Urban Agriculture in South-west San Diego
“To protect, conserve, and restore our natural resources through education, information, and technical assistance programs.”
The RCD of Greater San Diego County

Serving the greater San Diego community since 1941.

- Covers nearly 2,900 square miles.
- 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.
- Largest number of small scale farms (>10 acres) in the Nation.
EDUCATION

- Watershed Education
- School Gardens
- Milkweed for Monarchs
- Conservation Scholarship
- Range Camp Sponsorship
- SLEWS and Explorers
- Speak-Off Competition

CONSERVATION & GARDENING

- Tijuana River Valley Community Garden
- Carbon Farm Planning
- Pollinator Habitat Creation
- Invasive Species Removal

FIRE PREVENTION

- Defensible Space Assistance Programs
- Community and Private Chipping
- Wildland Urban Interface Trainings
- Fire Safe Council of San Diego County
Tijuana River Valley Community Garden

- Managed by the RCD since the garden opened in 2002
- Recent expansion to 210 garden plots measuring 30x30’
- Garden hosts workshops, clean-up days, volunteer groups, and public events like the Soil Shindig
- Native pollinator hedgerow planted in January 2018
- 6 quarter acre plots intended for beginner farmers, plus one plot for demonstration and education
2017-18 garden expansion

- Funded by two grants: NACD and SD County’s NRP
- Workshops and outreach with new and existing gardeners, and local farmers
- 72 new 30x30 plots (210 total)
- Larger plots to support beginner farmers and urban ag
  - 6 quarter-acre plots as starter plots
  - 1 quarter-acre plot for learning and demonstration
- Native pollinator hedgerow
- New water meter
- All gardeners encouraged to use drip – have drip kits to share
- Shipping container for equipment and tools storage
- New garden sign & interpretive signage
Quarter acre plots

• Starter plots for beginning farmers / growers
• 3 of 6 rented
• WEEDS
• 1 started growing, site prep done on other 2
• Certified producer
• Potential for on site farm stand
• Sharing resources
Farming that uses climate-smart agricultural practices that lead to long-term storage of carbon from the atmosphere in soil and vegetation.

Some benefits:
- Increased soil organic matter
- Increased water-holding capacity
- Increased plant yields

34 NRCS-recognized practices including compost application, mulching, cover crops, hedgerows, no-till / low-till.
Carbon Farming Demonstration Plot

• ¼ acre research and demonstration plot
• Funded by CDFA Healthy Soils Program
• Aim: to support farmers to implement climate-friendly practices that benefit both production and the environment.
• Testing 3 carbon farming practices (compost, mulching, two cover crops)
• Farmer outreach events, first on November 17 as a part of our annual Soil Shindig
• New Head Gardener hired and started in August
Hedgerow

• Planted in January during a garden work day – about 20 gardeners participated.

• 350 feet long with 26 species of native flowering trees and shrubs. 4 rows.

• Varying bloom times and heights.

• Challenges: weeds, critters

• Benefits: carbon sequestration, habitat for pollinators and other beneficials, little to no supplemental water once established.

• Maintenance at other garden work days.
New compost hub

• Managing garden green waste continues to be a challenge.

• Potential to partner with an external organization, Food 2 Soil, to become a compost hub. Use to create compost.

• Garden members would pay to participate – can also bring food scraps from home.

• Whole process managed by Food 2 Soil program graduate and their interns.

• Compost is distributed to members; surplus is sold to the community.
Thank you!

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