



GHOULISH GARDENS

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden

Weave your way through the garden to discover the eerier side of our collections!

Look for the scarecrows along the paths-- They indicate a stop on the Ghoulish Gardens route. Stops are found all throughout the garden and do not need to be followed in any specific order.

**Locations listed under each stop correspond to the map on the last page.*

BLOODLEAF PLANT: Named for its deep red appearance, the bloodleaf plant is also known as the chicken gizzard plant, the beefsteak plant, and other descriptive names.

(12. Redwood Grove/Outer Prehistoric Forest)

ROSEMARY: Traditionally placed in funeral bouquets to symbolize remembrance, the strong scent of rosemary also helped to disguise the smell of corpses!

(33. Crescent Farm)

POMEGRANATE: In Greek mythology, the pomegranate was known as the "fruit of the dead," and believed to have sprung from the blood of Adonis.

(33. Crescent Farm)

WHITE SAGE: A fairly common practice for dispelling evil or negative energy, Native Americans were the first on record as burning white sage in a ritual manner. For many of these cultures, white sage went by the name "Sacred Sage." Burning sage was used to banish unwanted, dark energies, and to communicate with the spirit realm in order to request cleansing and allow protective energy to infuse a space.

(33. Crescent Farm)

FIGS: Figs are pollinated by female wasps that crawl inside the fig to lay her eggs through a small passage, during which she loses her wings and antennae, ultimately trapping her inside. She lays her eggs inside the fig, and baby wasps are born. Though the male babies, wingless, emerge first and mate with the baby females, and then die. The female babies exit the fig to repeat the cycle of pollination and reproduction. The mother, however, is doomed to die inside the fig. Luckily for us, the fig produces an enzyme that digests the dead insect, turning her carcass into protein. The crunchy bits we eat are seeds, not wasp parts.

(33. Crescent Farm)

DRAGON TREE: This tree gets its name from an ancient Greek legend. According to the tale, Hercules was sent to steal the golden apples of the Hesperides, which were guarded by Ladon, a serpent-like dragon. Ladon had a hundred heads and lived twisted around a tree in the Garden. The mighty Hercules slayed the ferocious Ladon, and the dragon's blood flowed out over the land, sprouting 'dragon' trees. Ladon was placed among the stars by the gods as the Constellation Draco. And the dragon trees, with their long, slender succulent trunks and prickly leaves, continue to bleed the death of Ladon. Like the unfortunate dragon, the tree secretes a red resin when it is injured. In ancient times, the resin was believed to have magical and medicinal properties.

(Africa-Canary Islands, west of the road)

BAT'S WING CORAL TREE: This tree gets its name from the unique shape of the leaves. The leaflets have a broad wedge-shape with three lobes, resembling a bat's open wings!

(Australia- West of the road)

RAINBOW DREAM SNAKE: There is a giant serpent that weaves its way through the Australian garden! Based on an Australian Aboriginal creation story, the Rainbow Dream Snake, while a benevolent protector of the people, is a malevolent punisher of lawbreakers, penalizing them with violent storms and floods.

(7. Serpent Trail/Australian Discovery Area)

MADAGASCAR SPINY FOREST: Weave your way through thorns, spikes, spines, and other prickly plants in this creepy but fascinating biome. The plants of the Madagascar Spiny Forest habitat, offering striking sculptural forms and fascinating adaptations, represent one of the most endangered floras on Earth.

(9. Madagascar Spiny Forest)

MOUSE TRAP TREE: Look closely and you may spot one of this tree's 1 ½ to 2-inch horned seed pods with tiny barbed "fishhooks" at the end of their many stalks. Those hooks allow the pods to latch onto large animals for a free ride to seed dispersal, but reportedly can catch small animals, such as mice, as well. Some botanists once believed that this was by design, so that the tree would benefit from the nutrients in dead mice decomposing atop its soil, though the idea that the mouse trap tree was indirectly carnivorous has since been debunked.

(9. Madagascar Spiny Forest)

PUYA PLANT: Botanists have noted the Puya as hazardous to sheep and birds which may become entangled in the spines of its leaves. If the animal dies, the plant may gain nutrients as the animal decomposes nearby. Because of this, some botanists once believed the Puya to be indirectly carnivorous, because it lacks the ability to either directly digest nutrients from its prey, but rather has the ability to trap it, however the idea that the Puya is indirectly carnivorous has since been debunked. The Puya plant has earned the nickname "sheep-eating plant."

