

COARC Research Garden and Learning Center, 2008-2010

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Abstract

We'd like to take the opportunity to inform you of a continued project that is taking place at the Oregon State University (OSU), Central Oregon Agricultural Research Center in Madras. In the last 2 years we have developed a half-acre parcel of land adjacent to the southeast entrance of the research farm to implement a research and teaching garden. The purpose of the garden is to provide educational opportunities for the public through hands-on viewing, exhibits, agricultural, and gardening experiences.

Introduction

The Research Garden was established in 2008 to provide relevance and an opportunity to engage with the local community at large. The garden includes landscape, orchard, and vegetables, as well as providing a habitat for insect observation and ecological management displays. Our focus is to inform the general public about landscape and gardening in central Oregon. We are developing and maintaining a diverse living collection of plants to support teaching and understanding of plants in their natural environment. Our garden is an outdoor laboratory for students and the general public. The community is warmly invited to make use of the garden to learn about and enjoy plants in a beautiful setting.

Garden Construction and Planting

Heart Springs Design LLC of Bend designed the garden, including plant selection. In the spring of 2008 the garden layout was created, irrigation system installed, and the trees and large shrubs were planted by Daniel Balyeat Landscaping. Hardy Construction erected a building on the west side of the garden to be used for teaching and displays in February of 2009. The remainder of the landscape plants were chosen and planted in 2009 with the help of C.H.S. Garden Center in Madras. The eatable portion of the garden with fruit trees, strawberries, raspberries, and mint were planted in 2010. Our goal is to continue to add to the garden over time and document the growing progress for desirable species.

Future Goals

Our goal is to develop an outdoor laboratory engaged in teaching, collection development, research, conservation, and public service. These activities focus on a theme of natural plant diversity, economic botany, ecology, and plant conservation within the central Oregon region. We anticipate developing programs and services to support botanical and horticultural education in schools. The garden is expected to be an important teaching resource as we develop learning centers on a variety of topics.

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irrigation and water storage systems, vegetation selection based on water needs, pest resistance, disease resistance, and to provide a teaching facility for OSU professionals and the tri-county master gardeners to provide landscape training opportunities throughout the year.

Adult Learning Opportunities: Plant material with names and descriptions – landscape, fruit and small fruit, vegetables, weed control, irrigation methods – residential irrigation efficiency products. Site material options – rocks, pavers, and block: plant maintenance –including off-season care.

Student Learning Opportunities: The relationship between central Oregon climate and successful plant choices for this area, water conservation, invasive weeds, composting, and soil health. Learning opportunities will include the role of pollinators, special interest gardening – historical gardening system, pizza garden.

Displays: Large displays on targeted topics are planned for the event building – water-efficient irrigation, site material options, plant nutrition, and soil health. Tables and seating will be available for the garden classroom setting.

