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**THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS OPENS NEW
DESERT PLANT CONSERVATION CENTER**

PALM DESERT/INDIAN WELLS – (May 10, 2021) – In celebration of National Public Gardens Week, now through May 16, The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens announces the opening of its new Desert Plant Conservation Center, an exhibit of desert plants ranging from seed to mature plants.

The Center, nestled across from the pronghorn habitat in the North America section of the park, invites guests to explore and experience many of the plants they know and love from the park’s gardens and desert ecosystem all in a new setting.

“Plant conservation is an important pillar of The Living Desert’s mission and we are proud to showcase our efforts at this new center. Through the preservation and propagation of native plants we can further our work of desert conservation from the ground up,” said Dr. James Danoff-Burg, Director of Conservation. “Learning about the relationship between desert plants and animals is critical to helping the public understand the importance of conservation and their role to play.”

The Desert Plant Conservation Center serves a variety of functions. As an official Plant Rescue Center, designated by the US Department of Agriculture, the Center cares for plants that have been confiscated due to illegal wildlife trafficking, such as the popular saguaro cactus. As a propagation garden, many of the plants in the Center are being reproduced for habitat restoration projects like the desert pupfish habitat at Salt Creek, near the Salton Sea. The Center will also propagate other plant species to provide additional vegetation for recreating native habitats for The Living Desert’s animals, and provide nutritional resources, both of which are essential to their survival.

The Desert Plant Conservation Center is open to the public during park operating hours. The Living Desert is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with last admission at 4 p.m. Face coverings and advanced reservations are required. Tickets can be purchased online at LivingDesert.org.

About The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens:

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit, accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, ensuring the highest standards of all aspects of animal care, education, conservation, public service, and operations. The Zoo is active in conservation research, habitat protection, breeding programs and education initiatives around the world, as well as in its own community. The Zoo has been a top destination in the Palm Springs area for over 50 years. The Living Desert is located at 47900 Portola Ave, Palm Desert, CA 92260. For more information: (760) 346-5694 or visit livingdesert.org.

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