Botanical Activity Guide

How Gardens Can Inspire Calm and Teach Life Lessons

School Programs and Partnerships

THE HUNTINGTON
Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens
This activity guide is based on seven of the 16 themed gardens at The Huntington.

**The Herb Garden** was established in the 1970s and is designed to showcase herbs in four general categories of use: Medicinal, Culinary/Flavor, Cosmetic and Perfume, and Dyes/Fibers.

**The Shakespeare Garden** features plants with a variety of textures and colors, a number of which were mentioned in Shakespeare's plays, that were grown during the 1500–1600s, or have connections to plants of the Renaissance.

**The Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science** is a 16,000-sq.-ft. greenhouse with a plant lab and three different plant habitats: a lowland tropical rainforest, a cloud forest, and a carnivorous plant bog.

**The Desert Garden**, established more than a century ago, hosts approximately 2,000 succulent species and highlights the ways plants have adapted to survive heat, drought, and animal predators.

**The Ranch Garden** is a teaching garden where gardening techniques are demonstrated and experimental concepts are tested. It is home to fruit trees, vegetables, perennial herbs, native shrubs, and reseeding annuals.

**The Brody California Garden** is filled with native and other Mediterranean-climate plants that can thrive in southern California. It is punctuated with fruit trees that reflect the estate's agricultural roots.

**The Rose Garden**, established in 1908 and a favorite of founders Henry and Arabella Huntington, showcases more than 3,000 individual rose plants and more than 1,200 different cultivated varieties.

Discover the gardens online at The Huntington's website. Additional resources and links provided at the end.

**Essential Questions:**
1. How are gardens also art?
2. What is adaptation? How do plants adapt to survive?
3. What can gardens teach us about our senses?
4. How can gardens be both beautiful and functional?

The following resources explore ways that students can interact with the gardens at The Huntington. Each activity provides students with an opportunity to enjoy a garden in a new way; e.g., garden organization, sensory inspiration, and environmental transformation. While the activities are designed for elementary school students, they can be adapted for middle and high school students.

**The Huntington Framework**

*Observe and Describe* – What do you see?

*Explain and Interpret* – What does it mean to you?

*Reason with Evidence* – What makes you think that?

*Wonder and Question* – What questions do you still have?
**Standards**

**Writing, Kindergarten:** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

**Language, Kindergarten:** Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

**Life Science, Kindergarten:** Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

**Earth and Space Science, Kindergarten:** Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.

**Earth and Space Science, Kindergarten:** Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.

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**Life Science, Grade 1:** Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.

**Physical Science, Grade 2:** Plan and conduct an investigation to describe and classify different kinds of materials by their observable properties.

**Life Science, Grade 2:** Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

**Earth and Space Science, Grade 2:** Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land.

**Life Science, Grade 3:** Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence that plants and animals have traits inherited from parents and that variations of these traits exist in a group of similar organisms.

**Life Science, Grade 3:** Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment.

**Life Science, Grade 3:** Use evidence to construct an explanation for how the variations in characteristics among individuals of the same species may provide advantages in surviving, finding mates, and reproducing.

**Life Science, Grade 5:** Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water.
Botanical Vocabulary

Flower—The often colorful part of a plant that can attract pollinators

Fruit—The seed-bearing part of a plant

Herb—A non-woody plant valued for its medicinal or flavoring qualities

Adaptations—Changes made by plants or animals over many generations in response to the challenges of their environment

Cactus—A succulent plant with a thick, fleshy stem that usually has spines, no leaves, and has brightly colored flowers

Climate—The rainfall, light, temperature, wind, and other weather elements that are normal to an area

Desert—A region with fewer than 10 inches of rainfall each year, usually with extremes in temperature and having very few but highly adapted plants

Diversity—Variety, such as a number of different species of plants

Drought—A long time with very low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water

Ecosystem—A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment

Environment—The physical and biological conditions around a plant or an animal, such as the amount of space in which to live, climate, other plants and animals, etc.

