

Phoenix Magazine

5 Local Botanical Gardens to Check Out Right Now

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Phoenix may be in the desert, but the area is abundant with lush gardens and varieties of plant species. Explore these 5 desert oases around the Phoenix area.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum

Drive an hour north of Downtown Phoenix and tour the Boyce Thompson Arboretum – the largest and oldest botanical garden in Arizona. Arboretums are generally a collection of trees, but this arboretum includes an extensive array of lush gardens and plants. Choose among several walking tours to explore natural habitats and wildlife such as bird tours, night-time scorpion walks or wildflower, butterfly and lizard tours.

37615 E. Arboretum Way, Superior, 520-689-2723, btarboretum.org

Desert Botanical Garden

A popular tourist attraction in the Valley, the Desert Botanical Garden spreads across 140 acres and is home to 50,000 desert plants. The garden offers specialized tours, events, exhibits, gift shops and five different nature trails to observe the lavish desert gardens. Grab a bite at the Patio Café or Gertrude's restaurant where they incorporate dishes with fresh and local ingredients. The garden hosts many research and conservation programs to protect and conserve endangered desert plant species and habitats. Special discounts and benefits are offered to members such as unlimited annual admission, early entrance and discounts from classes, workshops and the Garden Shop.

1201 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix, 480-941-1225, dbg.org

The Japanese Friendship Garden

A peaceful pocket in the middle of the city, the Japanese Friendship Garden offers a serene getaway. The 3.5-acre garden features a 12-foot waterfall, Koi pond and flowing streams. Bird watch or view the 50-plant variety situated in the garden. The garden also provides numerous events and workshops throughout the year. Japanese tea ceremonies are held once a month October through July and allow guests to experience a 1,000-year-old Japanese ritual. Workshops offered at the garden include wood carving, Japanese flower arrangement, bamboo care-taking and an outdoor Tai Chi class.

1125 N. 3rd Ave., Phoenix, 602-274-8700, japanesefriendshipgarden.org

The Rose Garden at Mesa Community College

Take a stroll through one of the largest rose gardens in the Southwest. The Rose Garden at Mesa Community College is home to nearly 9,000 rose bushes with more than 300 varieties and is open to the public 24 hours a day. The best time to view blooming roses is March through June and November through December when the bushes have not been heavily pruned.

1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa, 480-461-7022, rosegarden.mesacc.edu

Glendale Xeriscape Garden

Smaller than the Desert Botanical Garden, the Xeriscape Garden in Glendale is home to a collection of more than 1,000 trees, cacti and shrubs. This small garden has two short dirt trails that allow visitors to stroll through the greenery. For a delightful surprise, walk toward the Glendale Library and catch a glimpse – or snap a photo – of wandering peacocks and peahens who have made the area their home.

5959 W. Brown St., Glendale, facebook.com/GlendaleAzGarden/