
Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Backcountry Garden

Santa Barbara, California



A unique outdoor space will engage visitors in an inspiring native backcountry landscape while also enhancing the site's ecological function and educational value.

SERVICES

Conservation Planning
Ecological Restoration

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (SBBG) is a 78-acre living museum designed entirely with plants indigenous to California. Its gardens exemplify the region's diverse botanical beauty. SBBG's Backcountry Garden will be a stimulating and wild space where children and other visitors can discover, learn about, and connect with the region's rich, natural surroundings through exploration and play.

As the ecological expert on a design team led by Brightview Design Works, Biohabitats analyzed and integrated the site's ecological elements and performance metrics into the overall garden design. The ecological analysis included a rapid field assessment to identify the site's potential to regenerate ecosystem diversity and provide linkage to adjacent or nearby open areas, as well as identify existing threats, constraints, and vulnerabilities. Biohabitats also participated in a workshop to further examine the site and listen to the input of stakeholders. Biohabitats then developed a site inventory plan to capture key ecological areas and existing and potential ecosystem services that could be provided by the site. Informed by the analysis, Biohabitats recommend ecological design elements such as habitat and plant alliances appropriate zoning, ethnobotanical attributes, soil erosion management and stormwater appropriate strategies, and ecological literacy concepts integrated to plan programming.

The resulting concept and schematic design, which celebrates the ecology, senses and experience of native backcountry landscape, is intended to spark a formative connection between the visitor and the natural world.