



Lessons from RBR's Hillside Native Plant Project, One Year Later

By Ingrid McConnell, Board President

Dear Members:

Take a look at the hillside above the "mare motel" at RBR.

Last year your board approved a project to plant native plants on that hillside. The goal was to mitigate erosion, complement the City's master plan for the Hahamongna Watershed Park, and to beautify the grounds of Rose Bowl Riders.

The challenges we faced when analyzing the project included a shoestring budget, obtaining City permission, invasive ground squirrel holes, a steep, challenging terrain, and the ongoing drought and heat wave that make planting anything a risky proposition.

Despite all these challenges, the newly formed RBR garden committee, led by landscape architects Anna Armstrong (now a board member!) and Richard Walker, put together a plan and a reasonable budget predicated on volunteer labor to implement. The City of Pasadena was enthusiastic about the plan and gave us permission to plant. Dozens of RBR members sat and sweated on the hill during the 95 degree day of last year's spring work day, as well as several subsequent Saturdays, moving rocks, removing weeds, destroying squirrel holes and generally preparing the hillside for planting. Many volunteers helped with these projects, as well as moving huge piles of rocks from the park (courtesy of Pasadena), and addressing the challenges of installing a modern-day irrigation system (needed to

help plants establish; when they are grown up they should need little or no irrigation).

Finally, the tiny little native plants -- including black and white Sage, Mexican Elderberry, Hollyleaf Cherry, Mountain Mahogany and Toyon -- were planted (with squirrel cages to protect from plant-eating rodents), the irrigation set up, and we crossed our fingers that these little Charlie Brown plants would grow in their new home.

Less than a year later and our hillside is blooming; 95% of the original plants are alive and well. Under the ground vigorous roots are forming that will keep our hillside stable. Buckwheat, poppies, yarrow and fescue seeds have been strewn that will eventually propagate and further beautify and stabilize the hill. These plants also capture moisture, help cool the environment, suppress invasives, and provide a habitat for native fauna.

The hillside planting project also serves as a metaphor for Rose Bowl Riders. Our organization faces many challenges that at times seem insurmountable. Yet when we pool our resources: the collective manpower of our volunteers to leverage our small budget, the expertise, sometimes hidden, of our membership, and sheer will to accomplish our goals, we can do it! Sometimes it may take years to reap the rewards, but thoughtful planning and responsible stewardship of the land we operate on will ensure that our efforts take root and provide benefits to our members and the community in the years to come.

New Volunteer Hours Tracker Coming Soon

<http://www.trackitforward.com/>

Because Rose Bowl Riders is an all volunteer organization, one of the conditions for membership at RBR is that members make some sort of volunteer contribution every year (10 hours per year) as well as paying the membership dues. In recent years, this has been expanded to allow members to opt out of volunteering by making a monetary donation instead. However, we have not had a good method for tracking members' volunteer hours.

Beginning soon, RBR will allow members to track their volunteer hours or pay an opt out donation in the same place. The Trackitforward app makes this possible. If you haven't already, you will soon receive an email from the Trackitforward site so you can create your own account and start tracking your hours *and* sign up to volunteer for upcoming events such as Spring Work Day on May 14th or the Schooling Show on May 22nd. More information will be coming soon, but til then if you have questions please send them to the RBR email address at rosebowlriders_info@yahoo.com

"Ask Anna" by Anna Armstrong

In response to our featured plant in last month's issue, Wild Cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*), we received a note of dismay from one of our members: "Wild cucumber?! A ghastly plant, only worthy of being extirpated. Huge, water-hogging root balls, spiked pods that protect its spawn, aggressive vines that choke other plants--what's to like?"

