

"Audubon at Home in California"
A Classroom Program for Healthy Native Plant Gardens

San Diego Audubon Society

Lesson Plan

Goal:

This program is intended to educate adults on how to establish environmentally healthy gardens using native plants that will attract wildlife, especially birds.

Duration:

The program consists of two, 1 1/2 hour sessions. About 20 students will be accepted.

Objective:

The individual should obtain the knowledge to select, plant, and maintain native plants appropriate to their home environment. They should also comprehend the environmental benefits of using native plants in terms of resource conservation and habitat creation. Additionally, the risks of using harmful chemicals and invasive non-native plants will be understood. Students will also learn how to attract birds and butterflies to their yards by providing suitable food, shelter and water.

Materials:

- Invasive plant samples
- Single page informational Audubon handouts: (1) Twelve Native Plants that are Attractive and Easy to Grow, (2) Native Plant Resource Material (websites, publications, nurseries, etc.), (3) How to Plant and Maintain Native Plants, and (4) Native Alternatives to Common Landscape Plants.
- Additional handouts from other sources can also be used.
- Reference books on native plants including nursery plant lists
- 20 1-gallon native plants
- PowerPoint program with screen, projector and laptop computer
- Garden tools for planting demonstration

First Session:

The class will start with introductions and a brief overview of the course. This will be followed by a 30-40 minute PowerPoint program on the benefits of native plant gardens, common varieties of native plants, healthy gardening practices and how to attract birds and butterflies to your yard. Issues covered in the PowerPoint presentation will then be discussed in more detail including water conservation and the risks to the environment of using of harmful chemicals. A short walk through the Tecolote Nature Center's native plant garden will be given.

Two handouts will be distributed: Twelve Native Plants that are Attractive and Easy to Grow, and Native Plant Resource Material.

Students will be asked to research several plants of their choice on the Internet for the next class.

Second Session:

The second session will focus on the practical issues of creating a native plant garden or landscape. The how, when and where of using native plants will be covered. Soil type, drainage, sun exposure, water needs, plant size, propagation and similar issues will be covered. One or two native species will be planted in the Tecolote Canyon Native Plant Garden to demonstrate the process. A question and answer session including a critique will take place.

Resource handouts will be distributed: How to Plant and Maintain Native Plants and Native Alternatives to Common Landscape Plants.

Evaluation/Follow-up:

A questionnaire will be mailed to the students to evaluate their success in growing native plants and their interest in healthy gardening/landscaping practices. They will also be asked if they have joined any environmental organizations, especially the Audubon Society or the California Native Plant Society.