### LIVING LABORATORY GARDEN ON-GOING CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

San Bernardino Valley College Last Update April 16, 2022 Biology Dept at SBVC

### **Brief Background**

Since the design concept charrettes of 2014-2015 led by Ben McCoy from EPT Design, and Ernie Loera, SBVC Facilities Project Manager, and in consultation with the Biology Department faculty, students and the community-at-large have been at the core of discussions and innovation.

The Living Lab Garden was installed to support water saving patterns by the District and also serve five vegetation zones: 1) Fossil Garden (FG), reflecting the Mesozoic geologic period; 2) Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS), reflecting a protected bird's critical habitat in Southern California (also known as soft Chaparral); 3) Chaparral (Ch) reflects SB mountains foothill vegetation; 4) Desert (D) replicated both Mojave and Colorado desert vegetation while also comparing to other non-locals; and 5) Oak Woodland (OW). This latter containing a mixed vegetative zones). DG paths accentuate the accessibility to these varied vegetative zones to faculty, students, staff, and the community at large while also being maintained against invasive non-Californian species. Indirectly these zones also strengthen the Inland Empire's varied ecology and ecosystems.

Since original installation, the plant palette has been actively expanded every semester to support the growth of these zones while also replacing failed plantings. Other plantings have occurred via introduction from wind and bird visits (e.g., Cardinal monkeyflower, local to Mill Creek and Santa Ana River).

Our current curricular and extracurricular activities continue to provide the highest value of education, outreach, stewardship, and physical and mental health to our various stakeholders of San Bernardino Valley College.

# **Summary of Departmental Activities**

The following list is non-exhaustive but represents the varied endeavors by faculty and students:

- 1. Outdoor laboratories and lectures for various Biology courses.
- 2. Semester-long projects conducted by students every semester.
- 3. Raise bed utilization
  - a. experimental conditions (e.g., soil microbiome)
  - b. horticultural annual crops (e.g., cantaloupe, squash, peas, herbs), plant domestication and allelopathy
  - c. community-centered fresh produce (intersecting environmental and economic sustainability)
- 4. Interpretive signage of plants and biological research to support current community member walks and photography, include brochures and guided student ambassador tours.
- 5. Organization of Annual Spring plant sales (plant starts and seed cultivation); first sale was projected for late April 2022

- 6. Cataloguing animal biodiversity annually, Fall and Spring seasons, and nesting success of resident species
- 7. Continue utilization of shade canopies (installed in Fall 2020)
  - a. outdoor lectures
  - b. outdoor laboratories
  - c. Department meetings and socials

#### Summary of Divisional Activities (Science Division)

The following list is non-exhaustive but represents the varied endeavors by faculty and students:

- 1. California Geography and Physical Geography assignments (Geography Department)
  - a. Quantifying native plants, photography and identification
  - b. Essays on native/endemic species
  - c. Bird biodiversity
- 2. Fossil Garden (FG) plant walk (Geology Department)

#### Summary of Potential Inter-Divisional, Inter-Departmental Activities

- 1. Culinary arts; Herb and Fruit Collection, application of local organics
- 2. Human Allied Health (nursing, pharm tech, psych tech); Biomedicinal properties in plants
- 3. Ethnic Studies; Calif. Indigenous people use of local native plants
- 4. Ethnic Studies; Calif. Indigenous people use of local animals within cultural traditions and linguistic aspects
- 5. Physics; seed spread fluid dynamics and/or water/plant hydraulics
- 6. Music; Soundscape of urban and migrant bird song

# **Examples of Plant-Plant and Plant-Animal Interactions**

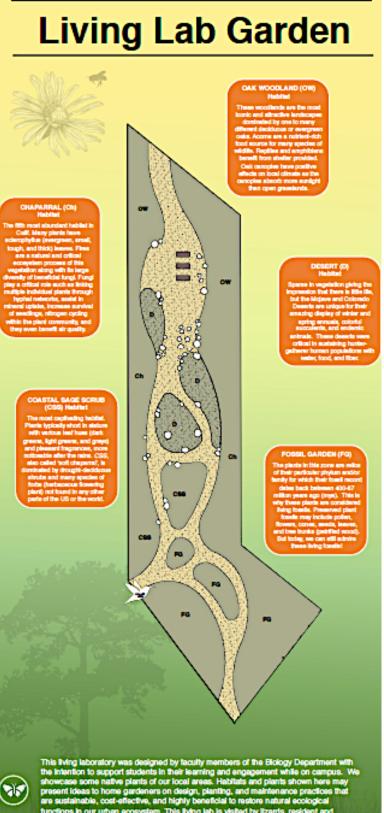
Oak Woodland Zone [area subject to removal, tech building]

- 1. Bee visitation in Orange, Apple, and Apricot trees
- 2. Coast Live Oak, Acorn Woodpeckers and California Scrub Jay, resource utilization
- 3. Gray Ground squirrel Oak Woodland microhabitat utilization rates compared to other areas on campus
- 4. Sugar Bush and Toyon berries, visitation by berry-eating birds
- 5. Understory arthropod biodiversity in Pines and Oaks.
- 6. Toyon, Conifers, and Oak chemical inhibition, competitive interactions
- 7. Bird insectivory in pines and oaks
- 8. Butterfly visitation on Seep Willow (Mule Fat)

#### Desert, Chaparral, and Coastal Sage Scrub [area subject to removal, tech building]

- 1. Pollinator effectiveness
- 2. Pollinator biodiversity of California native plants
- 3. California native bee and bird visitation in flowering plants
- 4. Nectar quality and visitation rates in flowering plants
- 5. Seed collection and bird insectivory in various plants
- 6. Bird territoriality and nesting success

In Southern California, these diverse plant communities have also been negatively affected, reduced in size, due to land conversion for urban development.



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