

Introduction

This garden is unique. Plants, which grow wild in our county, have been arranged in distinct natural communities. A walk through our garden is a botanical stroll through San Diego County. The 150+ species planted here have been chosen to highlight the biodiversity of our region.

This is a certified School Yard Wildlife Habitat. We provide food, shelter and water for wildlife.

Because we live in a coastal desert averaging a mere 10 inches of rain a year many of the plants native to the area adapt to drought by losing their leaves in the hot summer months. They are still alive and will sprout leaves and produce flowers when the seasonal rains come.

In August of 1995 this was a barren empty field. The students at Montgomery



High cleaned it up and planted all the plants you see here today.

Chaparral

Thick evergreen shrubs are found on north-facing slopes with more than 15" of rain per year and less direct sun. Only 20% of this habitat remains in California.



Lemonade Berry



Creosote Bush

Desert & Desert Wash

We have a number of Mesquites, two Creosote Shrubs, and a number of common desert plants in this area. We also have from Baja California Snap Dragon, Ocotillo and a number of other plants from the Baja desert.

Coastal Sage Scrub

This shorter drought deciduous vegetation is found in Nature on drier south facing slopes. Less than 12% of this habitat remains in California. California and San Diego Sunflowers are becoming abundant in our garden, as is California Sagebrush.

Mulch

Richard Vallen provided us with tons of mulch (plant trimmings) when we started the garden. By 2009 most of it has become compost. Over time garden waste used for mulch decomposes and returns the nutrients to the soil instead of wasting landfill space.

Mulch is important in a garden to conserve water and prevent the growth of weeds.

Trees

Torrey Pines are rare plants. We have a grove on the hillside along the fence, which were donated in five-gallon posts by Robert Minor. They are found naturally only on Santa Rosa Island and in a small section of Del Mar.

We purchased Mission Manzanita, Western Redbud and Elderberry. The Cottonwoods and Willows were grown from cuttings from the Otay River just north of the school.



Oak Savannahs

The coast and inland valleys were once covered with oaks and native grasses. Less than 10% of this habitat remains in California.

The Cara Knott Foundation contributed oak trees and acorns from which might oaks have grown. We have also planted native grasses, but exotic non-native grasses are overwhelming many of them, which is why they are rarely found in natural settings any more.

Drip Irrigation

We started the garden with a first-rate drip irrigation system thanks to Glenn Clauson and the Imperial Beach Job Corps. Small emitters delivered measured amounts of water directly to the roots of plants. This is healthier for plants, discourages weeds and saves water. It is also much cheaper than traditional irrigation systems. Except for the Riparian plants we do not now water.

We are garden number 59 on the Bureau of Reclamation's Waterwise Gardens map:

<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/watershare/resources/gardens/details.cfm?GardenID=59>.

Wetlands

Less than 10% of the historical wetlands remain in California. Wetlands are the kidneys of the land. They purify the water that runs off from other lands as well as providing important habitat for migrating birds, nurseries for fish, and home to many species.



Desert Grape

We have riparian plants, which grow along riverbanks in the wild, a fresh water marsh and a pond. Plants, which grow in these habitats, require year-round water. We have minimized water use by using copious amounts of mulch.

Pond and Waterfall

Our pond has a grate over it to protect small children from accidental drowning. We have Mosquito Fish, which the County provides free to anyone with a pond. Each fish eats 10 times its weight a day in mosquito larva. We also have Tree Frogs.



Job Corps Building and Solar Trades students built the pond and solar-powered waterfall for us with the help of their teachers: Ken Robinson, Jay Trottier, and Karl Hansen. (Unfortunately the pumps are expensive and do not last very long, so we generally do not have a pump operating.)

Dudleyas, Agaves, Yuccas & Native Cactus

Dudleyas are native succulents. Thirteen species grow in San Diego County. There are several species growing in the Otay Mesa section of the garden.



