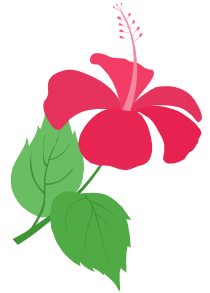


## San Antonio Botanical Garden

# Exploring the Formal Gardens

Explore the showy Formal Gardens at the San Antonio Botanical Garden with your family. In these Gardens, you'll discover colorful floral displays, different landscaping styles, an authentic Japanese Garden and more! Print out this mission and bring some paper, pencils and a clipboard (or book) with you to the Garden. When you arrive, please pick up a map at the front desk in the Carriage House to help you navigate the Garden.



**1. Gertie's Garden.** Honoring Ethel Gertrude Smythe White, this area is a showcase for container gardening. Container gardens are often planted following the “thriller, filler, and spiller” method. Look closely at the containers. Can you find the “thriller” plants that add excitement and energy to the container? Which are the “filler” plants? Do you see any “spiller” plants that are spilling out and hanging down out of the pot? Use your blank paper to draw your own container design. Hint: Look all around at different plants in the Garden for ideas to use in creating your own design.

**2. Rose Garden.** Roses have been grown for at least 5000 years for their beautiful flowers and their fragrance. Look for the interpretive sign about Rose Fragrance. When is the scent of roses strongest? \_\_\_\_\_



Try smelling several different kinds of roses. Which do you like the best?

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Can you find any rose hips (the oval-shaped fruit of the rose)? Rose hips have 50 times as much vitamin C in them as an orange.

**3. Sacred Garden.** In this small garden, you'll find plants that have been mentioned in sacred texts (Bible, Koran, and other religious writings). Many of the plants here have been used by people for thousands of years. List two that you have eaten or used in some way.

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**4. Old-Fashioned Garden.** This garden displays old-fashioned varieties of plants alongside modern versions. With so many flowers, it is a great spot to watch pollinators such as hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Scent, color, shape and food rewards are all important in attracting a pollinator. Plants provide sweet nectar and extra pollen to attract animals to their flowers. While the animal is feeding, pollen becomes stuck to its body. When it visits the next flower for more food, the pollen from the last flower rubs off on the new one, pollinating it. Now the plant can produce its seeds.



Some flowers have many different pollinators, while others have adapted to a specific kind of pollinator. The color and shape of a flower can give you a clue as to the identity of its pollinator. Spend some time observing the pollinators and take notes. Can you figure out which colors and shapes they prefer?

**Bees:**

**Butterflies:**

**Hummingbirds:**

**Others:**

**5. Display Beds.** Look for the large display beds between the Rose Garden and Wisteria Arbor. They are an example of living art. A former horticulturist here at the Garden once said, “When I was a kid, I loved plants and I loved art. In this job, I can combine the two!” Can you see the artistic shapes and patterns in the beds? How would you design the bed? Use your blank paper to create a new display bed design.

**6. Shade Garden.** Look for the Shade Garden to the right (west) of Wisteria Arbor. Many people in San Antonio have oaks or other trees shading their yard and come to the Garden to learn which plants grow well in the shade. List two trees in the garden that are providing shade. Which two plants would you include in a shady spot at home?

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**7. Fountain Plaza.** The fountain is hand-carved from cantera (a Mexican volcanic rock) and designed to look like the fountain in the Generalife at the Alhambra in Grenada, Spain. What might the shapes carved into the head of the fountain represent? Spend a little time at the fountain. What does having a fountain add to the Garden?



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**8. Sensory Garden.** This garden is designed to engage the senses. Visitors are encouraged to touch and smell the plants and listen carefully to the orchestra of natural sounds. Please don't taste anything, though!

Explore the garden with your fingertips. What textures do you feel?

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Pay attention to the sounds. What natural and man-made sounds can you hear?

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Rub your fingers gently on some plants to release their scent. Many plants (and animals) use scent to communicate. Some plants have strong or bitter-smelling leaves to help protect them. How would having a strong smell be protective?

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Sometimes plants will have bitter leaves, but sweet-smelling flowers. Why do the flowers smell good?

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Find two plants in here that you already know taste good (but don't eat them!) and are used to flavor food or drinks. What part of the plant do we use? List the plant and its part below.

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**9. Kumamoto En (Japanese Garden).** The garden is designed to be enjoyed one scene at a time, like an oriental scroll painting, as you wander through it. Observe the three kinds of pavements as you walk through: the *Shin* formal style, the *Gyo* semi-formal, and the *So* informal style. Notice how it changes. Why do you think it was planned that way?

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Kumamoto En contains over 30 elements of authentic Japanese garden features, all steeped in symbolism. Look for the three hills representing Mt. Aso (an active volcano near Kumamoto City, Japan), Mt. Fuji, and “Mt. San Antonio” (representing the Texas Hill Country). Please do not climb them. The pool of water represents a **much** larger body of water. Can you guess what it is?

(Hint: it’s between Japan and the United States.) \_\_\_\_\_

How many stones make up the bridge? What might the bridge represent?

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What stone “animal” is near the island? What do you think it symbolizes?

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Take a moment to sit down and relax in the Tea Arbor, traditionally used as a waiting area before joining a tea ceremony. If each of your family members sits on a different bench, what do you notice? Why do you think the benches were built this way?

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Thank you for visiting the San Antonio Botanical Garden!