



Fall 2022 plant care information for the plants in the Las Flores Learning Garden

Remember, to maintain a vibrant habitat space, avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Low water/low-maintenance Garden

This garden was installed in fall of 2020 and designed to include plants that require little or no maintenance. These plants also have similar low water needs and, on a rotating basis, display color interest all year round.

In this garden for the fall we will

- Rake up the leaves from the **Raywood Ash** trees and clean up any fallen fruit from the **Arbutus trees**
- Corral the **Star Jasmine**.....trimming back the long branches to the base, removing them from surrounding plants and generally encouraging them to grow in 'low banks' as designed.
- Trimming the upright branches off the **Kaleidoscope Abelia**. Cutting these back to the base rather than 'hedging' them for a more 'organic' look.
- Look at the **red Loropetalum** and see if they need any 'neatening up' using the same method as above
- Pull weeds from the gardens as well as from the sidewalk and street
- Removing all suckers from the **Crape Myrtle**.
- Removing any dead 'fronds' from the **Meyeri fern**

In the late winter we will

- Work on the **carpet roses** by cutting the taller portions back using the above mentioned 'organic' method so that they don't look 'hedged'. We also plan on moving the most eastern rose about 2 feet to the west.
- Prune and shape the **Crape Myrtle trees** and the yellow twig dogwood

Early spring we will

- Cut back the **Pink Muhly grass** to the ground in a dome shape.
- Shape the **Little Ollie Olive** as needed.

California Native Garden

This garden was installed in June 2022 and is a work in progress.

We are acquiring the correct California native cultivars, and working on increasing the number of each species. We plan on moving and/or removing plants if they are not working. This fall we will just be raking leaves, pulling weeds and observing and maintaining the existing plants.

In your own garden make sure to research the plants before you make a purchase. Select a plant that is what you really want in your garden and one that fulfills your design needs. Make sure you have selected the correct location that will provide the conditions that will support that plant. This will save money and heartache.

Why install California native plants in your garden?

- Many California native plants have low water and low-maintenance needs once established
- True California native plants have existed in California's specific ecosystem for millennia, evolving with the native insects and other animal life providing food sources and habitat
- They are more efficient than non-native plant species in converting their energy up the food chain for use by native fauna.
- Home gardeners can play an important role in the preservation of native insect and wildlife populations by creating habitat space by using California natives

Pollinator Garden:

This garden was installed in June 2022.

The soil was prepared with a layer of compost, then mulch. The idea is to keep the soil covered by plants and mulch at all times. This will reduce weeds, keep moisture in the soil and keep it cooler in summer heat. Covered soil will also hold the rainwater to avoid runoff and increase the aquifer. We choose diverse plants to provide more choice for a variety of pollinators and to help create root systems that support each other by drawing healthy microorganisms to "feed" the plants.

This fall we will rake leaves and pull weeds. The secret to weed reduction is to stay on top of the weeds by checking and pulling them weekly. Do not let them flower or set seed. Some common weeds in this garden are bindweed, fortnight lilies, bermuda grass, and oxalis.

Since this is a new garden we will observe the selected plants as they settle in. We will remove any poor performers and replace them with more of the plants worked or we will try something new.

Select plants that bloom at different times of the growing season, so there is year-round food for butterflies and other insects. Most sages bloom in early-mid-spring; California fuschia, aka *Epilobium* formerly known as *Zauschneria* blooms later in the summer; Zinnias, Echinacea, and other plants in the Aster family bloom until frost and Daphnes and Hellebores bloom in mid-winter. Also, different plants will create more variety and color interest in your garden throughout the year.

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