



El Cerrito Library Community Native Plant Garden

Only 250 years ago, native bunchgrasses, wildflowers and oaks covered the East Bay hills. Decades of development have made many of these plants rare or extinct. But you can still enjoy native flora in places like Albany Hill, Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Regional Parks and other East Bay parks.

This demonstration garden is one of many efforts to bring native plants back to local urban communities. On El Cerrito Earth Day, April 28, 2001, volunteers began work on the site. They dug up a foot-high bed of ivy and removed massive old tree

roots. In a series of work days during the summer, 29 volunteers cleared out the ivy and filled in the site with native plants. The garden is now thriving with about 30 plant species that bloom nearly all year round — from delicate pink manzanita flowers in December and January to dazzling red California fuschia in late summer and early fall.

Native plants are great natural assets. They provide food and shelter for a range of wildlife and insects. They also benefit people. In home gardens, native plants can

reduce the need for irrigation, pesticides and fertilizers. Their roots bind the soil, help reduce erosion, and draw rainfall down into the soil while filtering out pollutants and recharging groundwater reserves. A thriving population of native plants helps maintain biodiversity that is essential to our existence. They provide a unique sense of place and connection to nature in an urban area. Last, but not least, they are beautiful!

— *Carla Koop, Garden Coordinator*
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Thanks to the volunteers who created this garden

Laurel Balyeat-Morrison, Gina Brusatori, Ed Carville, Pam Challinor, Alton Chinn, Christina & Rochelle Cox, Vivian Goo, Bill Gubser, Aimee Haire, Karl Hans, Aarin Harris, Ann & Virginia Hotta, Stephanie Koop, Carol Langhausen, Lloyd McGrady, Suzanne McNulty, Rita Minjares, Gerardo Munck, Doug Ng, Anne Ogonowski, Molly Ong, Bob Powell, Rob Schwartz, Rosie Sicon, Karen Summerly, Shereel & Joseph Washington

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