COAST NEWS

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Annual garden festival signals spring tradition

By Wehtahnah Tucker

ENCINITAS — Garden enthusiasts will once again be treated to the sights and smells of private gardens as the fifth annual Encinitas Garden Festival and Tour commences April 17. While celebrating gardening and the horticultural heritage of the city, the event is taking a more family-friendly, interactive approach this year.

In addition to showcasing more than 20 private gardens featured on a walking tour of a selected community, the festival will feature the school garden at Paul Ecke Central, a drought resistant garden at the neighborhood fire house and butterfly gardening at the Monarch Program.

The highly regarded tour will take place in Leucadia where residents have agreed to open their garden gates. "They are awesome," said committee chairperson and local resident Nan Sterman. "This year we have such a variety of landscapes and the school garden that is of particular interest to everyone."

The festival is an all-volunteer event that grew out of an initiative of the city's Cultural Tourism committee. Sterman said that the committee of volunteers works year-round securing garden sites, working out logistical details and soliciting funds for the one-day event that occurs each spring. "We have very dedicated, resourceful volunteers," she said.



SPRING HAS SPRUNG The Paul Ecke Elementary School garden will be part of the fifth annual Encinitas Garden Festival and Tour April 17. *Courtesy photo*

The Gardeners' Marketplace will be located at Orpheus Park. The marketplace will offer festival-goers products and information for improving their gardens while also practicing environmental conservation. Vendors will be on hand to sell unusual plants, vegetable seedlings and garden-themed art.

Guest speakers throughout the day will offer seminars on a variety of garden-related topics including maintaining low-water gardens, growing your own fruits and vegetables, composting and using organic materials for pest control.

While the marketplace is free and open to the public, tickets are required to view the gardens on the tour. "They tend to sell out quickly," Sterman said.

A portion of the event proceeds go to the Encinitas Garden Festival Fund at the Coastal Community Foundation. Funds are reinvested back into Encinitas in the form of gardening books for the Encinitas libraries, funding for public landscaping, school gardens and other community gardening education projects.

Parking is located at the San Dieguito Academy parking lot on Santa Fe Drive. Festival participants will then board a double-decker bus for the ride to the Gardeners' Marketplace.

For more information, visit www.encinitasgardenfestival.org or call (760) 753-8615.