SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

April 11, 2010

THE OLD GROVE

Leucadia garden flourishes on the site of 'avocado acres'





Doug Jolly and Cecilia Baetge-Jolly's garden in Leucadia features a mosaic of flagstone and rounded pebbles (top) leading up to a lotus gate. The vibrant red flowers of a pincushion (Leucospermum) plant add a visual pop to the garden (middle). Succulents mingle with California native plants tucked in stone terrace walls. *Charlie Neuman / Union-Tribune photos*

By Nan Sterman
SPECIAL TO THE UNION-TRIBUNE

Right about now, Leucadia homeowners Doug Jolly and Cecilia Baetge-Jolly are spreading mulch, raking pathways and putting the finishing touches on their garden as they prepare for next weekend's Encinitas Garden Festival & Tour.

The Jollys' garden is one of 23 private gardens that will open their gates to visitors this coming Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The variety of gardens is stunning, as are the gardens, including the Jollys'.

The Jollys own one of the larger properties on this year's tour. It covers three-quarters of an acre that until a decade ago was home to chickens and horses. Before that, their property, like the surrounding neighborhood, was an avocado grove. In fact, locals still refer to the area as "avocado acres."

Years of avocado leaf mulch, plus two decades of chicken and horse manure made for beautiful gardening soil by the time the Jollys moved in at the end of 1999. The couple selected this property especially for the opportunity to create a big garden. Their last home had a small yard. Before that, Cecilia had never gardened. Her father was in the military so they moved around and lived mostly in apartments. Doug, on the other hand, gardened with his family in his native Scotland where the cool weather made for a short growing season. He remembers growing snow peas and rhubarb, but tomatoes, peppers and other warm-season crops could be grown only under glass.

Over the years, the two have taught themselves to garden in Leucadia's mild, dry climate. Mediterranean climate plants fit both their design aesthetic and their family's needs.

The entrance to the Jollys' garden is through a handmade lotus gate and beneath the huge red and purple blooms of a 'Ruby Glow' passion vine. The structure that supports the vine was built to keep trash cans out of the neighbors' view corridor, but on tour day, it will be a lovely way to access the garden. The gate leads to a sloping pathway of brick set in circles, the spaces between filled with small gravel. This permeable surface controls runoff from the street and irrigates nearby plantings.

Brick circles transition to stairs in a mosaic of flagstone, rounded pebbles, colored marbles, and bits of colorful ceramics, some that form Cecilia's name. The hardscape is the handiwork of an Old World craftsmen from south of the border. Over the years, he has done most of the rockwork on the property.

At the base of the stairs is what the couple refers to as their "copper cabana." This copper pipe structure is covered in a meticulously trained, white flowering, red berried Pyracantha. It screens the outdoor shower where the couple's teenagers rinse away sand after trips to the nearby beach.

Past the copper cabana and around

SEE **Garden, H4**

DETAILS

The fifth annual Encinitas Garden Festival & Tour, a self-guided walking tour.

When: Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit the Jollys' garden and 22 other private gardens along with a greenhouse, the Paul Ecke School garden, The Monarch Program butterfly vivarium, and the newest Encinitas fire station garden.

Admission: $21 for adults in advance, $7 for children under 10. If space remains on tour day, admission will be $25 and $10.

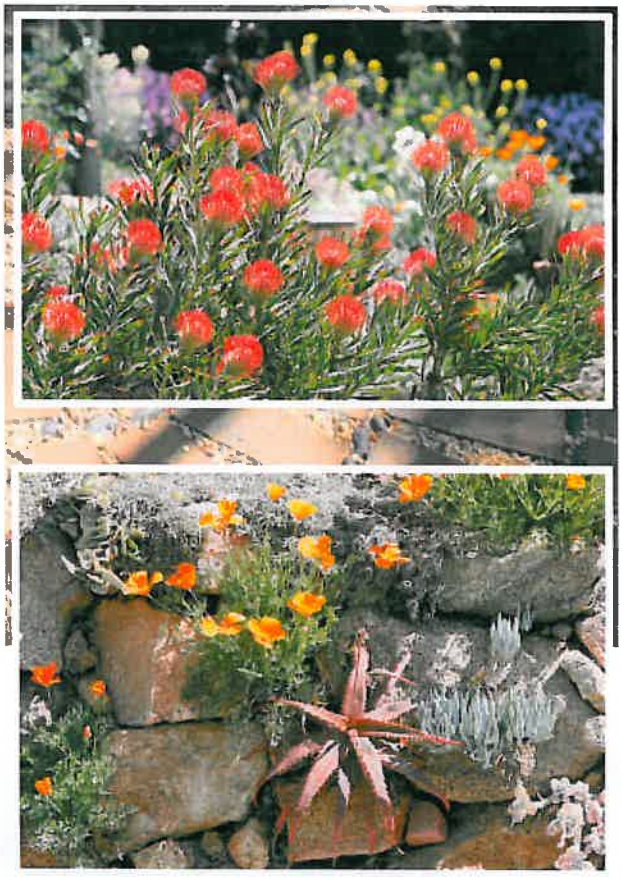
The Gardener's Marketplace at Orpheus Park in Leucadia is free and everyone is welcome. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., speakers will address topics ranging from composting to low-water plants to gardening with children.

