KiLL YOUR LAWN
HOW TO REPLACE YOUR WATER-GUZZLING LAWN WITH A LOW-MAINTENANCE, BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDEN

CREATED BY THE STUDENTS OF LOS ANGELES AUDUBON'S BALDWIN HILLS GREENHOUSE PROGRAM
The authors of this comic book have taken what generously might be described as an “innovative” approach to habitat conservation. Others might just call them “weirdos.” We realize the photos could really sway you either way. These authors were students in Los Angeles Audubon’s Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program. They spent the 2010-2011 school year conducting research at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park, completing hands-on habitat restoration projects at various locations within the Ballona Creek Watershed, writing and implementing environmental science curriculum for elementary school students, and keeping a sketchbook. Drawing on all they learned during the school year (pun intended), they spent their summer writing and illustrating this comic book.

Rina Arce, after spending two years developing methods to create hand-made paper from invasive plants and teaching others how to make paper, currently attends UC Irvine. Jamise Caesar, now at UC Berkeley, not only taught third-graders how to use binoculars but also went on a trip to China to put her Mandarin skills to good use. Yuisi Dennis is an artist and habitat restoration specialist who is also working on a documentary. He can clear a hillside of euphorbia AND teach a fourth-grader how to use a compass. Jimmy Perez, having studied methods for protecting young native trees from deadly gophers, now fights off banana slugs at UC Santa Cruz. A corvid-watcher extraordinaire, Joyce Realegeno monitored urban crows and ravens for her research project, served as an intern at the Venice Beach Least Tern colony, and currently meanders among the redwoods of the UC Santa Cruz campus. Reynalda Martinez, comics veteran, studied how visitors engage with nature at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park and is in her second year of the Greenhouse Program. Now a third-year Greenhouse Program star, Joanna Ruacho has taught elementary school students how to test soil, identify birds, understand the ecological importance of pollinators, and care for native plants... in English AND Spanish. Jessica “Plants Can Be Friends” Sosa is now in her third and final year as a greenhouse intern. A recipient of the Planet Connect grant (one of just ten nation-wide each year), she is continuing her study of companion planting between native and food plants. Stacey Vigallon, Los Angeles Audubon’s Director of Interpretation and manager of the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program, guided this rabble of authors through the project and told them it was perfectly okay to combine art and science for a living if they wanted to.
WHY ONE SHOULD KILL ONE’S LAWN

‘WHY SHOULD I KILL MY LAWN?’ YOU ASK?
‘IT SOUNDS LIKE SUCH AN ARDUOUS TASK!’
BUT CONSIDERING ITS EVENTUAL PERKS,
YOU’LL REALIZE THAT IT’S REWARDING WORK.
FOR WHEN YOU’VE SWITCHED YOUR LAWN TO NATIVE,
YOUR LANDSCAPING IDEAS WILL BECOME CREATIVE.
AND ONCE YOUR GARDEN HAS TURNED HABITAT,
COUNTLESS CALIFORNIANS WILL THANK YOU FOR THAT!

We, the students of the Baldwin Hills Greenhouse Program, are well acquainted with the many facets that encompass Southern California as a community: family, work, play, environment, livelihood. We’ve done a lot… Getting elementary school students and their families involved in the green movement, planting gardens for them to maintain and harvest, researching new ways to repair the ecosystem in order to restore habitat for California’s wildlife. We really have a strong sense of community! And, although we’re all just starting out (some of us in high school, some of us barely college freshmen), we deeply value the importance of making the world a little easier to live in. So, when we considered taking on the relentless job of convincing our fellow neighbors to “kill” their lawns, we had the community in mind. And, because Southern California’s climate makes it very time-consuming and ecologically expensive to sustain non-native turf grass, there is a pressing need to switch over to more sustainable landscaping solutions.

Have you ever noticed just how many lawns are in your neighborhood? Ever stop to realize what type of climate you live in? Here in Southern California, we dwell in a Mediterranean climate, which means we get most of our rainfall in the fall and winter and that our summer months are drrrryyyyy. So, when was the last time you met a nicely groomed lawn that didn’t need year-round care and irrigation? With that in mind, do you remember how high your water bill was last month? Of course you do! And your lawn probably contributed more to that bill than your daily thirty-minute showers (it’s okay, we’ve all done it). Maybe it’s time to consider replacing that water-guzzling lawn with something easier on your bank account and the environment. This comic book is here to guide you through your journey to water efficiency and going native (with native plant species)!
WHY SHOULD YOU KILL YOUR LAWN?

