



The RCD Mission

“To help people protect, conserve,
and restore natural resources
through education, information,
and technical assistance programs.”



The RCD of Greater San Diego County

- Covers nearly 3,000 square miles or 1.8 million acres.
- From the Pacific Ocean east to the Imperial County line, south to the US-Mexico border.
- Region encompasses mountains, deserts, forests, and coast.
- Includes urban, agricultural, and suburban areas.
- Densely populated with 3.32 million people living in the county as of 2016.



Our Programs

- The RCD of Greater San Diego County runs a variety of programs addressing the unique needs of our region:
 - Fire Prevention & Education
 - Storm Water Pollution Prevention
 - School Gardening Programs
 - Tijuana River Valley Community Garden
 - Milkweed for Monarchs
 - RCD Conservation Scholarships
 - District Headquarters Conservation Garden
 - Nursery & Greenhouse on Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians Tribal Land
 - Carbon Farm Planning
 - Conservation Planning

Tijuana River Valley Community Garden



Urban-Ag Interface in the Tijuana River Valley



- The garden is located in the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, SD County managed park a few miles from the US-Mexico border.
- 100+ year history of farming – past and present.
- Multiple ecosystems and home to many sensitive plant species and migratory birds.
- The area is culturally diverse, and home to many low income communities.

Garden History

- Opened to the public in 2002 with the support of a \$40,000 grant from the NRCS to build 90, 30' x 30' garden plots.
- In 2005 the garden expanded to 136 plots due to demand. Two more plots were added in 2016.
- Managed by the RCD through an agreement with SD County Parks.
- The largest community garden in the county, and a long waiting list demonstrates demand to expand to increase access.
- The property borders the Tijuana River, is surrounded by park trails, includes a community pollinator garden, a gazebo, and numerous bird houses and owl boxes.
- Garden expansion has been an ongoing and long term goal:
 - *Long waitlist for plots*
 - *County survey of community needs*
 - *State support of urban agriculture opportunities (AB551)*
 - *Demand for green space in urban communities*
 - *Access to healthy produce*
 - *Support for new farmers and the region's farming community (San Diego has the largest number of small scale farms in the county.)*



Garden Management

- Regular site visits and communication with gardeners.
- Terms of Use / Lease Agreement.
- Letter correspondence.
- Coordinating repairs, site improvements.
- Record keeping – plot condition, contact information for gardeners, volunteer hours.






JULY 2017 - SUMMER

TIJUANAN RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY GARDEN

TEV

Garden News



Every Drop Counts!

Let's work together to reduce water use and water costs.

Starting in the 2017-2018 rental term, we are responsible to pay around 30 percent of our water bill. We are grateful that the majority of our water use will still be generously funded. However this raises a new garden challenge. Can we lower our water use? With more land than ever to irrigate and rising temperatures, it is very important that everyone be utilizing water wise practices to keep water costs low. Using less water means a lower water bill!! Let's help each other out, share irrigation knowledge and smart practices!!

Water Saving 101...

- 1) Repair:** Fix Leaks!
- 2) Reduce:** Install a water wise irrigation system... drip or micro-spray! Need a hand, give us a call and we can connect you with fellow gardeners who know a thing or two about irrigation systems!
- 3) Mulch, mulch, mulch:** Mulch around plants: this helps the soil to retain water. You can add a 3-4 inch layer of untreated wood chips, weed-free straw, cardboard, or a few layers of newspaper covered with grass clippings or other vegetation. Mulching also helps control weeds!
- 4) Amend:** Add compost to your soil to help retain moisture. The more organic matter in your soil the more water storage possible!

RCD-619-562-0096 - 11769 Waterhill RD, Lakeside, CA 92040

Summer Crops:

- Cantaloupe
- Sweet corn
- Cucumbers
- Eggplants
- Melons
- Okra
- Peppers
- Squash
- Sweet potato
- Tomato
- Watermelon
- Lima Beans
- Snap peas

Call for Recipes...
We're looking to build and share a community garden recipe book!