Dear Priscilla,

While a bit dramatic, you do accurately describe some of this plant's features, but you fail to give it credit for being an interesting part of the local ecosystem and supporting native pollinating insects! I agree it may not be a prime candidate for most people's gardens (unless they are attracted to unusual and slightly ominous plants), but it has a place in the native habitat of our region. Yes, it does cover up other plants, but only for a few short weeks after winter

rains. Besides, the local Native Americans seemed to love it, and collected the seeds for a wide array of uses - red paint, beads for necklaces, marbles for kids' play, fish poison (from roots), black makeup, and roasted and



pressed for oil to promote hair growth! They used the plant's stems for string, dried and peeled pods for scrubbing (related to the loofa) and filtering

out grease, and boiled leaves to treat hemorrhoids. Some of these I would not suggest today, but it certainly was useful at the time! Maybe the most interesting is the root, which we never see - one name for the plant is Man Root, because the large, fleshy root can live for decades and weigh up to 300 pounds. So the plant that you only see for a few months comes from the same root every year; it survives drought, fires, floods, and surface clearing. You have to at least appreciate its tenacity.

Welcome New RBR Members Approved at the March Board Meeting

Bhutia Family, Tina & Paul Cartwright, Kim Family, Scolinos Family, Tung Family, Tecumseh family.

The membership roster is accessible from RBR's WildApricot site.

Equestrian Trails International Telephone Survey Coming Soon

By Priscilla Benson

Corral 2 of ETI (our local corral) has agreed to help with a survey that has been requested by Supt. Antonovich's office. The survey, which primarily deals with the equestrian use of the public roads, is only for Altadena residents and equestrians but many RBR members fall into that category. We (Corral 2) hope that if any of you as a member of RBR are contacted you will help all Altadena equestrians by putting in your two cents' worth.

Even if you are a parent whose only opinion of horses is that they might as well eat dollar bills as hay, your participation will help.

Stay tuned!

Horsemanship 101 Clinic Wednesdays May 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th in Oval Arena

This will take place from 3 to 6 pm in the small oval arena near the Historic Barn stalls. The oval arena is reserved for the clinic during this time and will not be available for riding or turnouts.

The clinic participants will also use the tie rails next to the vacant tack shed (formerly used by Arroyo Canyon).

La Canada Fiesta Day Parade: Strut Your Stuff!

RBR will be participating in the La Canada Fiesta Day parade on May 30th. Please come represent our wonderful club and show off our RBR spirit! We are searching for walkers with kids, with dogs, horseback participants as well as those that would like to ride in the Myrtle Hill Farm truck. Also need 3 youths to carry the RBR banner at the front of our group. More info on meeting times will follow. We do need to get our head count in so contact Nancy (626)437-4101 to sign up!

Kudos

Special thanks this month go to:

Members Carolyn Eberhard, Nancy Reed, Bonnie Hedrick and Heidi Kelman who stayed ALL DAY at the Dressage Show to make sure things ran smoothly right up to the end.

Board member Walt Myers who installed the new document lockbox in the Clubhouse and hung around waiting for the phone company.

Member Betsy Coles who donated the entire annual hosting fee for our rosebowlriders.org website.

Dressage Show Report



BIG thanks to those who volunteered at and sponsored the Rose Bowl Riders Spring Dressage Show! We had a great turnout with rides from 8am until just after 6pm and tests from Western and Intro all the way to PSG - a long, LONG day. Thanks to our combined efforts, the show went smoothly and we were able to provide a positive, professional show for more than 30 riders and horses - quite a few who were at RBR for the very first time!

Not only are these schooling events important for our organization, they provide an affordable showing opportunity and educational experience for the greater equestrian community in Southern California.

Thank you all again for your continued support!!

Thank you to our volunteers: Nancy Reed, Ann Regan, Bonnie, John & Greg Hedrick, Christy Hobart, Katherine Ginzton, Sue Lafferty, Carolyn Eberhard, Heidi Kelman, Nicole Hoang, Hilary Ruiz, Susan Hoskins, Jessica Stewart, Nancy Rose, Katy Ireland, Andrea Thorpe and Ingrid McConnell.

Thank you to our sponsors: Armstrong & Walker Landscape Architecture, The Eberhard Family, The Enzminger Family, Dr. & Mrs. Leonard Ginzton, Jane Harman, Christy Hobart & Henry Shapiro, Cathy McNassor, The O'Hara Family, Tania Owen, The Papac Family, Nilde Rivosecchi, Nancy Rose, Hilary Ruiz and Gail Young

