

When the Mar Vista Green Garden Showcase was launched, sustainable and edible gardens were a rarity. The tour was conceived as a vehicle to both inspire and demonstrate how to conserve water. As it grew the focus expanded to creating a pollinator habitat and other facets of a sustainable lifestyle. We were able to speak to why these things matter and show how it could be done. We are thrilled to say that today these are mainstream messages and readily available to the community.

Maintaining the Showcase has been a labor of love but a demanding one. With many volunteers the day of the event, the work of recruiting gardens and building the showcase has been carried primarily by a small group of people who no longer have the resources to donate the amount of time and energy required.

If a qualified leader steps up to continue the Green Garden Showcase as is, that's wonderful. We'll be happy to provide some training and turn over our database and other materials. Otherwise, the Green Committee is ready—and excited—to move on to a somewhat different Earth Day celebration.

The Green Committee proposes celebrating Earth Day on April 26 with a less structured community event focused on sustainability. The Green Committee would organize some activities, be a catalyst and clearinghouse for others. Ideas include community green volunteering—perhaps at local schools, tree plantings, feathers and foliage walks, and construction of demonstration gardens. There could also be localized mini garden shows; anyone who wants could open their sustainable garden on their own as well. There would likely be fewer gardens, and the burden of recruiting and screening gardens, and then collecting the required garden data and photos would fall to new leadership and volunteers.

We're open to ideas and would like feedback on this concept. Think of it as organic growth and transformation.

There are several other things the Green Committee hopes to move forward with. One is a virtual garden tour. People frequently ask us for resource information to support efforts in their own gardens. The Virtual Mar Vista Green Garden showcase would

- Reorganize the blog to feature all the gardens shown in the 5 year history of the tour
- Offer garden owners the opportunity to freshen their posts on an ongoing basis and include links to service providers
- Continue to add gardens as they are created in the community and feature them on the blog, in our eblast newsletters and on our Facebook page
- Expand the Google Map to contain all of the gardens so users can create their own walking and biking tours
- Create a list of links to the garden designers with gardens on the showcase

We'd also like to see small sustainability events occurring throughout the year. We'll do some at the Green Tent and in the community. In addition, perhaps a neighborhood association or several people on a block would like to host a green event. We'll be there to support the event leaders and publicize the event through our blog, Facebook page and bulletin boards.