

Growing Natives Symposium: talks, workshops, & garden descriptions

Saturday, March 28: Lafayette Community Center

Glenn Keator: **Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times**

From small to large, beautiful native gardens can be created to reflect ecological principles in a state with limited water resources. This presentation will explore the diversity of California's flora in plant communities adapted to low rainfall and hot, dry summers as well as the relationship between these natural habitats and artful gardens. Glenn will also present ideas for developing sustainable gardens that welcome native insects and birds.

Carol Bornstein: **Designing Native Gardens**

Plants native to California are often relegated to wild, naturalistic gardens. A choice few have become standard components of more conventional designed landscapes. Thanks to a heightened interest in regionally appropriate, sustainable landscapes, native plants are being used in increasingly innovative ways. This presentation will illustrate some intriguing examples of the promise they hold for our diverse landscapes.

Phil Van Soelen: **Trees and Shrubs as Structural Elements**

This presentation will feature outstanding, drought-tolerant trees and shrubs for garden structure. This is the starting point for creating beautiful and sustainable native gardens. Phil's talk will include a selection of individual plants as well as companion plants and images of gardens to give participants ideas for using trees and shrubs to create beautiful native gardens.

Roger Raiche: **Perennials and Bulbs for Seasonal Interest**

Trees, shrubs, buildings, fences, and paths define the space of most gardens. Yet much of how we feel about a garden may come from the "understory" elements that contribute texture, variety, seasonality, detail, sensory stimulation and an attraction for wildlife. There is an abundance of native material to fill this role, and the possibilities are endless. Gardens also change over time as some plants grow and others senesce. The understory elements are the easiest to change. Roger will discuss some of his favorite plants and landscape effects.

David Amme: **Creating a Native Meadow**

As one gets more involved with native plants, there is a desire to create a balanced, sustainable landscape reflecting the plant communities we treasure. One of the most important landscape motifs is the open expanse, the meadow. More often than not this is our lawn. The logical evolution (or passionate rebellion) of the native plant gardener is the creation of the native meadow.

David will outline the techniques of creating the native Californian meadow, approaching it from both above and below the ground. He will discuss the most adaptable native grasses for the home landscape and how to create striking settings adapted to sunny and shady conditions from oatgrass and needlegrass to bottle brush and vanilla grass.

Mike Evans: Engaging: How to Connect with your Garden

The Saturday program will conclude with an inspirational talk by Mike Evans, drawing from a lifetime of experience as an observer, collector and grower of California native plants. Gardens can be more than decorated outdoor spaces. They can provide opportunities for interaction and engagement, especially if they attract wildlife. Mike will discuss the philosophy of engagement and techniques for making a California garden.

Sunday, March 29: Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Native Here Nursery and private gardens in Berkeley and Lafayette

Steve Edwards: The Regional Parks Botanic Garden as Inspiration

This presentation will use the history of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden and its landscapes, plant groupings, and individual taxa to demonstrate that the garden has infinite capacity to inspire those seeking to bring native California into their gardens. It will emphasize plants that are extraordinarily beautiful but also eminently growable, and take note of species that have done well on miserable clay soils or with minimal to no irrigation.

The history of the garden has involved some 70 years of experimentation, discovering what will grow here, interwoven with an artistic vision established by founding director James Roof and carried on to the present with vigilant attention to improvement. Steve will discuss what has worked and what has not worked, including making a landscape filled with plants from the Sierra Nevada and maintaining a spectacular collection of desert and southern California plants on the edge of the Berkeley fog belt.

Workshops:

Steve Edwards and Glenn Keator: Drought Tolerant Plants

This workshop will focus on outstanding drought tolerant plants in the Regional Parks Botanic Garden for Bay Area gardens. Participants will walk through the garden with Steve or Glenn to see examples of individual plants and effective plant combinations.

Jocelyn Cohen: Aesthetic Pruning

California's handsome native trees and shrubs get caught in a Catch 22; on the one hand a common point of view that "natives are too messy and wild for

our cultivated gardens, and on the other “our natives are free-spirited and natural and thus should not be pruned.” Participants will walk through the botanic garden with Jocelyn and look closely at a half-dozen trees and shrubs to understand when and how to prune them to bring out their essences. She will touch on how nursery and garden conditions influence plants’ growth and aesthetic pruning considerations.

Mike Uhler: Tending a Native Garden

Join Mike for a walk through the botanic garden and a discussion of planting, new plant establishment, pruning, weed control (with an emphasis on chemical-free techniques), mulching, and watering (when to water, and more importantly when not to). Participants will see examples and results using the methods Mike will present. Time permitting, Mike will explore the topic of propagation.

Sarah Wikander: Principles of Irrigation

This workshop will cover guidelines for irrigation, focusing on native vegetation types and the need for water conservation. Topics will include:

- The importance of soils, slope, and the water requirements of plants for irrigation design.
- Avoiding the most common types of water loss in irrigation design.
- Modifying planting designs and installations to reflect the constraints of both water availability and existing irrigation technology.
- Features of irrigation controllers that assist in efficient watering.
- Water conservation strategies.

Native Here Nursery:

Charli Danielsen: Using Local Natives

Participants will tour Native Here Nursery in Tilden Park, while discussing the rationale for founding a nursery devoted to growing local plants for use in their native locales, how seeds and cuttings are found and treated, some of the challenges of growing plants that are not “nursery and garden tested”, and what to expect of them in garden and restoration plantings. Decision points on when, where, why and whether it is important to stick to local natives will also be explored.

Participants will have an opportunity to purchase plants, and the compact disk *East Bay Native Plants* will be available at \$25 per copy.

Tour of two private gardens:

Greenberg Garden: The Greenberg garden was inspired by the oak woodlands, grasslands, and chaparral of the surrounding valley in Lafayette and the

redwood forests of the East Bay hills. The 1.3 acre waterwise garden, now approaching its 30th year, is a tranquil refuge for plants, people, and wildlife. Katherine Greenberg is a gardener (in her own garden) and garden designer with a special interest in native plants. She is president of Pacific Horticultural Foundation, past president of the Mediterranean Garden Society, and founding president of the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden.

Fleming Garden: Started in the 1950s, Scott and Jenny Fleming's native garden in the Berkeley hills is one of the oldest in the Bay Area. With over 200 species, it has the plants of a collector's garden and the composition of a designer's garden. Luke Hass has maintained the Fleming garden since 2002. He is a landscaper, gardener, and board member of the Friends of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden.