



Figure 1. Davis Arboretum staff responsible for the creation of the Home Demonstration Garden for the Central Valley adjacent to a local Davis shopping complex.

A Home Demonstration Garden for the U.C. Davis Arboretum

Kathleen Socolofsky and Diane Cary

Program Goals

We received funding to develop a Home Demonstration Garden for the Central Valley. The educational goal for the garden is to demonstrate to visitors that they can create a beautiful garden and reduce water use, chemical inputs, and maintenance time by using plants, horticultural practices, and design elements appropriate for the Central Valley. Visitors can see plants that have been tested in the Arboretum as well as exciting new introductions, identify plants that they would like to grow at home and learn how to grow them successfully. The garden is intended as a flexible-use space where visitors can attend horticultural workshops and demonstrations, learn from interpretive signs and displays, or just meet their friends for a cup of coffee in a beautiful setting (Figure 1).

Discussion

In 1998, the U.C. Davis Arboretum received as a donation a parcel of land at one end of a new retail de-

velopment, located adjacent to the campus and the Arboretum. This gift represented an exciting opportunity for the Arboretum to reach a new audience with horticultural exhibits and educational programming.

The donation set off more than 18 months of planning, fund-raising, and site preparation. Arboretum Director Kathleen Socolofsky spearheaded the project. Arboretum staff members worked together to identify educational goals for the garden and generate a plant list to support those goals. Nationally-known garden designer David Yakish developed the Mediterranean-influenced design and planting plan. Landscape architect Skip Mezger from the UCD Grounds Division worked with Arboretum staff to coordinate site preparation and construction. Arboretum staff scoured the state for the best examples of specified plant taxa. Plant mover Steve Scott brought in two massive mature olive trees to anchor the garden (Figure 2). A UCD Grounds crew planted the large trees and shrubs, and, during five days in May 2000, more than 100 volunteers planted 900 trees, shrubs and perennials (Figure 3).

Continuing Work

We have been able to leverage the support of the Slosson Foundation and others to generate additional



Figure 2. Plant mover Steve Scott brought in two mature olive trees to serve as anchors for the garden.

funding, and the project has expanded to incorporate new design features and programmatic elements.

Phase II will involve construction of water features and a pergola-shaded teaching and sales area; planting of additional beds; and the addition of garden furniture, container plantings, and interpretive signs. Interpretive designer Dawn Hassett has been contracted to develop interpretive signs, exhibits, and educational publications for the garden. We anticipate hiring a gar-

den manager to coordinate horticultural, educational, and retail activities at the site. The site is now open on a limited basis; we expect to complete construction and celebrate a Grand Opening during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Kathleen Socolofsky is Director and Diane Cary is Program Director at the U.C. Davis Arboretum.



Figure 3. Over 100 volunteers planted 900 trees, shrubs and perennials in the demonstration garden during five days in May 2000.