

THE AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY'S 34th ANNUAL NCYGS

NCYGS
PASADENA 26



AMERICAN
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

THE FUTURE OF YOUTH GARDENING

The 34th Annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium will take place in Pasadena, California, from Monday, July 13, to Thursday, July 16, 2026.

This year's theme is "The Future of Youth Gardening." The symposium will include interactive workshops, expert keynotes, engaging garden visits, and networking opportunities. Come for the fun and take back skills, ideas, contacts, and resources to take back to your own community!

Symposium Headquarters Pasadena Convention Center

Located 10 miles from downtown Los Angeles at 300 E Green Street in Pasadena, the Pasadena Convention Center is a campus-style complex offering 130,000 square feet of space for meetings and events. The Conference Building features two floors of well-appointed meeting rooms. The Convention Center is LEED Gold Certified and GBAC Star Accredited.



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

	MORNING	LUNCH	AFTERNOON
MONDAY, JULY 13 (PRE-SYMPOSIUM TRIP)	Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden	Lunch at Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden	Descanso Gardens
TUESDAY, JULY 14	Block A Sessions, Opening Keynote	Lunch at Pasadena Convention Center	Awards, Block B Sessions, Block C Sessions
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 (FIELD TRIP)	Tours of Youth-Focused Gardens at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens	Lunch at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens	Explore The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens
THURSDAY, JULY 16	Block D Sessions, Closing Keynote	Lunch at Pasadena Convention Center	Block E Sessions, Block F Sessions

MOBILE WEBSITE & MESSAGING

The AHS NCYGS webpage is mobile-compatible for on-the-go use during the symposium. Registrants will also be provided at check-in with a code to sign up for event text alerts. These texts provide important real-time updates from the event organizer throughout the symposium.

GET SOCIAL

Tag your posts with #NCYGS2026 on social media to follow along and share your favorite symposium moments!



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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

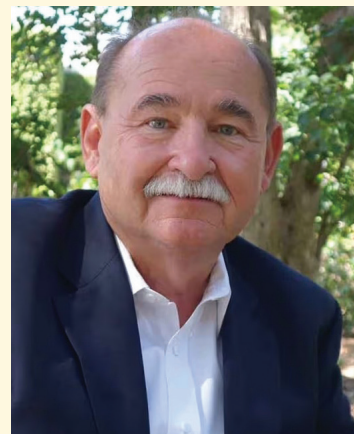
Bari Applebaum

Founder and
Executive Director,
Chicas Verdes



Dr. James Folsom

AHS board member,
AHS Liberty Hyde
Bailey Medal recipient,
and garden director
emeritus, The
Huntington



The Future of Youth Gardening: Solving Real World Problems

Chicas Verdes is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering young people to recognize their connection to nature, their communities, and themselves. It is the youth gardening partner of LA2050, a community-guided initiative driving and tracking progress toward a shared vision for the future of Los Angeles.

Founding Chicas Verdes director Bari Applebaum will share how the organization's work contributes to the LA2050 vision. Before working in the nonprofit sector, Applebaum taught chemistry and health at Manual Arts High School, where she served as Magnet Program Lead Teacher and Science Department Chair. In partnership with her students at the school, she co-founded Chicas Verdes, which has since grown from a student-led garden initiative into a multi-site nonprofit serving youth across the city.

Applebaum will discuss Chicas Verdes's models for community collaboration and horticultural job training, as well as the organization's new School Garden Challenge, which provides funding, training, curriculum, materials, and mentorship to create impactful, innovative, and sustainable school gardens in Los Angeles. She is also now leading the development of a national model to help schools launch and sustain garden-based education and food access programs across the country.

Applebaum holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and environmental studies from the University of Wisconsin and a Master's degree in Secondary Education from Johns Hopkins University.

The Future of Youth Gardening: Plant Education in the Age of TikTok

Dr. James Folsom will share his experiences with youth gardening over the course of his career, from his creation of The Huntington's renowned educational gardens to his current engagement with hundreds of thousands of learners on social media. He will note trends, offer insights, and posit the field's next steps for engaging youth with gardening.

