



sustainable solutions

growing a greener city

april 2011

garden tours

out-of-the-box

plant of the month

fun workshops



Tour de Plants!



"Although some people may have 1000 'friends' or 'followers', social networking has driven some towards more physical isolation. While sites like OhSoWe.com are attempting to bridge that gap, great change has often started with a few people sitting around a table, or going for a walk — together. Sharing your knowledge, learning from others, and experiencing your physical space together can lead to something better than any one person can imagine."

- Majora Carter, Founder Sustainable South Bronx



Have you noticed more and more sustainable gardens sprouting up in your neighborhood? All over Los Angeles, little by little, people are ripping up lawns and creating landscapes that are truly beautiful. They are trading in their out dated pop-up sprinklers for drip lines and rain barrels, skipping leaf blowers and setting up compost bins. Why not show 'em what you've got and organize a garden tour? It's Earth Month and there's no better way to celebrate than to inspire your neighbors to help grow a greener city.

1. Choose a theme

To distinguish your green garden tour from others, decide on a common theme and criteria for gardens. Some ideas: all natives, ways to capture rain water, clever ways to incorporate edibles. Maybe you're showing off solar panels or have lots of DIY advice, or perhaps it's all of the above. Whatever you choose, you want to highlight what's special and sustainable in your community.

2. Team up

You can make it a free event or charge for tickets and donate the proceeds to a local charity. Many schools have learning gardens... what a nice way to grow a sense of pride in your community. Gardening groups, non-profits, neighborhood organizations are all great partners to consider. Teaming up with a group to promote the event makes recruiting and organizing volunteers much easier.

3. Decide on a date

April 22 is a very popular day, but

isn't it nice that Earth Day can be celebrated all month? View the garden about a year in advance to pick the best time to show them off. See our short list of this spring's "not to be missed" garden tours for inspiration.

4. Create invitations and other forms

You'll need an invitation and application for participating gardens as well as brochures and flyers to advertise, maps and signage. Create sign-in sheets for participants to help build your tour in following years. These all can be distributed electronically to save paper and resources.

5. Get the word out

Begin by building an email distribution list and creating a blog. Send a press release and use social media. You're doing something really cool. Don't be afraid to blow your own horn. Network with local nurseries and organizations and create some buzz.

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TreePeople's Sustainable Solutions Program is dedicated to landscape transformation - turning yards into functional landscapes that are beautiful and sustainable. Our monthly guides and checklists detail an easy, step-by-step process, helping us all create a healthy urban forest where water is valued, air is clean, soil is healthy and trees are thriving.

Next Month: Ed Begley Jr. Emcees TreePeople's Green City

Linda's List

Linda Eremita, TreePeople's Senior ISA Certified Arborist, has the following suggestions for your April gardening fun:

Climate Appropriate Plant of the Month

Catalina Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia lyonii*)

This evergreen tree or large shrub is 30' to 45' tall and 20' to 30' wide. Native to our Channel Islands and Baja California, it does best near the coast, but can grow in the valley with a little more water. The shiny dark green leaves are a nice contrast to the grayish leaves of many California natives. 2" to 5" creamy white flower spikes appear in spring followed by edible cherries. Useful as a tall screen, small tree or for wildlife habitat.

Upcoming Workshops

April 16, 2011 - Community Greening Workshop • June 4, 2011 - TreePeople's Green City Fair!

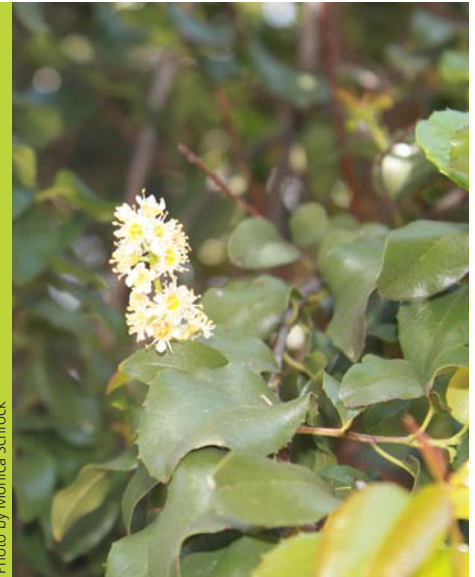


Photo by Monica Schrock

Out-of-the-Box

Walk This Way

On May 7 and 8, why not organize a Jane's Walk? Jane's Walks give people who care about the same sorts of ideas and places, a chance to connect. Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) was an activist who championed a community-based approach to city planning. Although she had no formal training as a planner, her 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, introduced ground-breaking ideas and is an essential text of architects, planners, politicians and activists.

Organizing a Jane's Walk is simple, and provides the perfect excuse for sharing what's cool about your neighborhood. Each walk is initiated by volunteers who chart a course that shows off special spots and unique character. You don't need a special degree to lead one, just the curiosity to dig around in local history, urban ecology, social issues and cultural assets.

A firm believer in the importance of local residents having input, Jacobs encouraged people to familiarize themselves with the places where they live, work and play. Go to www.janeswalk.net or www.janeswalkusa.wordpress.com for more information.

6. Prepare and enjoy the day

Create web-based maps with walking and biking tours. Organize volunteers to help at each of the gardens. Ask a local realtor to loan you some signs, or create something all your own! Finally, enjoy the day!

7. Give thanks!

Set up a thank you party for all your volunteers. They will get to know each other and want to do another tour again next year. Your tour will grow and become a new must-do event in your community.

Garden tours are no longer just the domain of "ladies who lunch". By showing off the sustainable practices in your neighborhood, you're creating a new aesthetic. And more importantly, you are bringing people together. Once that happens, there's nothing we can't do!

Sherri Akers, organizer of the Mar Vista tour commented, "The garden tour has given us a tremendous sense of community as we share our vision of a greener life. We inspire each other, and with what we learn from our neighbors, we are continually raising the bar!"

Our Short List of Must-See Tours

- **April 2:** The California Native Plant Society presents its 17th annual spring garden tour. www.sccnps.org
- **April 9-10:** Theodore Payne Foundation will feature more than 30 native plant gardens during its self-guided garden tour. www.theodorepayne.org/Tour
- **April 16-17:** The California Poppy Festival. www.poppyfestival.com
- **April 30:** Mar Vista Green Garden Showcase will feature nearly 80 climate appropriate landscapes. marvistagreen-gardenshowcase.blogspot.com
- **May 7:** The Venice Garden & Home Tour has 30 beautiful gardens and homes in The Walk Streets neighborhood. www.venicegardentour.org. (310) 821-1857. (See member benefit for a chance to win tickets.)

Member Benefit: Free Tickets!

The Venice Garden & Home Tour is an annual self-guided walking tour. This unique event on May 7th, 2011 from 10am - 5pm draws visitors from all over and gives financial support to Neighborhood Youth's Association's Las Doradas Children's Center. To enter a drawing for two free tickets, current TreePeople members may email contest@treepeople.org before April 30th. To become a member go to www.treepeople.org.