



Edible Landscaping Project

MERCY HOUSING CALIFORNIA
Kennedy Estates Apartments
Sacramento, California



The Sacramento Hunger Commission

Pursued edible landscaping to improve access to and consumption of fresh produce for low income residents in South Sacramento.



The Question...

Many trees and shrubs used in the average landscape project consist of ornamental varieties (i.e., Flowering Plum or Bradford Pear).

Why not plant varieties that can also feed the residents?



The Project Concept

To demonstrate how edible plants and fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and vines can be included in the landscape of an affordable housing apartment complex to increase access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The concept was adapted from an edible landscaping project at Cal Poly – Pomona.



Edible Landscaping



The use of plants (other than standard non-edible landscaping plants) that provide food for the resident while providing a unique landscape feature.



Edible Landscaping...




- Builds Community
- Increases Access to Fresh Produce
- Provides Fresh Fruit & Citrus to Residents
- Supplements Families' Food Budgets
- Provides an Attractive Landscape
- Provides Some Shade
- Is Easy to Do !

Project Partners



- Mercy Housing California
- Sacramento Hunger Coalition / Community Services Planning Council
- Network for a Healthy California / California Department of Health Services
- UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners - Sacramento County
- CSUS – Community Nutrition Interns
- AmeriCorps*VISTAs
- Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition
- and Kennedy Estates Residents

Mercy Housing California
Kennedy Estates
 Elder Creek Road at 65th Expressway
 Sacramento



- **Built in the 1970's - Bought and rehabbed by Mercy Housing in 1998**
- **100 Units on 5+ Acres**
- **Gated Apartment Complex**
- **Low-income Requirement** (average income \$18,000)
- **Very Diverse Ethnic Resident Population** (population 300+)
- **Over 7 Languages Spoken** (English, Chinese, Arabic, Mien, Spanish, Hmong, & Vietnamese)
- **Wide Range of Ages - Infants to Elderly**

Sacramento Hunger Coalition



In the beginning...

Project Volunteers
 Over 45 Volunteers including...



- Residents
- Hunger Commission Members and VISTAs
- First Congregational Church of San Jose
- UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners
- Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition

Sacramento Hunger Coalition



Project Translators



- Three resident teens were paid as translators to go door-to-door to inform residents on the project, to evaluate their interest and ask them what type of trees and herbs they would like to see planted near their apartment. They also helped translate at meetings on the project.

What was Planted

- **TREES**
 Apple, Apricot, Avocado, Loquat, Peach, Pear, Persimmon, Plum, Pluot, Pomegranate
- **HERBS**
 Basil, Mint, Rosemary, Cilantro, Chocolate Mint
- **CITRUS**
 Orange, Lime, Grapefruit, Lemon, Mandarin Orange, Tangerine, Blood Orange
- **OTHER**
 Blueberry, Grape, Peppers

Sacramento Hunger Coalition



Project Donors



- Four Winds Growers
- Western Growers Association
- Sacramento Tree Foundation
- Arata Brothers Fund of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation
- Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition
- Capitol Nursery
- Home Depot
- Wal-Mart
- Lowes

The Planting Begins



Planting the Orchard



New Fruit Trees



New Citrus Trees



New Edible Fruit Trees with Signage



Signage

Plant ID in 3 Languages & Nutritional Information



Informational Signage



An Orchard is Born



Maintaining the Orchard

The Residents adopted the Orchard and made sure it was watered.



Orchard (September 2004)



Thanks to the
California Highway Patrol Cadets...

With guidance from 3 Master Gardeners, 70 CHP Cadets:



- Uprooted and replanted 15 trees
- Planted an additional 6 trees
- Installed drip irrigation lines
- Spread woodchips
- Did about 4 workdays worth of work in the community garden



Transplanted Orchard



Planting Day

May 2006 & June 2007

Free Plants!

Hundreds of plants were given away for residents to plant in their personal front or backyard gardens:

- Vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, eggplant)
- Fruits (watermelon, strawberry)
- Annual and Perennial Flowers
- Soil



Summer Celebration/Potluck

August 2006 & June 2007





Project Impact

- Inspire Community Involvement
- Increase Access to Fresh Produce
- Infusion of fresh produce into the diets of the the families at Kennedy Estates will increase each year as the trees mature.



Edible Landscaping Plant Count

BEFORE

- 0 Fruit Trees
- 0 Citrus Trees
- 0 Herbs
- 0 Misc.

AFTER

- 37 Fruit Trees
- 39 Citrus Trees
- 200 Herbs
- 10 Misc.



Ongoing & Future Plans for Kennedy Estates

- Nutrition Education
- Plant Care Education
- Healthy Eating Workshops
- Kennedy Estates Cookbook
- Revised Edible Landscaping in Affordable Housing Toolkit



Potential Future

Edible Landscaping Projects

- Mercy Housing Village Park – Sacramento, CA
- Mather Community Campus – Mather, CA
- Mercy Housing/AIDS Housing Alliance Colonia San Martin – Sacramento, CA
- Mercy Housing Serna Village – Sacramento, CA
- Sacramento Front Yards



Edible Landscaping

Grow more than Leaves...
Grow FOOD !