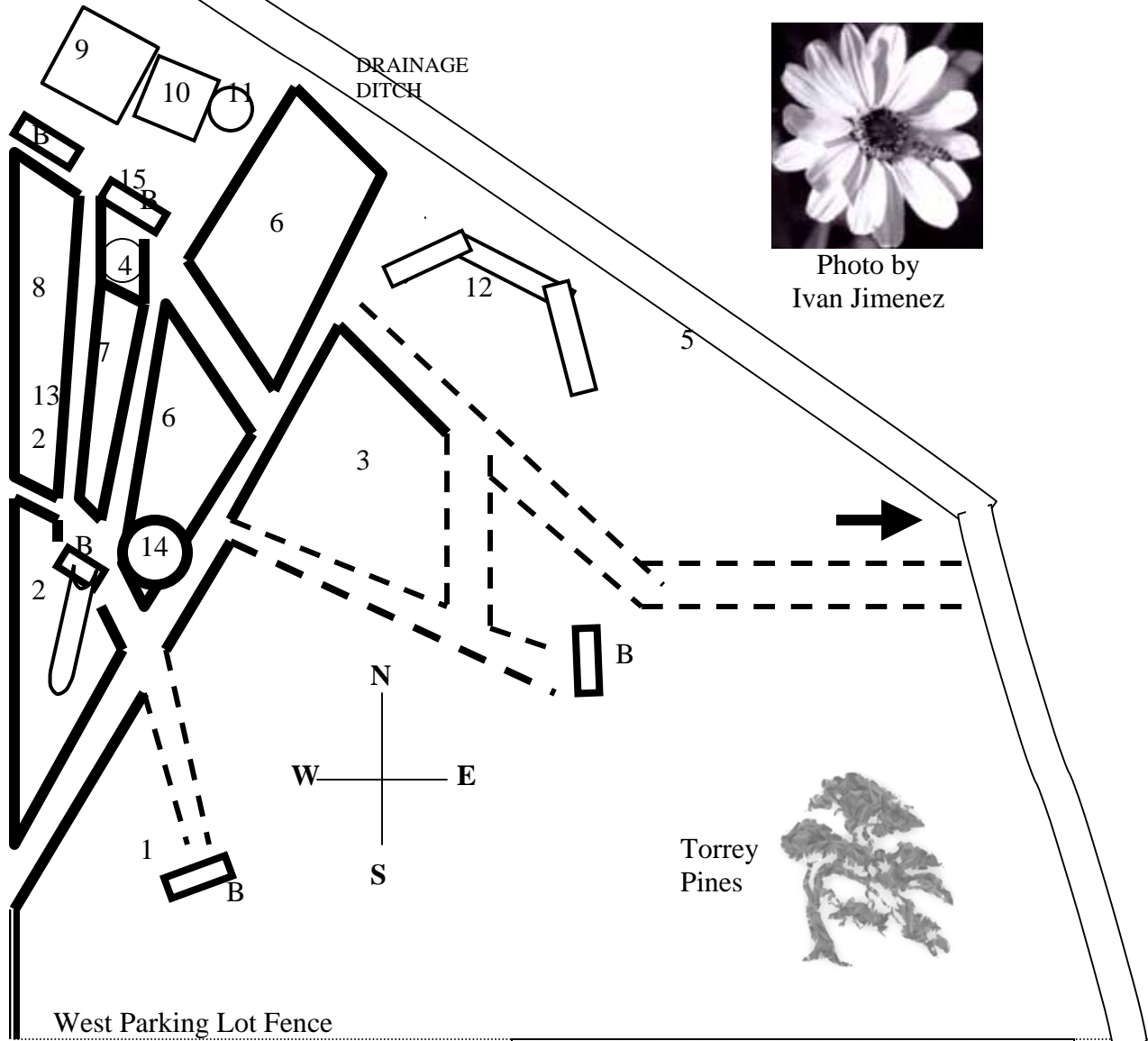
Coastal Cholla

We have Agave Shawii, which is on the endangered species list growing in area 14 as well as Teddy Bear and Golden Cholla.

We have several Coastal Barrel Cactuses in the desert mound where we also have Serpentine Cholla, Saguaro, a Joshua Tree, both native Yuccas, a Desert Agave and a number of other cacti.

We have paths lined with Prickly Pear Cactus and Beaver Tail. There are a number of stands of Coastal Cholla as well.

GARDEN MAP



- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Chaparral | 9. Fresh Water Marsh |
| 2. Desert/Desert Wash | 10. Pond |
| 3. Coastal Sage Scrub | 11. Waterfall |
| 4. Vernal Pool | 12. Amphitheater |
| 5. Trees | 13. Fan Palm |
| 6. Oak Savannah | 14. Sandy Mound |
| 7. Otay Mesa | 15. Solar Collectors |
| 8. Riparian | |
- fences
- - - paths

This garden was made possible by the generous contributions of time and labor by...

Students & Staff of Montgomery High School~Students & Staff of Imperial Beach Job Corps Landscaping, cement, welding, Masonry, and solar Trades~ROP Landscaping students at Barrett Honor Camp~AmeriCorps volunteers~Southwestern College Plant Propagation Class~Apprentices in the Cement Masons Union

Materials and Plants Donated By...

Paragon Building Supply~Rich Vallen Tree Service~Mike Gorham & Barrett Honor Camp~Walter Anderson's Nursery~ Pacific Tree Farm~California Desert~The Living Desert~The Theodore Payne Society~Home Depot, Imperial Beach~Sears, Chula Vista~H.G Fenton~Nelson Sloan~CalMat~Organic Recycling West~Dennis O'Malley~Cara Knott Foundation~Glenn Clausson~Robert Minor~Doug McKinney~Tim Hinkle Tree Service~

Materials discounted By...

Tree of Life Nursery~Dixiline Lumber-Hydroscapes~

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Vons~Ralphs~Kentucky Fried Chicken~

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Drawings by Pati Uresti

Welcome
To
MONTGOMERY HIGH SCHOOL'S
SAN DIEGO NATIVE PLANTS GARDEN
&
WALK IN BEAUTY



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