

Prologue

Location

Situated at the southern end of the Great Rocky Mountains and in the northern end of the Rio Grande River Valley, Santa Fe, New Mexico is at a geologic crossroads. It is adjacent to the Chihuahuan Desert to the south, the Great Plains to the east, and the Great Basin and Rangelands to the West, which end at the Jemez Mountains and the rift valley of the Rio Grande. Plant life from all of these geographic areas can be found in Santa Fe.

Chihuahuan Desert agaves and yuccas, wildflowers such as agastache and gaillardia, and many varieties of cacti, such as cholla hedgehog, and claret cup can be found in the wild and in Santa Fe gardens. Rocky Mountain wildflowers, such as columbine, liatris, and asters are favorite garden plants as well as being seen in the wild, and forests of pine, juniper and aspen can be seen on the mountainsides around Santa Fe

Trees of the Great Plains are favorites in residential areas, such as cottonwoods, sycamores and cedar, and also grow in the wild, particularly along streams and river banks. The many plants of the rose family that are native to the Great Plains also grow well in Santa Fe gardens as do honeysuckle and trumpet vines. From the Great Basin come sage, manzanita, gaillardia and prickly pear cactus. This rich confluence of native plant life makes Santa Fe a unique gardening area, and an important location for the interpretation of plant life.

At an elevation of 7,000 feet, Santa Fe enjoys a semi-arid climate, with moderate summers and winters. Humidity is low, and the sun shines on over 300 days per year. Snowfall averages 32 inches annually in the city; monsoons bring needed summer moisture to plant life in the wild as well as to Santa Fe's many residential gardens. The Santa Fe Botanical Garden has recognized the need to be water wise, making the most of limited precipitation through an emphasis on the use of xeric plants, and through conservation and reuse of water. It is a goal of the garden to become a model for sustainability.

History

In 1987 a small group of local gardeners, botanists and environmentally oriented citizens, came together to establish a botanical garden in Santa Fe. Beginning without a public garden, the organization they formed became a valuable resource to the area through educational programs and service to the community. In 1993, the organization entered into a long-term lease to manage the **Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve**.

This 35-acre site with its spring fed pond and remarkable diversity of plants and wildlife quickly became the focus of much of the organization's educational programming. Dedicated volunteers spent countless hours removing exotic and invasive plants, restoring the habitat through re-vegetation and ensuring that the pond remain a healthy environment for riparian plants, birds and invertebrates. From 2000 until early 2015, the organization also managed the **Ortiz Mountain Preserve**, which is owned by the County of Santa Fe, which now manages the site.

In December 2006 eleven acres of land were acquired on a long-term lease from the City of Santa Fe for the development of a botanical garden at Museum Hill. Nationally recognized landscape architect W. Gary Smith was hired to create a master plan for the new garden. Following an intensive review process, the master plan was approved by the City of Santa Fe in 2011. Additional acreage was leased from the City of Santa Fe and the State of New Mexico bringing the total to 14 acres in 2013.

The dream of the founders was realized when the **Santa Fe Botanical Garden at Museum Hill** opened in July 2013 with Phase 1, the Orchard Gardens. Now in its third growing season, this public garden is thriving and expected to attract close to 40,000 visitors in 2015. A temporary Visitor Center was added in 2014 and a permanent Visitors Center has been designed, and funds are being raised to build it.

Phase 2 of the Garden, **Ojos y Manos: Eyes and Hands**, an ethnobotanical garden of native medicinal and food plants is scheduled to open in 2016. Phase 2 will also include classroom areas and an amphitheater. Phase 3 of the Botanical Garden's Master Plan calls for a series of

Courtyard Gardens that reflect both traditional and non-traditional plantings. It is scheduled to be built later in this decade.

Community

Santa Fe is not only a geologic and botanical crossroads; it is also a cultural crossroads. Ancestral Puebloan peoples of the region were here for thousands of years before European explorers and settlers arrived, and they had established trade with other tribal groups, including trade of seeds and plant life with other areas of North America and with Central and South America. When Europeans arrived, Santa Fe, the site of an ancient pueblo, became the second European city in North America when it was established in 1607 by the Spanish, and it is the oldest state capital in the country.

Northern European, Anglo settlers arrived in the 19th century, primarily over the Old Santa Fe Trail, a wagon route from Missouri. These diverse populations have since co-existed in Santa Fe in relative harmony, resulting in a rich and diverse cultural heritage, as can be seen in the visual and performing arts, gastronomy, and spiritual heritage of the people. Santa Fe has become one of the leading art markets in the country and has a high percentage of its population engaged in the arts.

As the Botanical Garden moves forward in its development, the importance of Santa Fe as a cultural crossroad, as well as geographic and botanical crossroads, has been recognized by the Garden's Board of Directors, and this Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of the Botanical Garden in representing Santa Fe's three historic cultures and in providing a venue to showcase Santa Fe as a major center for the arts.

When UNESCO named Santa Fe in 2005 as the first *Creative City*, it saluted an historic tradition of innovation, culture as old as human habitation of North America, and a magnetic center for the arts and sciences. This designation heralded the need for a Botanical Garden that matched the City Different's special spirit and unique cultures, as well as its setting, lodged in the foothills of the Rockies' Sangre de Cristo Mountains at the crossroads of diverse geographic locales and botanical heritages.

