AN ENDURING COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

A Greener Future for Lotusland's Sustainable Horticulture Program

COLLECTIONS NEWS

Cycads, Ferns, and the Most Unusual Plant Specimen

PHOTO: Wool Carder Bee in the Orchard by Corey Welles
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Members,

As we enter our 2024 season at Lotusland, we are innovating and elevating the art of horticulture for our visitors and members’ learning and delight. This is our perpetual drive, and this year we connect to our roots and launch a new Master Plan to guide the stewardship of the Garden for the future. Today, Lotusland builds on 30 years of tradition as a public garden and focuses our energy and resources on sustainable environmental, operational, and financial practices to preserve the Garden and estate for generations to come.

Lotusland is known for its unique and renowned living collections with significant educational, biological, and cultural value. This year, with important capital improvement projects and endowment-building goals, we invest in the property’s accessibility and preservation, as well as formalizing plans for the long-term stewardship of our archives, Ganna Walksa’s artifacts, and Garden adornments. We must and will preserve them, so that Lotusland maintains its exceptional character and charm alongside our most important feature: our rare and exotic plant collections.

On behalf of all of us at Lotusland, thank you for your role in our extended family and for prioritizing Lotusland as a part of your life and our community. Whether you are a new Member or have been with us for three decades, we deeply appreciate the important part you play in helping the Garden grow.

Here’s to a bright and beautiful 2024 together!

Rebecca Anderson
Executive Director
randerson@lotusland.org

MISSION

Lotusland’s mission is to preserve and enhance the distinctive botanical gardens of Madame Ganna Walska. Lotusland educates and inspires visitors with its collections, sustainable horticulture practices, and plant conservation.
A SPLASH OF GENEROSITY
Ellen’s Koi Come to Lotusland

ROBERT RISKIN, of Riskin Partners Estate Group, reached out to Lotusland with a unique and generous proposition. His client, Ellen, recently acquired a property adorned with many koi. However, the existing pond on the estate proved insufficient for the sizable school of mature koi. Recognizing the need for a more suitable environment, Robert, whose ties with Lotusland span many years, considered the Japanese Garden Reflecting Pond as the perfect refuge for these special fish.

Lotusland embraced the opportunity to provide a new home for the 55 mature koi. Transported with care by the Lotusland team, the koi found themselves in an oasis within the expansive Japanese Garden. The tranquil setting immediately proved to their liking, as reported by the gardeners who witnessed the koi’s swift acclimatization.

This addition of vibrant and lively koi to the Japanese Garden Pond has not only enriched the biodiversity of Lotusland but has also become a source of joy and fascination for those who frequent the Garden.
LOTUSLAND’S SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE PROGRAM IS ADVANCED THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF ERIC AND WENDY SCHMIDT.

Lotusland, long renowned for its botanical wonders and commitment to sustainable practices, is thrilled to announce the receipt of a grant award for a partnership project that aims to revolutionize horticulture by utilizing fish waste as a soil amendment. Established in 1993, Lotusland has evolved into one of the world’s premier botanical gardens, showcasing over 950 endangered plant species. Under the leadership of former staff Mike Iven, John LaFluer, Corey Welles, and many dedicated gardeners and staff, Lotusland has continually embraced organic and regenerative techniques, resulting in a resilient and thriving landscape.

With Corey’s retirement in 2023, succession planning presented an opportunity to capture and document decades of gardening innovations. The grant was awarded to enable the creation of a comprehensive Plant Health Care Technical Guide, to train a successor, and to pioneer a transition to a locally sourced fish and kelp fertilizer. Hannah French, former Grounds Supervisor, has studied and recorded Lotusland’s horticultural successes in a Technical Guide to document and preserve the knowledge and experience of the past 25-plus years of the Garden’s evolving sustainable horticulture practices. Ultimately, the grant will help Lotusland launch its updated sustainability microsite to share the Garden’s tested techniques and resources with the broader community.
To advance its leading sustainable horticulture program, Lotusland is helping to develop and test an innovative fertilizer made from local sustainable fish and kelp waste in partnership with Get Hooked Seafood. Also, as part of the sustainability advancements, the Lotusland team is piloting a new organic fertilizer with waste from Get Hooked Seafood and evaluating the ecological benefits of a fertilizer from a local source. Beyond Lotusland, the project contributes to reversing climate change by reducing our carbon footprint and fostering a circular economy. The pilot program’s use of locally sourced fish waste aligns with sustainability goals, ensuring traceability and reducing dependence on imported sources.

The project sets the stage for continued expansion of Lotusland’s mission, embedding sustainability in all aspects of its work. Stay tuned for updates as we document our progress, share our findings, and inspire positive change in communities worldwide.

