

Angel Gomez, Club Director of Sales

Be Alive!

– La Cañada Flintridge

Angel's Descanso Gardens



A small waterfall by the café.

Descanso Gardens
 1418 Descanso Dr. • La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011
 (818) 949-4200 • www.descansogardens.org

Highlights: Rose Garden, Japanese Garden, Oak Forest, Nature's Table, Camellia Collection, California Natives Garden, Lilac Garden, and of course the Enchanted Railroad.

Hours: Open daily except for Christmas. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (last entry is 4:30 p.m.).

Admission: General \$9. Senior/students, \$6. Children (5 to 12 years) \$4. Guild members and children under 5 are free.

Tram: The tram was damaged in a recent fire and is not currently operating.

Parking: Free

Directions: From downtown, take the 2 north and exit at Verdugo Boulevard. Turn right onto Verdugo Boulevard. Verdugo Hills Hospital will be on your right. Turn right at Descanso Drive. Entrance is on your right side.

Hello again! This month let's visit one of La Cañada Flintridge's most popular attractions, Descanso Gardens.

The Descanso Gardens is only 20 minutes away from downtown Los Angeles, and I have only heard great things about this wonderful urban retreat. The year-round natural beauty has a collection of seasonal horticultural displays. E. Manchester Boddy founded and preserved the area in 1953, with more than 160 acres of gardens, woodlands and chaparral for future generations to experience the natural beauty of Southern California. Descanso Gardens is visited by thousands of people every year.

Let's begin!

Here are descriptions of some of the many gardens at Descanso:

Rose Garden: This five-acre garden is amazing, with all the lovely scents and perfumes of America's most popular flower. There are more than 3,000 roses here representing centuries of horticultural history from around the world.

Japanese Garden: Enter this area and stroll through Zen gardens and walk under shaded paths along koi-filled streams. There is also a teahouse designed by Whitney Smith and built in 1966. Note: The teahouse is open limited hours during the summer.

Oak Forest: These trees are giants in the Descanso landscape; the trees are centuries old and are the reminder of a forest that once filled the region. There are 19 species of coast live oak native to California. The coast live oak is known as a keystone species, which means the tree supports the existence of hundreds of other species, which include birds, insects, fungi and mammals.

Nature's Table: The edible garden has fruit trees and seasonal vegetables along with herbs, edible flowers and other tasty greenery. The area is like a homemade garden, with lots of seasonal items, such as citrus, pomegranates, pumpkins, squash, corn and even apples. The design of Nature's Table came from students enrolled at Cal Poly Pomona's landscape architecture design studio.

Camellia Collection: In the 1930s and 1940s, publisher E. Manchester Boddy was building his estate, and he planted thousands of camellias in the shade of the oaks to provide blossoms for the cut-flower industry. Today, Descanso Gardens is home to North America's largest camellia collection. Camellias at Descanso bloom from early autumn to spring; best time is January and February.

California Native Garden: This eight-acre garden was designed and dedicated in 1959 by a core group of California native plant lovers who wanted to revive the interest in California flora education for all people, including school children in native plants.

Lilac Garden: Lilac Garden blossoms into life in spring from mid-March to the end of April. Since lilac flowers bloom in many shades of white, violet, blue, pink, magenta and purple, they have always been a part of beauty pageants for more than 50 years in Southern California. Note: Many lilacs in the Lilac

Grove come from Lavender Lady ancestry.

Enchanted Railroad: If you like small trains and have children, they will love to take a ride on the Enchanted Railroad. The 1/8 replica of a diesel train travels through sections of the gardens and is only \$3. The Enchanted Railroad operates from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays and Fridays; and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$3 each or \$25 for a book of 10 rides. Tickets can be purchased at the Visitor Center. Riders must be at least 30 inches tall and able to sit on their own.

Boddy House: High above the Descanso Gardens landscape, the historic Boddy House offers a glimpse of a glamorous past era. When E. Manchester Boddy, founder of Descanso Gardens, decided to make Rancho del Descanso his home, he commissioned prominent Los Angeles architect James E. Dolena to create the perfect house to raise his growing family. Boddy, publisher and owner of the former *Los Angeles Daily News*, purchased the land that is now Descanso Gardens in 1937. Dolena was known as the "architect to the stars." Dolena produced a 12,000-square-foot, two-story, 22-room mansion for the Boddy family and nestled it into a prominent hillside in the far southeast corner of the property, with a panoramic view of the San Gabriel Mountains. The Boddy House is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. To find out if the Boddy House is open prior to your visit, please phone the Visitor Center at (818) 949-4290.

Sturt Haaga Gallery: Opened in the fall of 2011, the gallery was created by restoring Boddy's original garage, located near the entrance to his house in the southeast corner of his property, and then doubling

it in size with the addition of a contemporary building nestled into the hillside behind the structure.

Gift Shop: The Gift Shop is open every day except Christmas. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Descanso Café: The Descanso Café, located near the Gardens entrance, is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Café, operated by the Patina Group, provides sandwiches and luncheon specials with outdoor seating.

Descanso Gardens was more than I expected, with many beautiful flowers and gorgeous trees everywhere. Visiting Descanso Gardens is relaxing and fun, too. The price is right, only \$9 for adults, and add another \$3 for the Enchanted Railroad, a must for all visitors. That is a whopping \$12. What a great deal! The gardens and all the tranquility are priceless.

So, if you just want to take a casual stroll or go out and take lots of gorgeous photographs, this is the place to visit. I will come back and revisit the gardens; not all flowers bloom at the same time, so there will always be something blooming in the next few days.

Take a look at the Descanso

Gardens Website and mark your calendar for its next festival. Along with the festivals there are guided tours, Toddler Treks, and music on the grounds, too. So, bring or invite your family and friends to a wonderful place, that's only 20 minutes away from downtown Los Angeles. See you there.

Don't forget to bring your camera and take plenty of photos and send them to me at agomez@cityemployeesclub.com. Bring water, snacks and maybe some sunscreen.

As always, be safe and Be Alive!

Angel



Kathy sits by the gorgeous flowers.



The Boddy House den and study room.