(10. Desert Display Garden)

AFRICAN SUMAC TREE: Though its outside branches are lush and green, step beyond them to enter a dark tree cave of spindly, gangly, tangled branches that create a very creepy, mysterious atmosphere!

(11. Aloe Trail)

EPIPHYTIC CACTI: Most of the cacti in this encaged area are pollinated not by bees or birds or butterflies, but by bats! When the night-blooming cacti open, they emit a sweet odor, and the bats seek out the source of this highly attractive scent. They poke their long noses deep into the tubular cactus flowers reaching for the sweet nectar, and lick at it with their long tongues.

(5. Epiphyllum Collection)

OAK TREES: In folklore, trees are often said to be the homes of tree spirits. Revered by them as a sacred tree, Druids reportedly gathered under Oak Trees to conduct ceremonies and divination rituals.

(3. Garden For All Seasons-adjacent)

SUGAR CANE: We have this sweet natural treat to thank for all our Halloween candy! Raw sugar cane, however, tastes quite different from our October sweets. Cane sugar is unrefined, and compared to white sugar, tastes far less sweet. It is unprocessed, and retains a lot of the nutrients present in cane juice, including 17 amino acids, 11 minerals, and 6 vitamins, as well as antioxidants that may help reverse oxidative damage.

(3. Garden For All Seasons)

BAMBOO: In Bangladesh, it is believed that ghosts called Besho Bhoot live in bamboo groves. People from rural Bengal believe that harmful ghosts dwell within the bamboo, and one should not walk past these areas after dusk. It is said that when a bamboo leans or lays on the ground, one should always walk around it, because when one tries to cross the bamboo, the bamboo is pulled back straight up by an unseen force, and the person can die as a result. There are also tales of a gusty wind that blows inside the bamboo forests while the weather is calm on the outside.

(29. Palm & Bamboo Collections)

STRANGLER FIG: The strangler fig is so named because they grow on host trees, and slowly choke them to death! Once established, a young strangler fig begins sending aerial roots down to the ground, where they quickly dive into the soil and anchor themselves. The roots may dangle from the host tree's canopy or creep down its trunk. Once in contact with the ground, the fig experiences a growth spurt, consuming moisture and nutrients that the host tree needs. The strangler fig's roots then surround the host tree's roots, cutting off its supply of water and nutrients, ultimately killing the host tree. The host likely dies from being shaded by the fig canopy.

(19. Tallac Knoll)

- ***DON'T MISS THIS!*** If you look closely deep within the palm and bamboo trees across the road from the Adobe, you will find a palm tree that has been almost entirely devoured by a strangler fig!

(29. Palm & Bamboo Collections)

FLOR DE CACAO: The flowers of this tree have been used by native peoples in Guatemala for preserving food— and bodies. The pleasant fragrance stays in dry flowers for decades, thus they were used for funeral ceremonies and were found in crypts still fragrant after many years. This feature of the flower gave the plant another common name- “funeral tree.”

(19. Tallac Knoll)

WHITE FLOWERS: While white flowers represent innocence and purity in American culture, they mean the opposite in Chinese culture. White represents death, grief, and ghosts in Chinese culture, and white is often found at funerals. In the West, weddings are often decorated with bundles of white roses, however bringing white flowers to a Chinese wedding could get you taken off the guest list for future occasions, as white blossoms are associated with funerals rather than weddings.

(25. Rose Garden/Citrus Grove)

POTIONS: What we today refer to as herbal medicine was once considered the potions of witches! During times when female healers were persecuted as witches for brewing herbal medicines, it is believed that euphemisms for certain plants arose to create a more covert language around them. For example: Evidence suggests that “eye of newt” referred to mustard seeds, “gall of goat” referred to both honeysuckle and St. John's wort, and “scale of dragon” referred to tarragon. Explore the herb garden and its signs and discover what modern “potions” this garden currently contains.

(21. Herb Garden)

FENNEL: Fennel was valued as a magic herb. In the Middle Ages, it was draped over doorways on Midsummer's Eve to protect the household from evil spirits. As an added measure of protection, the tiny seeds were stuffed into keyholes to keep ghosts from entering the room.

(21. Herb Garden)

WORMWOOD: Legend has it that this plant first sprang up on the impressions made from the serpent's tail as he slithered his way out of the Garden of Eden. According to folk beliefs, wormwood was fabled to deprive a man of his courage, but a balm made from it was supposed to be effective in driving away goblins who came at night. In early Egyptian scripts, it was described as a medicine to rid the body of worms.

(21. Herb Garden)

MONARCH WAYSTATION: Millions of butterflies take flight to central Mexico each year as part of their yearly migration. They arrive in late October/early November around the time of the *Dia de los Muertos* festivities (Day of the Dead). Mexican folklore tells of these butterflies carrying the souls of the deceased, returning to earth on these holy days to visit relatives and provide comfort. During *Dia de los Muertos* celebrations, people sometimes dress like monarch butterflies and decorate their *ofrendas* (altars) with monarchs to honor and remember their ancestors. The plants in this garden were planted to attract monarchs and other butterflies.

(13. California Native Habitat Garden—By the Tongva wikiup)

BRIDGES: Bridges have always been a source of dark myths and legends. Some tell of bridges being built by the devil in return for the first living creature that crosses over them. In many of these legends, the devil is outwitted by the individual wishing to cross, who sends an animal across instead of a human victim.

(14. Turtle Pond)

ANGEL'S TRUMPET: For millennia, shamans have used the angel's trumpet as a sacrament in their rituals and ceremonies, often to gain entrance to other worlds of existence. It was believed that by consuming a tea made from the flowers, a shaman could fight evil forces, communicate with the dead, and forge a spiritual union with ancestors. The flower, being aimed downwards, also resembles the angelic horns in tarot cards, which point downwards to awaken the dead. These associations, combined with brugmansia's psychoactive properties, have contributed to its use in religion and the occult arts for years.

(1. Celebration Garden)

The Arboretum

LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARBORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

Grace Kallam Perennial Garden

Beds of themed colorful blooming perennials and attractive foliage along intimate paths. Each bed has a color theme. The Purple-leaved redbud (*Cercis canadensis*, 'Forest Pansy') and the Chinese fringe tree (*Chionanthus retusus*) shade the area.



Tule Pond

In and near the waterways at the Arboretum, visitors can see many species of resident and migratory birds, aquatic creatures, as well as numerous small reptiles and mammals.

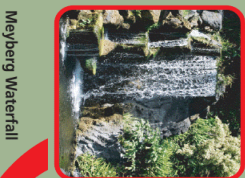
Queen Anne Cottage

Constructed in 1885, this building is an ornate example of Victorian extravagance set in a lakeside landscape. The cottage and grounds are a rare survival of Southern California's Golden age.



