

Ganna
Walska



LOTUSLAND

NEWSLETTER | FALL 2025

CROWNED
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL GARDEN
IN CALIFORNIA
SEPTEMBER
2025

MADAME WALSKA & THE COUNTESS
DE CASTIGLIONE

A Legacy of Likeness

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Growing Hope

FALL & WINTER EVENTS

Exceptional Plants

Letter from the CEO

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

This season, Lotusland has been celebrated both locally and nationally. Over the summer, our annual gala, *Lotusland Celebrates*, shone as an evening of extraordinary support and recognition for the Garden. More recently, this fall, Lotusland was named the “Most Beautiful Garden in California” by HGTV and featured in SFGate, KTLA, *Sunset*, and more. We are also honored to be included in *Santa Barbara Magazine*’s new book *California: Dream State*, affirming what our visitors and community already know: Lotusland is a place of extraordinary biodiversity, beauty, and belonging.



This fall, we are also deepening Lotusland’s connection with Santa Barbara County students through several educational initiatives.

Through a new partnership with Explore Ecology, we are evolving our Jr. Botanist program for regional fourth graders. By engaging Explore Ecology’s environmental educators, and with the support of our devoted docents, we are meeting increased demand for school visits, strengthening our curriculum, aligning with California science standards, and advancing lessons in plant science, nature connection, and climate advocacy.

In September, Lotusland proudly hosted students from YouthWell’s Youth Advocacy Board leadership program for a one-day retreat launching their year’s activities. This special gathering brought together high school students from across the County to champion youth mental health on their campuses and in their communities.

Lotusland continues its partnership with Santa Barbara City College’s Environmental Horticulture program and our residential summer internship in Sustainable Horticulture. And new this year, we are collaborating with the Santa Barbara County Office of Education’s Partners in Education high school internship program, further extending our reach in the hearts and minds of young people.

Lotusland’s commitment to students cultivates engagement through meaningful partnerships and expands the impact of our talented staff and volunteers.

As the role of botanical gardens grows ever more vital—both globally and locally—Lotusland continues to respond: to grow, adapt, and innovate. Together, we ensure Lotusland remains a sanctuary for plants and people, and a place of learning, discovery, and inspiration.

With gratitude for the vital role you play in our community,

Rebecca

Rebecca Anderson, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer,
Ganna Walska Lotusland

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FROM THE TREASURER’S DESK

Lotusland is not only a public garden supported by its visitors, its community, and generous donors—it is a living treasure. As a 100-year-old historic estate and garden, it requires constant and careful stewardship: preserving its landmark buildings, investing in its systems and infrastructure, and maintaining plant collections of global significance.



This year, we have taken several steps to strengthen Lotusland’s operational and financial sustainability. We have adjusted staff salaries to better reflect our local cost of living which allows us to retain and attract the expert staff whose knowledge and dedication make Lotusland possible. We have also upgraded and made more efficient the infrastructure that supports our water use, we have enhanced visitor mobility and safety, and expanded our use of organic and sustainable gardening practices. Finally, we have refined our investment policies and procedures to match industry best practices and position us for the future.

At the same time, we are entering the final stretch of the *Lotusland Forever* campaign—an ambitious effort with two vital goals: growing our endowment to secure long-term sustainability and to fund the capital projects that are necessary to fulfill our mission to the community. Just \$5 million remains to reach our goal. Achieving this milestone will allow us to replace aging infrastructure, expand access, ensure innovative water security through advanced resource management, and build the reserves needed to reduce our structural deficit.

The generosity that fuels Lotusland is not defined by a single evening or season. It is the steady, thoughtful commitment of friends like you that protects and shares this Garden’s beauty year after year. On behalf of the Board, I extend my deepest gratitude for all you do to keep Madame Ganna Walska’s vision alive and thriving—for today, and for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Mark K. Schmidt

Mark K. Schmidt
Treasurer,
Lotusland Board of Trustees



Walska's Wonderland by Christopher Noxon
Featured in the Lotusland Celebrates 2025 exhibition “Jardin des Rêves”
presented at Sullivan Goss: An American Art Gallery

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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.

A Legacy of Likeness

By Christopher Mahoney, Senior International Specialist, Senior Vice President, Photographs Department, Phillips

Before dedicating herself to the creation of Lotusland, Madame Ganna Walska pursued many passions—from jewelry and fashion to theater and history. Among them was her fascination with the audacious Countess de Castiglione, whose self-portraits Walska acquired and later drew upon in her own performances. While she sold much of what she collected to invest in the Garden, this remarkable collection of 150 photographs remained, carefully preserved at Lotusland. Their sale at Phillips in October will help ensure the preservation of the Garden’s archives and cultural legacy.

On October 9th, a small portion of Madame Ganna Walska’s legacy will be auctioned at Phillips in New York City. A series of 19th century photographs of the Countess de Castiglione—a muse to Madame Walska and others—will be offered in three lots. Proceeds from their sale will fund the preservation, inventory, and digitization of Lotusland’s archives and non-living collections—including rare books, correspondence, photographs, memorabilia, fine art, textiles, and garden artifacts—ensuring the continuation of its cultural and historical legacy.

The photographs all depict Virginia

Oldoini, Countess de Castiglione (1837–1899), who, in collaboration with several Parisian photographers, produced a groundbreaking body of self-portraiture that defied the conventions of her era. A striking and flamboyant figure, the Countess was both Napoleon III’s mistress and a fixture of Parisian high society. Driven by an unwavering self-regard, she sat for countless photographic portraits. Curator and scholar Pierre Apraxine has noted that her partnership with Pierre-Louis Pierson was particularly productive, with the photographer accommodating her every demand: ‘In a reversal of the roles, the sitter would direct every

aspect of the picture, from the angle of the shot to the lighting, using the photographer as a mere tool in her pursuit of self-absorbed, exhibitionist fantasies’ (*The Waking Dream*, p. 339). Many of these portraits were later embellished with the Countess’s own vividly hand-drawn borders. Collectively, they reveal a woman with a remarkably modern understanding of photography’s power to construct and sustain celebrity. The photographs share a distinguished provenance, having passed through the hands of two collectors who, in their own ways, were captivated by the Countess and reflected her audacious spirit.

