



College Area Community Garden

a community based member supported organic garden

June 2021

If you haven't been to the garden in the past couple weeks, you will be surprised at all the wonderful changes that have been happening. But before we break the good news, here is a hint.

Q: What do baby owls, solar cells, and a portable loo have in common?

A: YES, you guessed it, We have installed our new garden restroom complete with a hand-washing station; We received a donation by [Baker Electric Home Energy](#) of 4 new solar panels that they installed on the roof of Sheds S2 and S3; And, after two and a half year wait, we have seen evidence that we have a Barn Owl resident in our owl house. (Gabe our orchardist made a recording from below the owl house that contains sounds that you might hear from owl chicks)

Oh, what a relief it is!

With a big thank you to our anonymous doner and to Henry Bertram for spear-heading this effort, the garden now has a wonderful new Comfort XLT Fresh Flush restroom with washing station. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of the gardeners and volunteers that helped to plan the installation, construct the foundation for the restroom, privatize the location with shade cloth and are adding new plants to the area: Henry Bertram, Jacqueline Hadley, Noelle Perinet, Alex Cavalier, Keith Sweatt, Jocelyn Kilmer, Wes Moyers and David Petit



The restroom has been situated on the mesa above the berry tunnels and shaded area S8. We are still awaiting some parts to make the restroom complete. The restroom will be for garden members and guests only and will have a combination lock. We hope to be announcing the "grand opening" soon. So, keep posted.

Here's to another big step forward toward sustainability!

We are grateful to former CACG gardener Casey Lockwood, and [Baker Electric Home Energy](#), for donating and installing 4 new solar panels that are now in place and doubling our solar power generation. We will be getting a sign made to show our appreciation.



For the last 3 years we have had no electric bills because of the output of the existing array of solar panels. Now we expect to continue not having to pay for any electricity for many years to come and also are adding power back into the electric grid. This is good news for the garden budget and, of course, good news for planet Earth.

Can it be true?

On Sunday, June 6, CACG orchardist Gabe Mitchell recorded sounds that seemed to be a lot like baby birds coming from the CACG owl house. And, upon closer inspection a bird feather was found at the base of the owl house that was confirmed by the local chapter of the Audubon Society to be that of a barn owl. We also found the remains of a deceased rodent that appeared to have been attacked by a bird of prey. So, needless to say we are very hopeful that we now have a new resident owl who plans to spend the summer with us.



What a crazy year it's been!

On June 15, California is finally able to take the first steps toward opening up after 15 months of lock down due to COVID concerns. The garden is taking this opportunity to take the next steps to open up the garden to more people while still using the California guidelines to prevent contraction of COVID while gardening. Our new guidelines increase the number of gardeners and invited guests to 20 at one time and they make masks wearing optional while at the garden. We ask that all gardeners and guests self-evaluate and not come to the garden if they are not feeling well or have been in recent contact with anyone that has been diagnosed as having COVID. Click here to view the [CACG COVID Guidelines](#).

What's Growing at the "Eat, Drink, and Bee Happy" Herb Garden

It's been a bit delayed by the COVID restrictions, but the herb / pollinator garden is really starting to come along and we want to take this opportunity to invite all CACG gardeners to contribute to its success. These plants are for all gardeners to share in the planting and harvesting. It's a truly "community" effort. We started this garden in 2020 with several buddleia plants that were fostered by our "Bee Happy" gardener extraordinaire, Jacqueline Hadley. In



2021, we received plant donations and planting assistance from Jacqueline Hadley, Helen Pittman, Priscilla Kelly, and Nancy Smits. We also received support from Henry Bertram and the garden board that allowed us to extend the garden to include the 4 X 16-foot MM-4 raised bed. This has expanded the range of plants that we could support to include those that require the more refined soil found in the raised bed. It also makes the herb garden



more convenient for our gardeners to contribute to the planting, care and harvesting of the herbs. Many of you have been wanting to participate in creating this herb garden, and now is a great time to get involved. If you have some plants you want to contribute, or if you have extra time to spend in the garden and would like to help out watering and caring for the herb garden or the "Bee Happy" pollinator garden, please let us know by responding to any garden email communication or stop and chat with one of the garden members listed above. Curious about what to plant? Check out the labels that have been posted in M4 planting squares with no current plant in place. BTW – [National pollinator week](#) is coming up beginning June 21.

Happy Birthday to the Garden

This past week, the College Area Community Garden turned 8 years old. Here is a picture taken from the official ribbon cutting. We've come a long way in 8 years!!!



Getting the word out....

On June 12, 2021, the College Area Community Garden welcomed San Diego City Councilmember Elo-Rivera for a tour of the grounds. Among other areas of interest, topics discussed were food justice, sustainability, land stewardship, composting, climate change and water conservation. Councilmember Elo-Rivera expressed his interest in partnering with the CACG Board to host future community events in the garden.



More great news for the garden's sustainability efforts

The College Area Community Garden has been approved to be a Partner Site for a Summer, 2021 California Climate Action Corps program at our garden. This allows us to hire two Fellows to work for 10 weeks at our garden this summer with their salary paid 100% by the CCAC program. The garden will not receive any direct funding as a Host Site for the CCAC but will benefit greatly from the work performed by CCAC fellows. We have the good fortune to hire Noelle Perinet (a regular CACG volunteer) and Daniel Pentico (who developed and installed SOULA hydroponics) as the two CCAC fellows for our garden.

Here is a list of duties that they will work on at the garden:

- Wildflower and pollinator planting and care in order to foster green areas
- Distribute mulch throughout to increase soil health
- Assist member gardeners (over 100 raised boxes) with planting and care of vegetable crops for personal use
- Work with volunteer arborist and team leaders to care for 55 tree organic fruit orchard
- Help maintain rainwater catchment and distribution system
- Work with team leader on existing large scale static aeration composting areas
- Remove invasive weeds, unusable materials, and other fire hazards
- Work with team leaders to maintain outdoor meeting, gardener storage, and rest area.
- Assist CACG Board and Team members in identifying and applying for new grant and donor funding

Thank you to a generous benefactor – We hope this newsletter reaches you!

On June 1, the garden received a \$10k anonymous donation. Partly earmarked for rainwater catchment and improved rainwater distribution (Think underground purple pipes and new dedicated rain water only faucets along the main service road.) This will go a long way towards our sustainability mission!

It's time to bring the "community" back to our community garden!

We have begun planning for an informal gathering in the garden sometime after July 4. This will be an informal low-key event, with cold beverages. A time to get reacquainted with our fellow gardeners. If you would like to help plan and get involved, please reply to any board member or to the [communications](#) email address.