Mediterranean Muses

Gardens of San Diego

With Pacific Horticulture | April 7-13, 2027



Discover San Diego, one garden at a time

Step beyond the garden gate into a Southern California spring. Join Pacific Horticulture for five days of thoughtfully arranged garden and farm visits, from intimate private landscapes and exuberant tropical collections to regenerative farms and the iconic gardens of Balboa Park. Along the way, meet the people whose creativity and care make these places flourish, share memorable meals, and discover fresh inspiration for gardening in a Mediterranean climate.



Photo: A Growing Passion / KPBS

Meet your tour ambassador: Nan Sterman

Botanist, educator, author, garden designer, journalist, and television personality, Nan brings a passion for plants and sustainable gardening to every visit. A Pacific Horticulture board member, she will accompany the group throughout the included gardens, nurseries, and farms, adding her horticultural insight alongside the gardeners who know them best.

Your home for six nights: Hotel Indigo, Del Mar (or similar).
Tour facilitator: Shannon Cummins, Sterling Tours LTD
shannon@sterlingtoursltd.com | 619-299-3010

Welcome to the coast

Wednesday, April 7 | Day 1



Arrival & hotel check-in

Guests will make their own way to the hotel via taxi or rideshare service. The tour officially begins upon hotel check-in. Shannon of Sterling Tours will be onsite to ensure a smooth check-in process.

Welcome dinner with Nan Sterman

Enjoy a welcome dinner with wine, meet Nan and your fellow travelers, and look ahead to the gardens, farms, and shared discoveries of the coming days.

Balboa Park & private garden discoveries

Thursday, April 8 | Day 2



Balboa Park Botanical Building & Central Gardens

Begin the morning at one of San Diego's most iconic horticultural destinations. The Botanical Building and surrounding gardens showcase a diverse collection of tropical plants, seasonal displays, and beautifully maintained landscapes within the historic setting of Balboa Park. The Botanical Building in Balboa Park, is a historic 1915 landmark, quite recently it has had a massive structural revitalization. Because decades of weather took a toll on the structure, crews completely reconstructed its open-air redwood shell and steel framing. Nan Sterman served as the lead plant and interior garden designer for the Balboa Park Botanical Building renovation. Her involvement included creating the comprehensive plant list, designing the layout for the indoor plant beds, and curating an "otherworldly" selection of plants. What a treat to be led through the park today by Nan.

Specialty Produce Private Tour

Enjoy a private tour through one of Southern California's premier specialty food suppliers. Discover unusual produce, seasonal ingredients, and the connection between agriculture and culinary culture.

Sunset Cliffs Private Garden Hosted Lunch

Enjoy lunch in private garden setting, offering a welcoming atmosphere and a chance to appreciate a personally curated landscape designed for both beauty and enjoyment.

Rebecca Long Private Garden

Visit a thoughtfully designed private home garden featuring personalized plant selections, artistic elements, and creative use of space that reflects the owner's gardening philosophy and style.

Point Loma Native Plant Garden

Explore a garden dedicated to California native plants and sustainable landscape practices. The garden highlights species adapted to the region's climate while supporting local wildlife and pollinators.

Coastal gardens & farm-to-table inspiration

Friday, April 9 | Day 3



Steve Root Garden

Visit a distinctive private landscape reflecting years of gardening passion, plant collecting, and individual design character. The garden of Steve Root is a gorgeous example of climate-appropriate, sustainable residential landscaping. Designed and executed in collaboration with influential horticultural authority and designer Nan Sterman (host of the Emmy-winning show A Growing Passion), the property is deliberately styled to showcase how stunning a garden can look when tailored specifically to Southern California's arid climate.

Rob Friedman's Garden

Experience another unique private home garden where creative plant combinations and thoughtful design create an engaging environment.

Fox Point Farms Lunch & Tour

Enjoy lunch and a guided tour of this innovative farm-centered community space integrating agriculture, sustainability, and local food production. Time for an optional local brew tasting for those guests who wish to partake too. We will return to our hotel this afternoon for some free beach or shopping time.

Tropical treasures & regenerative growing

Saturday, April 10 | Day 4



Bird Rock Tropicals - Hosted by Pam Hyatt

Visit an impressive tropical collection featuring vibrant foliage, unusual plant varieties, and plants suited to Southern California's climate. This visit is hosted by Pam.

Julian Duval Garden

Enjoy a visit to a private garden showcasing personalized design and a diverse range of horticultural interests.

Sand n' Straw Regenerative Farm Tour & Lunch

Tour this community-focused farm and learn about sustainable agriculture and their regenerative practices.

Ronee Nicholson Kozlowski Garden

Conclude the day with a visit to another private garden filled with gorgeous bromeliads and many varieties of tropical plants that love San Diego's coastal climate.

