

Ferns and Cycads here, such as the Sago Palm (*Cycas revoluta*), Cardboard Plant (*Zamia pumila*) and Dinosaur Food (*Gunnera tinctoria*) are among the oldest living plants from prehistoric times.

Numerous times during the operating season you can observe Monarch Butterflies changing from caterpillars to butterflies in our Monarch Butterfly Exhibit. We feed and care for these lovely creatures during their entire life and up until we release them in the garden. Ask the Docent on duty for more information on our Monarch Butterflies.

Camellia Garden

Camellia sasanqua, which bloom in the fall and winter, are grafted to *Camellia japonica* which bloom during late winter and spring. These broad-leafed evergreens are used in a variety ways, including espaliers or ground covers. They vary in form from spreading and vine-like to upright and densely bushy. The flowers are delicate with a slight fragrance. 'Yuletide' variety camellias are on the south side of the walkway. They produce a single, red flower in the winter.

In this Garden also notice the many Laceleaf Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) trees interspersed with the Camellias and the lone Persimmon (*Ebenaceae*) tree at the center of the Garden near the Lily Pond.

Uncle John's and Bonfante's Splash Garden

A rose is a rose is a rose...well, not just any rose. We have roses named after presidents*, artists* and others that have all taken root along the edge of Uncle John's Terrace.

Dawn Redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) were thought to be extinct for thousands of years. This plant was found growing in a few isolated sites in its native China. It reaches about 90' tall and 20' wide at about age 40. Chinese Customs refused to allow the seed of this tree to be taken out of the country. The men who discovered it convinced authorities it was an "antique" tree. Since antiques could be taken out of the country, the seeds were brought to California and the tree has been propagated ever since.

Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia lythraceae*) trees and shrubs are satisfactory plants for hot summer regions. They produce showy summer flowers, good-looking bark and brilliant fall color.

Pinnacles Rock Maze

Enjoy the frolicking bear and squirrel topiaries from below or observe the structure of the maze from above via the walkway. Notice the Smoke Trees (*Cotinus coggygria*). These unusual and colorful trees get their name from dramatic puffs of "smoke" which develop from fading flowers. The puffs of smoke come from elongated stalks clothed in a profusion of fuzzy lavender-pink hairs. Leaves change in fall taking on colors ranging from yellow to orange red. This plant enjoys poor or rocky soil and stress.

Mimosa (*Albizia fabaceae*) trees have twice-divided, finely textured foliage and powder-puff flowers that are attractive to birds. This tree will grow quickly to 40' tall with a canopy that spreads to 80'. It has ferny, yellowish-green leaves that are light sensitive and fold at night. Fluffy pink flowers similar to pincushions bloom in summer.

Villa Pasta & Pizza

Outside this restaurant observe New Zealand Flax (*Phormium agavaceae*). It has sword-like evergreen leaves that grow in a fan pattern and variegated leaves that intensify in color in cold weather. Branched clusters of tubular flowers appear in late spring or early summer.

Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*) bushes are noted for crooked branches and smooth red to purple bark. Everyone has two parents, but the *Arbutus marina* trees, opposite Villa Pasta & Pizza and interspersed with the Manzanita, actually has three parents. For more information about these trees go to Information, Please! and ask for *The Arbutus Marina Story*.

Hall's Mercantile

The American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentals*) trees between Hall's and Sugar Plum Farm are "pollarded" to create the knobs on the trees that give them an interesting look. Next to Sugar Plum, on the left on both sides of the train bridge, notice the five redwood trees. They were saved in July 1986 when a bulldozer's bite would have knocked them down to make room for an addition to a museum in Santa Clara.

Sycamore Bridge

Traveling across the bridge under the canopy of the American Sycamore trees, enjoy the overview of Claudia's Garden. There is also an entrance to this Garden from the bridge. At the end on the right near the train bridge is a Magnolia (*Magnoliaceae*) tree that used to belong to an uncle of one of our Docents.

Dixie Cup Plaza and the Exit

The Dixie Cup tree topiaries are Holly Oak (*Quercus ilex*). Every other year they are pruned using specially made steel frames to ensure they keep their shapes. At other times, they are pruned freehand. These are the largest topiaries in the park.

Other trees next to the parking lot include Tulip trees (*liriodendron tulipifera*), Dwarf Magnolias and multi-trunk Crape Myrtles.