Succulent—A thick and fleshy plant that stores water

Terrarium—A usually transparent (see-through) closed container for growing plants

Tropical Rainforest—An evergreen broadleaf forest that develops in areas near the Equator with a climate of high temperature, humidity, and rainfall and no marked seasons, characterized by a high biological diversity and productivity
Herb Garden

Conservatory

Desert Garden

Ranch Garden

Shakespeare Garden

Brody California Garden
Practicing The Huntington Framework

Spend 1–2 minutes quietly looking at the gardens.

– What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear?
– If you are at home looking at the gardens online, what do you imagine them to smell and sound like?
– Share what you see (either with the group or to a partner). If you are completing this independently, write down what you see. Are there familiar shapes, textures, and colors?
– What else do you notice? What does this tell you about nature?

If you are looking at the gardens virtually, go to this link: https://www.huntington.org/gardens, then scroll down to Themed Gardens and click on the garden images to see what each garden has to offer.
Activity

Living Collage: The Herb Garden

Materials
– A variety of plant materials: leaves, flower petals, twigs, herbs
– Sticky board (or a piece of paper, with glue or tape)

Steps
1. Find your plant materials. You can go on a walk and pick up leaves or flower petals that have fallen on the ground.
2. Once you have collected your organic materials, it is time to start arranging.
3. Place materials on the sticky board (or on paper) to make a design.
4. Be thoughtful about how you place each stem, leaf, herb and flower petal. Consider environment, water, air, and light.
5. Add a label in the bottom right hand corner, with your name, the date you pressed the plant, and the name of the plant, with any notes you want to add, such as flower color.

Questions
1. Use your eyes: How did you decide to arrange your composition? Did you make a pattern? A picture? Did you place the material by color or by smell?
2. Use your nose: How does your living collage smell? Do you like or dislike the way it smells?
3. Use your sense of touch: Close your eyes and touch the artwork. How does it feel? What textures do you notice?
Extension Activities
1. Describe the colors and textures of the plant pieces you chose. Write about why you chose each piece in a particular spot on the paper. Make a connection about how the Herb Garden is organized—think about light, air, water, and plant use.
2. Research one of the herbs listed below. How does it relate to the section in which it is located? After learning about this herb, would you still place it in the current section or move it to a different section? Why or why not?
3. Archive your research by making an herbarium. An herbarium is a collection of preserved plants and information about the plants used for study.
   a. Write the name and key information about your plant or herb
   b. Draw an image
   c. If you have a sample, add a piece of the plant. Alternately, you can add a photograph of the plant/herb
   https://www.huntington.org/herbarium

The Huntington Connections
The Herb Garden is organized into 6 categories:
- **Medicinal**
  Plants in this section include: Aloe Vera, Pomegranate, Passion Fruit
- **Perfume & Cosmetic**
  Plants in this section include: Lemon Balm, 'Francis Dubreuil' Rose, Lavender, Orris Iris, Heliotrope
- **Trial**
  Plants in this section include: Lemon Mint Marigold, Mexican Tarragon, “Sugarcane” Jujube
- **Culinary/Flavorings**
  Plants in this section include: Lemon Verbena, Horseradish, Rosemary, Thyme, Oregano
- **Historic**
  Plants in this section include: Coffee, Allspice, Butterfly Bush
- **Dye, Fiber & Materials**
  Plants in this section include: Henna, Madder, Cotton

For more information about The Herb Garden, follow this link: https://www.huntington.org/herb-garden

Student Connection
Think about the organization of the light and dark plants, the plants with different textures, how the plants are used, and how the plants adapt to water needs. Discuss what you can tell about each stem and leaf and how that might impact your own design.

What plants do you notice around where you live? Do the plants’ colors, textures, and shapes tell you anything about their environment?

