

Elvenia J. Slosson Endowment Fund

Interim Annual Report September (December) 2005

Title: California Native and Exotic Plant Gardens That Demonstrate Varying Amounts of Water Use and Money Saved.

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Introduction: The UC Riverside Botanic Gardens will construct two, minimal water-use demonstration gardens for California native and exotic plants adapted to in inland valleys of southern California. Each garden will be divided into 4 sub-gardens that receive (1) rainfall only (average 10 inches per year); (2) one third local historic evaporation, or ET, (57 inches/yr.) = 19 inches/yr.; (3) one half of historic ET = 28.5 inches/yr.; and (4) two thirds of historic ET = 38 inches/yr. irrigation combined with rainfall. These gardens will facilitate public demonstration of recent research findings on landscape plant water-use. The same materials, native or exotic, will be planted in each sub-garden so that the visiting public may observe how attractive plants and sub-gardens look with reduced amounts of irrigation. The cost of constructing these minimal-use gardens, and the savings in water per year, will be computed and leaflets made freely available to the public.

Goals/Objectives: To demonstrate to the gardening public in the Inland Empire that gardens that use less water can be attractive and may save money once installed. The objective is to allow the public to be able to make a choice between a purely natural garden, that does not have to be wild, and three amounts of increasing supplemental irrigation that provide water use that is 1/3, 1/2 and 2/3 of local ET. The public will be able to decide the degree of aridity they want that is less than irrigation to full local ET. The cost of constructing the gardens and the savings in water use on a yearly basis will also be provided.

Discussion: A flat site was chosen across from the Herb Garden, which will receive a lot of visitors, since the Herb Garden is popular all year round. The site is handicapped accessible. It is adjacent to restroom facilities, mains water and electrical power. The site was previously used as a 'corporation yard' and an green trash collection point before removal of trash to the campus organic dump. The site was cleared of existing weedy vegetation, logs, bricks and concrete blocks. It is ready for further development as outlined in the proposal.

Beginning in January, 2005, the manager of the Botanic Gardens, who was to construct these garden with advice from Dennis Pittenger, became ill. Work on construction of the gardens stopped. The illness continued and eventually resulted in the manager taking early retirement in July 2005. The Botanic Gardens then had to obtain permission to rehire the position and this was obtained. We expect to fill the position in January 2006, soon after which work on constructing the demonstration gardens will resume. We have identified a mature student who wishes training in landscape design and construction, before going to Cal. Poly Pomona in Fall, 2006, to enter the Landscape Architecture course.

Most of the original grant was not spent and is available to finish the project. We will ask the Friends of the Botanic Gardens for additional financial help if needed to complete the demonstration gardens.

No-cost extension request: Along with this interim report, I am requesting a no-cost extension for this project until September, 2006.