There over 200 topiaries in the entire park. Many can be found near Lakeside Amphitheater and along the edges of the lake. Did you see the man riding the elephant and the baby elephant next to its mother? The best place to see them is from the dock at the Paddle Boat ride.

**We hope you enjoyed our horticultural tour of the Park! The names of the roses you are looking for at the Rose Walk are 'Tournament of Roses' and 'Gold Medal'. The roses at Uncle John's Terrace are 'John F. Kennedy' and 'Michelangelo'.*

Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park
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Gardens Tour




Gilroy
GARDENS
Family Theme Park
Created & Built by Michael Bonfante

The tour begins at Sugar Plum Farm in the Entry Plaza

(near green diamond "C" on Park Map)

Passing Sugar Plum Farm and continuing on the main path note the Japanese Blueberry (*Elaeocarpus decipiens*) trees along the side of the restaurant. These trees will grow to an eventual size of 60' high, 30' wide. They are so named because they have fragrant, small white blossoms in summer, followed by dark blue berries. All trees on the main path have been planted in such a way that a different tree is in bloom every 2-3 weeks.

Artichoke Dip

Located in the center of this ride is a Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). This is the only tree in the Park that was left in its original location.

Garlic Twirl

While standing in the line for this ride notice the over 100-year old Olive (*Olea europaea*) trees that were moved from Morgan Hill and the grape arbor in the back of the ride.

Rose Walk

Many varieties of roses can be seen as you continue along the main path. The roses are fertilized, watered and pruned regularly in order to keep them blooming throughout the season. Try to find the rose with the same name as a New Year's Day parade* or one named after an award given at the Olympics*. And did you notice the giant giraffe topiary?

Apple & Worm

About 3" to 4" in from the ground are pink Breath of Heaven (*Coleonema pulchrum*) which bloom in early spring. After the blossoms have fallen, the leaves give off a lovely scent when they are brushed. Southern Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) trees are growing along the walkway from the Artichoke Dip ride all the way to Spillway Bridge, which is just before the South County Backroads car ride.

Rainbow Garden and Round Boat Ride

Entering the queue line, see the lacy bamboo on the left, followed by several *Xylosma congestum* trees. *Xylosma* are usually shrubs, but they have been trained to a single-trunked tree. A clump of Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and colorful Impatiens provide the first splash of annual color, followed by Asparagus Ferns (*Asparagus sprengeri*) which produce small red berries. Opposite are some Japanese Aucuba (*Aucuba japonica*) with its handsome spotted leaves. Tall, graceful Evergreen Dogwood (*Cornus capitata*) with its large 4-petaled white flowers provide a pretty screen. Next are colorful Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*) bushes which are deciduous. Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) is on the right. Rounding the corner notice the graceful Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*) with its handsome peeling bark.

As your boat begins to float it will pass more *Xylosma* trees, cotoneaster and some topiary swans. Fountain Butterfly Bushes (*Buddleia alternifolia*) with their graceful arching blue blooms

provide a splash of color after the Empress Trees (*Paulownia tomentosa*) no longer bloom. A good time to see the Empress Tree in bloom is in April and May. A lovely Dwarf Birch (*Betula*) is evident with its tiny leaves and gently arching branches.

Next is your first view of Coyote Lake. Watch for the bee topiaries, then a splash of bright Nasturtiums (*Tropaeolum*). Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*) and Bamboo peek out and more topiary are visible. Horsetail is commonly called Miner's Scrub Brush because they used them to scrub their pots and pans. Notice the Hardy Geranium Cranesbill (*Geranium 'Johnson's Blue'*) and Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) which was used by ancient Egyptians to make paper.

Hear the birds chirp, see a dolphin jumping through a hoop topiary on the left and the tall Honey Bush (*Melianthus major*) shrubs with their attractive pale green foliage. On the right is Ornamental Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) with its bright orange blooms.

Bright Alstroemeria blooms nod their heads as the boat passes by white, yellow and orange Iceland Poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*) surrounded by plants that provide seasonal color. The ride ends at the rock garden on the left, a topiary bear catching fish in the pond, Dwarf Weeping Birch trees and the final topiary, a majestic deer.

Claudia's Garden

This conifer garden was named after Michael Bonfante's wife, Claudia, and was the first garden completed in the Park. Be sure to take note of the new entrance off Sycamore Bridge and several annual flower beds.