Curriculum Connections
**Language, Kindergarten:** Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

**Life Science, Kindergarten:** Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive

**Earth and Space Science, Kindergarten:** Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live

**Physical Science, Grade 2:** Plan and conduct an investigation to describe and classify different kinds of materials by their observable properties
Sensory Cube: Shakespeare Garden

Materials
– Plant-inspired materials (leaves, flowers, wooden texture tape, fake grass, and other covering materials such as aluminum foil, sandpaper, fabric, etc.)
– Wooden or styrofoam cube (or some type of 3D object to cover)*
– Tape, double-sided tape, or glue to stick materials on the cube.

* If you don’t have a cube or 3D object, you can place all 6 textures side-by-side on a piece of paper. Make a grid with 6 boxes and place the materials in each box.

Steps
1. Collect a variety of plant-inspired material. Be creative on what textures you use! If you are using a cube, you will need to have 6 different materials.
2. Decide what materials will go on what side.
3. Use tape or glue to stick materials to each side of the cube.
4. Be thoughtful about how you place each material. Consider how each side feels.

Questions
1. What textures did you use? How did you find these materials and why did you choose them?
2. How do the textures relate to the garden?
3. Are there textures you prefer more than others? Are there some you dislike?
4. Are any of your textures similar? If so, how?
The Huntington Connections
The plants and flowers in the Shakespeare Garden display a wide variety of colors and textures. Ruby red pomegranate trees (for *Romeo and Juliet*), dazzling violets (for *A Winter’s Tale*), bright daffodils (for *Love’s Labour’s Lost*), and a luscious green willow tree (for *Hamlet*). Click through the photos on the link to explore the colors and textures of the Shakespeare Garden.

While a sensory cube could be used for any garden, the one above includes materials that might represent the wood found in the garden or even the Shakespearean stage, and the soft green grass in front of the Shakespeare bust in the garden. The texture of the foil is like the sidewalk that winds through the garden, and the flowers and leaves represent the plants that are quoted in Shakespeare's plays.

For more information about the Shakespeare Garden, follow this link: https://www.huntington.org/shakespeare-garden

Student Connection
Your sensory cube was inspired by the colors and textures found in the Shakespeare Garden. As you feel the different textures on your cube, how does each one make you feel? Calm? Anxious? Happy?

Curriculum Connections
**Physical Science, Grade 2:** Plan and conduct an investigation to describe and classify different kinds of materials by their observable properties

**Life Science, Grade 2:** Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats
Activity

Terrarium: The Conservatory

Materials
– Jar with a lid
– Small rocks
– Potting soil
– Small succulent
– Moss
– Optional: Garden label and small plastic animals

Steps
1. Start with a layer of rocks
2. Then add potting soil
3. Remove the succulents from the pot
4. Carefully tease the roots (over the opening in the jar to save the soil)
5. Place the plant in the jar and sprinkle the old soil on top of the roots (if you have any left)
6. Gently tap down the soil and roots so the plant will stay in place
7. Add pebbles and moss
8. Option: add a garden label and place a small plastic animal on the moss
9. Water the plant just a little
10. When you get home, place in indirect light
11. Succulents like air, so you should not keep the lid on all the time

You can repeat these steps with a different type of plant. You can be a scientist and see which plants thrive with different environmental factors: light, water, air.

Scientific Inquiry
1. Make an observation—What do I see?
2. Ask a question—What do I wonder?
3. Make a hypothesis—What do I think will happen?
4. Test the hypothesis—Experiment!
5. Analyze the results—What do my results tell me?

Science Journal
1. Look at both terrarium plants. What do you see? Make notes in your science journal chart.
2. Ask a question. Write down your question.
3. What is your hypothesis? What is your experiment and what do you think will happen to your plants?
4. Time to test your hypothesis! Be sure to document your experiment either with photos, drawings, writing, or all three.
5. Analyze your results. What do your results tell you? Are your results the same or different for each plant?

