

April 24, 2022

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency
Rio Vista Water Treatment Plant
27234 Bouquet Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

To all Water Board Members:

I read with interest a recent article in *The Signal* about the new education garden the water agency plans to build and agree that it is a very good idea to make people aware of exactly how the water they use in their homes gets to them.

I'd like to request, however, that when planning the plants to go into this garden, that a very high percentage of them be California native plants, plants listed by the California Native Plant Society as being native.

People will be visiting the garden, as I did 25 years ago, looking for ways to save water by creating a drought-tolerant landscape. Therefore, it is vitally important that the Water Agency uses this opportunity to direct people to the best plants to plant.

Drought tolerance does not necessarily make a plant the best plant for this area. Non-native plants that grow well here probably came from other countries that also have a Mediterranean climate, but those plants did not evolve with the insects, pollinators, and other plants and animals that California native plants evolved with. Therefore, plants from other areas, while drought tolerant, do not support our local ecosystem as well as native plants do.

California native plants are also very easy to grow, use (on average) one-sixth of the water of most non-native plants, do not need fertilizer or other soil amendments, and require little maintenance. I have a yard full of natives and, when it's not raining, water every 2 to 3 weeks. Occasional trimming is about all I ever have to do.

Thank you for considering this option.

Mary Herr
Valencia, CA