in top-tiered society here and abroad, that her arrival on the Pacific Coast of California ushered a second chapter into the life of this self-proclaimed "enemy of the average."

What Ganna Walska set out to achieve in her life is far from what she is remembered for today. In defiance of her petit-bourgeois beginnings in a remote Polish town, her aspirations were nothing short of grandiose as she set her sights on becoming a world-class opera singer. However, despite unbridled determination, daily training, and a steel-clad will to succeed, her performances on stages from London to Paris and from New York to Chicago did not meet with overwhelming critical acclaim. Audience appreciation was reserved, and some reviews were unflattering.

It was not until half a life later, after storied forays in top-tiered society here and abroad, that her arrival on the Pacific Coast of California ushered a second chapter into the life of this self-proclaimed "enemy of the average." There, in the foothills of Montecito, Ganna Walska would finally enjoy the spotlight of success as the gardens of Lotusland were on their way to becoming her unexpected yet triumphant legacy. In their verdant enclaves, she staged visions of paradise in which landscapes became dreamscapes. Rare botanical specimens were the performers in a non-stop operatic scenario so rich in its diversity that, by the time of her passing, Madame's garden was known around the world.

Curiously, neither her stage career, nor her directorship of Paris's eminent Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, nor her role as proprietress of a French château, nor her collection of renowned jewelry, nor her accumulation of six husbands ever came close to rivaling her talent for the art of gardening. Ganna Walska's genius lay in masterminding the theatricality of tableaux which comprise the ever-intriguing exoticism and uncommon beauty of Lotusland's lasting landscapes.

Eric Haskel, Keynote Speaker
State of the Garden: The Growth of Lotusland
Tuesday, March 3, 2:30-5:00 pm
(See page 15)

PHOTO: MONIE PHOTOGRAPHY

PORTRAIT SESSIONS AT THE GARDEN

Capture a meaningful moment amid the beauty of Lotusland. Personal portrait sessions are available for engagements, families, and individual portraits within select garden settings. Guests bring their own professional photographer and may also enjoy time to explore the Garden during their visit; a standard admission ticket is required.

Sessions are offered during public tour hours, Wednesday–Saturday, 9:30–11:30 a.m. or 1:30–3:30 p.m. Rates vary by group size and day, ranging from $350–$950. **For inquiries, contact our reservations office at 805-969-9990.**

Left: Lotusland Members Steven and Elizabeth Green.

1) *Santa Barbara: At Home in Paradise* (Rizzoli)
2) Enthusiast with Corpse Plant
3) Anna Bower, Paul Mills, Randy Baldwin, Cristi Walden, Robert Bett, Jeff Chemnick
4) Silent auction bidding
5) David Moorman
6) Jill Taylor and Julie Morley
7) Mike Tully
8) Satie Airamé and Randy Baldwin
9) Lynn Cunningham Brown, Chris Brown, Rachael Douglas, Andrew Farkas, Karen Lantz
10) CalPoly students
11) Hannah French
12) Lotusland guest

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Scan to view the *Exceptional Plants* photo gallery.

PHOTOS: SHANON JAYNE

Randy Baldwin

AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF SAN MARCOS GROWERS TO CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURE

For more than 40 years, Randy Baldwin helped shape the horticultural landscape of California, quietly, thoughtfully, and with a deep respect for plants cultivated in their native habitats. Although Randy's longtime home, San Marcos Growers, closed on January 1, 2026, his influence remains firmly rooted in gardens across the state, in the living collections of public institutions, and in a shared ethos of stewardship that continues to guide Lotusland's work today.

Founded in 1979, San Marcos Growers became a defining force in Mediterranean-climate horticulture after Randy joined the nursery in 1981. Trained at UC Santa Barbara in environmental studies with a concentration in botany, he rose from production and shipping to general manager, and later president and part owner.

Under his leadership, San Marcos Growers expanded beyond its original emphasis on trees to include an extraordinary range of climate-appropriate, uncommon, and carefully selected plants, sourced from Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and California's native landscapes. His work made these plants widely available to designers, growers, and public institutions, reshaping what was possible in Southern California gardens.

Equally important was Randy's commitment to accuracy, education, and the sharing of knowledge. Long before digital plant databases became standard, he began carefully documenting the nursery's offerings. The San Marcos Growers website remains one of the most trusted horticultural resources in the field and continues to serve gardeners, designers, and institutions as a lasting contribution.

At Lotusland, Randy Baldwin has long been part of an exceptional plant

PHOTO: SHANON JAYNE

Randy Baldwin speaking at the *Exceptional Plants* Live Auction in October 2025.

community defined by generosity, discernment, and shared standards of care. His relationship with the Garden reflects decades of collaboration—through plant introductions, consultation, and ongoing conversations grounded in stewardship.

During his more 40 years of involvement at Lotusland, including serving on our Plant Collections and Exceptional Plants Auction Committees, Randy has had a profound role in the continuing development of the Garden's plant collections. Randy's mission has always been to expand the plant palette available to all of us, and Lotusland has been one of his innumerable beneficiaries.

Randy's impact reaches far beyond the nursery he stewarded. Throughout his career, he donated plants to nonprofits and schools, served on professional boards, and advocated for environmentally responsible, climate-appropriate horticulture. As he once put it, the most rewarding part of the

"Randy's vast knowledge and inquisitive nature have made him one of the most knowledgeable plant people of our time, and he's always quick to share."

—Paul Mills, Lotusland's Curator of the Living Collection and Director of Conservation

work has always been "cool plants and good people."

Paul Mills, Lotusland's Curator of the Living Collection and Director of Conservation reflects on Randy's depth of expertise and generosity: "Randy's vast knowledge and inquisitive nature have made him one of the most knowledgeable plant people of our time, and he's always quick to share." He adds, "Many times I have emailed with a quick question about a plant only to receive a lengthy reply with not only his personal knowledge, but historical accounts and any other resource he can find. It's hard to imagine no longer having access to San Marcos Growers, but Randy and the San Marcos Growers website will continue to educate and inspire."

With the closing of San Marcos Growers, its fields may now be quiet, but its impact remains firmly rooted. At Lotusland, that impact endures in the living collections Randy helped shape, in the horticultural standards he championed, and in a shared philosophy that values knowledge, generosity, and care for the land.

the LOTUS SOCIETY

PRESERVING AND ENHANCING A UNIQUE BOTANICAL TREASURE

A LEGACY IN PERPETUITY:

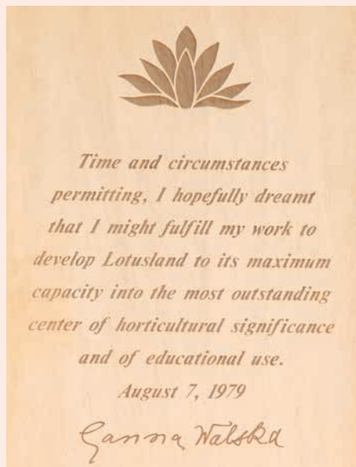
Madame Ganna Walska and the Future of Lotusland

By Arthur R. Gaudi, Lifetime Honorary Trustee

Lotusland exists because of Madame Ganna Walska and her unwavering determination that the Garden be preserved in perpetuity.

I first met Madame Walska in 1974, when her longtime advisor, Reginald Faletti, brought me to Lotusland. Over the next decade, until her death in 1984, I worked closely with her on what would become her will, along with fourteen codicils. She rarely spoke of her past, except as it related to her intentions for the Garden. What mattered to her was not what had been, but what would endure.

Madame Walska was exacting, strong-willed, and absolutely determined to have her wishes carried out. At the same time, she was generous, compassionate, and attentive to the lives of others. That balance is evident in her estate plan. She provided thoughtfully for family and friends, and with particular care for the gardeners who had served her so loyally. Many of the codicils addressed their legacies, reflecting her deep sense of responsibility to those who helped bring her vision to life.


Time and circumstances permitting, I hopefully dreamt that I might fulfill my work to develop Lotusland to its maximum capacity into the most outstanding center of horticultural significance and of educational use.

