

CNPS-SD FALL NATIVE GARDENING WORKSHOP 2018

Create a California Native Garden: Ready, Set, Go!

FINAL REPORT

DATE: Saturday, September 8, 2018, 9:00am-3:00pm

LOCATION: Scripps Sumner Auditorium, UCSD, La Jolla

SCHEDULE:

8:15 am Registration, Coffee and Muffins, Plant Sale

9:00 am **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: A WALK THROUGH YOUR NATURAL GARDEN**

Mike Evans (*President, Tree of Life Nursery*)

10:00 am **NATIVE GARDEN DESIGN NUTS 'N BOLTS**

Clayton Tschudy (*Owner of Tschudy Ecological Designs and Former Director of Horticulture & Exhibits at Water Conservation Garden*)

11:00 am **NATIVE PLANT SELECTION FOR YOUR GARDEN-THE NATURE RESTORATION APPROACH**

Dennis Mudd (*Founder of Calscape.com and Winner of San Diego Home and Garden's Garden of the Year Award in 2012*)

12:00 pm Lunch (boxed lunch included), Plant Sale continues until 1 pm

1:00 pm **INSTALLATION: THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PLANTING, WATERING, AND MULCHING**

A panel of experts moderated by **Clayton Tschudy**:

-**Mike Gonzales** (Natural Resources Project Manager)

-**Lee Gordon** (CNPS-San Diego Writer and Committee Champion of Gardening and Propagation best practices)

-**Diane Kennedy** (Founder, Finch Frolic Garden Permaculture)

-**Don Rideout** (Co-Founder and Past President, Anza-Borrego Desert Botany Society and Plant Selection Editor, Calscape.org)

2:15 pm **YOUR NATIVE GARDEN: CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

A presentation by the co-authors of "The California Native Landscape: The Homeowners' Design Guide to Restoring its Beauty and Balance" and "The Drought Defying California Garden"

-**Lucy Warren** (*Author, Master Gardener, and Former Editor of California Garden magazine*)

-**Greg Rubin** (*President and Founder of California's Own Native Landscape Design, Inc., Author, and a Licensed Landscape Contractor*)

TICKETS SOLD

WORKSHOP Create a California Native Garden: Ready-Set-Go! - Sep 08, 2018 9:00 AM

PRICE LEVEL	Sale Price	Quantity	Value
Door	55	1	55
Mail Registration by check General	55	1	55
Mail Registration by check Early Bird	45	1	45
Sponsor Tickets (0.00)	0	2	0
Student (30.00)	30	3	90
Early Bird Registration (45.00)	45	115	5175
General Registration (55.00)	55	99	5445
TOTAL		222	10,865

CHALLENGES IN PLANNING:

Venue search-CNPS-SD is growing as an organization and there is expanded interest in our organization (and this is a great thing). We want to try and increase our capacity for this particular event over time. However, it is becoming more challenging to find a venue for the Fall Workshop that will hold 200 or more people. It took almost 3 weeks of both of us searching online and making phone calls to find a venue. The identified venue had many challenges that are listed below.

Venue issues-Parking was far away (5-10 min walk) if you didn't find a spot on the street, ask about assumed items such as AC available. We found electric plugs when we did the onsite but never imagined they would not be live. Therefore we had some issues with brewing coffee and blowing fuses, but thankfully, Steve Miller helped us out of that one.

- Venue coordinator was slow to respond to questions and requests. Had rarely rented the auditorium to any outside group.
- Lot parking was far away and not guaranteed to us. Permits were sold to us but it was an uncertainty how many of those lot spaces would be available. The logistics of determining in advance four appropriate lots and available street parking consumed hours of time.
- Nearby street parking was miniscule. No drop-off area to discharge passengers OR load purchased plants.
- There was a slope in the paths leading to and away from the venue. This created some problems for equipment and nursery unloading/loading. Also, some attendees found navigating the slope difficult.
- Air conditioning was under repair-we found out just a few weeks before the event.
- The two single-station bathrooms were inadequate. The men's bathroom had a disjointed faucet.