**Get Hooked on Sustainable Fisheries**

Get Hooked was founded by Kim Selkoe and Victoria Voss, local women who knew the value of making healthy food tasty, convenient, and fun. Their passion for local seafood and their shared ties to the Santa Barbara fishing community led them to this venture.

Like Lotusland, the Santa Barbara Channel is one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots, with a mix of kelp forests, rocky reefs, sand flats, and sea grass beds. In deeper waters, bottom fishes like rock cod and halibut thrive along underwater shelf and canyon areas.

The waters of the Santa Barbara Channel region are incredibly dynamic—temperature, currents, and nutrient levels are always changing. This dynamism comes from the combination of cold and warm currents colliding in the Channel and a complex geomorphology from islands, headlands, and canyons that further stir up the ocean currents as they flow by.

These complex currents concentrate plankton, creating lush feeding grounds that support large schools of squid, sardines, and mackerel, which in turn fatten up migrating whales, tuna, and swordfish as well as resident sea lions, dolphins, sharks, and other predators.

Our local waters are best suited to small-scale, adaptable fisheries that respond to the ups and downs of species availability. Many members of the fishing community are part-timers who work in other sectors when the fishing season ends or when conditions shift. All are owner-operated boats with crews of 1-2 only. Responding adaptively to the ecological conditions is a key aspect of fishing sustainably.

Although Get Hooked is a for-profit company, their work is centered on mission-driven partnerships with other community groups, such as Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara Food Action Network, and the national CSF movement’s LocalCatch.org. A friendship with White Buffalo Land Trust led Get Hooked to develop a fish fertilizer that could be used in both ornamental horticulture and agriculture.

For more information, or to subscribe visit: https://gethookedseafood.com/
The Smart and Efficient Use of Water is a vital aspect of sustainable horticulture in drought-prone, seasonally dry climates like southern California. Responsible use of water not only allows us to reduce water use and maintain exceptional plant vigor, it also enhances biodiversity above and below ground. Through a generous grant from The Garden Club of Santa Barbara, Lotusland has taken steps to further increase the irrigation efficiency of our Deciduous Orchard, with a new upgraded irrigation system utilizing highly efficient anti-root intrusion subsurface drip tubing. In addition to quadrupling the number of valves, the new system allows us to efficiently target groupings of trees rather than employing an irrigating all-or-nothing approach. In November 2023, we added nearly 5,000 feet of high-efficiency drip throughout the orchard, and customized the size of each tree’s rings to concentrate water at and beyond the dripline, training root systems to be expansive. An exciting feature of the new tubing is that drip emitters are consistently spaced at 1-foot intervals, which means there are almost 5,000 emitters distributed throughout the orchard, giving us far better irrigation coverage than before.

Efficiently applying water to a greater area benefits the orchard by increasing the volume of moist soil for roots to explore, resulting in larger root systems better suited to handle future droughts, as well as overall healthier trees. Soil biological activity increases with the presence of moisture; therefore, moist soil also has the benefit of added biological activity and accompanying ecosystem services. By effectively irrigating soil, we not only keep it alive, but provide soil organisms with more ideal conditions where they can process organic materials, cycling nutrients and sequestering carbon. This diverse soil biome is mirrored by the above ground biodiversity represented by a diverse array of fruit trees, wildflowers, seed grown insectaries, and the wildlife that visits the orchard like native bees, butterflies, and varied species of birds, animals, and insects. Efficiently adding water where it counts helps our gardens, wildlife, and the environment, and we thank The Garden Club of Santa Barbara for helping make this project possible.
Phase Two of the Great Cycad Plant-Out
This past fall another group of cycads were replanted in the Cycad Garden after being rehabilitated in the nursery following an infection of *Armillaria mellea* or oak root fungus. The majority of the cycads were Mexican species of *Dioon* and *Ceratozamia*, plus eight plants of the African genus *Encephalartos*: all were successfully reestablished. The 22 plants of *Dioon* that were replanted contained a number of endangered species such as *D. purpusii*, *D. caputoi*, and *D. sonorense*, and within the genus *Ceratozamia*, the critically endangered *C. zaragozae* and *C. kuesteriana* were also planted. This bed is once again replete with cycads, and after the substantial improvements made during the Save the Cycads project they will thrive into the future.

Hardy Fern Foundation (HFF) Fall Distribution
Each year, the Hardy Fern Foundation, which is based out of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington, offers a selection of choice ferns to its 18 affiliate gardens across the country. Lotusland has been an affiliate since 2008, reporting data on fern horticultural worthiness and hardiness information. The Garden also takes part in the spore exchange, where spore is collected and shared among members to “encourage the study, cultivation, preservation, and propagation of ferns.”