Questions
Use this activity to talk about climate. The terrarium has its own mini climate. Follow the link to the NASA worksheet: https://climatekids.nasa.gov/mini-garden/
1. How is the terrarium like a greenhouse? Sunlight enters through the glass and warms the terrarium’s contents like the sun warms the earth. The glass is like the earth’s atmosphere; both hold in the warmth.
2. Do different plants like different environments? Succulents like air, ferns like moisture.
3. How do the preferences of plants—along with their environments—inspire adaptations? Consider global warming and/or the need to take care of the earth like you will need to take care of your terrariums. Think about aesthetics: form and function. Consider how the color, texture, and shape of the items in the terrarium not only impact the ecosystem but also impact the visual appeal.
Observation

Question

Hypothesis

Materials needed for the experiment

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<th>Plant 1</th>
<th>Plant 2</th>
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Experiment!

Analyze your results

The Huntington Connections
The Rose Hills Foundation Conservatory for Botanical Science houses a wide variety of plants in three different habitats.
1. A lowland tropical rainforest
2. A cloud forest
3. A carnivorous plant bog

Use these link to explore and find plants that would be found in these three habitats:
https://www.huntington.org/conservatory
http://huntingtonbg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=fe3167ba40174ec68c73f8b3e708afcf

To learn more about planting, go to this Huntington resource about Seeds, Soil, and Surprises:
http://www.seedsoilandsurprises.org

Student Connection
Keep a journal about your terrarium. Every day, notice which components need water, have too much water, are sweating or dry. What do you see? How does it change every day?

If you were able to make two terrariums with different plants, are both plants thriving? Does one need more light, water, or air? Keep notes in your journal about how you change the environment for each plant and how each plant reacts.

Curriculum Connections
Earth and Space Science, Kindergarten: Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live

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**Activity**

**Adaptation art: The Desert Garden**

**Materials**
- Succulent, cactus, drought-tolerant plant, or plant with interesting features*
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers, crayons

*You can also look up plant images online at https://www.huntington.org/desert-garden

**Steps**
1. Draw a plant: it can be a plant you've seen at The Huntington, based on plants you've seen, or a plant from your imagination
2. Consider how the plant might need to adapt to thrive in its environment
3. Add your adaptation ideas to your drawing
4. Write the type of terrain, the name of the plant, and your adaptation. Will the plant have a new name once it has adapted? If so, what will it be?

**Questions**
1. What type of adaptation did you design for your plant? Why?
2. Is your idea for adaptation helpful for the plant? For the garden? For the ecosystem? How will it help?
3. What are the reasons for adaptation? Provide examples of how plants adapt and how humans adapt. What factors necessitate adaptation?

**The Huntington Connections**
When you visit the Desert Garden, look carefully at the plant labels to discover the plant's name and place of origin. Plants in this garden come from Baja California, Chile, and Africa, to name a few places. Fun facts: Some of the golden barrel cactus were planted before 1915 and weigh several hundred pounds. For more information about the Desert Garden, go to https://www.huntington.org/desert-garden.

**Student Connection**
What types of plants did you see at The Huntington or on The Huntington’s website? Did you see any plants that would need to adapt to changing climate, ecosystem, or other conditions?

Write an informative paragraph examining why this adaptation is happening in nature. Support your point with logical reasons.

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Wind Chime: California Garden

Materials
- 1 mini or small flower pot (with a hole at the bottom)
- 2 pipe cleaners
- Mixed beads and/or bells
- Decorating materials: stickers, markers, sharpies, construction paper, paint, etc.

Steps
1. Place the end of both pipe cleaners through the hole at the base of the pot
2. Leave about 2 inches on the top
3. Fold and loop the pipe cleaner so that there is a small handle at the top to hang your wind chime later
4. Tuck about half an inch of the looped pipe cleaner back into the hole
5. From the inside of the pot, bend the pipe cleaner flat to secure it
6. Take one bead and string it from the bottom of the pipe cleaner up to the very top inside the pot; this will hold the loop in place
7. String beads onto the pipe cleaners
8. Loop the bottom of the pipe cleaner into a bell or around a bead at the bottom. You do not need to fill the pipe cleaner with beads; it will be too heavy for the wind to move it. 10 or 12 beads is perfect!
9. Time to decorate your pot any way you like. Be creative!