Folsom served as Director of the Botanical Gardens at The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens for 35 years, where he oversaw more than a dozen thematic gardens covering 130 acres of the Huntington's 207-acre grounds.

Some of the most notable additions to the garden under Folsom's tenure include a botanical research and education facility in 2001, the Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden in 2004, the Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science in 2005, the Chinese Garden in 2008, the James P. Folsom Experimental Ranch Garden in 2010, as well as the renovation and expansion of the Japanese Garden in 2012.

Folsom has authored numerous research papers, articles, and reports in both scientific and popular publications, and he has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Liberty Hyde Bailey Medal from the American Horticultural Society in 2020.

In his retirement, Folsom continues to contribute to the horticultural field through his service on the American Horticultural Society's board and through his highly popular TikTok channel (botanyincontext), which uses social media to engage people around the world in the joy of plant study.

HIGHLIGHTS

JULIA RAPPAPORT GROWING GARDENERS ENDOWMENT

The Julia Rappaport Growing Gardeners Endowment offers annual grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for educators to initiate or enhance gardening projects in schools and communities. This program aims to provide youth with hands-on gardening experiences to inspire a lifelong passion for gardening, the natural world, and horticulture. The 2025 Rappaport grant recipient was Congress Park School in Brookfield, IL. The 2026 award winner will be announced at the 2026 symposium. This grant is supported by a donation from Valerie Rappaport and Thomas Byrd and their family in honor of Valerie's mother.

GROWING GOOD KIDS BOOK AWARDS

The recipients of the 2026 Growing Good Kids — Excellence in Children's Literature awards will be announced Tuesday after lunch. Presented jointly by the National Junior Master Gardener Program and the American Horticultural Society, these awards recognize engaging and inspiring works of plant-, garden-, and ecology-themed children's literature. The Growing Good Kids — Excellence in Children's Literature awards are presented annually to qualifying titles published in the previous year.

JANE L. TAYLOR AWARD RECIPIENTS: Sam Ullery and Lisa Whittlesey

Sam Ullery is the School Garden Specialist at the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education. With a



decade of classroom teaching experience as his foundation, Ullery has dedicated the past 13 years to supporting garden programs at over 100 Washington, D.C., school gardens by offering technical support, conducting trainings, and providing resources and connections with local organizations. Ullery organizes and leads key projects such as

DC School Garden Week, Shared Roots, Summer Institute for Garden-Based Teaching, and Educator Outdoor Learning Gatherings. He created the engagement tracking tool, Thriving District School Gardens Storymap, which provides an overview of school garden successes.

Lisa Whittlesey is the Senior Extension Program Specialist at Texas A&M University, where she lectures



for agriculture, floral design, and socio-horticulture classes and creates educational horticulture segments for the local television show, Weekend Gardener. Whittlesey is also Director of the International Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Program, which operates in all 50 states and which she has expanded through collaborative partnerships with the Borlaug

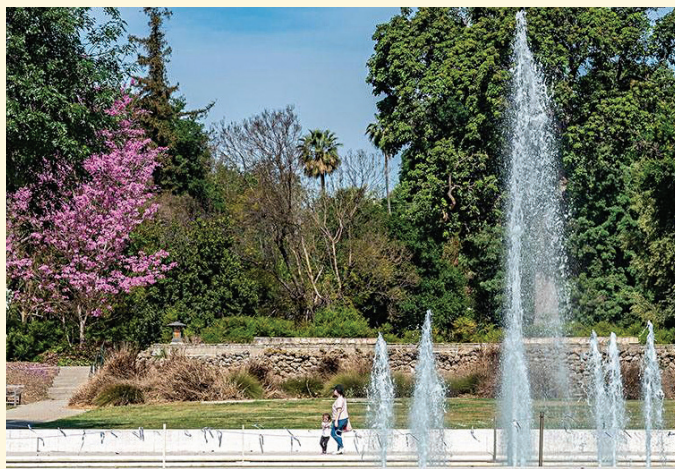
Institute for International Agriculture, JMG Korea, and US Military and National Guard projects. During her education career spanning over three decades, Whittlesey has authored and implemented 12 award-winning youth environmental curricula, such as JMG's "Learn, Grow, Eat & GO" and the Food for Education and Child Nutrition Initiative with the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Education.

