



## Sonoma Botanical Garden Staff



**Harper Adams** (she/her)  
Gardener



**Harper Adams** cares for the collection of rare plants as a Gardener with the horticulture team. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fine Arts and Photography and is currently studying environmental horticulture. She is a lifelong gardener and lover of plants and nature whose work at the Garden allows her to connect people to the magic of mother nature. As an artist, Harper works across multiple mediums, including traditional film photography and pressed botanicals, and has exhibited at numerous venues. She applies her artistic insight to the Garden by supporting the exhibition program. Her personal interests include hiking and all things outside, naturally, as well as cooking and anything "artsy."

**Gilbert Alcala** (he/him)  
Gardener

With a decade of experience in the tree service industry, **Gilberto Alcala** brings extensive knowledge of arboriculture and landscape maintenance to his Gardener role. As a skilled tree climber and groundsman, he is dedicated to preserving the health and beauty of the Garden while enhancing the visitor experience. Gilberto is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in psychology. Combining his keen understanding of nature with an interest in human behavior, he recognizes the importance of green spaces in fostering well-being and connection. Whether working independently or alongside the team, he strives to uphold the Garden's mission by ensuring the landscape remains vibrant, sustainable, and welcoming to all.



**Bridget Beck** is a Gardener with the horticulture team and has spent most of her career working directly with plants in the gardening and landscaping industry. She holds an associate's degree in horticulture and landscape design and a bachelor's degree in applied studies. Bridget's favorite garden tasks include small-project management, garden-overhaul, plant nurturing, and pruning. Her organizational skills help to support administration within the department as

<b>Bridget Beck</b> (she/her) <b>Gardener</b>	<p>well. Bridget enjoys being surrounded by amazing plant life and is in awe of the unique specimens that grew from seeds in the retired rock quarry that comprises part of the Garden.</p>
<b>Valerie Brown</b> (she/her) <b>Visitor Experience Associate</b>	
<b>Guillermo Calderon</b> (he/him) <b>Gardener</b>	
<b>Salvador Calderon</b> (he/him) <b>Director of Horticulture and Facilities</b>  <a href="mailto:scalderon@sonomabg.org">scalderon@sonomabg.org</a>	
 <p><b>Kelsie Childs</b> (she/her)  <b>Director of Strategic &amp; Creative Initiatives</b>   <a href="mailto:kchilds@sonomabg.org">kchilds@sonomabg.org</a>  707-996-6027</p>	<p>A California native, <b>Kelsie Childs</b> is an arts and culture professional with experience in visitor services, collections management, and exhibition planning, along with administration and event management. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies and has contributed to museums and botanical gardens in Arizona and Florida. Kelsie is passionate about gardens becoming inclusive, dynamic spaces for learning about our shared natural environment, history, art, and each other. She resides in Sonoma with her husband, Lann, cat named Robert, English bulldog puppy, Ralph, and ever-growing plant collection. In her role as Director of Strategic &amp; Creative Initiatives, she is excited to support the Garden as it continues to develop into a unique destination for the Sonoma County community.</p>
 <p><b>Julianne Culley</b> (she/her)  <b>Membership and Visitor Services Manager</b>   <a href="mailto:jculley@sonomabg.org">jculley@sonomabg.org</a>  707-888-3316</p>	<p><b>Julianne Culley</b>, a California native, works as the Membership and Visitor Experience Manager. Her position plays an essential role in creating a welcoming experience and helping to grow the Garden's community of members and supporters. She joined the team in March 2024, with a background focused on customer service and event coordination. Julianne was recognized as a "Rising Star" at Sonoma County Tourism's 2025 Stars of the Industry awards. With a degree in political science, Julianne is passionate about the ways botanical gardens and similar institutions advocate for social justice and environmental responsibility. Her favorite thing about working at the Garden is the dynamic people who work alongside her and visit each day!</p>



**Nicholas Formato** (he/him)  
**Facilities Horticulture Specialist**

As the Facilities Horticulture Specialist, **Nicholas Formato** helps to care for the plants and grounds, maintaining the natural beauty and seamless functioning of the Garden's infrastructure. Nicholas has worked with plants for over 15 years and loves to connect directly with the earth! Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his family, caring for his personal garden, and tinkering with his truck and bike. One of his favorite things about being at the Garden is the opportunity to contribute to such a beautiful, peaceful environment that celebrates plant diversity. He is committed to honoring the founder's legacy and vision each day through his work.

**Jack Hart** (he/him)  
**Visitor Experience Associate**

**Jack Hart** was born and raised in beautiful Sonoma Valley which has helped to shape his appreciation for the outdoors and, of course, wine! He holds a bachelor's degree in recreation administration and a minor in business administration. Throughout his education, Jack explored Northern California, solidifying his love for nature and the outdoors. He previously worked as a coach for Sonoma Valley High School and has experience at various instructional youth sports programs. With his strong desire to connect with others and appreciation for the natural environment, Jack is a great addition to the Visitor Experience team!



**Kristina Lindh** (she/her)  
**Coordinator of Marketing & Communications**

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As the Coordinator of Marketing & Communications, **Kristina Lindh** plans and executes content for social media, newsletters, and the Garden website, and helps to organize the various vendors that support communications. Kristina joined the Garden in 2024 after working as the Digital Marketing Coordinator at the Bay Area Discovery Museum, which ignited her passion for museums and the opportunities to build community through marketing. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Digital Studies from St. Mary's College of California. Kristina's favorite part of working at the Garden is witnessing the change through the seasons.





**Robert Mahar (he/him)**  
**Coordinator of Learning & Engagement**

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With over two decades of experience designing and leading hands-on educational programs, **Robert Mahar** works as the Garden's Coordinator of Learning & Engagement. A seasoned educator and artist, he has developed and facilitated dynamic workshops for cultural institutions, public gardens, and lifelong learning programs, including the San Francisco Botanical Garden, the Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden, and Oakmont Lifelong Learning. His background also includes producing creative online content and television programming in alignment with his passion for fostering creativity and community engagement. He currently lives in Sonoma with his husband, George, and their German wire-haired pointer, Bunny. Robert brings enthusiasm for environmental education, a creative approach to learning, and a deep commitment to building meaningful connections within the Garden community.



**Jadyn Pando (she/her)**  
**Coordinator of Administration & Donor Relations**

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**Jadyn Pando** works as the Garden's Coordinator of Administration & Donor Relations. She is a Napa native, and passionate about preserving public spaces and fostering connections with the outdoors. Jadyn holds a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Sociology from Oregon State University and has experience working in libraries, national parks, and law firms. Out of the office, she enjoys cooking new recipes, hiking, and playing tabletop games. Jadyn is excited to apply her diverse administrative and client relations skills to support the Garden's mission.



**Jeannie Perales (she/her)**  
**Executive Director**

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Since August 2023, **Jeannie Perales** has served as Executive Director, leading a talented team of staff, volunteers, and board members in shaping the Garden's future. She holds a Master of Arts in Educational Psychology, a K-6 Teaching Certificate, and a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology and Communications. Jeannie's passion lies in collaborating with content experts to create engaging educational programs and exhibitions, particularly in museums and gardens. She shares her life with Daniel, her husband of 22 years, her children, Kique & Luci, a sweet old hound, and a silly quarter horse. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, cooking, reading, and good wine. Jeannie loves working in public gardens, especially because of the inspiring people they attract.

	<p>What excites her most about the Garden is its potential for growth and opportunity for community connection.</p>
 <p><b>Daisy Tenorio (she/her)</b> <b>Visitor Experience Associate</b></p>	<p><b>Daisy Tenorio</b> works as a Visitor Experience Associate in the Welcome Center. She recently returned to California from Atlanta, Georgia, where she worked in the film and TV production industry for six years. Daisy is a student at Sonoma State University, majoring in environmental studies, geography, and planning. In her free time, you can either find her exploring new hikes, volunteering, or spending time with her nephews. She also helps to support Garden programs, such as <i>Acoustic Sunsets</i> and school tours, welcoming visitors of all ages to explore the Garden.</p>
 <p><b>Michael Wenzel (he/him)</b> <b>Curator of Living Collections</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:mwenzel@sonomabg.org">mwenzel@sonomabg.org</a></p>	<p>As the Curator of Living Collections, <b>Michael Wenzel</b> manages and documents the composition, both in quality and quantity, of the living plants on the grounds. Michael has been with the Garden since December 2020 and has almost three decades of botany experience. He holds a Master of Science in Biological Sciences with a concentration in plant systematics, and has had many unique highlights in his career, including leading a propagation workshop for a rare conifer in Fiji and delivering presentations at the Smithsonian and the Guilin Botanical Garden. His favorite part of working at the Garden is experiencing the entire cycle of a botanical garden from his unique position caring for the plant collection. From his perspective, it begins with the collection itself, continues with collaborating with great people who share a mutual appreciation for plants, and ends with sharing the fascinating world of plants with visitors and researchers.</p>