Following the Countess’s death in 1899, her estate was auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris. Her extraordinary archive of self-portraits was acquired by the French Symbolist poet, artist, and collector Robert de Montesquiou (1855–1921). A flamboyant dandy with a vast ego, Montesquiou was a celebrated artist’s model whose likeness was captured in photographs, drawings, and



Paul Nadar, Robert de Montesquiou, 1895 (not in sale)

After Montesquiou’s death, his collection of Castiglione photographs was acquired by Madame Ganna Walska who became equally entranced by the work.

paintings by James McNeill Whistler, Giovanni Boldini, and others. In the Countess he recognized a kindred spirit. His fascination culminated in the first biography of her, *La Divine Comtesse: Étude d’après Madame de Castiglione*, which de Montesquiou published in 1913.

After Montesquiou’s death, his collection of Castiglione photographs was acquired by Madame Ganna Walska who became equally entranced by the work. Born in present-day Belarus to Polish parents, Walska trained as an opera singer and performed in Europe and the United States. In 1922, she acquired the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, guiding it for more than four decades and ensuring its vitality as a center of Parisian cultural life before ultimately leaving it to the French



Advertisement for Ganna Walska’s play, *La Castiglione*, performed at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, in 1929 (not in sale)

state. It was there, in 1929, that she produced and starred in *La Castiglione*, a lavish stage production inspired by her collection of photographs of the Countess. Drawing directly from these images, Walska appeared in elaborate costume in her first non-singing role, a performance the New York Times praised for its dramatic force and for the generous applause it received from audiences.

In 1941, Madame Walska purchased the Cuesta Linda estate in Montecito, California, and transformed it into Lotusland, now recognized as one of the world’s most iconic botanical gardens. In 1971, she sold most of her Castiglione photographs to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which today holds the largest collection of this

material. Walska, however, retained a select group of works as a personal tribute to the woman who had so profoundly inspired her.

Sale begins 10:00 am EDT, Thursday, October 9, 2025

On View October 2-8

Phillip Auction House: 432 Park Avenue, New York, NY, United States, 10022

Preview online and Register to bid:

phillips.com



Left and Center: Portraits of the Countess Virginia Oldoini Verasis di Castiglione Pierre-Louis Pierson, 1863–66, Albumen silver print

Scherzo di Follia—Portrait of the Countess Virginia Oldoini Verasis di Castiglione Pierre-Louis Pierson, 1863–66, Albumen silver print

John Bleck: A Life Surrounded by Plants

By Anna Bower, Associate Curator of Living Collections and Nursery Manager and Paul Mills, Director of Conservation and Curator of the Living Collection

With an encyclopedic knowledge of plants, renowned plantsman John Bleck was always ready to share his wisdom while mentoring generations of plant enthusiasts. A constant learner himself even at 91 years of age, John Bleck was still as awestruck and inquisitive about the plants that surrounded him as he surely was back in the 1950’s studying floriculture at the University of Indiana. John never showed up anywhere empty-handed, always having an unusual plant, an interesting article or some bit of

information to share. John’s plants and his influence can be found throughout the plant world.

John’s early days included working at the Mathias Botanic Garden at UCLA and as a research diver and curator of the ichthyological collection there, later going on to manage the research greenhouses at UCSB as a master plant grower and a renowned hybridizer, all the while developing his personal plant collection. From Oman to the Baja Peninsula, John’s collection spans geographical regions

from around the world and decades in its development. After his passing earlier this year, much of his collection came to Lotusland, encompassing 120 new accessions and consisting of 140 individual plants. Twenty species of plants in John’s collection are listed as Threatened by the IUCN Red List and many are uncommon in collections.

Highlights from John’s Collection

At John’s bequest, Lotusland received his succulent bonsai collection which is now housed in the Succulent Garden’s Roundhouse. The majority of the collection consists of *Bursera*, *Commiphora*, *Boswellia*, and *Operculicarya* species all staged in decorative pots and carefully tended using bonsai techniques. *Bursera*, *Commiphora*, and *Boswellia* are all members of the Burseraceae, or torchwood family, and exude aromatic resins used for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. *Bursera* are native to tropical and subtropical America and copal resins extracted from several species were an important part of pre-Columbian Mesoamerican cultures. Later uses included extraction of linaloe essential oils from the wood and fruit. *Bursera graveolens* wood is the source for palo santo and *Bursera glabrifolia* is exclusively used to create alebrijes, the colorfully painted animal carvings known from the Oaxaca Valley. John’s donation also includes several species of *Commiphora*, the source of myrrh, opopanax, and guggul resins, and *Boswellia*, producer of frankincense resin.

John was particularly interested in island endemics. His collection includes several species of *Operculicarya*, a small genus only found on Madagascar and two of its remote islands, Comoros and Aldabra. *Operculicarya* are members of the



John’s collection spans geographical regions from around the world and decades in its development.

Anacardiaceae, or sumac family, a sister group to the Burseraceae. They feature stout, often knobby trunks and make an excellent subject for bonsai techniques. The genus name comes from the Latin, *operculum*, meaning “lid or covering,” referencing the hatch-like door on the seeds. Opercula are also found as bud caps on eucalyptus and as snail shell “trapdoors.”

John grew impressive specimens of *Pelargonium cotyledonis*, a critically endangered succulent geranium from Saint Helena Island, located in the

middle of the southern Atlantic Ocean. This ultra-remote island is where Napoleon I was exiled in 1815 and died in May of 1821. His burial site was located in the Valley of the Geraniums on the island but his body was later exhumed and returned to France.

The Roundhouse is the ideal environment for specimen succulents that are winter dormant or those that are best grown in small pots. This group of plants prefers to receive rainfall in the summer months, the opposite of our Santa Barbara weather pattern. We already had a small holding of winter dormant Madagascan euphorbia and were able to incorporate John’s plants into the existing collection. We estimate the Roundhouse was built in the 1960s and is in need of renovation to properly house these collections. Having this protected space allows us to feature succulent bonsai and winter-dormant and finicky taxa. Future plans include augmenting these collections and making the space viewable for tours.

Other highlights from John’s collection include nine different species of *Rhipsalis*, a genus of epiphytic cacti, which have made their home in hanging baskets in the Tropical Garden. We also received several *Tillandsia* and other bromeliads to be incorporated into the Upper and Lower Bromeliad Gardens, and now-rooted cuttings of *Wercklea lutea*, a thorny shrub from Costa Rica to western Panama and member of the Malvaceae or mallow family.

