

People, birds to benefit from new Descanso Gardens lake

Birds and people got equal consideration in plans for redeveloping the lake area at Descanso Gardens in LaCanada Flintridge. The concept of combining two existing ponds into a larger lake originated with Bill Beggs, a retired construction engineer and longtime volunteer at the public garden. Mr. Beggs is also an active member of the Audubon Society who comes to Descanso Gardens every day to feed the birds.

Steve Smith, landscape architect with Lawrence Moss & Associates, took the concept and created a lake that serves many uses. Although the site will look like a pristine natural area, the lake and its outfall are actually part of a flood control project.

"We plan to achieve the delicate balance between public needs and those of the birds," said Mr. Smith. The increased shoreline of the 1 1/2 acre lake with its central island will be an estuary for nesting and foraging waterfowl to use either year around or during migration

Garden visitors gain several viewing decks and educational exhibits that will blend into plantings around the lake.

Plants are mostly native and Australian shrubs that need a minimum of care and that will grow back quickly if damaged by the waterfowl. The shrubs and two large willows hanging over the water will enhance the existing groves of redwoods, sycamores and alders. Visitors can follow a footpath that wraps around the project and crosses a waterfall.

At the lower end of the lake, water will cascade year around over two falls separated by a natural-looking rock outcropping. In summer it will be recirculated and in winter excess rainfall will escape over the waterfalls.

The project, financed equally by Los Angeles County and \$70,000 in matching funds from Descanso Gardens Guild, should be finished in time for waterfowl migrations in the fall of 1990.

"Water Management in the Landscape" set for May 19

"Creating a water-conserving garden doesn't mean cactus and special irrigation - it's a whole attitude", says Lisa Iwata. She is one of four experts who will offer homeowners tips on creating lush yet water thrifty gardens during a hands-on water conservation symposium at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum May 19. "Water Management in the Landscape" runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

A registration fee of \$25.00 will include a box lunch. Space is limited, so participants should register early.

Water use can be cut from one-third to one half or more with simple management techniques. By grouping them in the right part of a garden, homeowners can still grow thirsty old favorites like azaleas and camellias. Ms. Iwata, a landscape architect with Land Interactive, Inc. will share these tips and more in her talk on designing attractive gardens that minimize water use.

"People can have a lush garden without lawn or turf, for example, if they use ground-

covers creatively," says Ms. Iwata. Homeowners will learn about retro-fitting, or re-vamping an existing garden, and see slides of endless garden design possibilities.

Dr. Peggy McLaughlin and other speakers will cover such topics as plant selection, irrigation design and garden maintenance. In the afternoon, experts will combine the planting tips and techniques to create an ideal garden as homeowners watch.

In addition, Dr. Steve Cohan will narrate a walk through the Henry C. Soto Water Conservation Garden, a thriving landscape of more than 200 plants that are not only drought-tolerant but colorful as well. The garden has flourished without irrigation for up to three weeks during hot weather.

The seminar is sponsored by the California Arboretum Foundation, Metropolitan Water District, the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum and the City of Pasadena Department of Water and Power.



1990. "People, birds to benefit from new Descanso Gardens lake." *Arboreta and botanic gardens : a publication of the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens* 2(1), 5.

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