

The Virtual Gardener – Botanic Gardens, Route 2

By **Marrilyn Morris, MG**

The second half of the cyber-tour of Southern California gardens takes us all over the map, from the desert to Santa Catalina Island, with stops in Orange and San Diego counties along the way.

Our first stop is The Living Desert Wildlife and Botanical Park, located in Palm Desert (www.livingdesert.org). This large and attractive website presents information very clearly with beautiful photographs, beginning with the basics – hours and location – and continuing with garden maps and descriptions. What I like most about the site is its educational component – with good solid information presented on individual desert plant and animal species through a fact sheet format, as well as clear and concise explanations on endangered species conservation. On-line links will take you to the web sites of other zoos and museums involved in species conservation and eventually to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service site. Upcoming events include tours, jazz concerts, wildflower walks, and plant sales. Earth Day 2001, April 21, sounds like fun. Live entertainment, gardening demonstrations, and a plant give-away are just some of the planned activities.

Our next stop is at the Fullerton Arboretum, on the California State University campus (www.arboretum.fullerton.edu). This arboretum, open just over 20 years, features many types of plant collections, including Mediterranean, desert, historic citrus and avocado, a children's garden, and a palm grove. This no-frills web site is logically and pleasantly arranged and covers all the basics and more about the Arboretum. I was most impressed with their calendar of events, which indicates a strong commitment to community outreach. Saturday classes cover many gardening interests and age levels, including a week of kid's activities during spring break. Plant sales are held at the arboretum every weekend and primarily feature water-conserving shrubs and perennials suitable for our climate. The big event this spring is the Green Scene Garden Show on April 28 and 29, featuring a large plant sale, with exhibitors, speakers, and kid's gardening activities.

Next we head toward the coast to Encinitas and Quail Botanical Gardens (www.quailbotanicalgardens.org). This site covers the basics, but doesn't have anything to really grab the browser. The "Virtual Tour" attracted me with the promise of a look at specific sections of the garden, but turned out to be disappointing because each tour consisted merely of four or five labeled photos of plants. Some sections, however, were cleverly linked to related web sites, for example, the Bamboo Collection provided a link to the American Bamboo Society. The "Bloom in Focus" was out-of-date, featuring a plant that blooms in November, whereas the calendar of events ended in March, but did feature major events through June 2001. I was impressed with a description of plans to build a children's interactive garden, similar in design to one at Michigan State University.

Our last stop will take us across the Pacific to Santa Catalina Island and the Wrigley Memorial and Botanical Gardens (www.catalina.com/memorial.html). The site is very small and provides only the most basic background information on the monument to William Wrigley, Jr., the gardens and the hours and location. Even so, the brief descriptions of the garden's collections of desert plants and Channel Island endemics are enough to convince me that I need to plan a weekend get-away! Everything needed to plan just that (except the money, of course) is provided on the Catalina.com website. See you there!