Last fall, we received 13 new types of ferns for the collection that are currently housed in the Lotusland nursery. This spring, select areas of the Fern Garden will undergo soil improvements in anticipation of planting these new, exciting ferns in the Garden.

Tillandsia ‘Samantha’ Comes to Lotusland
Some of the hidden benefits of Lotusland’s signature plant auction, Exceptional Plants, is that our generous plant donors often bring more plants to add to Lotusland’s collections. Last year, Pamela Koide-Hyatt of Bird Rock Tropicals, generously donated several tillandsias for the bromeliad collection, including the one-of-a-kind hybrid, *Tillandsia* ‘Samantha’. This coveted *Tillandsia* is an award-winning hybrid of *T. mooreana* and *T. kalmbacheri* that was created by Pam herself. The beautiful and unique plant was nominated as a finalist for ‘Plant of the Year’ at the 2012 Royal Horticultural Society Chelsea Flower Show. In 2013, it was the winner of FloraHolland Glass Tulip, and in January of 2017 *Tillandsia* ‘Samantha’ won the Most Unusual Plant Specimen and Favorite New Flowering Plant at the TPIE 2017. It is a fantastic addition to the Lower Bromeliad Garden.
ART AND ARTIFACTS

Restoring Lotusland’s Tunisian and Puebla Tile Collection

THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION of Lotusland’s historic tiles is a vital preservation project of our art and artifacts. Decorative ceramic tile is an important feature of Lotusland, incorporated in fountains, benches, planting boxes, and as decorative trim to structures. Restoration is an act of renewal. It is the process of bringing an artifact back to its original condition without the damage that it may have acquired with time. This involves historically accurate reproductions by master glaze chemists and artists dedicated to the importance of creating tiles by hand that come as close as possible to the originals, using materials that are obtainable today.

We are grateful to Nola Stucky of Santa Barbara-based NS Ceramic Incorporated for her generosity, expertise, and artistry in the current restoration of two significant types of ceramic tiles: Puebla and replicas of Tunisian tiles. These tiles decorate the fountains and runnels of the intimate Pavilion Patio designed by George Washington Smith and celebrate the beauty of water. When a thin layer of water flows over the sunlit glazed tiled surfaces, there is an appearance of a greater volume of water, magnifying the tiles’ reflective power. The design of patterns for the basin floors gives the water the appearance of movement.

Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium

JOIN OUR FRIENDS AT THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY for a riveting symposium on April 13, 2024 at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre. The all-day event explores Frank Lloyd Wright and his Southern California work and legacy.

Lotusland Members enjoy special pricing. For tickets and information visit: https://www.gardenconservancy.org/education/flw-garden-symposium

LEFT: Puebla tile RIGHT: Tunisian tile
NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Ganna Walska Lotusland Welcomes Two New Members of the Board of Trustees

“We are thrilled to welcome our new Trustees, Elizabeth and Susie. Both are skilled professionals and committed community volunteers. Their competencies, experience and skills will undoubtedly improve Lotusland and advance our efforts and governance.”
— David M. Jones, Ganna Walska Lotusland President

SUSIE READ CRONIN

Susie is a local artist, author, and poet with a studio in Summerland. Educated at the Madeira School in McLean, VA, Susie Cronin received a BA in English from Williams College, MA, where she developed her passion for art and design. Cronin served on the board of Vermont Studio Center for twenty years.

Susie and her husband Ted, founder of Manchester Capital Management, moved to Santa Barbara from Vermont in 2016. Since coming to Santa Barbara, Susie’s bronze sculpture has been featured in Lotusland exhibitions including Flock (2015) and Lotusland Celebrates (2023). Cronin has been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the country. Her exhibition Fables, Foibles and Fairytales has traveled to 18 museums, and was featured last year at the Elverhøj Museum in Solvang. Her bronzes are held in private and public collections including the Erie Art Museum and the Southern Vermont Arts Center. Susie is also a published author and poet. Her titles include Bronze Casting in a Nutshell and three books of poetry, the most recent of which is entitled What’s Left.

ELIZABETH PATTERSON

Elizabeth is a graduate of Boston University where she earned her BA in Art History, and later earned her MBA from Pepperdine University, and a Master of Arts from Pacific Graduate Institute. Her professional background includes work in non-profit management (with an emphasis in fund development) and private foundation management. She has served on numerous charitable boards, museums, independent schools, and social service organizations. She currently serves as a trustee of Cate School, Carpinteria, and the Thornton Foundation, Los Angeles.