Vendors will offer specialty plants, art, photography, food, and more.

There is no on-site parking. Instead, park for free at San Dieguito Academy, 800 Santa Fe Drive in Encinitas. Ride a double-decker bus to the marketplace to shop or to start your tour.

For more information: To make a reservation online or to locate a ticket outlet, please visit **EncinitasGardenFestival.org,** (760) 753-8615.





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GARDEN

CONTINUED FROM H1

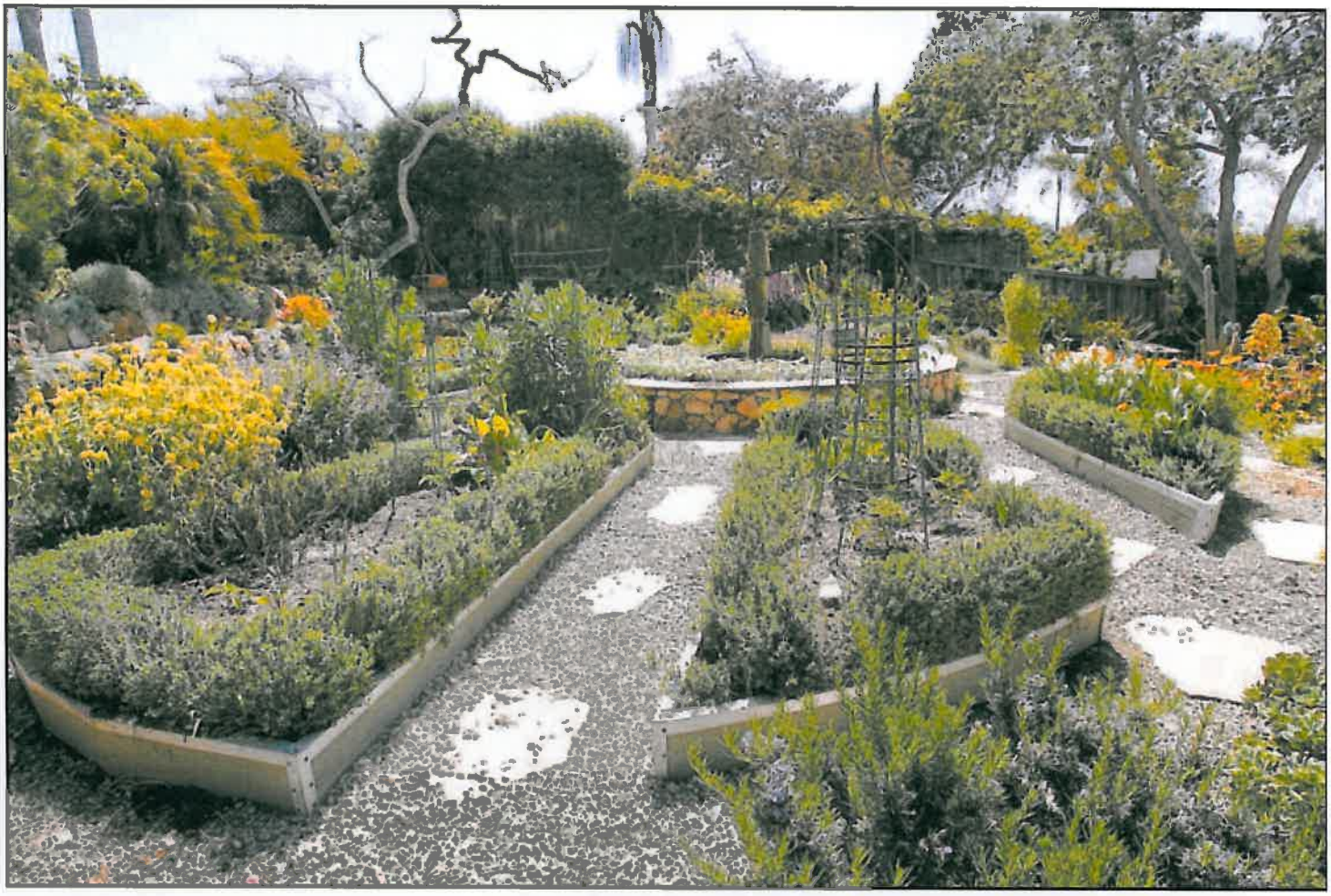
The first room one encounters is a broad patio

the corner of the house, the view opens to a broad expanse.

The garden is an absolute wonderland, created of the Jollys' own design. Early on, they interviewed several designers, but they all proposed what Cecilia refers to as "McMansion gardens." That wasn't at all what the Jollys had in mind. Instead, they drew upon their respective heritages.