PRE-SYMPOSIUM OPPORTUNITY

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden and Descanso Gardens

Monday, July 13, 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Additional registration required. Transportation provided to/from Hyatt Place Pasadena. Lunch provided.



Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden

The Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden is a unique 127-acre botanical garden and historical site located in the heart of the historic Rancho Santa Anita in the city of Arcadia. The Arboretum cultivates natural, horticultural, and historic resources for learning, enjoyment, and inspiration. Features include aquatic gardens, a waterwise garden, herbs, perennials, roses, and landscapes of native California plants. Attendees will have the opportunity to observe the Garden Adventures summer camp and to participate in sample programs of the Arboretum's school experiences, led by Arboretum education staff.

Descanso Gardens

Descanso Gardens is a botanical garden, living museum, and urban oasis 20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles, sitting on 150 acres of cultivated and wild land nestled into a natural bowl by surrounding mountains. The Gardens' director of horticulture and education staff will lead the group through many paths and trails, verdant woodlands, lush gardens, and colorful native flowers. Features include roses, coast live oaks, waterwise plants, native California plants, camellias, lilacs, and a Japanese garden. While taking the specialized garden tour, attendees will learn about the Gardens' youth programs and the plans for the new children's garden.

FIELD EXPERIENCES

Wednesday, July 15

Consistently named as one of the world's top gardens, this year's field trip will explore The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in neighboring San Marino. With 130 acres, The Huntington is best known for its Rose Garden, Desert Garden, and Chinese and Japanese Gardens; however, the spectacular botanical collections also include an Australian garden, California garden, and Jungle garden, as well as herbs, palms, lilies, camellias, and subtropical plants.



Potager, The Kitchen Garden

This tour of The Huntington's newest garden will demonstrate plantings and activities perfect for school and community gardens. Created for hands-on youth engagement and education, the Potager (a garden where one traditionally grows vegetables for soup) helps children explore their food sources, soil health, nutrition, and sustainable small scale food production.

The Potager Garden seeks to replicate the bountiful kitchen garden the Huntington estate once relied on and get back to the property's agricultural roots. Dubbed the San Marino Ranch when Henry E. Huntington purchased the working farmstead in 1903, Huntington planted orange groves and was among the first in the state to farm avocados. He maintained a kitchen garden as well. The Potager Garden is the part of the 15-acre James P. Folsom Experimental Ranch Garden—part classroom, part research lab, and part community resource for an equitable food system. The Ranch includes some of Huntington's original orange groves, a heritage avocado orchard, and a food forest.

The Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden

This children's garden tour will inspire all our attendees, especially staff who work in public gardens. The Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden invites kids of all ages to splash in water, play among topiary animals, make music with pebbles, dance under rainbows, discover fairy doors, and hold the magic of magnetic forces in their hands. This whimsical garden is the perfect space for youngsters to explore the green world and develop a lifelong appreciation for nature. Huntington education staff will also show their themed activity stations where kids can get creative on a variety of craft projects..



The Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science

These exhibits will spark ideas for attendees who teach in classrooms and labs. The Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science houses interactive exhibits designed to engage children and families in a wonder-filled scientific exploration of plants. Living plants fill a 16,000-square-foot greenhouse that comprises three different habitats (a lowland

tropical rain forest, a cloud forest, and a carnivorous plant bog) and a plant lab devoted to experiment stations focusing on the parts of plants. The Plant Lab offers an entertaining, hands-on introduction to botany, including a plant petting zoo.