Future

Emboldened by the Botanical Garden's early successes, the Strategic Planning Committee has asked, "What can the Garden become and what purposes should it serve? How can it most fully realize the promise of a living museum encompassing indigenous and adapted plants and the diverse populations of the region? What questions about climate, water use, renewable energy, and sustainability can such an organization help to answer? What are the best ways to encourage all comers to learn about the relationship of plants and people? How can the Garden help to build on the reputation and attractiveness of this community to visitors, who expect world-class cultural institutions and amenities when they visit? Located at the confluence of spiritual, artistic and historic traditions, how can the Botanical Garden serve as gathering place, a locus for complementary presentations of the arts and sciences?

It is with these questions in mind, as well as Santa Fe's unique setting and history, that led the Board of Directors to embark at this pivotal time on a reexamination of its vision for an extraordinary future for the Botanical Garden. The Goals and Objectives contained in this Strategic Plan set forth a Vision for growth and enhancement of the Santa Fe Botanical Garden over the next five years.

Values

As it works to make its goals a reality, the Botanical Garden will value conservation and sustainability of land and water use; excellence and creativity in all aspects of garden design, management and programming; and sound governance, professional leadership and financial stability. While valuing history and heritage, the Botanical Garden will also seek to be relevant and contemporary.

Working in harmony with nature and in partnerships with like-minded institutions, the Santa Fe Botanical Garden will strive to be a boon to the community it serves and a national treasure that preserves and celebrates the rich heritage of the American Southwest.

Mission Statement

The Santa Fe Botanical Garden celebrates, cultivates and conserves the rich botanical heritage and biodiversity of our region. In partnership with nature, we demonstrate our commitment through education, community service, presentation of the arts, and the sustainable management of our nature preserve and public garden.

Long-term Goals and Objectives

- I. **Public Garden as a Living Museum – Engage diverse audiences through innovative and thoughtful curation of botanical, scientific, historical and artistic exhibits, displays and performances.**
 - a. Plan for and present innovative horticultural displays and special programs that complement the permanent plantings.
 - b. Foster increased involvement of current constituencies and develop programming that will engage new and diverse audiences.
 - c. Create and manage Garden-wide curatorial content and collections policy.
 - d. Adopt an on-going five-year plan for art exhibits in the garden.
 - e. Develop and implement a plan for featuring musical and theatrical presentations in the garden.

- II. **Educational Outreach – Provide engaging and relevant opportunities for lifelong learning for all ages and serve as a leader in the community.**
 - a. Inventory, analyze and prioritize the Santa Fe Botanical Garden’s areas of expertise and intellectual capital across all constituencies, in order to leverage all skill sets at our disposal.
 - b. Develop and offer attractive and meaningful learning opportunities in priority areas for diverse and underserved audiences.

- c. Educate the public on the benefits of environmental stewardship through conservation, ecological restoration and preservation, and responsible use of natural resources.
 - d. Engage in synergistic educational collaborations with other institutions and entities.
 - e. Expand the reach of educational programming for children by preparing teachers and volunteers to deliver the Botanical Garden's educational content.
 - f. Create on-line learning activities and virtual exhibits to expand the number of individuals served.
- III. **Sustainable Environmental Practices – Implement sustainable environmental practices regarding horticulture, energy, land and water use, and climate impacts.**
- a. Demonstrate a consistent culture of sustainability.
 - b. Create and implement a water conservation plan, including costing out infrastructure for water capture and use, and identifying sources of potential funding.
 - c. Develop a solar energy plan, identify equipment and its placement, perform a cost/benefit analysis and identify potential funding sources.
 - d. Become a model for sustainability through practices promoting resource conservation and LEED standards.
- IV. **A Leading Attraction – Expand the profile of the Botanical Garden as a premier destination in Santa Fe and New Mexico.**
- a. Implement compelling marketing strategies designed to expand the Garden's presence and profile.

- b. Communicate a cohesive message about the Botanical Garden's multifaceted offerings that inspire and delight.
 - c. Take leadership in collaborations with local, regional and national partners.
 - d. Cultivate a visitor-centric outlook.
 - e. Develop a regular process for assessing the visitor experience, and strive to exceed audience expectations.
 - f. Design a plan for ADA compliance and make physical improvements to enhance the visitor experience.
- V. Financial Sustainability – Achieve short and long-term financial stability.**
- a. Develop and implement a long-range business plan and reporting systems that ensure financial viability.
 - b. Conduct cost/benefit analyses of the gardens sites and programming.
 - c. Develop a plan to increase annual contributed income, and develop the capacity to obtain grants from foundations and governmental entities.
 - d. Identify methods to expand earned income.
 - e. Create an operational plan that supports the development of the physical site(s) and programming needs.
 - f. Ensure that staff compensation and benefits are competitive and equitable and that professional development opportunities are made available.
 - g. Recruit, train, retain and recognize an exceptional cadre of volunteers whose roles are consistent with their capabilities and interests.
 - h. Develop a cohesive and comprehensive safety and risk management process.

- VI. **Capital Development** – Expand the Botanical Garden at Museum Hill by raising the capital for its development.
- a. Revise the Garden Master Plan, including expansion plans and capital improvements.
 - b. Create a long-range development plan to raise capital funds.
 - c. Prioritize and construct improvements and expansions as funds become available.
 - d. Work with the city and state on land management and infrastructure issues and funding sources.