Meals

A sizable challenge was our being required to place a catering order for boxed lunches by the university. The lunches required a lot of trash disposal. There wasn't very much outdoor seating. We ended up renting 50 chairs in addition to what was available on the campus. Our ticketing site didn't offer a good way to place a specific order for each person. We were able, however, to identify those who wanted a vegan or gluten-friendly lunch choice (same catered meal). We labeled those meals at the event.

Programming We decided to run a sequentially thematic program of 4 presentations preceded by a keynote speaker. One of the presentation was planned to be a moderated panel of 3 experts (later bumped to 4). The focus was creating a native garden from the planning phase to the installation and care and maintenance phases. This required a different approach than on some occasions in the past where we identified speakers and essentially asked them what they had or wanted to present. These were assignments! So we could expect some push-back or, at the least, some confusion about the changed approach from past speakers.

Overall, the speakers pulled together memorable presentations that were focused on their assigned topics, however there were some gaps. There was a fair amount of effort, at times, to spell everything out so that there wouldn't be overlap amongst the presentations.

Registration and ticketing The workshop was sold out a week in advance. However, there were some latecomers and procrastinators who really wanted to attend. We were able to accomodate in most cases by adding more tickets and swapping people for the turn-back tickets. However, it created substantial extra work for ticketing.

Communications Writing a detailed week-of email with the intricate details of parking and logistics for the event was a challenge. We sent an extra email to attendees to confirm that they received this first email.

Speakers Identifying available speakers was a challenge. A number of speakers were out of town or had other commitments. We also wanted to make sure that we asked speakers with solid presentation skills, who could keep an audience engaged during the course of a long day. We tried to create a balance of female and male speakers but many female speakers were not available on the date of the workshop.

Equipment Managing stored equipment and supplies with purchased equipment and supplies, audio-visual equipment, and food items was a heady challenge.

CHALLENGES ON THE DAY-OF-EVENT

- As anticipated---bathrooms! Constant lines for women. A portalet was identified about a 1-minute walk away, but it was not too savory.
- Air conditioning was turned off on the morning of the event! We called maintenance and it took them over two hours to restore the settings.
- One nursery was upset that they did not have ample time to set up but they arrived later than what was communicated to them and what was agreed to.
- There was a rush of people purchasing plants and merchandise during breaks and the sellers and cashier were overwhelmed.
- Very difficult to restart the presentations after breaks. Attendees wouldn't take their seats when requested.
- Several attendees parked in the lots that we had marked in our instructions as NOT available for the event. Strangely, many people did not use the parking lots and found either street parking or other modes of transportation presumably.
- The preorder vegan/gluten-friendly lunches were left on the table by half the people ordering them who opted for the regular lunches,, thus leaving them as a 'discard pile' for those coming late to lunch. This was completely unexpected.
- Managing volunteers early in the event, especially in the remote parking locations, combined with hauling and unloading equipment was a vigorous time challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

Venue Search

- Begin identifying possibilities sooner. We have maintained a list of future possibilities.
- We came to realize that all of the rooms in Casa del Prado are booked indefinitely so that is pretty much a wasted effort.
- Don't rent a space that isn't used on a consistent basis for similar type events.
- Pay close attention to parking from the very beginning. Make sure there is easily accessible parking.
- There should be 1 toilet stall available per 50 attendees.
- Pay attention to slope in terms of access and loading/unloading.

Meals

The best choice for these events are if there are restaurants or foodservice operations nearby or 'on campus'. Attendees frequently prefer to make their own food choices, often spontaneously. However, if that is not available, catered services take a lot of burden off the event directors.

Programming

If co-directing, agree on theme and/or format for the workshop. But, then have one person communicate it to the potential speakers so that every speaker gets the same message in lieu of two or more slightly differing messages.

Registration and ticketing

- When venue is chosen, agree on target number for audience in advance and allow for a buffer since we are experiencing more interest in the area of native planting. It is okay to 'oversell' venue by about 10-15% to account for no-shows. Base this number on realistic capacity and resources of the venue.
- Keeping a waitlist after the event is sold out is okay but only for turned-back tickets.

