

Santa Fe In Bloom: Botanical Garden opens this month

By Carole Langrall

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The much anticipated Santa Fe Botanical Garden swings open its garden gates this month with a Gala Opening Night Reception kick-off party July 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. Guests can enjoy tapas, margaritas and sangria while strolling through Phase One of the new Museum Hill location. On July 20, the gardens will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for a Members Only Day, then the official public opening is 9 to 5 on Sunday, July 21.

With stunning views in all directions, the Santa Fe Botanical Garden at Museum Hill is sure to become a popular attraction for residents and tourists. Sitting directly across from the Museum of International Folk Art, the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, and the Laboratory of Anthropology on Camino Lejo, visitors will find ample parking and handicap accessibility.

One of the best parts of the new garden is the reasonable entrance fees: \$5 for the general public, \$4 for seniors, \$3.50 for students and free admission for children under 12. According to chief executive officer Clayton Bass, the gardens will be open every day but Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's.

The entrance is welcoming, as visitors pass through a handcrafted metal gate where young honeysuckle vines have started to wrap their way around the base. Blooming yuccas frame the walkway along with native agaves and grasses, as visitors make their way toward the admissions area.

The garden hosts several rustic iron and steel structures, like an artistic trellis covered in bunches of salt cedar. Several starter trumpet vine plants have been planted at the base, which are starting to twist their way up, where they will ultimately create a living roof.

Other hardscape features dot the garden landscape, including locally supplied stone and rock that are used naturally to create wall and paths. Art exhibits will be a constant feature, with current exhibit artist Candyce Garrett's three magnificent round granite sculptures by the meadow garden.

Centrally located is The Orchard Garden where apple, pear and apricot trees have been planted. Young native grasses cover the interior which will grow taller in seasons to come. A beautiful array of perennial plants frames two sides of the orchard, including coral bells, blue geranium, penstemon, aquilegia, plumbago and sedum, just to name a few. Adjacent to these is a brightly colored rose garden where tufts of lavender mix in for added fragrance. While Phases Two and Three are still under construction, a walk to the Kearny Gap bridge provides quick views of the future Courtyard and Naturalistic Gardens.

Bass says the new Museum Hill garden is geared toward education; there will be many programs where both children and adults can participate, teaching them about water conservation, permaculture and ethnobiology.

Although the gardens are still young, there are already signs that the plants are adapting and beginning to flourish in their new home, despite the drought. Drip irrigation is in place, but according to Bass, only with the objective of tapering it off as plants establish themselves in certain areas.

For information on the SFBG, or to become a member, contact santafebotanicalgarden.org.

Carole has been in the floriculture industry for over 23 years, from wholesale and retail sales to public outreach and events planning. She is a Master Gardener and is an advocate, lecturer and supporter of New Mexico's sustainable, local flower farms. Her floral design studio, "A Garden of Earthly Delights," has two locations: Santa Fe and Baltimore. She can be reached at 443.257.8833.