Where gardens, art & history meet

Sunday, April 11 | Day 5



Betsy Schulz Art Studio

Visit a charming art studio featuring a private presentation by Betsy Schulz. Working with hand-sculpted tiles and found objects, she includes poems, historic information, and captions pressed into clay with antique letterpress letters or silk-screened as glazes onto tiles and glass. Her work is highly detailed, with many layers of words, imagery, and texture.

Bobbi Hirschkoff Garden Lunch & Ceramic Art Studio

Enjoy a catered picnic box lunch surrounded by a peaceful garden setting. Bobbi Hirschkoff is a highly versatile, multi-disciplinary artist, and her two-acre garden functions as a dynamic, open-air gallery for her creations. Her artwork is heavily inspired by the natural world, infused with brilliant colors, light, and organic textures.

Angela Noble Garden

Visit a beautiful private garden in one of San Diego's historic neighborhoods, showcasing regional planting styles and personalized design elements. Angela Noble is heavily involved with the APLD San Diego District, where she plays a key role on their Communications Committee (managing email broadcasts and digital outreach) and actively participates in their regional and statewide programs. Her alignment with the APLD perfectly matches her focus on sustainable, design-forward landscaping. It bridges her professional background running her digital agency, with her deeply rooted dedication to ecological landcare and local habitat creation.

Scott & Jim's Garden

Experience a garden reflecting the architectural and horticultural character of a hillside garden. Passersby viewing Jim Bishop and Scott Borden's 1938 Spanish-Revival home from the street would never guess that a horticultural wonderland lies just beyond the front gate. The property covers nearly an acre, but the catch is its topography: the backyard drops a dizzying 100 feet straight down into a north-facing canyon. When the couple bought the estate, this sheer cliff was an impenetrable wilderness of overgrown eucalyptus, dense brush, and old construction debris. Today, it is a terraced, multi-level botanical masterpiece. https://mylifewithplants.com/

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

This evening, enjoy a walking tour through San Diego's historic Old Town, followed by free time for independent dinner exploration. Known as the "birthplace of California," Old Town San Diego is a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that preserves the region's transition from a Kumeyaay settlement to a Spanish presidio, a Mexican pueblo, and eventually an American frontier town. Visited by millions annually, it offers a distinct mix of living history, open-air museums, bustling artisan marketplaces, and celebrated Mexican dining.

Succulent landscapes & a farewell picnic

Monday, April 12 | Day 6



Patrick & Ron's Garden

Visit a welcoming private garden showcasing the owners' personal horticultural interests and landscape style. Located on a sunny, sloping half-acre hillside (in northern San Diego County), the home of Patrick Anderson is widely considered a legendary, world-class residential succulent garden.

Mountain Meadow Mushroom Farms

Next stop, we visit a fascinating, behind-the-scenes mushroom farm. Located in Escondido, this family- owned, organic farm offers guided tours where you can discover the science of mushroom cultivation, from composting to harvest, and take home fresh fungi!

Sage Hill Ranch Gardens Tour & Farewell Picnic

Perched in the backcountry hills of Escondido, California, Sage Hill Ranch Gardens is a premier boutique market farm dedicated to ecological food production. Orchestrated by head farmer Spencer, this half-acre property serves as a vibrant blueprint for how intensive, small-footprint agriculture can thrive while actively restoring the surrounding environment. Spencer rejects industrial farming norms in favor of natural systems. Our visit here today includes a tour and our final shared luncheon.

Wanda & Gary's Garden

On the return to Del Mar, enjoy a final private garden visit featuring mature landscapes and a personal approach to gardening. Cultivated from scratch over more than 25 years, this botanical sanctuary is a regular highlight on prestigious regional tours, including those hosted by the Cactus & Succulent Society of America (CSSA) and the San Diego Horticultural Society. The property represents a perfect division of labor: Wanda acts as the visionary head curator with an insatiable appetite for unique flora, while Gary acts as the master builder, fabricator, and daily caretaker who brings those design ideas to life.

Until next time

Tuesday, April 13 | Day 7

Following breakfast, guests will check out of the hotel and services conclude.

Tour cost & reservations

Pacific Horticulture members	**$3,895 per person**
Non-members	**$3,995 per person**
Single supplement	**$895**
Deposit to register	**$1,000 per person**

Land cost per guest, based on double occupancy. Consider joining Pacific Horticulture before registering: pacifichorticulture.org/membership-registration/

Included

6 nights and breakfast at Hotel Indigo, Del Mar, California (or similar). Coach services based on the present itinerary within a 12-hour day (e.g. 9am-9pm). 5 lunches, a welcome dinner and a farewell picnic. All garden entrance fees and services as stated in the itinerary. A $350 patronage for Pacific Horticulture. Expert botanist and tour ambassador Nan Sterman. Tour facilitator/escort Shannon Cummins of Sterling Tours LTD.