August 7, 1979

Ganna Walska

What never changed was her resolve that the property on Sycamore Canyon Road, and the bulk of her estate, would pass to a foundation dedicated to maintaining, preserving, and enhancing Lotusland. Her commitment to the Garden's future never wavered.

At one point, I suggested that she put into her own words what she wanted Lotusland to be. She did so with remarkable clarity and restraint. That passage now appears on the Wall of Honor at the entrance to the Garden. She felt no need to elaborate. She trusted that her intentions were clear and that they would be honored.

Following her death, a new Board undertook the responsibility of carrying her vision forward. We sought expert guidance, studied other great gardens, and adopted a guiding principle that endures today: Lotusland would remain Madame Walska's private garden, but open to the public. It would always be her garden but visitors would be welcome.

The late Michel Towbes, a former Lifetime Honorary Trustee, once described Lotusland as "an oasis of tranquility in a busy world." I have always felt that phrase captured Madame Walska's vision perfectly. It remains both a gift and a responsibility—one that calls for thoughtful stewardship and long-term care.

Madame Walska planned carefully to protect what she loved. The future of Lotusland depends on the same care, foresight, and commitment to perpetuity that guided her decisions.

CREATE YOUR LEGACY AT LOTUSLAND

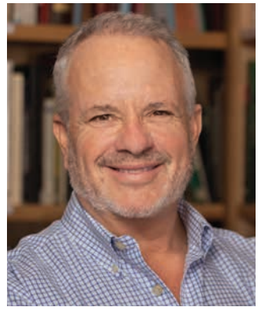
Madame Ganna Walska ensured the future of Lotusland through thoughtful planning and a commitment to perpetuity. Today, supporters who share that vision can create your own lasting legacy by joining *The Lotus Society*.

For information about *The Lotus Society* and legacy giving, please contact:
Patricia Sadeghian, Director of Philanthropy
thelotussociety@lotusland.org | 805-969-3767, ext. 125

PHOTO: KIM BAILE

Welcoming New Trustees

We are pleased to announce the appointment of three new Trustees who joined Lotusland's Board in January. Each brings deep professional expertise and a shared commitment to the Garden's mission, strengthening our long-range vision. Their leadership arrives at an important moment as Lotusland advances significant initiatives in collections management, water stewardship, and visitor experience.



John P. Margolis, AIA, Appleton Partners is an accomplished architect with decades of experience in residential, civic, and institutional design. His work reflects a deep commitment to classical and traditional architecture, shaped by leadership roles at nationally recognized firms and ongoing involvement with the Institute of Classical Architecture & Art, where he currently serves on the Board of the Southern California Chapter and was recently elected a Fellow. John serves on Lotusland's Building & Grounds Committee, the Architectural Advisory Ad-Hoc Committee, and brings valuable perspective to the stewardship of the Garden's historic structures and evolving needs.

Graciela Carrasco is a nonprofit volunteer and former global Chief Human Resources Officer whose career has centered on helping people and organizations realize their potential. With experience across media and entertainment, consumer goods, agriculture, technology, and professional services, she has led international teams and built philanthropic partnerships that advance community and environmental well-being. Graciela currently leads nonprofit programs that empower young people to become climate leaders through writing, mentorship, and immersive retreats focused on environmental storytelling and community impact. A Santa Barbara native, she brings a deep commitment to conservation, education, and community stewardship.

PHOTO: ISAAC HERNANDEZ

Julie Morley, a longtime Garden supporter, author, and ornithographer, offers a unique lens shaped by her work documenting bird lives through photography, videography, and writing. She holds a PhD in multispecies studies and is the founder of Multispecies Media, a nonprofit media platform dedicated to fostering empathy and understanding between humans and wildlife through art and storytelling. Julie served as Co-Chair of Lotusland Celebrates in 2025 and will again in 2026, bringing creative vision and deep commitment to community engagement.

They join a talented and dedicated Board of Trustees whose collective leadership in strategic planning, philanthropy, business, design, and community engagement continues to guide Lotusland's mission with care and vision. We are grateful for the expertise and stewardship each new Trustee brings to Lotusland and look forward to the insight and energy they will contribute to the Garden's future.

