

NEWSLETTER

Winter/Early Spring 2020

Students choose garden to make environmental change

Year-long project studies carbon sequestration in garden trees

A group of Westlake High School science students have chosen the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden as an "outdoor laboratory" for an environmental project they hope will bring change to their own school campus.

The students are working on a year-long action project for an honors-level environmental field studies class taught by instructor Jennifer Boyd, which requires them to focus on a local environmental subject.

For their project, they are measuring the canopy density of about 50 trees at the CVBG, and calculating how much carbon from the air the trees sequester.

Carbon sequestration is the process by which atmospheric carbon dioxide is taken up by trees, grasses and other plants through photosynthesis. Then it is stored as carbon in trunks, branches, foliage, and roots, as well as soils.

"Certain species of trees also have different effects on sequestering CO₂ and that's what



Daniel Yal, a Westlake High School student, takes the measurement of a tree trunk at the garden.

we're collecting data on," said Stephen Saw, a student.

The students will be using formulas that require data, such as the maturity and size of the tree, as well as light intensity and other information, to figure out how much carbon is actually being sequestered.

The students are also using GPS, so they can track and relocate the trees to validate where they are reading the canopy. For deciduous trees, returning to retrieve data at different times of the year is important.

According to the United States Geological Survey, carbon sequestering is "one method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change."

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Joshua Langhore, a Westlake High School student, takes notes at the garden.

The Conejo Valley Botanic Garden is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, cultivation and display of native and other water-conserving plants.

Projects in the garden



Volunteers Alex Dizon, Daphne Wells, and Jay Lavi, built a new Passion Vine arbor in the rare fruit garden.



A child inside the Kids' Adventure Garden enjoys the beautiful, new (and much-needed) shaded picnic table, which was made by volunteer and talented woodworker David Hergesheimer.

Student project story, continued from page 1

"By analyzing the canopy densities and modification of temperatures, now they can modify their campus and reduce the heat reflection off of the hardscape. So, there's a practical application to their project, and it's very pertinent," said Dr. Steven Cohan, a CVBG board director supervising the project at the Botanic Garden.

Cohan, a retired university plant science professor, also added that the project is a good learning experience for the students to use the CVBG as an outdoor laboratory."

"The Botanic Garden has a lot of resources it offers in terms of studying the local environment," Saw agreed.

The students plan to present the results of their findings at the end of the school year.

Joshua Langhorne is also a student in the Field Studies class, which is project based and takes the knowledge they gained from previous advanced placement courses and applies it to real world.

"I'm really interested in the environment, so I

love it," Langhorne said.

Daniel Yal, a student, is also using his advanced math skills to handle the data for the project.

"Nature is probably one of the best places to find good data. There's a lot of really cool phenomena here, and I just felt it would be a great place to start and introduce myself to this project," Yal said.

We look forward to hearing the results of their project when it's completed!



Westlake High School students Stephen Saw, Emily Iopioffe, Daniel Yal, and Joshua Langhorne are working on a carbon sequestration project at the garden.

Master Gardener Program trainees get tour, learn about volunteer opportunities at garden



Trainees in the University of California Master Gardener Program in Ventura County recently paid a visit to the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden to learn more about the garden and the numerous volunteer possibilities available here.

Bill Dobner, a master gardener and a longtime volunteer at the garden, led the tour and explained the history of the garden.

“We’ve been here almost 50 years,” Dobner said about the garden, which started in 1973. The 33-acre garden property is leased by the city for \$1 a year.

Dobner said that one of the things he regularly gets asked is, where is the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden? And usually the person who asks mistakes it for the Gardens of the World, a privately-owned garden on Thousand Oaks Boulevard.

The difference, he explained, is the CVBG is a local, public garden that is manned by volunteers and run on donations, fundraising efforts, and grants.

“It’s unique here. We have a lot of specific areas in the garden dedicated to different types of plants,” he said.

Master Gardener trainees and graduates must put in a specific number of hours of volunteer time at their choice of ten different partner gardens, including the CVBG.

Dobner encouraged the trainees and others to volunteer at the CVBG. He emphasized that times to volunteer and projects to work on are flexible.

“We have volunteers working in everything from fundraising, newsletters, propagation, pruning, pulling weeds, to you name it. Anything related to the garden is welcome here,” Dobner said. “There will be a lot of areas where you can add your expertise if you’re interested.”