Elizabeth has a keen interest in the preservation and restoration of historic properties, including homes and gardens. Through her relationship with the Thornton Foundation and Thornton Gardens (a historic home and eight-acre garden in San Marino, California), she remains active with the Council of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Currently, Elizabeth works as a licensed marriage and family therapist in private practice. She and her husband, Tom, live in Santa Barbara. Together, they have four adult children.
PHILANTHROPIC MEMBERSHIPS
Sustain the Garden

GANNA WALSKA LOTUSLAND GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES OUR PATRON CIRCLE MEMBERS. The Patron Circles provides invaluable support to the people and programs that make Lotusland one of the most spectacular gardens anywhere. Patrons’ philanthropic gifts enhance this unique horticultural treasure for all to enjoy. Thank you to our Patrons for helping to keep the vitality of the Garden alive with your Membership support.

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ANNOUNCING Patron Circles

In 2024 Garden Lover Circles become Patron Circles.

This title change acknowledges our members’ commitment to philanthropy, not just as Garden enthusiasts but as vital Patrons supporting the future of this botanical nirvana.

Visit Lotusland.org/membership to learn more. We invite you to elevate your membership and become a philanthropic force within our extraordinary community.
TRIBUTE
Corey Welles’ Roots Sustainability and the Lotusland Legacy

by Stacy Pulice

When I was offered the opportunity to write about Corey Welles, in honor of his retirement after 33 years at Lotusland, most recently as Sustainability Manager, I jumped at the chance. Corey is a true agent of transformation for all beings that cross his path, human and otherwise—myself included. Variously called a genius, ahead of his time, and a human spark plug, he’s legendary for his rare passion, commitment, and loyalty to Lotusland, and for the impact he’s made here and beyond.

But before I dig into the incredible change he’s spearheaded during his tenure (and the moment he and I met along the way), I want to go way back to the earliest beginnings that made Corey who he is. When I moderated this year’s second Lotusland Sustainability Symposium, where Corey was the keynote speaker, and more recently interviewed him for my podcast, Regenerative Spaces, I wanted to know what made him tick. I was curious about the innate spark that ultimately steered him down his path to become the rock star plant whisperer he is today, so I asked about his early fascinations. When did his passion for sustainability begin?

As a kid, Corey was obsessed with insects, especially the most dangerous and dramatic varieties. He delighted in presenting his collections to his horrified yet admiring mother. Not only was this unique gift not “schooled” out of him, it was positively nurtured, as he led his astonished young classmates on adventures in the wild, teaching them about his beloved insects. His true nature was clear from the outset, and circumstances conspired to nurture it.

His passion for all forms of life was further developed during six years at SBCC, where he took every life science course they had to offer, including botany, horticulture, zoology, ornithology, entomology, and marine biology. A triathlete and long-distance runner, he competed on the cross-country team under the tutelage of a coach who also happened to be a local landscape contractor. Initially helping out after school, Corey soon became indispensable and was highly sought after for his horticulture skill as well as his aesthetic talent creating stunning floral displays for clients.

A chance meeting with Lotusland’s then-director Steve Timbrook brought Corey onboard the fledgling nonprofit botanic garden in 1990, and soon he began working under the guidance of director Mike Iven and pest manager John LeFleur. It would seem fate had a hand in bringing them together because by the mid-1990’s they met with a pivotal challenge that would define Corey’s career. The aloe plants he managed were dying, pests were rampant, and the conventional remedies being used at the time were not working. He remembers “the soil was bleached out, basically dead, having been chemically treated for so long.” Like many revolutionary ideas, the decision to try an organic approach in the Garden began at a time when they had nothing left to lose. The first desperate yet bold move was to simply stop using all chemical poisons. After just one year, the improvement was positively dramatic, and he knew he was on to something.

Encouraged, Corey doubled down on life-promoting practices in the higher-stakes Rose Garden, experimenting over time with organic compost teas, mulch, and increasing the diversity of plants, mycorrhiza, insects, bats, and birds. Perhaps his childhood curiosities, and his devotion to even the tiniest critters, were essential here. To me, this is the source of Corey’s real gifts: an intense desire to make people happy and his willingness to try things out and see what happens, trusting Mother Nature to lead the way, even when others saw these regenerative approaches as strange and radical. Keep in mind, 50-year-old industrial agriculture methods were still very much the norm, but that didn’t seem to scare Corey one bit.

By the time Corey and I connected in
DONOR HIGHLIGHT

Restoring Heritage, Building Community

In the heart of our Garden lies the century-old Pavilion Patio, a cherished space that has withstood the test of time, witnessing countless gatherings, events, and lectures. This historic haven, however, faced the inevitable toll of age until two philanthropic souls stepped forward to breathe new life into its venerable structure. Their impactful gift has not only revitalized the Patio but has added modern enhancements, including wheelchair access, new drainage, ambient lighting, and the meticulous restoration of historic fountains and tiles. Through their vision, this space has been transformed into a vibrant hub for the community, fostering connection and shared experiences.