Questions
1. Where is the best place to put a wind chime?
2. What is the purpose of a wind chime? How could it be a helpful tool for people before digital technology?
3. Based on how you designed your wind chime, how do you think it will hold up to strong winds?

The Huntington Connections
The Celebration Garden is part of the California Garden. When you visit The Huntington, the Celebration Garden welcomes you with brightly colored flowers and a recirculated water stream. For more images in the California Garden, look here: https://www.huntington.org/california-garden.

In 2011, a storm with strong winds came through Southern California. The wind damaged many places, including The Huntington. Read the blog below to learn more: https://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2011/12/huntington-library-assesses-damage-from-high-winds.html

Here is more information about the Santa Ana winds in California: https://www.farmersalmanac.com/what-are-the-santa-ana-winds-90667

Student Connection
Talk to the students about how the different textures on the beads might affect the movement and sound of the wind chime. You can also talk about good air/wind and bad air/wind.

Conduct an experiment with the length of the pipe cleaner and the amount of beads. What combination of pipe cleaner length and number of beads will produce the most movement given the same amount of wind? Make predictions. You can use a hair dryer or a house fan to act as the wind.

Curriculum Connections
Earth and Space Science, Kindergarten: Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time
Earth and Space Science, Grade 2: Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land
Tissue Paper Roses: The Rose Garden

This activity is based on the instructions given on this website: https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Tissue-Paper-Roses

Materials
– Tissue paper
– Pipe cleaners
– Pencil

Steps
1. Choose the colors of the tissue paper that you would like for your rose.
2. Carefully crumple the paper up. This will give the rose volume.
3. Spread the tissue paper back out on a flat surface.
4. Cut the pieces of tissue paper in half lengthwise. If your tissue paper is a rectangle, make the cut in the middle of the shorter side. This will leave you with longer pieces.
5. Fold the tissue paper in half lengthwise.
6. Wrap the tissue paper around a pencil. Pinch the bottom of the tissue paper so that it stays together. Gently pull the top of the tissue paper out like blooming petals.
7. Pull the pencil out of the tissue paper.
8. Pinch the bottom of the tissue paper and wrap the end of pipe cleaner around the base of the rose bud.
Questions
1. If you were to design a rose, like the ‘Huntington’s 100th’ rose, what colors would you choose?
2. What would you name your rose? Why?
3. What is your favorite rose?

The Huntington Connections
The ‘Huntington 100th’ rose is a new hybrid rose developed for The Huntington’s Centennial by Tom Carruth, E.L. and Ruth B. Shannon Curator of the Rose Collections. This rose is a hybrid made by crossing the ‘Julia Child’ and ‘Stormy Weather’ roses.

Take a virtual tour of the Rose Garden: http://huntingtonbg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=77383b4f140d-4bc7a669802890c71d4a&folderid=a1a935db91564213aeb60c1098beb457

Student Connection
Does your rose have any symbolism?
Look at this link to discover what colors have symbolic meanings. https://www.proflowers.com/blog/rose-color-meanings

How many roses would you give to someone if you were their secret admirer? What colors would you choose?
Collaborative Recipe Book: The Ranch Garden and the Herb Garden

Materials
– Paper
– Writing utensils (pencil, colored pencils, marker, crayons, etc.)

* This can be done by hand or on the computer

Steps
1. Using the Herb Garden and the Ranch Garden as inspiration, find or create a recipe you really like. To see what herbs and produce are located in these gardens, check out the two links.
   Herb Garden https://www.huntington.org/herb-garden
   Ranch Garden https://www.huntington.org/ranch-garden
2. Either use the template below or create your own recipe template. Write down the ingredients you will need and the steps to make your recipe.
3. Add a photo or a drawing of your dish.
4. Share it with friends, family, or classmates. Have them do the activity and combine the recipes to make a collaborative recipe book.