We are thrilled to be able to house John’s carefully tended specimens and continue his legacy here at the Garden.



The Roundhouse is the ideal environment for specimen succulents that are winter dormant or those that are best grown in small pots.



Euphorbia lomelii (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*) ‘Loop the Loop’ won Best Crested Succulent at the 2017 Inter-City Cactus and Succulent Show.

SPECIMEN PLANT FUND

Lotusland constantly strives to increase the diversity of the plant collections, also having the need to replace large, mature specimens in the landscape that are beginning to fail due to age.

Lotusland’s Specimen Plant Fund is a restricted account that is funded entirely by donations. This important reserve allows us to purchase specific

plants for special projects or rare plants that become available but are not part of our annual budget. Often times these opportunities are time sensitive.

To learn more about the importance of the Specimen Plant Fund or the other ways Lotusland acquires plants, please contact Paul Mills, Curator of the Living Collection at pmills@lotusland.org.

Reflections on the 2025 International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society (IWGS) Symposium

By Brigid McManus, Section Gardener—Water Garden and Aquatic Features

This year’s IWGS Symposium took place in New York at Wave Hill Botanic Garden and included two days of tours, beginning with Brooklyn Botanic Garden and New York Botanical Garden, followed by three aquatic plant nurseries, and koi facilities.

The symposium gathered an impressive roster of speakers. Among them was Robert Sheldon, owner of Latour-Marliac in France—the world’s oldest waterlily nursery, founded in 1875 and a source of inspiration for Claude Monet’s famous water garden paintings. Also presenting was Dr. André Leu of Australia, a leading voice in the international organic agriculture movement and an expert in regenerative farming, who spoke about hybridizing and collecting Australian waterlilies. From China, Mr. Yuchu Chen returned as a special guest. When the symposium was held in Qingdao in 2011, it marked a turning point for research and industry in China, fostering award-winning collections of lotus and waterlilies that continue to enrich the global water gardening community. Additional participants included aquatic horticulturists from England, Mexico, and across the United States.

Our first tour was of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden which spans 52 acres and includes water features with terraces of hardy waterlilies and lotus, and an aquatic plant house showcasing a single *Victoria* ‘Longwood Hybrid’ alongside orchids, ferns, and tropical species from the arum and pitcher plant families. The New York Botanical Garden spans 250 acres and cares for more than one million plants. Declared a National



It was here that I found Lotusland’s newest koi: a young Doitsu Lemon Hariwake butterfly koi from Yamasan Koi Farm in Japan’s renowned Niigata region.

Historic Landmark in 1967, the Garden is home to 50 specialized gardens and vital plant research facilities. Its two great pools, adjacent to the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, display an accessioned waterlily and lotus collection, including *Victoria cruziana*—currently flourishing in Lotusland’s own ponds.

The second day of visits brought us to Aquascapes Unlimited, an expansive aquatic nursery producing both native wetland plants and ornamentals. Spanning 20 acres, the site includes five vernal ponds, 15,000 square feet of heated greenhouse space, and extensive outdoor wet beds. Known for its carnivorous and custom hybrid pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*), the nursery also cultivates *Nelumbo*, *Nymphaea*, *Nuphar*, and more.

Owner Randy Heffner led a hands-on bog-building workshop, where we created planting mixes of peat moss, perlite, coir fiber, pine fines, charcoal, and sphagnum moss, and planted *Sarracenia*, *Drosera*, *Lachnocaulon minus*, orchids, and even cranberries.



Meet Little Lemon, a young *Doitsu* Lemon *Hariwake* butterfly koi and Lotusland’s newest addition to our koi family

Our final visits were to two Fitz’s Ponds nursery locations in New Jersey. The Saddle River property, formerly Waterford Gardens, and originally established in 1895 by William Tricker, is recognized as the first commercial waterlily farm in the United States. We visited a second location, the Fitz’s Fish Ponds Farm/Warehouse, serves as the country’s largest Japanese koi importer, annually hand-selecting nearly half a million koi from Japan. Six state-of-the-art greenhouses house koi and aquatic plants, including specialized quarantine, lily, tosaï (juvenile), and champion koi facilities.

It was here during our last visit that I was introduced to a young *Doitsu* Lemon *Hariwake* butterfly koi from Yamasan Koi Farm in Japan’s renowned Niigata region, one of only two recognized butterfly koi breeders in the country. Named “Little Lemon” in honor of Lotusland’s Lemon Arbor, the young koi arrived on August 19th and acclimated in a quatantine tank behind the Bathhouse, with gradual introductions of water from the Bamboo Pond. By mid-September, he joined our koi collection in the Japanese Garden, where he will delight visitors for years to come.

Fusarium Wilt of Palms in Montecito

By Chris Ziliotto, Sustainability Program Manager

While not native to California, Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) are such a regular sight throughout our area that it’s hard to imagine them not being here. If you keep an eye out, you’ll notice many of these large palms are in dramatic decline, many of which are exhibiting symptoms of fusarium wilt caused by *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *canariensis*, an introduced and lethal fungus. We lost a large Canary Island date palm along Cold Springs Road just last year.

Looking closely, the signs of this fungus can be hard to miss. Characteristics of fusarium infection in Canary Island date palms look like distinctive one-sided browning of fronds, often with a streak along the petiole. Symptoms typically begin in the older fronds, progressing upwards until the tree is dead.

There is no cure for fusarium wilt, with infected trees needing to be removed. One of the primary vectors for infection between plants is thought to be infected pruning equipment, therefore it is important for homeowners, gardeners,



Phoenix canariensis in private residence in Montecito sporting a pineapple cut with characteristic one-sided wilting and progressive frond death from bottom up. This tree will not recover.

and arborists alike to take extra precautions when working on these palms. Saws and pruners should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between trees that are being worked on. It is nearly impossible to disinfect a chainsaw blade, so, if possible, it is best to avoid using a chainsaw when pruning palms.

The unnecessary removal of green palm fronds results in what are essentially open wounds in the palm canopy which can be more vulnerable to pests and pathogens of all sorts. We encourage



Phoenix canariensis on Cold Springs Road showing dramatic lower frond death progressing up the canopy. This tree was removed.

people to be judicious with their pruning practices, avoiding things like the popular “pineapple cut” and instead opting to only remove fronds that have completely died.