“Lotusland is a center of botanical excellence, architectural significance, horticultural education, and simply an inspiration to all who visit. We are honored to be a part of such a significant and critical Capital Campaign as Lotusland celebrates its 30th anniversary as a public garden. Our intention is to motivate and encourage other loyal (and future) Lotusland supporters to join us to preserve and protect this world-class space left by Madame Walska. We are very excited and proud to be contributing to the Garden entering its next era.” —Julie and Roger Davis, Lotusland Supporters, Honorary Council Members
Well-being Wednesdays: Forest Bathing with Elena Rios

**FOREST BATHING,** originally developed in Japan as *shinrin-yoku,* refers to the practice of immersing all your senses in the healing forest as you connect with the natural world. Join ANFT Certified Nature & Forest Therapy Guide and Inter-disciplinary Artist Elena Rios for an immersive experience in the Garden. Elena draws inspiration from her grandmother, who was a Curandera as well as her partnership as a cultural practitioner with Japanese Shinto Priest, Hiroji Seikiguch. She is an indigenous Azteca Chichimeca woman of the Americas, with distant genetic Chumash links, multi-ethnic Spanish, and Scot-Irish ancestry.

Tickets for Well-being Wednesdays are $50 for Members and $85 for Non-Members. We encourage participants to make an additional reservation for the afternoon tour to extend their Garden experience. Space is limited and reservations are required. View more information and reserve online at Lotusland.org/events.

**Saturday, March 2 • 6:00 p.m.**
**The Plant Paradox Wine Dinner at El Encanto, A Belmond Hotel, with Special Guest Dr. Steven Gundry**

**JOIN THE PARTY** at El Encanto for a spectacular evening of food and wine. Dr. Steven Gundry, author of The Plant Paradox, will collaborate with the culinary team at El Encanto, a Belmond Hotel, to design a Plant Paradox menu with exceptional wine pairings. This intimate group will wine, dine, and learn about The Plant Paradox.

Tickets are $1,000 per person with 100% of proceeds benefiting the care of the Garden. Learn more about and reserve your spot by contacting Samantha Lloyd-Knauf, Manager of Annual Giving, at 805.969.3767 or development@lotusland.org

**Tuesday, March 5 • Noon to 2:00 p.m.**
**Annual Meeting**

**EACH YEAR THE GANNA WALSKA LOTUSLAND BOARD OF TRUSTEES** gathers along with our generous Guardian and Steward Circle Members for Lotusland’s Annual Meeting. The 2024 program will feature Guest Speaker Peggy Perry presenting *Dames in the Garden: Women Who Shaped California’s Landscape* and will be followed by an al fresco picnic lunch.

Join as a Guardian Circle member to receive an invitation to this special appreciation event. Learn more by contacting development@lotusland.org, or 805.969.3767

**Saturday, March 16**
**Private Tour of Virginia Robinson Gardens**

**SEE THE LARGEST STAND OF KING PALMS** outside of Australia and the oldest coral tree (*Erythrina caffra*) in the state when we travel to the Virginia Robinson Gardens. The Virginia Robinson Gardens are the period landscape, historic mansion, and botanical gardens located at the Virginia Robinson Estate. Built in 1911, the Robinson mansion was one of the first homes in Beverly Hills. Today, the garden is recognized as a historical landmark and an exotic paradise.

View more information and reserve online at Lotusland.org/events.
**Wednesday, April 10**  
1:00 p.m. – sunset  
**Gardens in Paradise:**  
**Private Gardens of Fernald Point**  
A RARE OPPORTUNITY to experience the most exquisite and stunning private gardens on Fernald Point. Join preeminent landscape designer Eric Nagelmann as he leads guests through Gardens he has curated and designed. Meet the homeowners and hear the story behind the breathtaking landscapes. You will see beauty, horticultural and architectural excellence, incredible design and vision.  
Benefit tickets are $2,000 per guest, or $5,000 for a series sponsorship, which includes another equally special outing in November. Reservations are required.  
For more information or to reserve a space, please call Samantha Lloyd-Knauf, Manager of Annual Giving, at 805.324.8425 or development@lotusland.org

**Friday, April 19 • 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Member’s Wine & Walk**  
VIEW THE GARDEN in the magical light of late afternoon when the botanical colors and textures come alive. Wander at your leisure as you enjoy wine provided by local winemakers and bask in the golden hour glow. The chance to stroll the Garden as the sun begins to set is a special opportunity reserved for Lotusland Members and their guests only.  
Tickets are $60 for Members and $85 for Member’s guests. This event is a complimentary benefit for Patron Circle Members. Space is limited and reservations are required. View more information and reserve online at Lotusland.org/events

**Wednesday, April 24**  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
**A Compost Tea Party**  
JOIN LOTUSLAND’S SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER Chris Ziliotto along with special guest, renowned educator and pioneering environmentalist Dr. David White, for an insightful look into Lotusland’s compost tea program. After a brief presentation by Dr. White on the soil food web, we will trek to Lotusland’s compost piles for a behind-the-scenes look at how the tea is made, the methods of application, and the science behind why it works. Go home with a organic materials to jump start your own compost tea program.  
This event is co-sponsored by White Buffalo Land Trust and Get Hooked Seafood. Space is limited and reservations are required. View more information and reserve online at Lotusland.org/events.

