

## Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is the 2016 City of Santa Barbara Water Hero

Every year, the City of Santa Barbara Water Conservation Program honors an individual, business, or organization that has gone above and beyond in their water conservation efforts and serves as an example of resource efficiency in our community. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has been awarded the 2016 Water Hero Award for serving as a role model for sustainable landscape practices, as well as for their recent achievement of constructing the Water Wise Home Garden and Island View Garden.

In 2016, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden celebrated its 90th anniversary and also opened its doors to the new Pritzlaff Conservation Center, Island View Garden, and the redesigned Water Wise Home Garden. Executive Director Steve Windhager, Ph.D. says that in 2010, the Garden updated its mission to reflect their desire to serve as a role model for sustainability. Windhager said he was overwhelmed when he learned the Garden was receiving the Water Hero Award, as it recognizes the hard work put in over the last six years and encourages the Garden to go even further with its sustainability initiatives.



Water Wise Home Garden. Photo: Randy Wright

With regard to the newly renovated Water Wise Home Garden, Windhager says “the message we’re really trying to communicate more than anything else is that native plants are beautiful and good for our environment. Our gardens demonstrate that anyone can have a water conserving landscape that provides habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, and gives you all the beauty you might want with a fraction of the water needs of a conventional landscape.”

This message comes to life throughout the Garden’s 78 acre property, as one can see colorful landscapes designed with California native plants. The Water Wise Home Garden was created to bring these principles down to a scale that can be applied in your own backyard. “One of the exciting things about this garden is that it demonstrates multiple ways you can save water in your landscape,” said Frederique Lavoipierre, Director of Education. The Home Garden features easy to grow native plants, a rain garden, a rain collection tank, and soon will display different types of mulch and smart irrigation options as well as a laundry-to-landscape graywater system.



Island View Garden. Photo: Botanic Garden

The Island View Garden also made its debut in 2016 and is devoted to showcasing native plants from the California Channel Islands. According to Betsy Collins, Director of Horticulture, the garden contains plants from the 16 California islands, including the eight Channel Islands and eight Baja islands. The plants are not only beautiful Collins says “they are also plants that have proven to be incredibly easy and wonderful choices for any home landscape.”

The Island View Garden was designed to be water neutral. As Windhager states, “over the course of the year, as we gather

rainwater off our parking lot and building rooftop and collect it in our rainwater collection system, we expect it to meet our entire demand in this garden.” The rainwater gets channeled through a bioswale that contains sedges and horsetail plants to filter the water before it collects into the three 15,000 gallon underground tanks for irrigation usage.

The Garden is a great place to find inspiration, learn more about native plant care, and pick up some great native plants as well! The Garden Growers Nursery offers a range of plants from throughout California and is “where all the fun happens” says Collins. The nursery is open almost every day of the year and holds semi-annual native plant sales with Garden Grower volunteers available to help you select the right plants for your garden.



Rainwater collection system. Photo: Botanic Garden

If you are unfamiliar with using native plants in the landscape, the Garden offers classes for everyone from beginning gardeners to more advanced landscape designers. Information on classes, as well as walking tours and other events, is available on their website or by signing up for the gardENotes e-newsletter.

The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is committed to promoting the use of native plants in landscapes and serving as a role model for sustainable practices. Their beautiful gardens demonstrate that you can use a wide variety of California native plants to save water and preserve the environment. Congratulations to the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden for being a Water Hero!