These mature date palms are iconic in our area and are expensive to remove and replace. Proactively preventing the transmission of diseases like fusarium wilt through simple sanitation methods pays dividends and preserves these regal palms for everyone’s continual enjoyment.

PLANT HEALTH CARE INTERNSHIP AT LOTUSLAND: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING UNLIKE ANY OTHER!



By Sean McSherry, 2025 Plant Health Care Intern

Living and working on the site of a stunning hundred-year-old garden is something that I didn’t think was possible to do as an intern until I was selected as the 2025 Plant Health Care Intern.

Lotusland’s incredible commitment to sustainability was one of the things that drew me to the Plant Health Care Internship Program. At Lotusland, I learned first-hand about compost tea application, but also production and how local partnerships reduce environmental impact. I gained experience in integrated pest management and was able to put this to work in the garden with thrip-eating lacewing insects. It was a powerful illustration of these techniques. I also had the opportunity to learn about drip irrigation setup, Japanese *Niwaki* pruning techniques, and aquatic gardening practices.

Although all my experiences in the gardens were incredible, my favorite

thing about Lotusland is the lovely people. It’s thanks to the amazing crew of kindhearted, collaborative, dedicated people that Lotusland flourishes.

Now that this internship has ended, I’ll be continuing to my senior year at Pitzer College where I will complete my B.A. in environmental science before making my way off into the world. I would like to thank everybody who made this incredible experience possible for me this summer.

Support for the Sustainable Plant Health Care Internship program is provided by a grant from the John Percival and Mary C. Jefferson Endowment Fund.

Growing Hope

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOOD SAMARITAN SHELTER

By Phylene Wiggins, Grants and Strategic Partnerships Officer

Lotusland is excited to announce a new partnership with Good Samaritan Shelter—sharing our bounty of healthy, organic fruit to feed community residents experiencing homelessness.

Lotusland is home to 160 fruit trees divided between deciduous and citrus orchards. Each year, these mature trees bring forth an abundance of fruit, all grown using our regenerative horticulture practices. The annual harvest includes diverse varieties of plums, peaches, apples, pears,

persimmons, and figs, as well as oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit, guava, and kumquats.

Good Samaritan is the largest homeless shelter in Santa Barbara County, operating multiple programs across the region. In Santa Barbara, their work includes supporting the La Posada Interim Housing Community in partnership with DignityMoves, another key housing provider in the county's efforts to combat homelessness. Good Samaritan's vocational agriculture program, "Growing

The program needed a steady source of organic fruit and Lotusland's orchard is blessed with abundance.

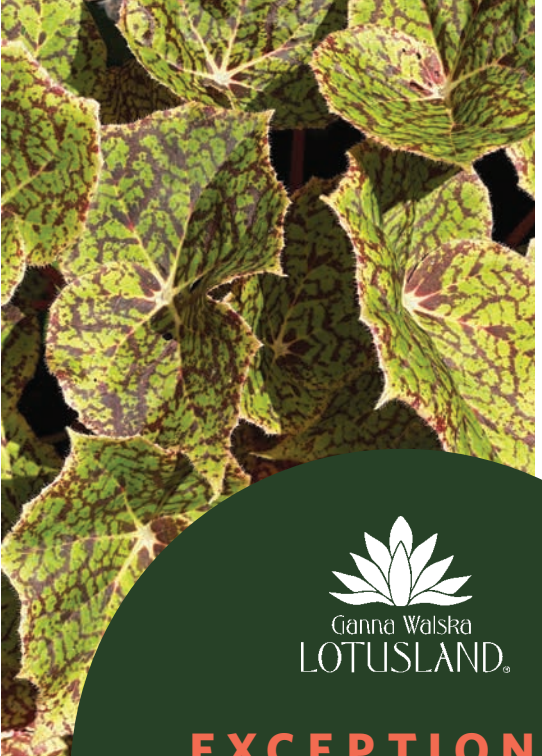
Hope", is a farm venture with two primary goals. First, provide fresh produce to the Good Samaritan Shelter system county-wide. Second, provide agriculture vocational training for current clients. Clients are able to apply and be part of the 6-week cohorts where they will learn tools from the agriculture field that can then be applied in the agriculture workforce, while at the same time giving back to their community by providing fresh produce for the individuals and families living in the shelter system.

In conversation with Sylvia Barnard, Executive Director of Good Samaritan Shelter, I learned about the *Food for Good* program. The program needed a steady source of organic fruit and Lotusland's orchard is blessed with abundance. Under the terms of Lotusland's new partnership, Good Samaritan schedules fruit collection once a month and gathers fruit as part of the program to train clients in vocational agriculture skills. The harvested fruit is then provided to individuals and families living in their shelter system.

"Good Samaritan Shelter is thrilled to partner with Lotusland on harvesting fruit and utilizing the fresh produce within our culinary programs. Fresh produce has transformed our culinary program and created balanced & nutritional meals for the 1,000 persons under roof that we serve every night. Good Sam is so grateful for this new collaborative partnership with Lotusland," said Barnard.



Jeff Hendrickson, Farm Manager, and Martha Diaz Hernandez, Food Coordinator for Good Samaritan's program with citrus gathered from Lotusland's orchard.



Ganna Walska
LOTUSLAND.

EXCEPTIONAL PLANTS AUCTION RETURNS TO LOTUSLAND

AUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

(Photos L-R)

Begonia 'Frances Fickewirth' is a rarely seen 1972 hybrid from Helen Shortt of Baldwin Park, CA. It is a rhizomatous *Begonia* with beautifully colored leaves. *B. 'Norah Bedson'* and an unknown Mexican *Begonia* species are the parents. This hybrid was first published in the American Begonia Society Journal, *The Begonian*, in April of 1973.

Amorphophallus titanum, aka the titan arum or corpse flower, is one of the most unusual plants in the plant kingdom. From the subterranean corm emerges a single leaf with the stature of a small tree or if you're lucky enough, the largest unbranched inflorescence on the planet. The flower brings with it a powerfully putrid odor, hence the name corpse flower.

Encephalartos horridus x woodii—where else but Lotusland would you find a hybrid of the extinct in the wild South African cycad, *Encephalartos woodii*, crossed with the beautifully fierce *E. horridus*. This one-of-a-kind plant guarantees to become something amazing.

