

## Grow Native Nursery is Branching Out

Claremont, Calif., (September 14, 2010)-Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden announces the opening of a second location of Grow Native Nursery, located on the grounds of long-established Veterans' Garden in Westwood.

The nursery grand opening begins at 9 a.m., for RSABG members; 11 a.m., for the general public, and will close at 4 p.m., on Saturday, September 25, 2010. The public is invited to tour the grounds, meet the staff and shop L.A.'s newest California native plant nursery. Located in the Westwood District of L.A., near the intersection of Constitution Avenue and Sepulveda Avenue, the nursery is adjacent to the Jackie Robinson Stadium.

Beginning September 27, Grow Native Nursery in Westwood will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The 15-acre garden and nursery, located on the grounds of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS), was established in 1989 as part of the VA's Horticulture Therapy Program, a work therapy program to assist veterans making the transition back to civilian employment. The Grow Native Nursery staff will collaborate with the GLAHS to train veterans on the propagation, care and maintenance of California native plants. The partnership between RSABG and GLAHS, began in January 2010, will offer a new focus on native flora as well as sustainable landscaping and gardening practices. In addition to occupational therapy for the veterans the project will offer nursery sales of California native plants to the public.

"The increasing use of California native plants in landscapes is heartening," says Patrick Larkin, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden executive director. "By opening this site on the Westside, we're making these plants more available to a wider audience. Additionally, by partnering with the VA to provide this training program, we're providing a knowledgeable workforce to help meet the demand for increasingly sustainable landscapes."

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (RSABG), the largest botanic garden dedicated exclusively to California's native plants, grounds itself with a philosophy of biodiversity and the importance of bringing real-world conservation applications to the public through horticultural education, scientific research and sales of native plants.

RSABG's Grow Native Nursery (GNN) site will also include a number of demonstration garden plots, designed to illustrate the ways in which native plants can be used to achieve sustainable and drought-tolerant home gardens and landscapes. The will also allow veterans in the program to learn horticultural techniques in a real-world, practical way.

Kat Eriksson, Grow Native Nursery manager, directs the daily operations and serves as the RSABG representative at the site. She will manage the care, propagation and maintenance of plants cultivated at the garden and supervise veterans in the program who are nursery and garden workers.

Eriksson joined RSABG from The Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, where she served as the head gardener of perennials, roses and herbs and was responsible for the care and propagation of plants on 10 acres. Prior to The Huntington, Eriksson was at the Los Angeles Arboretum, where she responsible for care of the Kallam Perennial Garden. She has also managed her own landscape design business since 1988.

RSABG has been selling native plants at the Westwood Farmers Market, located in the nursery parking lot, since January. The weekly farmers and artisan market is held every Thursday from 12 to 6 p.m. RSABG members enjoy a 10 percent discount on all purchases from the Grow Native Nursery booth at the market and at the nursery.

More information can be found at [www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org). Email inquires can be made to [keriksson@rsabg.org](mailto:keriksson@rsabg.org).