“If you’re determined to work in a specific area of the garden, you can do that. We will work with you in terms of developing that area or enhancing it as best we can, depending on funding,” he added.

Dobner noted Marshall Monley, a master gardener and CVBG board director, as an example of someone who does exemplary work at the garden.

For Dobner, who is originally from Montana, the draw to volunteer at the garden was that it was close to his home in Thousand Oaks.

“And for me, it’s been ongoing continuing education ever since I’ve been here,” he said.

“I love the garden.”



CVBG Volunteer Profile: Daphne Wells

If you visit the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden, you most likely will run into Daphne Wells, an outstanding volunteer who has been an incredible asset with everything she participates in, whether it be greeting visitors on Sundays at the Kids' Adventure Garden or taking a leading role in various projects in the Main Garden.

Wells, a Moorpark resident, actually first got connected with the garden during the 2019 Matilija Poppy Festival.

She said when she saw an advertisement for the festival in the local newspaper, she felt "like Darwin in the Galapagos or Steven Maturin in the movie 'Master and Commander.'"

"I gleefully emptied my wallet at the (garden's) plant sale and then came back two weekends more," she said.

"From the beginning, I wanted to try everything to get a feel for the garden organization and pick an area to be of use," said Wells, who has worked with replanting Lillian's Meadow and the California Native area.

Wells also recently helped set up a trellis in the Rare Fruit Garden, and helped children prepare for the upcoming Earth Day event.

She definitely is not a newbie to gardening. Her Moorpark home that she shares with her husband Rick has a yard filled with beautiful plants, flowers and fruit trees.

"I want to go into my yard and grab a bite to eat, a tea to drink, an herb to spice up life, and flowers to give a friend," she explained. "We have a tangerine tree in the front yard to encourage



the neighborhood kids to pick one on the way to and from school. We even have a couple of other citrus trees in the backyard so we have fresh vitamin C year round."

Even though she has gardening experience, Wells said the CVBG offers volunteers like herself an opportunity to learn from the land and experienced caretakers.

"I always come home with an interesting story (after volunteering)," she said. "Working with the Rare Orchard crew you get to taste things."

And, why does she think people should visit the garden?

"Like the birds that sweep in for a drink in our falling water ponds, they should come. It's beautiful. It's nourishing."



Happenings in the garden

*Local high school students helped prepare cuttings and seedlings for an upcoming Earth Day event, which will be held at the garden on Saturday, April 25. More details to come, so check emails for updates!

*We love rain at the garden, but too much of it can cause damage to the trails. Before heavy rains in December, Board Director Marshall Monley and contractor Jim Cyr surveyed the trails

and dug several run-off ditches across them to handle erosion.

*Preparation has already begun for the upcoming Matilija Poppy Festival, with volunteers and workers doing winter preparation, including cutting back the poppies, and carting off the bulk of the stems of the pruned plants. The rest will be left there to serve as mulch. We can't wait to see the new blooms in spring!

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

-John Steinbeck



Winter/Early spring gardening tips

—Plant summer bulbs now:

Nurseries are well stocked right now with summer bulbs, which are planted in winter/spring. Some beauties to plant now are vibrant gloriosa lilies and colorful tiger flowers.

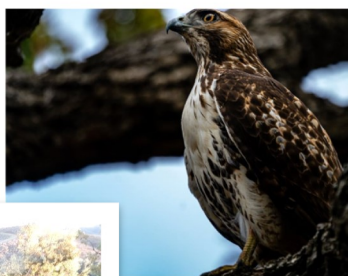
-Tread carefully: Stay out of flower beds until they can dry—usually from a few days to up to a week or more after it rains. If you trample through beds after rain, you may compact the soil, decreasing the porosity and limiting the water, nutrients and air necessary for healthy plant root activity.

-Consider blackberries: Blackberries are native to California, and many varieties can be successfully planted in backyards and supported with trellises. Try varieties such as 'Boysen' and 'Ollalie'.

Garden views

Here are some photos submitted by garden volunteers, and visitors. For more photos, visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/conejovalleybotanicgarden>, or our Flickr page @ Conejo Valley Botanic Garden.

