



## Statement of Support for Black Lives Matter

The UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and those who demand justice and equality for our Black communities.

### **In sadness & solidarity we speak out against racism and systemic oppression.**

We have watched in heart wrenching horror the murder of George Floyd along with unwarranted and unjust deaths of black men and women killed in recent years. We grieve the murders of Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many others, as well as the life threatening experience of Christian Cooper while birding, as a result of systemic racism and police brutality. White supremacy and racism must end, and we support efforts to reform policy to ensure a safe and equal existence for all Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

### **We are committed to providing a safe place for ALL people to connect with nature, reflect, and heal.**

We recognize that as a place of education, research, community partnership, and environmental stewardship, it is the Arboretum's work to continually reaffirm, expand, and permanently establish equal rights for all BIPOC. For the Arboretum to fulfill its mission of *connecting people with plants*, our work has to be far-reaching and inclusive. We must be mindful of the economic disparities stemming from racism, greed, ignorance, and apathy that keep large groups of people from being able to study, appreciate, and develop a meaningful connection with plants, land, and native ancestral heritage. Our natural resources and ecological knowledge play a crucial role in our collective responsibility to care for our environment.

### **We have much to learn, and much to accomplish.**

Our fight against racism and systemic oppression begins with self-reflection, awareness, and outreach. Through collaboration with university, local, state, and national organizations, we are committed to promoting the well-being of BIPOC and those from under-represented communities. We are prioritizing building relationships with BIPOC at all levels of our organization including among our student workers, interns, volunteers, staff, garden visitors, and plant-inspired collaborators. We are working to correct previous conservation efforts in our nation's history that were rooted in racism and white supremacy, and the violent dispossession of Native Americans from their homeland, by stewarding the Amah Mutsun Relearning Program in collaboration with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. We recognize that there is much more that we can do, and we are committed to utilizing our resources in ways that address inequality and oppression.

### **We are ready to make a change.**

What is happening in our country today is a result of a failure to confront a history of racism, violence, and white privilege. It is time to bring conversations about racial inequality to the forefront of our work. As an organization that supports human diversity in all its forms, we must remain vigilant to ensure that we are working to create change. Our gardens provide solace and safety during times of grief, rage, diminished hope, and confusion. While we are not yet able to reopen to the public, every single person in our community is important to us and vital as we all move forward, together. We want to hear from you, to understand your concerns, and your ideas for how we can provide more for BIPOC within our gardens and educational programs. We welcome your feedback at [arboretum@ucsc.edu](mailto:arboretum@ucsc.edu).

**In Solidarity,  
The Staff of the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden**