



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jennifer LeMay – Director of Marketing and Communications, SBCC Foundation
lemay@sbccfoundation.org (805) 730-4409

Jill Cloutier – PR Director, Explore Ecology
Jill@exploreecology.org (805) 884-0459 x13

Jaime Eschette – Director, Marketing and Communications, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
jeschette@sbbg.org

SBEE Garden Project Receives 2021 Golden Leaf Award from Santa Barbara Beautiful

Santa Barbara, CA – The SBEE (Santa Barbara Ecological and Edible) Garden Project partners are honored to receive a 2021 Golden Leaf Award from Santa Barbara Beautiful. One of three winners, the SBEE Garden Project is being recognized as an outstanding project that achieves community beautification while epitomizing the strength of collaboration as it supports biological and cultural diversity through ecological edible gardens. The project comprises a network of community gardens that promote biodiversity, increase access to locally grown food, and foster a connection between the community and natural ecosystems.

The SBEE Garden Project award recipients are: **Prof. Adam Green**—SBCC Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies; **Daniel Parra Hensel**—SBCC Instructor of Environmental Horticulture; **Lindsay Johnson**—Executive Director, Explore Ecology; **The Somos Semillas Program**, El Centro Santa Barbara; **Hugh Kelly**—Board President, Mesa Harmony Garden; **Dr. Denise Knapp**—Director of Conservation and Research, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden; **Jesse Gonzalez**—Club Director Westside Unit, United Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Barbara County; **Brad Smith**—Youth Drought Project; **Geoff Green**—CEO, Santa Barbara City College Foundation; **Rachel Johnson**—Chief Program Officer, Santa Barbara City College Foundation.

“The SBEE Garden Project is so grateful to have received a 2021 Golden Leaf Award from Santa Barbara Beautiful. Being recognized for contributing to the beauty of our community, while also educating that community about edible gardens and healthy ecosystems, is an honor,” said Rachel Johnson, Chief Program Officer for the SBCC Foundation. “The SBEE Garden Project is truly a collaborative effort, bringing together SBCC faculty and students, elementary school students and their families, researchers, educators, garden enthusiasts, and the community as a whole.”

Dr. Denise Knapp, Director of Conservation and Research at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, said, “The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is proud to work alongside our community partners on the SBEE Garden Project. The data that our SBCC intern has been collecting are showing that native plants are important for supporting insect pollinators. We're honored to see this work recognized by SB Beautiful and look forward to watching it flourish in years to come.”

“Explore Ecology is thrilled that the SBEE Garden Project was recognized by Santa Barbara Beautiful with a Golden Leaf Award,” said Lindsay Johnson, Executive Director of Explore Ecology. “We’re honored to be part of such an outstanding community project! We look forward to working together to grow our network of biodiverse permaculture gardens that will add such beauty to our community. Thank you, Santa Barbara Beautiful.”

SBEE Garden Project sites include the SBCC Permaculture Garden, Explore Ecology School Garden sites, Mesa Harmony Garden, the Westside location of United Boys and Girls Clubs of Santa Barbara County, El Centro (aka Santa Barbara Lower Westside Community Center), Youth Drought Project, and the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.

The broad array of sites and partners connect K-14 students, teachers, the public, and local researchers around the critical issues of ecological health, water conservation, restoration of native habitat and biological communities, and the production of local, healthy food. Earlier this year, it was announced that the project received a \$100,000 EPA Environmental Education Grant, the largest ever awarded to an organization in Santa Barbara County. For more information, visit the [SBEE Garden Project website](#).

About the SBCC Foundation

The SBCC Foundation has provided Santa Barbara City College with private philanthropic support since 1976, serving as the vehicle through which individuals and organizations may invest in the college and its students.

As an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization and partner to SBCC, the SBCC Foundation awards more than \$5 million annually for student success programs, scholarships, book grants, emergency funds, and other critical needs of the college. For more than four decades, the resources raised and managed by the SBCC Foundation have supported SBCC students as they prepare for careers, transfer to four-year universities, and pursue lifelong learning goals.

In 2016, the Foundation launched the SBCC Promise, offering all recent, local high school graduates the opportunity to attend SBCC full-time at no cost. The SBCC Promise relies entirely on private support and covers all required fees, books, and supplies for up to two years. To date, more than 5,000 local students have participated in the SBCC Promise. By removing financial barriers, the SBCC Promise ensures that SBCC's life-changing educational programs are fully accessible to all local students.

For more information, visit <http://www.sbccfoundation.org>

About Explore Ecology

Explore Ecology is an environmental education and arts nonprofit that educates over 38,000 children a year, inspiring them to engage with the natural world, think critically, and experience the value of environmental stewardship. Explore Ecology programs include the Art From Scrap Creative Reuse Store and Gallery, Watershed Resource Center, and School Gardens Program. For more information, visit ExploreEcology.org.

About Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

As the first botanic garden to focus exclusively on native plants, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has dedicated nearly a century of work to better understand the relationship between plants and people. Growing from 13 acres in 1926 to today's 78 acres, the grounds now include more than 5 miles of walking trails, an herbarium, seed bank, research labs, library, and a public native plant nursery. Amid the serene beauty of the Garden, teams of scientists, educators, and horticulturists remain committed to the original spirit of the organization's founders – conserve CA native plants and habitats to ensure they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

The garden is open to the public daily 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and offers a members-only hour 9-10 a.m. For more information, visit sbbg.org.

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Santa Barbara Ecological and Edible Garden Project





Photo: Casey Richart (Courtesy of Santa Barbara Botanic Garden)