**Saturday, May 18**  
2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
**A Spring Picnic at Lotusland**  
SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT LOTUSLAND. Don’t miss the roses in bloom and the Insectary Garden in its full colorful glory! Bring the family and pack a picnic for an outing to remember with live music on the Great Lawn, plenty of space to spread out your blanket, and a Garden in bloom to explore.  
$60 for Member Adults / Member’s Children $25 and $85 for Non-Members Adults / $30 Non-member Children. Space is limited and reservations are required. View more information and reserve online at Lotusland.org/events

**Saturday, July 20**  
**Lotusland Celebrates**

**Saturday, October 5**  
**Exceptional Plants Auction**
ENDOWMENT GIVING
The Lotus Society

A COMMUNITY SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF LOTUSLAND

Endowment donors are like-minded in their love of Lotusland and their support for the preservation of this horticultural masterpiece for future generations.

You can join this devoted group and leave a lasting legacy of your own. Through gifts to the endowment, or by using gift-planning vehicles such as bequests and life income gifts, you can address personal financial goals and make a meaningful and lasting gift to Lotusland.

When you make a bequest or life income gift, you are welcomed into The Lotus Society, along with supporters who elect to make a gift that is restricted to support and grow Lotusland’s endowment. Members enjoy up to two exclusive events per year that celebrate the importance of the Garden.

As a member of The Lotus Society, you join a dedicated group whose support enables:

- Restoration and preservation of the historic and unique estate and gardens.
- Botanical beauty and tranquility, enjoyed by the community and visitors worldwide.
- Collections of plants that are rare and exceptional, and in some cases, endangered or extinct in their native habitats.
- Environmental education of local school children.
- On-site classes, lectures, and workshops on a variety of topics.
- A community resource for innovative horticultural design, sustainable gardening, and protection of the environment.

If you are interested in learning more about joining a devoted group of Garden stewards by including Lotusland in your estate plan, please contact us at thelotussociety@lotusland.org or 805.324.8426.
the public. In recent years Mike has transitioned back to horticulture with his signature zeal and devotion to care once again for his beloved bromeliads. It’s because of Mike’s passion for this plant collection, coupled with help from his cadre of devoted volunteers, that it has been referred to by bromeliad experts as “one of the best outdoor displays of bromeliads in any public garden.”

Join us in congratulating Mike for his lifetime of dedication to Lotusland and all of his achievements, with many still to come, when you come across him in his “office.”

**STAFF HIGHLIGHT**

**Mike Furner**

HAVING RECENTLY CELEBRATED HIS 45TH ANNIVERSARY of employment at Lotusland, Mike Furner has spent more time at the Garden than just about any other person—employees, volunteers, or even the previous owners, including Madame Ganna Walska. His knowledge of the Garden is all-encompassing and irreplaceable, and he has been part of many of the significant developments that have taken place during Lotusland’s recent history.

Mike’s initiation to Lotusland was as an employee of Griffin Tree and Landscape, which did much of the contract landscape work at the time. His years working for Griffin included one of the most important projects ever happen at Lotusland—the construction of the Cycad Garden. Mike and others spent weeks rootballing cycads and moving them into the newly designed garden, starting with the three plants of *Encephalartos woodii*. “This made me incredibly nervous, knowing the importance of these plants,” remembers Mike. It was Charlie Glass, Garden Director under Madame Ganna Walska, who urged her to hire Mike as staff after observing firsthand his talent as a plantsman on this project.

After joining the staff, Mike worked in both the Cycad Garden and the Aloe Garden until he found his true passion—bromeliads. He devoured information about these exotic plants and would travel far and wide to learn more. Not long after, Mike transferred to the maintenance department where his attention to detail and woodworking skills really came to the forefront. According to Mike, some of his greatest accomplishments were during this time. He worked together with Peter Stollenwerk to construct the Shinto shrine and wisteria arbor in the Japanese Garden, reconstruct the lemon arbor, and build the bird house in the Insectary Garden, along with countless infrastructural improvements that were taking place at the time as the Garden prepared to open to the public.
OPEN PATHWAYS

Community Access Day

LOTUSLAND RECEIVED A SPECIAL VISIT from Mayor Randy Rowse and first lady Janet Rowse on the occasion of the Garden’s Community Access Days. In celebration of 30 years of civic engagement, Mayor Rowse presented the historic estate with a colorfully inscribed vellum proclamation received by Board Trustees Laura Bridley and Jeanne Anderson. This year’s program, which provide reduced rate entry to Santa Barbara residents on November 17-18th, was generously supported by the Lucky One Foundation and Lily Hahn and included free well-being sessions and sound baths presented by Kind Mind and Palma Collective.