Exhibits are organized into six different groups: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, seeds, and spores. Visitors can design a leaf quilt using a variety of leaves and learn how to use scientific instruments including a refractometer, which measures the percentage of sugar in different nectars.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Monday July 13, 2026

Pre-Symposium Tour

Additional registration required. Transportation provided to/from Hyatt Place Pasadena. Lunch provided.

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Registration check-in at hotel for pre-symposium tour

9:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Pre-symposium tour

Evening open for dinner and exploring Pasadena

Tuesday July 14, 2026

Symposium Day 1

Pasadena Convention Center. Lunch provided.

8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Registration check-in at Pasadena Convention Center

9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Session Block A

11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Opening Keynote: Bari Applebaum

12 p.m. – 1 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Awards

2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Session Block B

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Session Block C

Evening open for dinner and exploring Pasadena

Session Block A

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the School Garden Sprout Lab: Design Thinking in the Garden	Zari St Jean	102
Track: In the Public Garden Tropical Treasures	Julie O'Bryan, Patti Berry	103
Track: In the Community Garden Monarchs on the Move	Mary Beth Cary, Susan Meyers	104
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future "Cover to Cover" on the Farm and in the Garden	Ginger Anderson, Tricia Betterly Jimena Espinoza	105

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Session Block B

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the Classroom Teaching Math in the Garden	Noel Cibulka	101
Track: In the School Garden Place-Based Literacy: Making Meaning in the Garden	Scott Morrison, Anna Keller	105
Track: In the Public Garden Cardboard Binoculars, Mud Kitchens, and Garden Exploration: Engaging Young Audiences at a University Botanic Garden	Shelley Mitchell	102
Track: In the Community Garden Design a Food Forest Garden	Cierra Arterberry	103
Track: Youth Gardening in Research Nature Based-Counseling Approaches in School Gardens	Dr. Jeff Cranmore	104
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future Getting Youth Excited about Plant Identification via Gamification	Mark Tancig, Valerie Stansly	107

Session Block C

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the School Garden Power in Partnerships: How America's Second Largest School District and Local Community Organizations Collaborate on Compost	Ann Dang, John Garside, Florence Simpson	107
Track: In the Public Garden (A) Expanding Outdoor Education to all Grades	Jessie Wingar	105
Track: In the Public Garden (B) Learning as We Grow: Adapting Youth Programs in Non-Permanent Learning Spaces	Michelle Dupar, Kate Sorensen, Linda Mank	101
Track: In the Community Garden Playscapes in Garden Areas	Crystal Gaudio	103
Track: Youth Gardening in Research Sowing the Seeds: Cultivating Teachers to Grow Vegetables and Vocabulary	Jennifer Stratton	102
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future Beyond Academic Boundaries: An Integrative Curriculum for Eco-Cultural Stewardship & Career	Sara Weaner Cooper	104



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday July 15, 2026

Symposium Day 2—Field Trip to The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens

Transportation provided to/from Hyatt Place Pasadena. Lunch and garden admission provided.

Attendees will be divided into three groups and will rotate between tours of The Huntington's Kitchen Garden, the Children's Garden, and the Conservatory.

9 a.m.	Bus Pick Up at Hotel
9:30 a.m – 9:45 a.m	Welcome from Gardens Director and Director Emeritus
10 a.m – 10:30 a.m	First Tour
10:45 a.m – 11:15 a.m	Second Tour
11:30 a.m – 12 p.m	Third Tour
12 p.m – 1:15 p.m	Lunch
1:30 p.m – 4:45 p.m	Exploration Time
4:45 p.m	Depart for Hotel

Evening open for dinner and exploring Pasadena

Thursday July 16, 2026

Symposium Day 3

Pasadena Convention Center. Lunch provided.

8:45 a.m – 9:15 a.m.	Registration Check-in at Pasadena Convention Center
9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Session Block D
11 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Closing Keynote: Dr. James Folsom
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Session Block E
2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Session Block F



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Session Block D

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the School Garden No Time, No Money-How to Create a Garden for Young Children in Any Setting	Liz Scholl	105
Track: In the Public Garden Little Botanists, Big Discoveries: Teaching Plant Science with Joy!	Joy Burns, Elizabeth Overcash, Cathy Mack	102
Track: In the Community Garden Nature Journaling as a Learning Tool: Supporting Attention, Literacy, and Critical Thinking in Children	Linda Mank, Kate Sorenson, Michelle Dupar	101
Track: Youth Gardening in Research From Lunch Trash to Living Soil: Using Composting to Launch Youth Gardening	Jeannie Rodriguez	103
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future Beyond the Raised Bed: A Model for Farm-based Learning, Ag-Tech, and Strategic Partnerships	Dr. Travella Free, Khalifa Shareef Morgan Malone	104

Session Block E

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the School Garden Pulling Weeds and Sprouting Eager Learners: School Garden Lessons and Ambitions	Cassandra Espinoza, Michelle Fe Joyce	103
Track: In the Public Garden (A) Connections Through Hawaiian Ethnobotany: How Ethnobotany Can Be a Powerful Tool to Spark Intrigue in Our Local Environment	Shawn Garrard	105
Track: In the Public Garden (B) Exploration Without Limits: Reimagining Field Trip Design for Youth Education in Public Gardens	Briana Gonzalez, Rachel Sebastian	102
Track: In the Community Garden Farm to Feast: Growing, Cooking, and Connecting Youth to Local Food Systems	Jenna Jones	104
Track: Youth Gardening in Research Sow Smart: Planting Your Future Programs with Quality Books and Websites	Pam Hosimer	101
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future From One-Day Events to Year-Long Impact: Rethinking Youth Gardening Models	Cameron Anderson	107



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Session Block F

TITLE	PRESENTER	ROOM #
Track: In the School Garden Using the Therapeutic Horticulture Activities Database for Youth Programs: Expand Your Reach through Learning and Wellness	Elizabeth (Leah) Diehl	102
Track: In the Public Garden (A) Beyond Field Trips: Designing School District Partnerships that Extend Garden Learning	Sarah Thomas, Jill Mc Arther, Katia Ahmed	107
Track: In the Public Garden (B) Refreshing a Legacy Youth Program Through Reflection, Collaboration, and External Partnership	Kate Sorensen, Linda Mank Michelle Dupar	104
Track: In the Community Garden Growing Structures: Designing Trellises for Peas, Dramatic Play, and Physics Skills in Early Childhood Gardens	Anna Christiansen	105
Track: Youth Gardening in Research Tasting Together: Introducing Young Children to New Foods	Marielle Hampton	103
Track: Youth Gardening for the Future Developing an Entrepreneurial Classroom Through Hydroponics	Michael Craig	101



PASADENA INFORMATION

Welcome to sunny Pasadena, California, the City of Roses! Right on historic Route 66 and minutes from Los Angeles, Pasadena brims with luscious landscapes, historic buildings, and thriving businesses. This city is the cultural and population hub of the San Gabriel Valley, bordered by breathtaking mountains. As the home to major innovations such as the Tournament of Roses, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and California Institute of Technology, this vibrant town is an embodiment of this year's symposium theme, The Future of Youth Gardening.

The NCYGS hotel is the Hyatt Place Pasadena (399 E Green St, Pasadena, CA 91101). The hotel is convenient to historic Route 66 and local shops, eateries, and entertainment. The Pasadena Convention Center is steps away, directly across Green Street.

Pasadena Attractions:

Caltech
ArtCenter College of Design
Pasadena Playhouse
Norton Simon Museum
USC Pacific Asia Museum



Pasadena Restaurant Recommendations

BREAKFAST:

Alfred Coffee
Amara Chocolate and Coffee
Coffee and Plants
Hello You're Welcome
Home Brewed Bar

DINNER:

Aikan Sushi & Ramen
Anaya's Restaurant
Bobby's Place
Boiling Point Concept
Kwan Kitchen
786 Degrees Pizza
The Original Tops

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