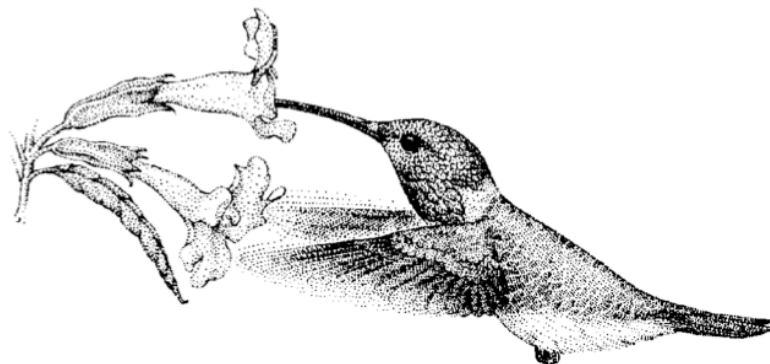


Saturday and
Sunday
May 2 and 3, 2026



Bringing Back
the
Natives
Garden Tour

The *Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour* showcases gardens that provide habitat for wildlife, are water conserving, free of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and contain 70% or more native plants. The gardens featured in the tour will demonstrate that, from postage-stamp sized yards to large lots, beautiful California native plant gardens are possible for anyone.

The purposes of this tour are to:

- Provide Alameda and Contra Costa County residents with the opportunity to see first-hand gardens containing 70% or more native plants.
- Illustrate that healthy, attractive gardens can flourish without the use of chemicals.
- Motivate residents to try gardening with native plants.
- Encourage gardeners to use natural gardening techniques in their own gardens by providing the opportunity to visit a variety of interesting and visually appealing pesticide-free gardens.
- Inspire gardeners to provide wildlife habitat in their home gardens.

Details:

- Tour participants will pre-register for the tour. Visitors receive directions after registering.

- The tour will be advertised in local papers, gardening-related and environmental publications and on a variety of websites.
- During the tour host gardener(s) will need to be at their gardens from 10:00-5:00, and be ready and willing to provide information on native plants, and to explain the various natural gardening techniques that are used. Volunteers will be sought to assist with greeting visitors and answering questions.
- Hosts must label the native plants. Information on how to make labels will be provided.
- Hosts should try and find their own morning and afternoon Greeters.
- Visitors will be informed in advance that rest room facilities will not be available at host gardens and that the gardens will be available for viewing only between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Step 1—Does your garden qualify?

Host gardens must meet the following criteria to be considered for tour participation:

- The garden contains 70% or more California native plants (excluding lawn).
- Gardener must use organic and/or natural techniques for pest control, rather than synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. “Organic” refers to materials used in certified organic production; examples are soap, oil, sulphur and copper. “Natural” refers to the encouragement of beneficial insects or other wildlife for pest control.
- Demonstrate water-conservation techniques. Examples include use of mulches, groundcover plants, water-efficient drip or soaker-hose irrigation, and the use of drought-tolerant plants. Lawn size is minimized.
- No invasive species are on-site.
- The gardener is a good ambassador for natural gardening. The gardener is knowledgeable about native plants and natural gardening techniques, and will enjoy sharing this information with the public.

Step 2—Submit the questionnaire and a list of the native plants in your garden

Complete this application, sign the letter of agreement, and mail them, and your native plant list, as soon as possible. Garden selection will be made from respondents that meet the criteria (step 1) and best demonstrate a variety of natural gardening techniques. Natural techniques could include, but are not limited to the following: reduced or no lawn, dense plantings to out-compete weeds, mulching, use of compost to enrich the soil, inclusion of bird and beneficial insect-attracting plants, and the conditions to support the needs of wildlife, such as food, water, shelter, and breeding areas.

If your garden is not selected, it could be because we selected gardens that were clustered together, we needed gardens in certain geographic areas, or because of a desire to showcase a variety of natural gardening techniques, and not because of the quality of your garden.

Step 3—Wait to be notified

After the Host Garden Applications have been reviewed gardens that meet the criteria will be visited by a garden tour planner. Don't worry about having your garden look its best at this time. The purpose of the visit is for the garden tour planner to meet the gardener, view the garden, and discuss the site.

Questions?

If you should have questions about the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour criteria or wish to obtain additional copies of the host garden application, e-mail Kathy Kramer at kathy@kathykramerconsulting.net or call (510) 236-9558 between 9 am and 7 pm.



Your Questionnaire

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Day phone _____ Evening phone _____

Parking restrictions _____

Nearest two main cross streets and freeway _____

The garden

- Square footage of the garden areas proposed for the tour:

front _____ back _____ parking strip _____ side _____

- What kind of garden do you have? (Check all that apply)

native plants from throughout California

local native plants

low-water-use

use of drought-tolerant plants

collector's garden

wildflowers

collect seeds/cuttings and propagate own plants

woodland

butterfly

bird

hummingbird

use of insect-attracting plants

slope

creekside

low maintenance

wildlands look

manicured look

edible landscape

other _____

- What kinds of birds, insects, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals visit your garden? _____

- How do you provide food, shelter, nesting areas and water for wildlife? _____

Describe any unusual physical features of your garden (Stream? Extreme shade? Extreme slope? Difficult soil? etc.)

- Approximately what percentage of your garden (excluding lawn) is planted with native plants? _____

- Approximately what percentage of your garden is lawn? _____

- Did you sheetmulch? Did you receive a lawn removal rebate? If so, from what agency?

- Do you have a water feature? **yes** **no** If yes, please describe it _____

- Which agency provides your water? EBMUD CCWD ACWD Zone 7
- How do you deal with persistent weeds? _____
- Is your garden free of synthetic chemicals? yes no
- When you began gardening at this site, were there elements that needed correcting that you successfully addressed? What were they and how did you address them?

- Which of the following natural gardening techniques do you currently use?

- | | |
|---|--|
| drought-resistant plants | disease-resistant plants |
| sticky barriers (example, Tanglefoot) | provide wildlife habitat (food, shelter, water) |
| copper barriers | provide sound of falling water to attract wildlife |
| encourage beneficial insects with plant choices | efficient irrigation (drip, timers, soaker hoses) |
| encourage birds with plant choices | mulching with leaves, grass, wood chips |
| grasscycle (leave clippings on lawn) | reduced lawn size |
| use compost to enrich soil | grouping plants of similar needs |
| dense plantings to outcompete weeds | minimize hardscapes (concrete patios, decks) |
| tolerate some plant damage | |

- Are there any special or unique features such as plants, special habitat or erosion control projects that you would like to showcase in the garden guide? Examples might include mason bee nests, a butterfly garden, bank stabilization project, or other unique elements of your garden.



- Who designed the garden? _____
- Who installed the garden? _____
- When was your native garden installed? _____

Graphics courtesy
Valerie Kells, from
the National History
of Big Sur.

Other

- Do you have before and after photos of your garden? yes no
(Photos are not required, but would be of interest.)
- Is your garden certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Garden?
yes no certification in progress

(The NWF website is <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat>;
Certification is not required for participation in the tour.)

- How did you hear about the tour and acquire this application?

- I would be willing to give two fifteen-minute talks on the day of the garden tour. My talk title is _____

That's it!

Please return your completed application and native plant list *no later than July 15, 2025* to →

Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour

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