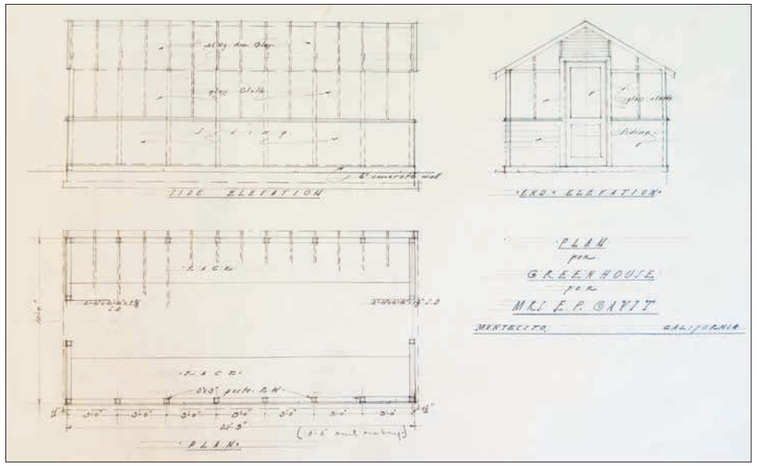
A Greenhouse Returns:

HONORING GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH'S ARCHITECTURE AT LOTUSLAND

Tucked within the lush calm of the Fern Garden, a long-forgotten architectural jewel has returned to the landscape. Faithfully reconstructed from original drawings by renowned Montecito architect George Washington Smith, the historic greenhouse now stands revitalized as part of Lotusland, offering visitors a new way to experience the Fern Garden while honoring the estate's architectural heritage.

The newly completed structure is an exact replica of Smith's original design, created using his archival blueprints and specifications. Carefully relocated to the Fern Garden, the greenhouse is accompanied by a new ADA-accessible pathway that will allow all guests to reach and enjoy this tranquil area, furthering Lotusland's commitment to both preservation and access.

This project reflects the Garden's dedication to respecting the historic character of the property and the buildings, while thoughtfully enhancing the visitor experience. Rather than introducing a contemporary structure, Lotusland looked to its past, bringing forward an architectural element that aligns seamlessly with the estate's original vision and the Spanish Colonial Revival style that defines it.



Original architectural drawings for the greenhouse by George Washington Smith, whose Spanish Colonial Revival designs helped shape the early estate of Cuesta Linda in the 1920s.

George Washington Smith and Cuesta Linda

In 1925, the Gavit family, then owners of the Montecito estate known as Cuesta Linda, commissioned George Washington Smith to design a series of buildings and landscape features. Smith, one of the most influential architects in Southern California, is widely credited with shaping the region's Spanish Colonial Revival style, drawing inspiration from Andalusian, Moorish, and Mediterranean traditions.

At Cuesta Linda, Smith designed the perimeter wall, pavilion, stables, swimming pool, bathhouse, and several other outbuildings—establishing the architectural framework that continues to give the property its distinctive character. The Gavit family owned the estate until 1937, and in 1941 it was purchased by Madame Ganna Walska, who transformed it into the extraordinary botanical garden we know today as Lotusland. Smith's architecture remains an integral part of that legacy, forming a harmonious dialogue between built form and living landscape.

The return of the greenhouse extends this lineage. Rooted in historical accuracy and craftsmanship, it stands as both a tribute to Smith's work and a reflection of Lotusland's long-standing commitment to stewardship, beauty, and authenticity.

The George Washington Smith Greenhouse is sponsored by Jeanne and Robbie Anderson.

Left: Remains of the historic greenhouse designed by George Washington Smith.
Right: Historical replica of the George Washington Smith greenhouse under construction in the Fern Garden.

MEMBERSHIP AT LOTUSLAND

A Deeper Way to Belong

Membership at Lotusland is an invitation to experience the Garden more fully, with greater access, closer connection, and a shared commitment to caring for this extraordinary place. At every level, membership supports the preservation of rare plant collections, historic landscapes, and sustainable horticultural practices, while offering members a more personal relationship with the Garden throughout the year.