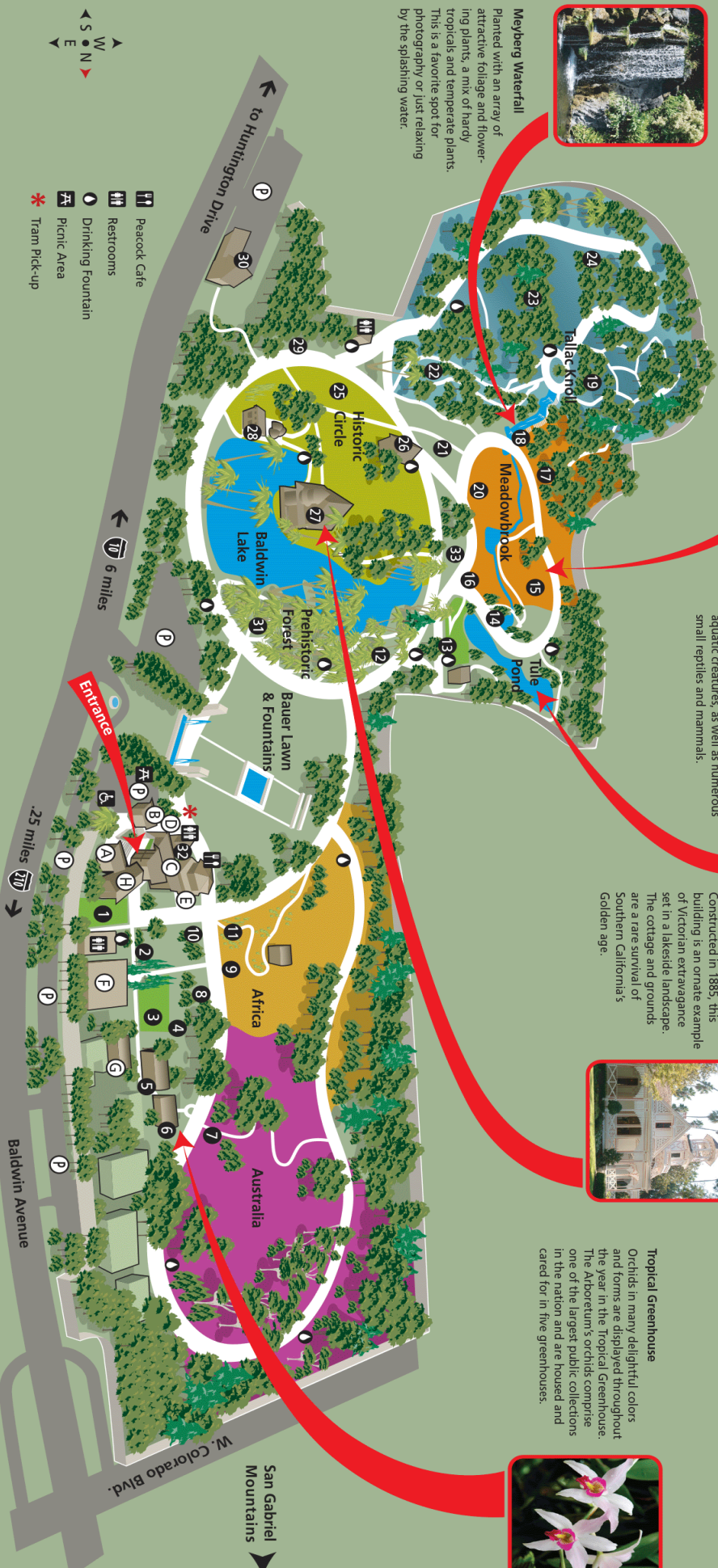
Tropical Greenhouse

Orchids in many delightful colors and forms are displayed throughout the year in the Tropical Greenhouse. The Arboretum's orchids comprise one of the largest public collections in the nation and are housed and cared for in five greenhouses.



Meyberg Waterfall

Planted with an array of attractive foliage and flowering plants, a mix of hardy tropicals and temperate plants. This is a favorite spot for photography or just relaxing by the splashing water.



- 1 Celebration Garden
- 2 Weaver's Garden
- 3 Garden For All Seasons
- 4 Wedding Garden
- 5 Carnivorous Plants/Epiphyllum Collection
- 6 Tropical Greenhouse/Orchids
- 7 Serpent Trail/Australian Discovery Area
- 8 Water Conservation Garden
- 9 Madagascar Spiny Forest
- 10 Desert Display Garden
- 11 Aloe Trail
- 12 Redwood Grove
- 13 California Native Habitat Garden
- 14 Turtle Pond
- 15 Grace Kallam Perennial Garden
- 16 Viewing Platform
- 17 Temperate Asia
- 18 Meyberg Waterfall
- 19 Tropical Bowl
- 20 Daylily & Magnolia Collections
- 21 Herb Garden
- 22 Southwest Collection
- 23 Engelmann Oak Grove
- 24 Ficus Collection
- 25 Rose Garden/Citrus Grove
- 26 Coach Barn (1879)
- 27 Queen Anne Cottage (1885/86)
- 28 Adobe
- 29 Palm & Bamboo Collections
- 30 Santa Anita Depot (Tues./Wed. 10am-4pm; Sun 1-4pm)
- 31 Cycad Collection
- 32 Organic Vegetable Garden
- 33 Crescent Farm
- A Membership
- B Garden & Gift Shop
- C Library / Plant Information
- D Classrooms (Palm Room & Bamboo Room)
- E Oak Room Classroom
- F Ayres Hall
- G Education Greenhouse
- H Administration
- I Parking

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