From the mountains of Crete, where Cecilia's mother was born, came the inspiration to terrace the sloping property. Dry stacked stone walls and "standing stones" set here and there hearken back to the cairns of Doug's Scottish homeland. The couple's vegetable garden and fruit orchard evolved from both traditions. The first garden room one encounters is a broad patio that spans the back of the home. Outdoor table and chairs beckon family members to sit and relax. There are pots everywhere, including some glazed ceramics planted with a grotesque Pachypodium and other "fat trunk" succulents, an inspiration from Cecilia's "plant nerd" brother, who lives on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

To one side of the patio is a lovely collection of potted succulents, all in terra-cotta pots of



The garden features raised beds for vegetables. In the middle are artichokes *Charlie Neuman / Union-Tribune photos*

differing shapes and sizes. Listening to Cecilia talk about how the collection came together, it is clear that she sees the garden with a designers' eye — creating unity with single color pots being a prime example. The fig tree aside the patio has particular significance for Cecilia, as the fragrance of fig leaves on a sunny day conjures a favorite memory. "I was 12 or 13," she says, "in summers in Greece, we spent all day on the beach and the nights in my uncles' restaurants. Every day after lunch, my mother, her sisters, and my cousins would sit and do each others' nails as they talked. It was how I learned to speak Greek."

A masonry wall rims the patio, which, together with a low boxwood hedge, separates this more formal living space from the rustic garden beyond.

Step down from the patio and you pass through a pair of variegated Duranta shrubs that bloom purple with golden berries. Another few steps beneath an orange flowering trumpet vine arbor and you are in the garden proper. Just below is a lava rock-covered mound planted as a succulent sampler. Here, several tall, spiny Pachypodium, round red flapjack plants and fuzzy mounds of *Mammilaria cacti* contrast with some of the gardens many cycads, gifts

from Cecilia's brother. Dry stacked stone walls support gravel pathways that wind down through the garden. The stones came from Ramona and were assembled into walls by the same craftsman who made the flagstone and brick mosaic walkways. He taught Cecilia to plant in the cracks between the rocks. Today, the walls are studded with red-fleshed aloes, succulent blue chalk fingers, and round green rosettes of aeoniums.

One set of pathways leads to a large vegetable garden set in an interesting pattern. Each bed is wedge-shaped and arranged around a large circular bed, also raised. The idea, Cecilia explains, was to for the round bed to be the sun and the wedge shaped beds rays around the sun. In the center of the circular bed is a crescent moon-shaped pond from which rises an avant-garde fountain of concrete and copper "stars."

The vegetable beds overflow with peas, spinach, beets, cilantro, countless types of greens, fava beans (a favorite of "Mr. Neige," the family's white bichon frisé), and more. Some beds hold herbs, others flowering Mediterranean ornamentals such as a yellow blooming Jerusalem sage *(Phlomis fruticosa)*.

Below the vegetable garden sits one of the garden's many ancient, but still producing, avocado trees. This one stands guard beside a picnic table, clearly a favorite sitting spot. From this point, one can almost see the ocean out beyond Coast Highway.

Still another level down is a fruit orchard where the Jollys grow two types of persimmons, plums, apricots, white and yellow peaches, apples, pomegranates, pineapple guava and other fruits.

The fruit orchard and flowering trees at the bottom of the yard are separated by a long, winding path edged in round river rock and planted in the center with the low-water ground cover *Dymondia margaretae*. The path is typical of those found in rural areas of both Greece and Scotland, the Jollys say, though there, they would be planted with other species. The fruit orchard side of the path is edged in Thompson seedless and Midgely's purple grapevines trained onto chest-high lengths of copper pipe.

Beyond that, Cecilia planted a pair of Tipuana tipu trees in honor of Kate Sessions, the legendary San Diego nurserywoman and "mother" of Balboa Park. Both orange and yellow blooming African tulip trees *(Spathodea campulata)* stand nearby, as do tall, spiny trunked floss silk trees *(Chorisia speciosa)*. The couple loves the fact that floss silk, like the garden's young ginkgo and many cycads, date back to the time of dinosaurs.

In this lower area of the garden, pathways meander here and there, around beds filled with trees, naturalized pink and purple Peruvian lilies *(Alstroemeria)*, succulent agaves, and Doctor Seuss-like *Geranium maderense*. This giant geranium blooms in its second year with a mophead of pink flowers whose seeds then spread across the garden.

New citrus trees keep the old avocados company these days. The space beneath several of the stately avos is blanketed with orange-blooming Clivia from late winter into spring. Cecilia stops to gaze at the Clivia flowers, then asks a visitor whether she thinks the color clashes with a nearby pink blooming azalea.

The entire garden is such a show that the thought of clashing colors doesn't even enter one's mind. It is all just wonder and excitement, ancient and new, and all totally delightful.

Nan Sterman is a garden journalist and designer.



Cecilia Baetge-Jolly added water to the fountain in her large, sprawling garden.



The garden, part of the Encinitas garden tour, also includes many potted succulent plants.