Discover The New Lotusland App

IN PARTNERSHIP with Bloomberg Philanthropies, Lotusland is proud to offer another way to access and experience the Garden. We’re excited to share that we are now on Bloomberg Connects, a free mobile app that offers access to more than 350 museums and other cultural organizations.

This new digital guide is designed to help you connect with the Garden to explore its fascinating history and breathtaking beauty, either before you visit or from home. Sample Lotusland highlights, discover behind the scenes clips from our curators, experts, and friends of the Garden, with new and exclusive content added each season. Find information to help plan your visit, including information about docent tours and other amenities, seasonal highlights, maps, accessibility resources, and more.

Download the Bloomberg Connects App to access our Digital Guide:
COMMITMENT FOR STAFF SUCCESS AND WISH LIST
Lotusland Staff: Convene, Lead and Teach at Garden Conferences in 2024

IN SUPPORT OF OUR CONTINUED EXCELLENCE, Lotusland is seeking support to enable its staff to participate these enriching professional development opportunities:

North American Japanese Garden (NAJGA) Conference

American Public Gardens Association (APGA) Annual Conference
Staff will attend the American Public Garden Association Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The conference theme is Rooted in Resilience: A Sustainable Future for Gardens.

American Public Garden Association (APGA) Plant Collection Symposium
Director of Conservation and Curator of Living Collections Paul Mills and Assistant Curator of Living Collections Anna Bower will attend the American Public Garden Association Plant Collection Symposium. Paul Mills is the current Chair of the APGA Plant Collections Community.

This symposium is a key opportunity for the Lotusland curatorial team to gain invaluable insights into plant collections care and management, and form meaningful connections with fellow botanists, conservationists, and plant curators.

California Association of Museums (CAM) Annual Conference
Staff will attend the California Association of Museums (CAM) Annual Conference in Long Beach, California, to learn about new and innovative museum management and archives programs and best practices.

Director of Large Gardens Meeting at Brookgreen Gardens
Our Executive Director will join Large Garden Directors from across the country at the historic sculpture garden and wildlife preserve, Brookgreen Garden, in South Carolina. This annual gathering convenes leaders of the largest public gardens in the US to share knowledge, build connections, and highlight one of the nation’s premiere botanic spaces.

All Hands Staff Retreat – Topa Institute, Ojai
Through the power of play and challenge, Topa Institute brings nonprofit and corporate teams together to develop leadership, connection, and collaborative skills. The retreat will foster communication and teambuilding among Lotusland staff in preparation for a new season at the Garden.

Blooming in the Desert
Our Membership Manager attended Blooming in the Desert the 2024 American Public Garden Association (APGA) Membership and Development Symposium in Tucson, AZ. The conference promotes innovative strategies and best-in-class practices that support authentic connections between people, plants, and gardens while connecting with public garden colleagues from around the country.
THE LOTUSLAND STORY is one of resilience. Like its 3,000 different types of plants, many of which are endangered elsewhere, the Garden has survived for 30 years despite environmental, legal, and financial headwinds. Increasingly, those winds are getting stronger.

Founder Madame Ganna Walska spent 43 years fulfilling her ambition of creating “the most outstanding center of horticultural and educational use.” Her motto, “Despite it all,” exemplified her resolve in financing this imaginative property.

When Walska passed away in 1984, a new challenge began. Nine years and 64 public hearings later, Santa Barbara County finally allowed Lotusland to be shared with the public. A foundation created by her dearest friends set out to preserve Ganna Walksa’s legacy garden.

Conservative estimates to maintain the Garden annually entered the millions—and remain there today. Behind the accolades, awards, and press is a new reality. In short: Lotusland needs sizable, accelerated philanthropy to protect the gardens and rehabilitate the 37-acre property.

What Would Ganna Walska Do?

by Cedar Pasori

We are not daunted by these challenges. With our current cap of 20,000 visitors annually, we cannot earn more ticket revenue or a more welcoming reputation. (For context, most similar gardens and museums welcome that many visitors per month.)

With a recently approved Master Plan, we have a roadmap for creative, low-impact solutions for upgrading our 100+-year-old buildings and adding amenities, including restrooms, educational demonstrations, water storage and infiltration infrastructure, plus more accessibility features.

