

UCR Palm Desert Garden Intervention

This is a collaborative art intervention initiated by Dick Hebdige, Director of Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies, which takes place in the UCR/Palm Desert Sustainable Garden. The project includes artists Deena Capparelli, Lisa Tucker, and entities concerned with native plants/animals, desert studies, and sustainable landscape practices. Our intention is to bring together researchers, artists and the public in a community project that will create a new awareness of the land bridging UCR and CSUSB. Past uses of flora and fauna in our desert region by Native Americans will be explored in order to inform the piece, as well as a close study of current desert research.

The project has many rich possibilities. One is a series of interpretive pathways connecting working labs/meeting areas within the garden. Bringing together researchers and students from K12, community colleges, and the two universities adjacent to the garden, we will create a working laboratory with unique opportunities to study the desert environment and produce new works. Bridging the land and disciplines will give artists, scientists, sociologists, historians, architects, healthcare professionals, and others a place to incubate ideas and perform. Some of the components may include:

- **Micro-gardens and a meditation garden outside the formal garden that will focus on native edible plants**
- **Experimental energy systems modeled within the garden to provide power sources for laptops and lighting within the meeting areas. In addition, old and new forms of irrigation will be implemented—from ollas to highly sensitive moisture/evaporation sensors.**
- **Plant matter, clay, and other materials will be used to sculpt living walls of plants to act as wind and sound barriers**
- **Palo Verde, Mesquite, and other trees to provide shade and seed pods for fall harvest, which could include a native edible plant feast with a local chef showcasing their flavors and textures.**
- **A fall seed collection and native plant tour organized in preparation for the fall harvest feast**
- **Performance space for dance, music, theater, creative writing, and visual art**
- **Interactive art space for students and professional artists**
- **A blog for conversations between artists, researchers, and the public**
- **Possible path connecting to CSUSB's proposed medicinal garden**
- **Collaborative course development or coordinating projects with CSUSB's Health Sciences Program and local public health organizations**
- **Incorporating desert studies and the arts within science, math, social studies, and language arts in support of K12 curriculum**
- **Collaborating with native tribes to include cultural events, research partnerships, and integration of native plants into daily living**
- **Video documentation of the project, as well as video art production. We will use a surveillance camera and live video feed of the area to study the garden and record patterns of use by people and animals**
- **Initially to include fundraising events for the formal garden: dinner gala with native edibles and art auction; film festival; juried student exhibition; and more to be added/discussed**
- **There has been discussion of extending the garden project into museums and galleries, with two venues expressing interest, even at this early date**

UCR Palm Desert Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies direct and fund the project, though the artists will be actively involved in grants writing and acquiring donations.