Lotusland invites you to experience one of the most anticipated events of the season, the **Exceptional Plants Auction**, on **Saturday, October 11, from 1 to 4 pm**. This spirited afternoon in the Garden brings together plant collectors, landscape designers, and passionate gardeners for the chance to acquire rare, hard-to-find specimens in a truly unforgettable setting.

With both silent and live auctions featuring more than 200 exceptional lots, the auction offers an extraordinary range of plants. Many specimens are sourced from leading nurseries, botanical institutions, and private collections, while others are propagated and nurtured right here at Lotusland. Together, they reflect both global diversity and Lotusland's horticultural expertise.

From sculptural succulents and dramatic bromeliads to elegant palms, ancient cycads, rare tropicals, and climate-resilient selections perfectly suited to Southern California gardens, each lot tells a story, and every purchase provides vital support for the care and preservation of Lotusland's world-class gardens.

Beyond the excitement of the auction, guests will enjoy signature cocktails and light bites while connecting with fellow plant aficionados in the Garden's spectacular surroundings.



TICKETS: Please scan the QR code to preview the auction lots and secure your place at Lotusland's ultimate plant party.

BOOK NOOK & AUTHOR SIGNING

Back by popular demand, Lotusland will also feature a Book Nook offering gently used titles on garden design, horticulture, and plant collecting—always a favorite for visitors eager to expand their libraries.

This year also includes a special book signing of *Santa Barbara: At Home in Paradise* (Rizzoli, 2025) by Douglas Woods, with photographs by Mark Walla, architectural contributions by Marc Appleton, and essays by M. Brian Tichenor. Copies will be available for purchase on-site.

Join Us!

Upcoming Events

Purchase tickets
and reserve your space
at lotusland.org/events



PHOTO: KIM BAILE

LESSONS FROM LOTUSLAND

Wednesday, October 8, 5:30–6:30 pm

Home Composting—Discover the benefits home composting and how to adapt methods used in the Garden into your own home with Dr. David White.

Tuesday, December 2, 5:30–6:30 pm

A Tale of Two Architects—Discover the untold story of Lotusland in this exploration of the vision and legacy of George Washington Smith and Reginald Johnson in this inspiring talk lead by Anthony Grumbine.

WELL-BEING WEDNESDAYS

October 15, 11:30 am–12:30 pm

Quigong

Based on the philosophy of “harmony between man and nature”, Linda Peng leads this intimate energy practice that combines physical exercise, breathing exercise and mental exercise in the serene atmosphere of the Garden.

ART IN THE GARDEN

Friday October 24 / Saturday, October 25,
9 am–1 pm

Eco Printing Workshop—Learn how to capture botanical prints on fabric with local fiber artist Linda Kollofski and Lotusland’s Associate Curator Anna Bower in an interactive workshop using plant material gathered from the Garden.

Saturday, November 8, 1–4 pm

En Plain Air Adult Studio Art Class with SBMA—Inspired by works currently on view at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum Teaching Artist Nicola Ghersen will lead artists of all levels for an inspiring afternoon in the Garden.

Signature Events



EXCEPTIONAL PLANTS AUCTION

Saturday, October 11, 1–4 pm

Browse, bid, and bring home rare, hard-to-find plants—exceptional specimens sourced from top nurseries, botanical institutions, and private collections. Whether you’re building your collection or simply love unique plants, this spirited event supports the care of Lotusland’s world-class gardens.

Community Events

COMMUNITY ACCESS DAYS

Friday, November 21 / Saturday, November 22

Half-priced admission for Santa Barbara County Residents. Three self-guided visits offered daily. Spaces are limited and advanced reservations are required.

Community Access Days are made possible thanks to the generous support of Lily Hahn-Shining and Stewart Shining.

VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY PARTY

Thursday, December 4

Save the date for this special event honoring our extraordinary volunteers. Invitation to be sent by email. RSVP required.



SANTA YNEZ VALLEY
Wednesday, November 5, 9 am–3:30 pm

Join us for another edition of our exclusive *Gardens in Paradise* series. This progressive garden tour will uncover the stories behind several breathtaking Santa Ynez Valley private properties, guided by experts and homeowners, who will illuminate the artistry and vision that shaped these gardens. Participants will engage in botanical and architectural discovery, while enjoying a gastronomical experience and local fine wines generously provided by Mattei’s Tavern.

- This experience is limited to 30 people. Advance reservations are required.
- Tickets for this fundraiser are \$2,000 per guest (\$1,750 tax-deductible).
- Sponsorships are \$5,000 (\$4,500 tax-deductible) and include an additional tour in April 2026.

Proceeds for this fundraising program benefit the care of Lotusland’s gardens. For more information, please contact Development. Telephone: 805.324.8426, Email: development@lotusland.org

SERIES SPONSOR	PREMIER SERIES SPONSOR	HOSPITALITY SPONSOR
Ellin Todd	Whittier Trust	1886 M

Members-Only

MEMBERS HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Saturday, November 29 / Saturday, December 13

For the Holiday season, we’re opening the gates for **Members-only days at the Garden**. Enjoy a self-guided tour and stop by our Garden shop where you can take advantage of your Members discount and cross off some last minute shopping. Advanced reservation is required.



LOTUSLAND CELEBRATES JARDIN DES RÊVES

SETS HISTORIC RECORD FOR GENEROSITY



PHOTO: ISAAC HERNÁNDEZ DA LIPA

Trustee and Honorary Chair Wendy Schmidt and CEO Rebecca Anderson

On a dazzling summer evening, Lotusland welcomed friends and supporters to its 31st annual signature event, *Lotusland Celebrates: Jardin des Rêves*. The gala was nothing short of historic—breaking records and setting a new standard for generosity and community spirit.

“This was an historic evening—one that reflects the generosity and commitment of our community,” shared Gala Co-Chairs David M. Jones and Julie Morley. Their leadership, alongside

the dedication of countless volunteers, donors, and staff, ensured the evening’s resounding success.

Proceeds from *Lotusland Celebrates 2025* will directly support the care and maintenance of the Garden’s world-renowned collections and landscapes, sustaining Lotusland’s role as one of the most biodiverse and beautiful botanical gardens in the world. “Gala proceeds enable us to continue to carry out our role as a sanctuary for plants and people,” affirmed Board President Mari Mitchel.