Priority Access & Visiting Privileges

One of the most valued benefits of membership is priority access to the reservation calendar, which opens two weeks ahead of the public.

Each membership includes two complimentary visits per year, reserved through the calendar. At the *Supporter* level, additional visits are available at half-price. At higher membership levels, including the *Patron Circle*, all visits are included, providing even greater flexibility and access throughout the year.

During peak season, when reservations fill quickly, this early access is especially meaningful, particularly during lotus viewing season, when members enjoy first opportunity to secure preferred dates and times.

Member-Only Experiences

Members are invited into a range of exclusive experiences designed to foster connection and discovery, including:

- Intimate garden conversations and walking tours with horticultural staff
- Behind-the-scenes access to select areas of the Garden
- Special lotus viewing days during peak bloom, when the public calendar is typically full
- First access to signature events and limited-capacity programs
- Priority invitations to newly announced experiences
- Seasonal gatherings such as Member Appreciation Day and Lotus Viewing Days

Throughout the year, members also enjoy:

- First access to the reservation calendar and special event tickets, including *Lotusland Celebrates*
- Discounted admission for guests and reduced rates on docent-led tours
- A 10% discount at the Lotusland Garden Shop and online store
- A complimentary subscription to *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine

A Community of Connection

At its heart, Lotusland membership is about belonging to a community that values beauty, meaningful access, and a shared commitment to the Garden's future. Memberships support the care of this remarkable place and help ensure that its landscapes, collections, and programs continue to inspire.

Memberships are tax-deductible.

Learn more at lotusland.org/support/become-a-member or contact the Membership Department at 805-969-3767, ext. 115.

MEMBERS SHOP & SAVE!

We are grarteful for the generosity of our local parnters who extend special savings to Lotusland Members throughtout the year. Discounts vary by business and may range from 10%-15%; simply present your membership card before your purchase to receive the applicable offer. We are deeply appreciative of their support and are pleased to share these valued partners with you.

Learn more at lotusland.org/support/become-a-member

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Calendar: February–June

For more detailed information about upcoming events, visit lotusland.org/events

Valentine's Day
Saturday, February 14

Public Tour Season Reopens
Wednesday, March 11

Golden Hour Wine Walk
Friday, March 13

Spring Equinox Sound Bath
Saturday, March 21

Twilight in the Garden
Saturday, May 23

Garden Conversations (Members event)
Thursday, March 26

Twilight in the Garden
Saturday, April 4

Botanic Art: Gel Printing Class
Saturday, April 11

Well-Being Wednesday: Poetry of Nature Meditation
Wednesday, April 15

***Gardens in Paradise:* Hope Ranch**
Wednesday, April 22

***En Plein Air* Art Atelier with SBMA**
Saturday, May 2

Music in Paradise: Piano Concerto
Thursday, May 7

***Gardens in Paradise:* Montecito Estate Twilight Dinner**
Thursday, May 7

Picnic on the Great Lawn
Saturday, May 9

Garden to Glass: SB Culinary Experience
Friday, May 15

Garden Conversations
Thursday, May 21

Lessons from Lotusland: Ferns & Begonias
Wednesday, June 3

Golden Hour Wine Walk
Friday, June 5

Picnic on the Great Lawn
Saturday, June 13

Well-Being Wednesday: Japanese Meditation
Wednesday, June 17

Volunteer Appreciation Day
Tuesday, June 23

2026 TICKET RELEASE SCHEDULE:

Due to ongoing work in the Garden, the Public Tour Season reopens March 11, 2026. Members receive access to reservations two weeks prior to the public release.

FEBRUARY–MARCH
January 6: Member Pre-release

MARCH
January 20: Public Release

APRIL–MAY
February 17: Members Pre-release
March 3: Public Release

JUNE–AUGUST
April 21: Members Pre-release
May 5: Public Release

Ticket release dates are subject to change. Additional information is available at **lotusland.org/visit**

Lotusland is open for public visitation Wednesdays through Saturdays with a self-guided or docent-led tour by request. Explore lotusland.org/visit to check availability and reserve your space. Space is limited and advance reservations are required. We recommend making reservations one month in advance.