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<th>Steps</th>
<th>Image or drawing of the dish</th>
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Questions
1. What recipe did you choose? Why?
2. Is it one you love to eat or is it a new one you created?

The Huntington Connections
The Ranch Garden and the Herb Garden both contain plants that can be used in cooking and baking. The Huntington Ranch Project is an urban agricultural garden project that explores and interprets optimal approaches to gardening in our regional ecosystems and climate: the semi-arid landscapes of Southern California (https://www.huntington.org/ranch-garden). Growing in the Herb Garden are herbs and spices that are able to thrive in the Southern California climate. https://www.huntington.org/herb-garden

Student Connection
What ingredients did you choose for your recipe? Did you use herbs that can be found in the Herb Garden or produce that is grown in the Ranch Garden?
Tunnel Book: All Gardens

Materials
– Construction paper (3)
– Transparency paper (2)
– Sharpies or other permanent markers (for the transparency paper)
– Markers, crayons, or pencils (for the construction paper)
– Glue or tape

Steps
1. Fold two pieces of construction paper in an accordion style with three folds (down forward, down backward, down forward).
2. Consider the components of an ecosystem. Draw one level of the ecosystem on each of the three remaining pieces of paper.
3. Glue the ecosystem pages in order in valleys of the accordion folds on each side: clear paper, clear paper, solid paper.

Questions
1. What is an ecosystem? Think about how life cycles (birth, growth, reproduction, and death) are what all animals have in common. Think about plant life cycles.
2. What is the overlap of life and plant cycles that create an ecosystem?
3. What does your ecosystem show? What is the cycle of life that you represented in your tunnel book?
The Huntington Connections
The Huntington is home to sixteen gardens. Life cycles of plants and animals are central to each of these themed gardens. https://www.huntington.org/gardens/#gardens

Student Connection
The basic definition of an ecosystem is a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

You can add to this definition by including groups that work together. For example, you might have a school ecosystem because students, teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents work together to create an education system.

What ecosystems are you a part of? What role do you play in each?

Write a story about the ecosystem you designed. Explain the life cycle of the organism from birth to death.

Curriculum Connections
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Life Science, Grade 2: Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats

Life Science, Grade 3: Develop models to describe that organisms have unique and diverse life cycles but all have in common birth, growth, reproduction, and death
Books


Lectures

“California Plants”
https://www.huntington.org/videos-recorded-programs/california-plants

“Garden Lust: A Botanical Tour of the World’s Best New Gardens”
https://www.huntington.org/videos-recorded-programs/gardenlust-botanical-tour-worlds-best-new-gardens

“The Florentine Codex and the Herbal Tradition: Unknown versus Known?”
https://www.huntington.org/videos-recorded-programs/florentine-codex-and-herbal-tradition-unknown-versus-known

“The ‘Huntington’s 100th’ Rose”
https://www.huntington.org/videos-recorded-programs/huntingtons-100th-rose

Virtual Tours

Conservatory Tour
http://huntingtonbg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=fe3167ba40174ec68c73f8b3e708afcf

Dinosaur Plants Tour

Mediterranean Plants Tour

Rose Garden Tour
http://huntingtonbg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=77383b4f140d4bc7a669802890c71d4a&folderid=a1a935db91564213aeb60c1098beb457

What’s Blooming at The Huntington
https://huntingtonbg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Shortlist/index.html?appid=87a80728e7c44639bf5f0f341db9a67
Web Links

“A Curious Herbal”

“An Herb Garden Caper,” Lisa Blackburn

“Fiber Arts,” Manuela Gomez
https://www.huntington.org/verso/2018/08/fiber-arts

“Herbarium”
https://www.huntington.org/herbarium

“How ‘Huntington’s 100th’ Came to Be,” Usha Lee McFarling
https://www.huntington.org/verso/2019/04/how-hunttings-100th-came-to-be

“Making Ink from Oak Galls,” Usha Lee McFarling
https://www.huntington.org/verso/2019/05/making-ink-oak-galls

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