One of the night’s most significant achievements was the establishment of Lotusland’s first-ever Building and Grounds Renewal Fund, a visionary step toward the long-term stewardship of the Garden. Live auction proceeds launched this fund, designated for the deferred maintenance of gardens and infrastructure. Identified by the Finance Committee as a strategic goal for 2025, this milestone has now been realized thanks to extraordinary community support.

Lotusland is deeply grateful to all who made this dream evening a reality. Together, we are ensuring that the Garden remains a place of beauty, inspiration, and renewal.



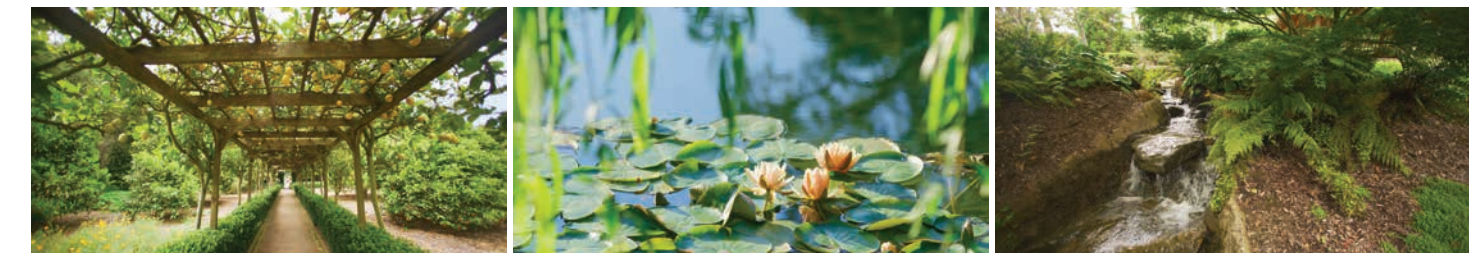
PHOTO: ISAAC HERNÁNDEZ DA LIPA

Co-Chairs David M. Jones and Julie Morley

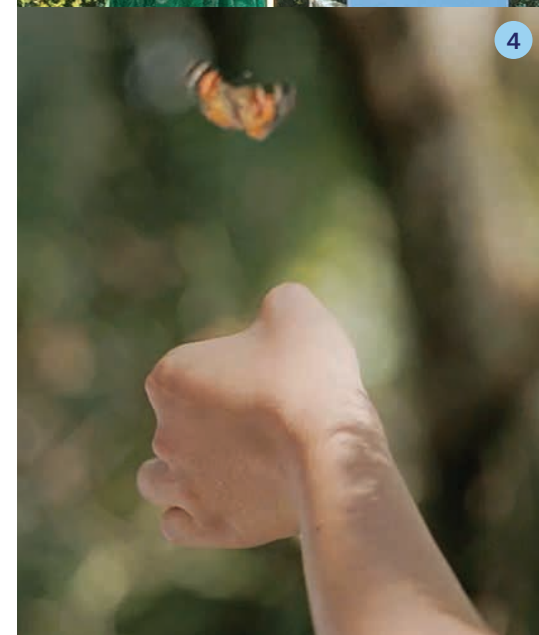
Lotusland extends special gratitude to its generous sponsors and notably Presenting Sponsor Manitou Fund under the stewardship of Nora McNeely Hurley and Michael Hurley, patrons, underwriters and auction donors whose generosity made the evening possible.

SAVE THE DATE:
Our next *Lotusland Celebrates* benefit will take place on **Saturday, July 18, 2026**

Scenes from short film *Botanical Beauty*, shot and directed by Louie Schwartzberg and narrated by Lotusland Member, Gwyneth Paltrow



1. Lotusland Celebrates *Jardin des Rêves* Committee
PHOTO: ISAAC HERNÁNDEZ DA LIPA
2. Camilla Belle addressing guests
PHOTO: DAVID MENDOZA III
3. Live Auction underway
PHOTO: DAVID MENDOZA III
4. Butterfly release in the Bromeliad Garden
5. Merryl Brown, Elizabeth Gabler, Susie Bechtel, and Mari Mitchel
PHOTO: ELIZABETH MESSINA
6. Truman Davies and Belle Hahn in the Dacora Lounge
PHOTO: ELIZABETH MESSINA
7. Peggy and Marc Appleton
PHOTO: ISAAC HERNÁNDEZ DA LIPA
8. Vintage Delahaye
PHOTO: ELIZABETH MESSINA



LOTUSLAND CELEBRATES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PRESENTING SPONSOR

Manitou Fund—
Nora McNeely Hurley & Michael Hurley

CREATEURS DES RÊVES

Susan & Riley Bechtel
Kristina & Christopher McCausland
Wendy & Eric Schmidt

VISIONNAIRES DES RÊVES

Belle Hahn
Lily Hahn Shining & Stewart Shining

GARDIENS DES RÊVES

Peggy & Marc Appleton, Appleton Partners
Lesley Cunningham & Cyndee Howard
Kelsey Martin and Anita Hovanissian,
Goldman Sachs
Connie & John Pearcy
Shirley & Walter Wang

AMBASSEURS DES RÊVES

Julie & Roger Davis
Sintija Kemezys Felder
Perri Harcourt
Julie & Peter Morley
Rooms & Gardens
Christopher J. Toomey
Laura-Lee Whittier Woods and Lauren King

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Stephen Schaible & Daron Builta
Hutton Parker Foundation and Erin & G.M.
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Members End-of-Summer BBQ

Saturday, September 6

A day of celebration and thanks for the community that helps Lotusland Flourish.



Top L-R: Babcock Wines, Lotusland Members on the Great Lawn

Center L-R: Potting Shed with Lotusland’s Director of Conservation and Curator of Living Collections Paul Mills, Guest creating a love letter to the Garden led by Sondra Weiss, Founder of Lost Art of Love Letters

Bottom L-R: Glendessary Jam, a young Member at the Potting Shed



Safeguarding the Garden from Fire Risk

Lotusland is embarking on a major fire mitigation of its eucalyptus groves. These trees have long been part of the Garden’s landscape, but they also carry significant fire risks. As stewards of this special place, it is our duty to protect not only Lotusland but also the surrounding community by managing these risks with care.



By proactively managing these trees, Lotusland continues to protect its landscape, its collections, and its community in the face of an evolving fire climate.

Eucalyptus trees present unique challenges: their height, leaf litter, and tendency to shed bark and deadwood make them particularly vulnerable during wildfire season. Balancing preservation with safety means carefully thinning stands, removing hazardous material, and managing the steady buildup of leaves and bark. Our horticulture team also prioritizes pruning cycles to improve fire truck access along perimeter roads while maintaining the protective green screen and overstory.

Pruning and maintenance follow a long-term cycle of approximately 8-10 years for perimeter trees, with phased work scheduled so that the effort is both sustainable and minimally disruptive. Severe weather events can accelerate this timeline, shifting staff immediately into response mode—removing debris, ensuring emergency access, and restoring the landscape in phases until

the garden is safe and clear. Because large pruning projects cannot take place during nesting season, timing these efforts requires both ecological sensitivity and careful planning.

Reducing and removing flammable material and carefully managing eucalyptus groves supports community-wide fire safety by helping to slow the potential spread of wildfire. Homeowners can take similar precautions by limiting fire-prone plantings, pruning to manage height, and removing deadwood and accumulated litter on their own properties.

By proactively managing these trees, Lotusland continues to protect its landscape, its collections, and its community in the face of an evolving fire climate.



PHOTO: KIM BAILE

Restoring Lotusland’s Historic Goya and Delft Tiles

This fall, Lotusland advanced a significant conservation project made possible by the Lotusland Forever campaign for capital improvements: the restoration of its historic ceramic tiles. These richly glazed works—17th- and 18th-century Delft tiles and 19th-century faience tiles from the studio of Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (aka Goya)—were acquired by Ganna Walska in the 1940s. Today they adorn walls, benches, planters, and the George Washington Smith–designed Pavilion, adding a distinctive layer of artistry to the estate’s landscape.

Among the most striking are 216 Goya-style tiles depicting bullfighting scenes, originally displayed outdoors in three planters, alongside Delft tiles whose blue-and-white pastoral imagery continues to line both the fountain and benches. Together, these collections exemplify Walska’s eclectic eye for European artistry. Photographs from Lotusland’s archives showing the tiles at the time of purchase provided critical guidance to the conservators as they undertook this delicate work.

The project was led by Silverlake Conservation. Principals Linnaea

Dawson and Amy Green, together with Elizabeth Condie and Hannah Stahulak, carefully stabilized, cleaned, and repaired the fragile surfaces with meticulous attention.

Elizabeth explained, “These tiles have been part of the Garden for nearly a century, and yet they still carry the vitality of the artists who created them. Our role was to protect that vitality, not erase it.”

Amy Green added, “Every tile presented a different problem to solve. We studied the glazes and brushwork closely, sometimes working under magnification, to make sure our interventions respected the hand of the original maker.”

Because the tiles are displayed outdoors, they face unique challenges. Linnaea Dawson emphasized, “Unlike objects kept in a museum, these tiles live in the open air. Sun, moisture, and temperature fluctuations are constant factors, and that means their conservation is never truly finished. They will always need monitoring, care, and, eventually, additional treatment.”

Hannah reflected on the long view of the project, noting, “Conservation is



Delft tile restoration

about stewardship. What we’ve done is one step in a much longer continuum to ensure these tiles survive for generations to come.”

With immense gratitude, Lotusland thanks the donors who made the project possible: Manitou Fund, at the direction of Nora McNeely Hurley; the William E. Weiss Foundation; and J. Scott Francis and Susan Gordon, Francis Family Foundation.

Lotusland is not only a garden of extraordinary plants, but also a living museum of art, architecture, and history.

The next stage of ongoing tile conservation is estimated at \$35,000. If you are interested in learning more about the preservation of Lotusland’s historic tiles and how you can help safeguard the Garden’s future, please visit lotusland.org/forever or contact Patricia Sadeghian at development@lotusland.org



Left: The treatment process: Loose material was dry brushed off the tiles faces; the surface was washed to reduce biological growth present between the tile and glaze. Then losses on the tile faces (and backs if applicable) were filled with a conservation grade patching mortar, sanded down to match the tile’s surface, and then painted to mimic the glazing both in sheen and color.

Right: Goya planter tile after treatment patching.



The LOTUS SOCIETY
PRESERVING AND ENHANCING A UNIQUE BOTANICAL TREASURE

The Lotus Society Celebrates 25 years

On June 6, 2025 over 100 Lotus Society members gathered to celebrate its newest members and 25 years of philanthropy towards the Garden's critical endowment.

The festive tropical-themed appreciation event took place at Por La Mar Nursery, owned by Lotus Society members Ron and Pat Caird. Guests enjoyed a peek at the private nursery's collections while enjoying tropical fare & cocktails, wine generously donated by Clementine Carter, and traditional Hawaiian music and dance performances. Lotusland recognized past Lotus Society Chair, Mimi Michaelis for her support, and introduced new Chair, Jeanne Anderson.

In 2000, the Lotus Society legacy program was created to sustain Lotusland in perpetuity, ensuring the Garden thrives for future generations. Lotusland is proud to share that this important community now has 266 households, all committed to ensuring the Garden remains world-class forever.

We are honored to welcome the following newest members for the 2024-2025 calendar years:

- Christopher Clinton Conway and Floyd M. Elwell, III
- Julie and Peter Morley
- Louis Scolnik and Joy Masoff
- Cordelia and Peter* Stearns
- Mary and Gary Dokes
- Julianne Willig

To learn more about joining The Lotus Society, please contact us at thelotussociety@lotusland.org or 805.324.8426.

SAVE THE DATES
More Information Coming!

January 31, 2026
Annual Lotus Society
appreciation event

August 16, 2026
Private lotus bloom
viewing at Lotusland



Louis Scolnik and Joy Masoff



Pat Caird, Erin Caird, and Mimi Michaelis



Connie Percy, Mitchell Opalski, and Rachael Douglas

LOTUSLAND PAYS TRIBUTE TO PAST PRESIDENT

Bob Emmons

Robert John "Bob" Emmons, Ph.D., passed away peacefully on July 23 at his Montecito home at the age of 92. A philanthropist, poet, and steadfast advocate for Santa Barbara's cultural treasures, Bob's leadership and generosity left a lasting mark on Lotusland and many of the community's most iconic institutions.

