

Come visit our new Southern California Native Pollinators' Garden at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine!

The San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary has something new for visitors: a native pollinators' garden! Next to the Butterfly Garden behind the historic Duck Club building, this 6,600 sq.ft garden features southern California native plants that attract native pollinators. What are pollinators? They are animals like hummingbirds, insects, and bats that help transfer pollen from one plant to another to help create new plants. Bees are especially important, but beetles, butterflies, moths, and flies also help pollinate plants.

Perhaps you have heard that honey bees are disappearing, but native solitary bee populations are also decreasing. Why should we care? Because without pollinators, we would lose 1 out of every 3 bites of food to eat, drinks to swallow, fibers to wear or use, and medicines to take! Pollinators are important!

The education staff of Sea and Sage Audubon was inspired by former Education Committee chairman Vic Westling, a visionary who recognized the need to bring attention to the plight and benefits of native pollinators. We received permission from the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary Inc. Board of Directors to develop a beautiful garden that demonstrates the major role of pollinators in the ecosystem and the vital importance of preserving them.

We selected 20 different Southern California native plants for our garden. These plants are adapted to dry summers, are drought-tolerant, and can live in full sun and clay soil. We use drip irrigation once a week to get the plants growing during this dry winter. We will not use any pesticides because birds and other wildlife will remove any pests the natural way!

To attract hummingbirds, we planted Island Bush Snapdragon, Sticky Monkey Flower, Hummingbird Sage, California Fuchsia, Peninsular Manzanita, Red Fairyduster, Dudleya and Bladderpod. Hummingbirds love these red, light orange, and deep purple tubular-shaped flowers!



To attract solitary bees, we planted White Sage, Black Sage, Cleveland Sage, San Clemente Island Bush Mallow, Desert Mallow, California Buckwheat, Desert Penstemon, Foothill Penstemon, Showy Penstemon, San Diego Coyote Mint, California Goldenrod, Western Elderberry, and Greenbark Ceanothus. We planted these in clumps to make it easy for bees to visually find the flowers. These plants bloom at different times of year so native bees will have a continual source of nectar food.

Since native bees also need a nesting place in the ground and in wood, we included dead tree stumps and branches plus a few bare areas on the ground. An Eagle Scout from our summer camp programs is working on a bee nursery with tubes for nesting. These are different from the non-native, colonial European Honey Bee that builds hives and makes honey. Native bees are solitary and less aggressive!

It is easy to make your home garden native pollinator-friendly! Using Southern California native plants, you can attract a wide variety of pollinators to your garden and benefit wildlife. Let us show you how! Contact Trude Hurd or Deborah Brin at seaandsage@sbcglobal.net. Also, see our Pollinators' Garden Plant List which is divided gives information about height, width, flower and flowering season.