Not included

Airfare; travel insurance; tips for the host, Old Town San Diego tour guide, and driver. A collection for Nan and the driver, with a card to sign, will be circulated before the tour ends. For air assistance (for a fee), contact Leslie.garber@cadencetravel.com. Suggested travel insurance: www.travelguard.com.

How to reserve

Complete the booking form at www.sterlingtours.com or send in a form. Your reservation is not complete until the $1,000 per-person deposit is received. Please allow at least 48 hours for confirmation of your form and a secure Stripe Checkout deposit link. Deposits may also be paid by check. Email Shannon@sterlingtoursltd.com for the secure PO Box address or with questions.

This information is important, please read it carefully. Submission of an online or printed Booking Form along with payment of required trip deposit indicates you have read and expressly agree to these Terms and Conditions. If there is something that you do not understand please ask us about it!

Reservations and Payments – A non-refundable deposit of $ 1000 per person is required at the time of booking. Written confirmation will be provided upon receipt of deposit. Balance of payment will be due 90 days before departure.

Number of Guests - A maximum of 20 guests per tour can be accommodated. A minimum of 16 guests are required to operate the tour at the quoted price. The purchase of non-refundable services outside of tour itinerary (such as airline tickets) before a minimum number of guests have registered is at the sole risk and expense of the guest. We will advise when to proceed to book your air.

Cancellations – All cancellations must be made in writing. As noted, final payment is due 90 days prior to departure and is non-refundable. We strongly recommend that you purchase appropriate cancellation insurance. Hotel – Hotel shown on your itinerary. Sterling Tours reserves the right to change any hotel through any circumstance---the substitute will be of equal or higher quality.

Scheduled Activities – Every effort will be made to provide such services as listed, but where unavoidable circumstances necessitate changes, the best substitute alternatives will be made at the discretion of Sterling Tours, the local escort, or the ground operator without financial compensation to tour members.

Service Fees & Taxes – Today there are frequent service charges and taxes imposed by hotels, suppliers, and governments. These fees and taxes are included to the extent possible, but where pre-payment is not allowed the amounts concerned must be paid locally by tour members.

Travel Documents – If coming in internationally **,** a passport valid for at least 6 months after the last date of this tour is required for this trip.

Baggage – Sterling is not responsible for loss, theft or damage to your baggage---travel insurance is strongly recommended to protect against loss. Guests are responsible for airline and government-imposed baggage regulations and fees.

Exclusions – Your arrangements exclude airfare, passports, visas, excess baggage charges, items of a personal nature such as laundry, communication expenses, room service, meals not specified in your itinerary, optional sightseeing and other excursions, and any items not listed in your documents.

Travel and Trip Cancellation Insurance – We strongly recommend that you purchase Travel Insurance.

Physical Capabilities - The tour includes a **SIGNIFICANT** amount of walking, **FREQUENT** use of stairs and steeply sloped pathways on hillside gardens, on uneven or unpaved surfaces. Some of the places we will be visiting can only be seen on foot with no other access possible. Guests with limited mobility **MUST** consult with Sterling prior to tour registration. Please be honest with your abilities. Sterling Tours LTD, Pacific Horticulture and the Gardens included will not be responsible for your dishonesty or injuries.

Responsibility Clause – Sterling Tours – the "Operator", CEO Michael Lee, Planner and Facilitator Shannon Cummins, Tour Ambassador/ Host Nan Sterman of Pacific Horticulture, and/or the, guides, gardeners, operators or representatives, act only as agents for the various companies involved in providing services. They assume no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any means of conveyance which may be used either whole or in part in the performance of its duty to the passenger. Likewise they will not be responsible for any act, error or omission or for any personal injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, irregularity

or inconvenience which may be occasioned by reason of any defect in any vehicles, or through any act, neglect or default, or any company or person engaged in carrying out the purpose for which tickets or coupons are issued, whether negligent or not, including, but not limited to, any act of God, terrorism or war. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort or well-being of passengers, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the Operator. The right is reserved to withdraw from any or all tours that should be conditionally warranted, also to decline to accept or retain passengers as members of the tour. Legal proceedings against the Operator may be instituted only in a State or Federal Court within the County of San Diego, County of Riverside, State of California, and any claim involved in such proceedings shall be decided in the County of San Diego, State of California. Any legal proceedings against the Operator must commence within one year following the date of tour completion. Neither the Operator, nor Pacific Horticulture shall in any case be liable for compensatory damages and you hereby waive any right to punitive damages.

Sterling Tours, Ltd

A California Corporation

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Please sign that you have read and understand our TERMS AND CONDITIONS and return to us with your booking form.

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