(right) A hawk visits the garden by Photos for Thought



(above) Grape vine trellis by Joseph Scarpine.

(right) Sunset view by Visit Conejo Valley



What's blooming

Some of our favorite plants are blooming right now at the Conejo Valley Botanic Garden. Here is a sampling:

Banksia menziesii (firewood banksia) is a rugged native



tree to West Australia that produces stunning pink-red flower spikes with golden styles from winter through early summer that attract bees, butterflies and birds. Each spike is composed of up to 6,000 individual flowers, yet only a few

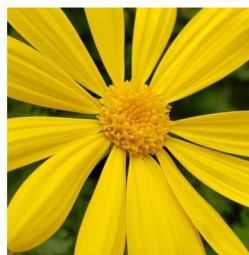
become filled with seeds. The fruits protect the seeds from animals that forage, so most of the time, the fruits will not open until they have been burnt or are thoroughly dried out. (Found in the Australian Garden)

Tulbaghia fragrans (society garlic) is a perennial that is



native to South Africa and produces pink-purple flowers at the end of winter and early spring when the leaves are still dormant. It has a pleasant fragrance, and some say that placing them in a vase can perfume a whole house. (Found in the Mediterranean Garden)

Euryops pectinatus (yellow bush daisy or African yellow daisy) produce sunny



flowerheads. It is considered a tough plant that flowers most seasons until the first freeze and survives all but the most extreme warm weather conditions. The name Euryops is probably a contraction of Greek words meaning "wide" and "eye" and possibly refers to the large flowerheads compared to the

narrow leaves. (Found in the Kids' Adventure Garden)

Cephalocereus senilis (old man cactus) is native to eastern Mexico. It has hairs that are actually modified



spines that make the plant appear almost snow white and serve to protect the plants from frost and sun. Flowering is rare (usually until after 10-20 years old), and will usually happen in early spring and at night. (Found in the Cactus Garden)



Gardening Fun Facts: **The earliest gardens were used to grow food and medicinal herbs. Around 1500 B.C. in Egypt, the first decorative gardens appeared. **There are more microorganisms in one teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth. ** During the 1600s, tulips were so valuable in Holland that their bulbs were worth more than gold.

CONEJO VALLEY BOTANIC GARDEN

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President – Beverly Brune
Vice president – Melvin Earley
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Newsletter Editor

Michele Willer-Allred

Address

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Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

www.conejogarden.org

Garden Hours

Sunrise to Sunset
Closed July 4th, during rain and when
paths are muddy. Also closed during
high winds and fire danger.

Renew Your Membership or Become a New Member!

Your tax-deductible dues payment and/or
contribution should be sent to:

Conejo Valley Botanic Garden

400 W. Gainsborough Rd.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
Include your name, address,
Email and telephone number.

Annual membership

\$50 - Family
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[www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-
programs/rap](http://www.ahsgardening.org/gardening-
programs/rap).**

(Some restrictions apply)

CALENDAR

Saturday, March 7 — Conejo Valley Audubon Society's Birding
Identification class led by Bonnie Clarfield-Bylin.

8 am—10 am, in the CVBG Kids' Garden. \$10 donation.
To RSVP, call Dee Lyon (805) 499-2165

Sunday, March 8—Daylight savings time begins:
Set clock forward one hour!

Tuesday, March 17—St. Patrick's Day

Friday, March 20—First day of spring

Upcoming

Saturday, April 25—CVBG Earth Day event

Sunday, May 17 — Matilija Poppy Festival

Stay tuned for more details!

Ongoing

Kids' Adventure Garden

Open Sundays 11 am-3 pm

Live Music by RubySkye

First Sunday of the month 11:30 am-1 pm

Plant Sales in the Garden Shop

Every Sunday 11 am-3 pm

Floral Design Classes

In the Sogetsu style

1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month

Contact Camille: (805) 498-7421

Kids' Birthday Parties

Email Sandy Krutilek:

conejo.garden@yahoo.com

Garden Tours (including children groups and school tours)

Email Mary Freed:

conejo.garden@yahoo.com

DONATIONS RECEIVED

(December 2019-February 2020)

**Chevron Your Cause fbo Bella Hermesen
Allison Beck
Kathy Vieth
Joan Craig in honor of Beverly Brune**

**GRANTS
City of Thousand Oaks**