Joining Lotusland's Board of Trustees in 1997, Bob served as President from 2000 to 2006, guiding the formation of the Lotus Society, the adoption of its 2003 10-year master plan, the creation of the Dunlap Cactus Garden, and the renovation of the Pavilion. He was a key member of the Development, Finance, and Lotusland Celebrates committees, and in 2006 was named a Lifetime Honorary Trustee. Bob and his wife of 44 years, Christine, were charter members of the Lotus Society, hosting its first recognition luncheon in 2002. Their generosity extended to co-sponsoring Members' Family Day for many years and supporting critical projects such as the Topiary Garden renovation, kitchen refurbishment, and Dunlap Cactus Garden.

"Bob was a strong leader and on top of all aspects of Lotusland. He encouraged Trustees, management, and staff to do more. Concerned about Lotusland's future and carrying out Madame Walska's goals in five, ten, or even twenty years, he clearly saw the need for a larger endowment which led to the creation of the Lotus Society. He was a visionary and through his efforts, he made Lotusland more secure. Bob had intelligence, imagination (he was a poet and a sculptor also), strength, and a good sense of humor. His company was a delight. He made us better than we were." —Lifetime Honorary Trustee Arthur Gaudi

"It was a true joy to serve alongside Bob on the Lotusland board in its early years and to witness firsthand his brilliance, kindness, generosity, and wonderful sense of humor. He was an extraordinary friend, mentor, and community leader who made a lasting impact—not only at Lotusland but across every nonprofit fortunate enough to have had him in their midst." —Lifetime Honorary Trustee Merryl Brown

Lotusland is deeply grateful for Bob's vision, dedication, and friendship. He will be truly missed by his family, friends, and the many institutions and communities he enriched through thoughtful, compassionate, and quietly powerful leadership.



PHOTO: ISAAC HERNANDEZ DA LIPA

Bob Emmons and wife Christina at Lotusland's Guardians of the Garden Benefit in 2021

Inspired by the Garden

Shop textiles, jewelry, fragrances, art, books, and plants—perfect for gifting or keeping.

Stop by the Garden Shop during your next visit or shop a selection of holiday gifts online through December 15: lotusland.org/visit/shop



Members save 10%.



Lotus Blossom Fine Wool Shawl
\$79
Dimensions 28" x 72"
100% Wool



Pre-Order Now! Limited edition 2026 Lotus Garden Calendar \$45

Featuring fine art photography by Fran Collin.

Proceeds from the sale of this calendar support plant conservation, ensuring the renewal and long-term vitality of Lotusland's world-renowned collections, including our treasured aquatics. In a time of climate pressures and habitat loss, this fund helps protect biodiversity while sustaining Lotusland's legacy as a sanctuary for conservation, beauty, and education.

GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

The perfect gift this season and every season. Give a Lotusland Membership and share the wonder of the Garden all year long while supporting plant preservation and environmental stewardship. Certificates now available for purchase online. Beginning at \$125 for the Supporter level to enhanced benefits for Patron Circle members; give a gift that gives back.

**MEMBERS
HOLIDAY
SHOPPING DAYS
NOV 29 &
DEC 13**



Wish List

SPONSOR A STUDENT INTERNSHIP—\$1,000

Support the Garden and a young person's future. A \$1,000 gift will fund a paid intern through Partners in Education's Job Readiness Training & Internships program giving a student the opportunity to build professional skills and experience.

For more information on how to support Lotusland, contact Patricia Sadeghian, Director of Development at psadeghian@lotusland.org



PHOTO: KIM BAILE



GIFTS *for the* GARDEN

Dear Friends,

Step through the gates of Lotusland, and you enter a world carefully cultivated for wonder, learning, and renewal. Each season, our horticultural team tends to over 35,000 rare and exotic plants, nurtures delicate ecosystems, and creates incredible landscapes that make Lotusland unlike any other garden in the world.

This beauty and inspiration does not happen on its own. Lotusland thrives because of a passionate community of supporters who understand that our mission extends far beyond horticulture. Your generosity preserves the Garden as a sanctuary for visitors, a classroom for students, and a haven for rare plant conservation.

All gifts to Lotusland are fully tax-deductible. As a special thank-you, donations of \$500 or more received by December 31, 2025, will be entered into a drawing to win a behind-the-scenes curator tour for eight, a special opportunity to explore the Garden with the expert team that cares for Lotusland.

For questions or to discuss your gift, contact our Development team at development@lotusland.org.

Ways to Give:

- **Gifts of Appreciated Stock:** Support Lotusland while potentially receiving tax benefits.
- **Grants from Donor Advised Funds:** Directly fund our mission through your DAF.
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs):** Individuals age 70½ or older can give up to \$108,000 per year directly from an IRA to a qualified charity, reducing taxable income while supporting Lotusland.
- **Give Online:** Support Lotusland anytime on our website (scan code below)
- **Send a Check:** Contributions by mail can be sent to:

Ganna Walska Lotusland
695 Ashley Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Lotusland's tax ID number is 23-7082550.

Thank you for helping sustain Lotusland! Your support keeps our gates open, our Garden thriving, and our programs flourishing. Together, we can ensure that Lotusland continues to inspire, educate, and enchant all who visit.

With deep gratitude,

Susie

Susie Cronin
Trustee, Lotusland

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Patterson
Trustee, Lotusland





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Calendar: October–December

For more detailed information about upcoming events, see pages 12-13 or visit [Lotusland.org/events](https://lotusland.org/events).

Lessons from Lotusland:
Home Composting
Wednesday, October 8

Exceptional Plants Auction
Saturday, October 11

Well-being Wednesday: Qigong
Wednesday, October 15

Eco Printing Workshop
Friday, October 24 or Saturday,
October 25

**En Plein Air Adult Studio Art Class
with SBMA**
Saturday, November 8

Gardens in Paradise—Santa Ynez Valley
Wednesday, November 5

Community Access Days
Friday and Saturday, November 21-22

Members Holiday Shopping
Saturday, November 29

Lessons from Lotusland:
Tale of Two Architects
Tuesday, December 2

Volunteer Holiday Party
Thursday, December 4

Holiday Shopping
Saturday, November 29
Saturday, December 13

SEASON ENDS IN NOVEMBER

Lotusland will close for regular
public tours on Saturday,
November 15 and re-open for
the 2026 season on Saturday,
February 15, 2026



2026 RESERVATIONS WILL
OPEN EARLY JANUARY

Special events and limited
opportunities for Members continue
throughout the closed season.

Visit lotusland.org for availability