

Cultivating Native Wisdom ... for the future generations

The Amah Mutsun Relearning Garden at the University of California Santa Cruz Arboretum invites you to be a part of a historic collaboration. On the 40-acre parcel known as the California Teaching Garden, the descendants of the land's original inhabitants, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, are assisting the Arboretum in the management and development of a community-centered learning project.



Together, we can make a difference in the lives of all of our future generations – the people, the plants, the earth.

“A loss of species is a loss of culture.”
- Valentin Lopez, Amah Mutsun Tribal Chairman and elder

In 2009, the Arboretum staff and the Amah Mutsun tribal members recognized their mutual respect and interest in ethnobotany and came together to create the Relearning Garden. This collaboration acknowledged that modern land management is missing the perspectives of native technology, and that the indigenous peoples of the area have the desire to reintegrate their cultural use of local plants in cooperation with the university. However, without the participation of people of all ages and walks of life, the true value of sharing our collective wisdom cannot not be realized.

With the guidance of the Amah Mutsun tribal elders and council, as well as the continuing involvement of the UCSC American Indian Resource Center, the Relearning Garden will unfold as a place where traditional plant-gathering and tending can co-exist with educational and interpretative programs. A Student Council is forming that is dedicated to the well-being of the Relearning Garden and is supported by tribal members and the Arboretum. Students and volunteers are also encouraged to get involved and offer whatever resources they have to see these projects to fruition.

Collaborative projects are already happening in our area. Alongside the Relearning Garden is the partner project in McCabe Canyon at Pinnacles National Monument which is restoring a historic site where basketry materials were likely cultivated by local native peoples. Working with basketweavers who have witnessed the degradation of native plant habitats over the past decades, the national park service and university staff are researching what management methods make the best materials and the impact these methods have on the ecosystem. Also as a management collaboration, the Arboretum is working with the Amah Mutsun (in addition to UC Berkeley and State Parks) on a National Science Foundation funded research project at Quiroste Valley State Cultural Preserve. This interdisciplinary research project is implementing indigenous fire usage for land management and watershed restoration, and the Arboretum is documenting native vegetation and gathering plants for the Relearning Garden.

While the groundwork has been laid for the Relearning Garden to become reality, there is much to be done. Working from a comprehensive plant list provided by the Amah Mutsun, plants are being identified in the Arboretum's existing collections and sought in local nurseries and wild habitats. Garden infrastructure such as access to water for irrigation and accessible paths for visitors need to be installed as a foundation for further development. Interpretation, outreach, and education are being considered as methods for sharing these resources with generations to come. Funding for all phases of the Relearning Garden is being sought from public and private donors and grant opportunities. Without the involvement of the greater community, this inclusive and unique environment cannot thrive to its fullest potential as a resurgence of cultural and ecological awareness.

The seeds of this project have been sown and are being tended, but now it's time to support this abundance of wisdom and embrace the way this landscape has been tended for countless generations. Not only can we work together to restore a balance, but also to regain knowledge and inspire the future stewards of our world. The research and educational value of this project are immense in terms of land management practices and future collaborative efforts in conservation and preservation. Be a part of this landmark inquiry into sharing our knowledge and growing new possibilities.



Join us in creating the Amah Mutsun Relearning Garden at the UCSC Arboretum today!

**For more information and to contribute to the Relearning Garden,
call 831.427.2998 and visit <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu>**