

Annual garden festival to feature Cardiff-by-the-Sea homes

By Wehtahnah Tucker

CARDIFF-BY-THE-SEA — Garden enthusiasts and those with a penchant for all things out-of-doors will once again be treated to the sights and smells of private gardens as the Encinitas Garden Festival commences April 25.

The annual event celebrating gardening and the horticultural heritage of the city showcases more than 25 gardens featured on a walking tour of a designated community.

The highly regarded tour will take place in Cardiff's Composer District where residents have agreed to open their garden gates.

The festival is an all-volunteer event that grew out of

an initiative of the city's Cultural Tourism committee. Nan Sterman said the committee of volunteers works year-round securing garden sites, working out logistical details and soliciting funds for the one-day event that occurs each spring. "We have very dedicated, resourceful volunteers," she said.

Olivenhain resident Juli Gillett scouted the neighborhood along with fellow committee member Jennifer Axelrod. "We had heard that people in Cardiff wanted to be in the tour," she said.

The scouting process requires a lot of time and attention to detail. "We just



GARDEN GEMS Above left, this etched agave leaf is one of the unique features found in the Cardiff gardens of the Composer District that will be featured in this year's Encinitas Garden Festival on April 25. Above right, this outdoor fountain surrounded by succulent plants will be on display during the festival. *Courtesy photos*

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drove around, got out of our cars, looked over fences and knocked on doors," Gillett said. Once word spread that the committee was looking for gardens, residents began to come out of the wood work. "In Cardiff, it seems as if everyone knows each other, it's very community-minded."

In fact, many of the private gardens surround homes that have been in the area for more than 50 years. "The response to be involved was so positive from the community," Gillett said.

Gillett said perfection was not the goal in selecting the gardens. "We're looking to show people what they can do with a certain space," she said. "In Cardiff, gardens are smaller, so there is a very creative use of space."

This year's festival features 26 gardens, including the Children's Garden at Cardiff Elementary School. Nearly every garden had an element of edibles, ranging from a single-bed to an entire landscape

according to Sterman.

The event's marketplace will also be located on the school grounds along Mozart.

Jill Treadwell Svendsen, who serves on the marketplace committee, said the atmosphere will be both fun and educational. "We have more vendors participating than in years past," she said. Educational talks and demonstrations will be held on various subjects throughout the day. Composting, recycling and water conservation are high on the list of topics.

The marketplace is free and open to the public. "We are featuring gardening, nature, landscaping, wildlife, specialty plant vendors and artists," Treadwell Svendsen said.

Educational opportunities are also available along the garden tour route. Amy Trujillo, a biologist from the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy, will educate visitors to Rossini Canyon, which spans the neighborhood, on the rampant invasive plant species that have overwhelmed the area.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The event is April 25 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$21/adult, \$7 kids (6 to 10 years old). If there are tickets left on the day, they'll be \$25/adult, \$10 kids.

Buy tickets online at www.EncinitasGardenFestival.org. Tickets may be purchased in person at Anderson La Costa Nursery (760) 753-3153 and Barrels and Branches Nursery (760) 753-2852.

Parking is only at the San Elijo Campus of MiraCosta College: www.miracosta.edu/OfficeOfThePresident/PIO/maps.htm#SEC.

Double-decker buses start running at 9:30 a.m. and loop throughout the event. Food is available for purchase at the marketplace.

This is a walking tour, so dress accordingly and don't forget sunscreen.

For more information, visit EncinitasGardenFestival.org.