



Advocates for the Greater Good of Balboa Park

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sarah Beckman, (619) 742-0686, sarah@balboapark.org

Plant It Forward Goes Virtual to Celebrate New Volunteer Garden Stewards Corps and Kate Sessions May 1–8, 2021

San Diego (April 23, 2021) — The Balboa Park Conservancy invites everyone to dig in for a hands-on virtual *Plant It Forward* event, celebrating the launch of the Garden Stewards volunteer initiative and the legacy of Kate Sessions. From May 1 to 8, 2021, the Conservancy is partnering with SDG&E to present a family-friendly series on climate-friendly garden stewardship to help budding gardeners of all ages “plant it forward” in their own backyard. All *Plant It Forward* instructional materials will be available free to the public on the Conservancy’s [website](#) and social media channels.

With an SDG&E Environmental Champions grant, the Conservancy created online curriculum to train new Garden Stewards, including a series of mini-video tutorials on native and climate-appropriate plants and other engaging gardening topics. The videos will be posted throughout the first week of May on the [Plant It Forward online hub](#). Participants are invited to pick up a free narrow leaf milkweed plant or pomegranate sapling at the Balboa Park Visitors Center on select days and times (details below).

At-home participants are encouraged to do their own part to protect and renew natural habitats and landscapes through planting native species to attract pollinators, removing invasive species, composting, and using best water conservation practices in their yards. While learning about garden stewardship through the virtual event’s videos and hands-on engagement, participants can also share their own images, stories, and garden tips on social media with the hashtag #plantitforward.

Plants are available for pickup on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last (limit one plant per household) during the following times at the specified locations:

- **May 5, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**, Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama
- **May 7, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**, inside Balboa Park Visitors Center (ask at desk) or at Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama

- **May 8, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.**, Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama

First launched in 2019 to celebrate the invaluable horticultural contributions Kate Sessions made to Balboa Park, *Plant It Forward 2021* is timed to commemorate the First Annual Flower Festival on May 8, 1888, organized by Kate Sessions, to raise funds for a new building for the Woman’s Home Association in Balboa Park.

This year’s virtual installment of *Plant It Forward* is also designed to inspire garden stewardship throughout San Diego in conjunction with the launch of the Conservancy’s Garden Stewards initiative. The new Balboa Park Garden Stewards are a corps of specially trained volunteers who assist the city’s Parks and Recreation department in maintaining the park’s 18 public gardens with routine gardening tasks, while also serving as garden docents.

Plant It Forward 2021 is presented in partnership with Friends of Balboa Park and made possible by an SDG&E Environmental Champions grant. For more information, visit <https://balboaparkconservancy.org/plant-it-forward-2021/>

About Friends of Balboa Park

Friends of Balboa Park is a nonprofit that champions and enhances the park by connecting the philanthropic community to Balboa Park. The group has spearheaded major capital improvement initiatives throughout Balboa Park, including purchase and operation of the historic Balboa Park Carousel, restoration of the historic gate houses and Lily Pond, construction of the Morton Bay Fig Tree Platform, upgraded carillon speakers in the California Tower, [Adopt-A-Plot](#) program, [dedicated](#) benches and trees, and other programs that facilitate the community’s involvement in the enhancement of Balboa Park.

About the Balboa Park Conservancy

The Balboa Park Conservancy provides expertise, advocacy, and resources to envision, enhance, and sustain Balboa Park for all visitors in partnership with the City of San Diego and in collaboration with other organizations in the Park and the community. The Conservancy manages and maintains the House of Hospitality and operates the Balboa Park Visitors Center, serving more than 500,000 visitors annually.

Plant It Forward 2021. Thank you to our sponsors.



#