Garden Tour 2023!
by Monica Tudor

WE WERE SO LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH A gorgeous day for a garden tour! It was sunny, not too hot, and just perfect for a group of like-minded gardeners who had gathered for the 2023 garden tour.

We met at the home of Marcia and Rey Rodriguez. Marcia had attended the “Ditch Your Lawn” class in fall of 2022 and went all-in. Their native garden was less than a year old, and although it might have looked sparse at the moment, it was perfectly planted to give space when the plants matured. The Rodrigues had a traditional grass yard with traditional flower beds surrounding the house. They liked their traditional flower beds surrounding their home and kept them, but went native on the rest of the front yard. They planted deer grass, Palo Verde trees, western redbud, white sage, bees bliss sage, blue eyed grass, pseudospectabilis penstemon (the pink-flowered kind), and a few other natives. They used weed barrier and small bark chips as mulch. Rey was a wonderful host as he described their garden.

Next, we went to the home of Paul Gipe and Nancy Nies. Since their yard is sloped, they had retaining walls installed. Their garden had been installed over a year ago and was designed by Fred Simon*. Their front and back yard gardens are beautiful, with an impressive and pleasing variety of native plants. They planted lupine, heuchera, salvia, deer grass, desert marigold, ceanothus, and more. Paul and Nancy answered all our questions while we ooh’d and ahh’d over their garden. Then Paul suggested we walk down to Gitika Commuri’s garden, since it was just a few blocks away.

Above: Monica, addressing the tour group in Paul and Nancy’s yard. Below: Paul standing in front of some of the retaining walls built to accommodate their front yard slope.

Below: Walking to the Commuri garden.
Mimulus Memo —June 2023

CNPS is the leader for providing reliable information on California native plants and plant conservation. Comprehensive information about California’s flora and vegetation communities is available throughout the state for conservation and educational purposes. CNPS’s leadership influences personal ethics and actions, as well as public policy for native plant protection.

... Megan Means for teaching us about Atwell Island.
... Peyton Ellas for the story of her starting Blue Oak Nursery in Springville.
... Brandon Dunn for sharing plans for the exciting Kern Gateway Trail.
... Monica Tudor for arranging the details of the 2023 Garden Tour.
... Rey and Marcia Rodriguez, Nancy Nies, Paul Gipe and Gitika Commuri for sharing their gardens.

So the lot of us trooped down the streets of the neighborhood, noting and commenting on some nice gardens on the way to Gitika’s house. Gitika’s garden is also on a slope and is a riot of color! Her garden combines natives with non-natives and she takes a low-maintenance approach to gardening. She has nasturtium, succulents, salvia, iris, poppies, sunflowers, santolina and more. She waters infrequently in the summer and explained some plants will go dormant in the summer sun but will return when the rains fall. As she shared some succulents with us, she commented she thoroughly enjoyed the company and our visit made for a great day for her.

*Fred Simon, 661-322-1381
fredsimonasa@yahoo.com