From the outside, Lotusland is best known as a cultural asset, a one-of-a-kind botanical nirvana of beauty and vitality, and one of the ten best gardens on earth. Indeed, it grew from its origins as a commercial nursery into a horticultural masterpiece. It went from a private home to a public garden, a haven for plant enthusiasts and a center for education. It defied the odds to express Walska’s distinct vision for well-being and harmony with the natural world.

Behind the scenes, Lotusland’s beauty, which appears effortless, thanks to our skilled staff, is crucially underpinned by sustainability. We are a longtime leader in natural resource management and have contributed to many industry standards in collaboration with national and international conservation groups. We were notably one of the first botanic gardens in the U.S. to employ environmentally responsible gardening practices using organic materials. As a result, we have healthier plants and a stronger ecosystem that helps us conserve both natural and financial resources.

Our experts are also entrusted with nurturing rare or exotic seeds from various institutions, a process that can take up to a decade or longer. Thanks to Lotusland’s coastal Mediterranean climate and ample sunshine, we are singularly suited to continue these types of innovative partnerships and experimentations.

Just as we gather knowledge and plant life from around the world, we develop new ways to share with visitors of all ages. Our Junior Botanist Program supports the next generation of horticultural visionaries and has brought fourth-grade students to Lotusland free of charge for 20 years. We remain partners with colleges, universities, and research institutions. We also have our Open Pathways and wellness programming to welcome underserved segments of the population. We feel a responsibility to keep advancing an appreciation of plants and the environment.

Through philanthropic investment, and by maintaining a legacy of loyal leadership, the Garden will flourish as a local and global resource for years to come. Your generosity and engagement are crucial for us to continue preserving, enhancing, educating, and inspiring in the ways we are uniquely positioned to do at Lotusland.
WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Did you know?

There was already a nursery and garden at this site when Montecito Water District was founded over 100 years ago. Early pioneers recognized the scarcity of the local water supply as their biggest challenge. Today, Montecito residents and visitors enjoy exquisite beauty, attributable to grit, ingenuity, and a wealth of innovations.

Lotusland, a spectacular historic gem, showcases the value of landscaping practices, education, and involvement...it all adds up to an inspiring splendor, focused on sustainability.

Mulch, green waste, cover crops—these tried-and-true strategies support water conservation. Neighbor to neighbor, ensuring water efficiency is the surefire way to guarantee a garden's long-term success. Small changes can make a big impact in sustaining the community’s water future.

Laura Camp, Public Information Officer, Montecito Water District

ADMISSION PRICE CHANGES FOR 2024

The ever-increasing costs associated with inflation and maintaining and improving the Garden and its programs have necessitated a thoughtful adjustment to Lotusland’s pricing structure. To ensure the sustainability of our operations, we are implementing our first admission price increase since 2019.

**Beginning in 2024, adult admission is $60 for the general public. Unique and personalized docent-guided tours are an additional $15 per adult, free for children.**

Membership benefits have not changed, and Members and their guests enjoy free docent-led tours.

Children’s admission remains at $25, ensuring that families can continue to enjoy the beauty and wonder of Lotusland together.

As always, we partner with community organizations through our Open Pathways program to provide no-cost and discounted admission to underserved populations in Santa Barbara County. Lotusland is proud to continue our participation with Museums for All, an initiative offering $3 admission for those who receive food assistance benefits.
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Winter | Spring 2024

For more detailed information about upcoming events, please see page 16 or visit Lotusland.org/events.

**Wellbeing Wednesday**
Wednesday, February 28

**Plant Paradox Dinner**
Saturday, March 2

**Annual Meeting**
Tuesday, March 5

**Tour Virginia Robinson Gardens**
Saturday, March 16

**Gardens in Paradise: Private Gardens of Fernald Point**
Wednesday, April 10

**Member’s Wine & Walk**
Friday, April 19

**How To Compost: A Compost Tea Party**
Wednesday, April 24

**Spring Picnic in the Garden**
Saturday, May 18

**Lotusland Tour Schedule**

We look forward to welcoming you to the Garden! Lotusland is open for public visitation Wednesdays through Saturdays with a choice of a self-guided visit or a docent-led tour at the time of reservation. Visit lotusland.org/visit/ to check availability and reserve your space. Space is limited and advance reservations are required. We recommend making reservations well in advance of your desired visit.

**2024 Ticket Release Schedule:**

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<tr>
<th>JANUARY – MARCH</th>
<th>APRIL – MAY</th>
<th>JUNE – AUGUST</th>
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<td>1/9/24: Member Prerelease</td>
<td>2/20/24: Member Prerelease</td>
<td>4/23/24: Member Prerelease</td>
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*Ticket release dates are subject to change.*  
*Additional information is available at www.lotusland.org/visit.*