



DALLAS ARBORETUM
Education

AUTUMN AT THE ARBORETUM
SEPTEMBER 20 - NOVEMBER 2

¡Mundo México!

Family Learning Guide



Jacobo and María Angeles,
Deer-Butterfly,
fiberglass and acrylic paint, 2024.
Artwork © Jacobo and María Angeles.
Exhibition organized by Denver Botanic Gardens

We grow minds, too.



OBJECTIVE:

KEEP LEARNING AT HOME WITH SIMPLE ACTIVITIES, REFLECTION QUESTIONS, AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT AUTUMN AT THE ARBORETUM: ¡MUNDO MÉXICO!

THE EXPERIENCE

Welcome to ¡Mundo México! This season you explored the art, plants, and traditions of Mexico throughout the Arboretum. From giant spirit guide sculptures to pumpkin houses, colorful plants, and photography, the gardens were full of stories connecting people and nature.

This guide helps you keep learning at home with simple activities, reflection questions, and resources.


THEMES YOU EXPLORED:

- Spirit Guides & Zapotec Traditions
- Pumpkin Village & 60+ Pumpkin Varieties
- Plants of Mexico
- Photography by Victor Mozqueda

 What part of the exhibit inspired you most?

SPIRIT GUIDES

Eight monumental sculptures by Jacobo and María Ángeles celebrated Zapotec tonas and nahuales—animal guides that connect people to the spirit of nature. Their colors and patterns symbolize concepts like joy, fertility, respect, and strength.

 Draw your own spirit guide by combining two animals that reflect your personality. Give it a name and describe its special powers.

MY SPIRIT GUIDE:

Name:

Animals Featured:

Special Powers:



PUMPKIN HOUSES

Each house in the Pumpkin Village is inspired by a different Mexican region, tradition, or artistic style. Use this as inspiration for the activities below.

- Casa Calabaza Azul – Frida Kahlo’s home, a symbol of creativity.
- Casa Monarca – Monarch migration, memory, and transformation.
- Casa de Flores Wixárika – Beaded floral art of the Huichol people.
- Casa del Zócalo – Community celebration in Mexico City’s plaza.
- Templo de Kukulkán – Mayan pyramid marking the solar year.
- Casa Zapoteca – Weaving, marigolds, and Barro Negro ceramics.
- Casa de Saltillo – Tilework & Talavera accents.



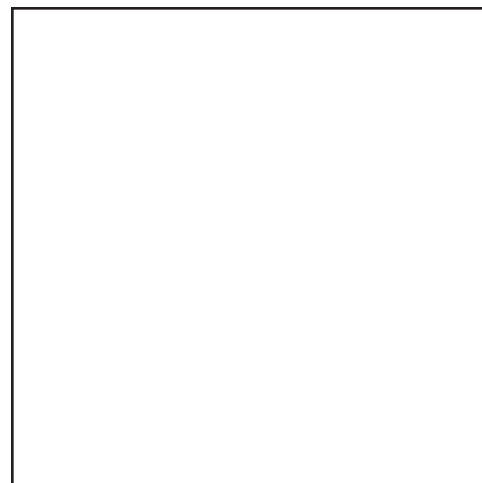
Use the box to the right to design your own decorative tile using markers, paint, or collage.



Make a simple papel picado banner by folding and cutting colorful paper into patterns.



MY DECORATIVE TILE:



PLANTS OF MEXICO

Mexico is one of the most biodiverse places on Earth. Here are some highlights you saw in the garden:

- Agave – Used for fiber, pulque, and mezcal. Pulque, an ancient fermented beverage, was called the ‘drink of the gods.’
- Biznaga Cactus – Once harvested and candied for traditional sweets, biznagas are now protected species.
- Cochineal on Nopal – Insects that create natural red dye.
- Three Sisters – Corn, beans, and squash grown together for food and soil health.
- Chiles – Domesticated in Mexico, essential for mole and global cuisine.
- Cempasúchil (Marigold) – Bright orange flowers guiding spirits during Day of the Dead.
- Plus ferns, oaks, orchids, and wildflowers—each part of Mexico’s rich ecosystems.

TRY THIS AT HOME:



Plant milkweed to help monarch butterflies on their migration.



Cook with a new type of squash or chile—try roasting, soups, or mole sauce.



Experiment with natural dyes from your kitchen (beets = red, turmeric = yellow).



Start a mini Three Sisters garden by planting corn, beans, and squash together.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Inside the DeGolyer House you discovered **A Naturalist’s World: The Art of Victor Mozqueda**. His photographs highlight the symmetry of cacti, the vibrant wings of butterflies, and the hidden beauty of Mexican biodiversity.



Take close-up photos of plants, insects, or natural textures near your home. Make a “nature photo journal” and notice patterns you may not have seen before.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ❓ Which sculpture, house, or plant connected most with you?
- ❓ How do art and plants work together to tell cultural stories?
- ❓ What story did the pumpkins tell you this fall?
- ❓ If you could design a Pumpkin Village house, what would it honor?
How would you tell the story of your city, your family and your friends?

EXPLORE MORE

Jacobo & María Ángeles
jacoboymariaangeles.com



Victor Mozqueda
victormozqueda.com



Cielo Tejido
instagram.com/cielotejidoac



BOOKS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

FEATURED IN THE HOFFMAN FAMILY GIFT SHOP

Carle, E. (2022). *How does a caterpillar change?: Life cycles with the very hungry caterpillar*. World of Eric Carle, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

Medina, M. (2015). *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (A. Domínguez, Illus.). Candlewick Press.

Morales, Y. (2018). *Dreamers / Soñadores*. Neal Porter Books.

Morales, Y. (2014). *Viva Frida* (T. O'Meara, Illus.). Roaring Brook Press.

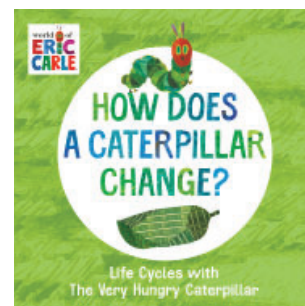
Raúl the Third. (2020). *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat*. Versify/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Tonatiuh, D. (2023). *A Land of Books: Dreams of Young Mexihcah Word Painters*.

Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Tonatiuh, D. (2015). *Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras*.

Abrams Books for Young Readers.



COOKBOOKS

FEATURED IN THE HOFFMAN FAMILY GIFT SHOP

Carrillo Arronte, M. (2018). *Mexico the cookbook*. Phaidon.

López, B. (2019). *Oaxaca: Home Cooking from the Heart of Mexico*. Chronicle Books.

Ruiz Olmedo, A. (2018). *Alejandro Ruiz, Cocina de Oaxaca*. Sicomoro Ediciones.

Jinich, P. (2013). *Pati's Mexican Table: The Secrets of Real Mexican Home Cooking*.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Jinich, P. (2016). *Mexican Today: New and Rediscovered Recipes for Contemporary Kitchens*.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Jinich, P. (2021). *Treasures of the Mexican Table: Classic Recipes, Local Secrets*.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