Have a favorite recipe made with garden produce... send it our way!!

Email garden recipes and a photo of you with the dish to:
info@rcdsandiego.org

Planning the expansion

- NACD grant made garden expansion a reality:
 - Provided staff time for planning and for conservation & education components.
 - Helped leverage additional funding.
- Support from many partners:
 - Department of Parks & Recreation
 - County Board of Supervisors
 - SD Community Garden Network and other community partners.
 - NRCS offered advice on irrigation and conservation planning.
- Early and long-term planning:
 - Started coordination with the County and project contractors in early 2016; lots of meetings and emails.
- Site Prep:
 - Bird nesting surveys
 - Clearing the vacant land
 - Infrastructure installation
- Worked to coordinate volunteer and gardener support.
 - Community work days, new gardener orientation meetings, volunteer fence installation days.



Expansion details

- 72 new 30x30 plots = **210** garden plots.
- 6 quarter-acre plots / urban ag incubator plots.
- Create space for learning and demonstration.
- New water meter – we will have to pay for some of our water use.
- All new gardeners will be on micro-irrigation.
- Improved compost system.
- LOTS of education and outreach with new and existing gardeners.
- Habitat renewal - hedgerow and other native plantings.
- Storage container for equipment and tools library.
- Help Park Rangers with trail maintenance.
- New garden sign & interpretive signage.
- Translation for garden signs, events, and documents.



Challenges & Opportunities

- Paying for water while maintaining equal access for all.
- Distance from RCD office.
- Unforeseen problems led to delays.
- Contacting people on waitlist uses **a lot** of staff time.
- Language barriers.
- Ongoing repairs and maintenance.
- Theft.
- Green waste management and storm water regulation.
- Managing expectations and communicating change.
- Keeping the site weed-free and clear of trash.
- Site has great potential - multigenerational, multicultural community with a wealth of farming/ gardening knowledge to share!
- Creating greater food security and access to green space.
- Potential to share / sell produce
- More staff time = opportunity to get really good gardening practices in place.
- Further build the garden community through more events, meetings, workdays, and collaboration.
- Partnership opportunities – continued collaboration with neighboring farms, schools, and local organizations.
- Create a space for demonstration.



Community Building

- **Education** - Providing opportunities for gardening success, e.g. sustainable composting and irrigation techniques.
- **Creating ownership in communal space** – meeting neighbors, garden meetings, potluck events, sharing info & success in the quarterly garden newsletter, beautification projects, creating seating and gathering spaces.
- **Consistency** – events, staff visits, and protocols.
- **Utilizing gardener skill sets** by building opportunities for sharing.



Community Impact

- The expansion project allowed us to offer educational opportunities for the greater community. So far this year, approximately 90 people have participated in workshops at the garden.
- Soil Shindig ~ November 2016 – Around 500 people attended the event and nearly 300 attended a workshop during the event.
- Fall and Spring Garden Cleanup Days – Community cleanup events hosted in partnership with I Love a Clean San Diego. 275 volunteers attended a garden cleanup day this year.
- Engagement with local youth-based organizations: Scout Troops, Eagle Scout Projects, and WiLDCoast, a partner organization working on conservation and youth education across the US-Mexico border.
- Involvement and volunteer support from students at Southwestern College.



Work in progress...

- Develop a protocol and rental process for the quarter acre plots.
- Continue to fill remaining garden plots.
- Review of garden management structures.
- Shipping container to serve as office, tool library, and storage.
- Find ways to keep garden rental costs accessible.
- Reduce overall garden water use.
- Maintain staff position(s) to support increased garden management and maintenance.
- Continue to seek funding to sponsor a garden education program.
- Continued planning to effectively manage the garden's green waste - upscale our compost efforts.
- Installation of hedgerow and other native plantings.





**RESOURCE
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**
Greater San Diego County

Thank you!

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