

Homegrown Habitat Host: Colene

Location: Orangevale

Age of Garden: 7 Years

Size: approximately 5,000 sq. ft.

Description: *Filtered sun, low water, many bushes and trees, attracts birds, pollinators and butterflies.* This rain garden captures water from the property, as well as the street and directs it to flow through two separate basins to slow and sink the water before it flows off the property. The basins provide various levels for planting. Lower in the basin are Juncus that don't mind wet feet and help to filter the water before it sinks down. Higher on the basin edge are California hibiscus, button willow and Bearded penstemon and a California Sycamore. At the top and throughout the yard, are dry shade loving natives and cultivars including Toyon, Fuchsia Flowering Gooseberry, Flowering currant, Dutch Pipevine, grasses and many others providing blooms for wildlife throughout the seasons. (See full Plant list in next pdf.)

Inspired by: A presentation at the local library by Audubon and the California Native Plant Society representatives. These ladies shared the beauty and functionality of California native plants in terms of supporting our local wildlife- birds, bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects. I was hooked! My husband and I immediately set about to transform the soccer field in the back yard to a haven for local wildlife. That was 2009. The front yard became a similar project but with the challenge of 'dry shade' in 2016. I am continuously inspired when seeing the Western Tiger Swallowtail and Dutch Pipeline Swallowtail butterflies, the hummingbirds and all the pollinators who frequent these plants.

Wildlife observed: Pipeline Swallowtail, Western Tiger Swallowtail, Carpenter Bees, Honey Bees, Sweat Bees and a variety of little tiny native pollinators as well as other beneficial insects. Anna's Hummingbirds, Scrub Jays, Mourning Doves, and California Towhees.

Turf Removal: In 2015 the water was turned off and the lawn allowed to die. The entire yard was mulched with 3-4" of wood chips from a local tree trimmer. This kept the weeds from growing and began to feed the soil for planting the following year.

Additional Features: Bird bath, bench seating, bocce court and garden art. National Wildlife Federation 'Certified Wildlife Habitat' and Xerces certified pollinator habitat ([Add links](#)).

Maintenance:

1. No fertilizers or pesticides are used.

2. Pruning is not required; some deadheading of a few plants is done to tidy up well at the end of the season and the cuttings are left around the plants to decompose and provide habitat for soil dwelling beneficials.
3. The canopy is four very old fruitless mulberries (not native) that do require pruning, however the shade they provide the western facing house is substantial and absolutely necessary. Additional oaks, a keystone wildlife species) have been planted in the understory to eventually replace one or two of the Mulberries.
4. The large number of leaves shed in the fall are divided with some allowed to stay in the front yard to decompose and feed the soil and the others are carted to the back yard and spread in possible future planting areas.
5. Over the years the mulch slowly breaks down to feed the soil and new mulch is added.

Irrigation:

Once a week in the heat of summer for 1 to 1 1/2 hours using Netifim drip tubing with emitters spaced 12" apart.

Resources to help inspire other Habitat Hosts:

Books and other resources:

Bringing Nature Home, Nature's Best Hope and The Nature of Oaks by **Doug Tallamy**;

Gardening with a Wild Heart by **Judith Larner Lowry**;

California Bees and Blooms by **Gordon Frankie** and **Robin Thorpe**.

(see videos of some of these on the [Homegrown Habitat](#) main page.)

MORE resources: SacValleyCNPS.org/resources