Communications

Confirming and then re-confirming with participants is always a solid approach. In some cases, re-confirming again with key people or businesses by saying, "I will see you at 8am, then" might be helpful.

Speakers

Talk with potential speakers in advance of workshop planning to see what they have to offer or might be pursuing at the time.

Equipment

- Prepare a final list of equipment and supplies at least two weeks in advance.
- It might work best to rent a U-haul truck and designate a volunteer to drive it and another 2 volunteers to load and unload it. Storage unit equipment would have to be loaded a day in advance.

Presentations

- Longer time frames (meaning 1 presentation less?)
- Fewer breaks (attendees could take a break during a 15-minute Q & A session)
- Close doors to auditorium to filter outside noise

Sales at Event

- If the planning is for an event of 200 or more participants, have 2 cashiers available.
- Coordinate with nurseries and come up with a streamlined way to purchase and store plants.
- Perhaps include a ½-hour break for shopping at some point.

Presentation Resources

- Request from speakers that they submit at least one document or several key slides from their presentation to a post-event resource page for attendees. For an example, see cnpssd.org/fw18-documents
- We prefer not to print handouts and would rather store them online as above, minimizing paper waste and offering a secure library to continue one's studies from a workshop.

Potential Future Venues

During the workshop, one of the attendees, a Master Gardener, made a suggestion and gave us info on a County Municipal Building in Kearny Mesa that has parking, ample bathrooms and maybe even some rooms for break out sessions. MG Scott Parker is the contact. This should be explored for future workshops.

INPUT FROM ATTENDEES

All input on the day of the event indicated that the workshop was extremely well received. Throughout the course of the day, we had numerous attendees say how much they were enjoying the sessions and how much they enjoyed the speakers, that the volunteers were great and they enjoyed how well the event was organized.

VOLUNTEERS

We had tremendous support from the Garden Committee with Al Field, Bonnie Nickel, Sheila Kirschenbaum, Nancy Levine, Sue & Karen Marchetti, Diana Stockdale, Jeff Stanley, and Holly Jones helping out in many capacities. We had some other non GC helpers- Jeff Lincer, Kristy Ashby, Nancy Deutsch, Marisol Davalos, Louis Perilla, and Eduardo Reynoso. Of course, a big thanks to Cindy Burrascano and Cindy Hazuka and Connie di Girolamo, who put in a very full day and Pete di Girolamo who helped out too. Steve Miller was our very valued UCSD contact sponsoring us to rent the venue and was on call-all day for Tech Support. Great teamwork!

SURVEY

To read the complete survey please view document “Fall Workshop 2018 Survey Results” in Admin folder Special Events under Surveys.

Top Trends in Comments:

- Bathroom issues (We knew that would be an issue)
- Parking a challenge for some, but many were very satisfied with detailed directions
- Attendees wanted better staffing and organization for plant sales and book sales
- Attendees wanted more time for questions during sessions
- Attendees would like more presentation documents available to them, especially after the event.
- Volunteers were incredibly helpful and appreciated. So many comments. No surprises there!
 - “The staff and volunteers were all wonderful!”
 - “They were very helpful, enthusiastic and friendly.”
 - “What great volunteers - helpful, cheerful, knowledgeable”
- Most attendees reported that they enjoyed the workshop and gained a lot from it.
 - · Everyone was delightful -- a beautiful day!
 - · Everyone was very gracious and helpful.

- · Seemed to work seamlessly from casual observation
 - · This was my first time attending CNPS event. I was very impressed!
 - · A+ Not enough toilets, though.
- A few attendees did not glean much from the day, either feeling like the material was a retread or not presented in a helpful fashion
- We are particularly fond of this response:
 - "I always enjoy this event. You all have it so well organized and it runs smooth as silk. The presenters are great, the attendees are all taking notes so you know they are learning and inspired. I was a little "under the weather" this year so did not stay after lunch, came home with several plants, especially pleased with the 4 ft. fern leaf Ironwood and we are clearing a space for it next to the house. My thanks to you and everyone who helped put the event together. I plan to attend next year and may bring some friends this time."