Grafting is represented many times in this garden. One can see Green Spruce (*Picea*) grafted to Blue Spruce, green Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*) grafted to red, and prostrate juniper (*Juniperus*) grafted to form small trees. The Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) is represented here, although not a conifer. It is an ancient species, approximately 160 million years old, and is believed to be the link between conifers and deciduous trees. The veins on this tree go down instead of around.

Two species of Sequoia are here - the Giant Sequoia (*Sequoia gigantea*) and Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), which is a mutation of the California Redwood. Coast Redwoods are the tallest trees in the world reaching heights of approximately 364' and are the most planted tree in the Park.

Atlas Blue Cedars (*Cedrus atlantica*) are visible in their pendulous shape and also in their upright form trained in rings to encircle the tree or to form a design. Bi-color Yews (*Taxus*) and Cypress (*Cupressus*), pale green foliage of the Bald Cypress, varying shades of blue and green Spruce, Pine (*Pinus*), Fir (*Abies*) and Juniper (*Juniperus*) cover a wide range of hues to delight the eye.

Across the bridge, the Japanese Maple area begins. With over 40 of these beautiful trees, leaf varieties range from delicate and lacy to broad. To the left of the Maples are several Juniper topiaries trained into spiral trees, hearts and other shapes.

Holly Garden

Outside Skeels are California Pepper trees (*Schinus molle*). They quickly grow to 25-40' tall and wide. They are noted for their exfoliating bark.

Across the pathway, enter Holly Garden and follow the trail to see over 20 varieties of hollies displayed in shrub, tree and topiary forms. Not well known in the west, this Garden was created to show the diversity in leaf sizes and growth habits of various hollies. Holly ranges in size from 12 inches to full size trees at 75 feet. They can be either evergreen or deciduous, but all produce colorful berries in the fall.

Panoramic Wheel

The queue line at the Panoramic Wheel is surrounded entirely by Bamboo. There have been bamboo plants clocked at 47.6 inches of growth in a 24-hour period!

Monarch Garden

Named for the butterflies that frequent areas of Santa Cruz and Pacific Grove, this garden is a semi-tropical greenhouse with plants that need protection from the winter frost. Some of these plants can live on the coast or in the Santa Cruz Mountains that form the backdrop for the Park, but would freeze in Gilroy.

Located directly behind the Bob Kraemer Memorial Bench is an *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, more commonly called a Guanacaste or an Elephant Ear Tree, due to the curious shaped seedpods it forms.

The Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) are also grown as standards and their flowers last only one day. The Orchid tree (*Bauhinia*) is the first tree to bloom in the spring. Notice the Cockspur Coral trees (*Erythrina crista-galli*), the national tree of Argentina, on both sides of the train tracks.

Inside the greenhouse, notice a group of Palm trees of several species, including the Triangle Palm (*Neodypsis decaryi*). This tree has three flat sides and comes from the Mediterranean area.

The Mexican Fan Palms were originally grown in Arizona. There they had been planted from seed only five feet apart on 11 acres. During their 5th year a storm blew a number of the palms down. Because they had been planted close together, there was no way for them to be righted and they were left where they lay. Those that survived wound their way up looking for sunlight and resulted in the contorted shapes you see here presenting an interesting view as they twist over the train bridge.

Vines cover the columns supporting the structure and provide color and fragrance. The vines include Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*), Guinea Gold (*Hibbertia scandens*), Mandevilla, and Passion Vine (*Passiflora*). Gardenias, natal plum (*Carissa macrocarpa*), Plumeria trees and the flowers of fruit trees also add to the fragrance. Look down the hill to the left of the small waterfall for the Nile Tulip (*Markhamia lutea*) trees with their showy clusters of bright yellow flowers.

Seasonal color is introduced with three large groups of pedestals on which Impatiens are placed.

Several unusual trees can be seen including the Sausage tree (*Kigelia pinnata*), New Zealand Christmas tree (*Metrosideros excelsus*), Nile Tulip (*Markhamia lutea*) and Floss Silk tree (*Chorisia speciosa*). All bloom at different times providing a colorful background to the shorter plants.

A waterfall lined with lava rock from the Modoc Plateau cascades down one end of the greenhouse. Bird of Paradise (*Strelitzia*), Elephant's Ear (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*), Croton (*Codiaeum variegatum*) and Anthurium rim the stream and pond.