Lawns used to be a symbol of wealth in Europe (where there is a lot of rain). But now...

Everyone has a lawn! Lawns take in a lot of water. You have to water them or spray someone else to do it for you—and mow in it too...

And if you don’t care for them, they’ll grow bigger, turn brown, grow weeds, and give you more unnecessary work.

Also lawns require treatments that pollute water. This pollution also harms other living things. That later on run off into our water bodies.

AQUATIC PLANTS SUFFER FROM LOW OXYGEN AND SUNLIGHT.aquatic animals too...

Aquatic plants need oxygen!

In 1987, a study found children living in homes where lawn pesticides are used were 5 times more likely to develop leukemia.

I don’t want to have leukemia?

In Los Angeles, we don’t get a lot of rain, so we use a lot of precious water to maintain these lawns.

What should you replace your lawn with? How about native plants... easy to maintain, keeps soil duff, beautiful, and not evil.

* We found this information in “Turf Grass Madness: Reasons to Reduce the Lawn in Your Landscape” by the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Sustainable Landscape Series Bulletin #130 (March 2010).
WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

A native garden benefits native wildlife. Compared to a lawn, a native garden does not require the use of pesticide.

Pesticides are easily taken into their environment, harming ecosystems and native wildlife.

Eliminate the use of pesticide by installing a native plant garden!

Unlike a lawn, the native plant, toyon, is alive all year round without the help of pesticide or the use of too much water.

Native plants such as toyon, Dudleya, and the California poppy are adapted to Southern California’s climate. Therefore, they require less maintenance than a lawn.

The California poppy is an annual native.

Dudleya is characterized by its bright flowers and blue-gray leaves.
GREENBLOOD... HOW TO KILL YOUR LAWN

**Lawn Lasagna Method**
- Cardboard
- Water
- Newspaper
- Organic Mulch

Cover lawn with 3 or more layers of cardboard or newspaper

Add 4 to 6 inches of organic mulch, then water

TWO MONTHS LATER

Dig through to plant natives!

**Solarizing Method**
- Tarp
- Dr. Water
- e-Mower
- Robot

Use mower to cut grass very short

Water lawn then cover it with a tarp

LET THE SUN COOK THE LAWN

SIX WEEKS LATER

Remove tarp and plant natives!
How to Care for Natives

Make sure your newly planted plant has a raised basin around it and doesn't sit above the soil's surface.

Native plants should be watered thoroughly through winter and summer months when planted in fall.

Great Job, Wallace!!

Now we have a Home

It's My Pleasure

Water, Wallace Water...
IF YOU EVER DECIDE TO INSTALL A NATIVE GARDEN, BE SURE TO KNOW THAT NOT ONLY WILL YOU SAVE WATER AND CREATE A MORE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING YARD, BUT YOU WILL ALSO PROVIDE WILDLIFE WITH A SAFE HAVEN FOR LIFE.

NATIVE GARDENS PROVIDE WILDLIFE WITH YEAR-ROUND SHELTER AND FOOD.

FROM THE SMALLEST MASON BEE TO THE MOST LONG WINDED NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD, YOUR NATIVE GARDEN MAY ATTRACT WILDLIFE FOR YOU TO ENJOY.

A GARDEN IS MORE THAN PLANTS...
NATIVES and VEGETABLES CAN BE FRIENDS

GARDENING PROVIDES EXERCISE AND VERY HEALTHY FOOD. STUDIES SHOW THAT BEING OUTSIDE RELIEVES STRESS.

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS MAY HELP PROVIDE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS IN URBAN SETTINGS.

THIS IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "COMPANION PLANTING." COMPANION PLANTING IS A GARDENING TRADITION THAT INCORPORATES PLANTING TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANTS CLOSE TOGETHER IN ORDER TO GENERATE SOME TYPE OF BENEFIT.

PURPLE SAGE
GIANT WILDRYE
CACTI
LETTUCE
CHARD
TOMATOES
BUCHN GRASS
WHITE SAGE
NOKOL
CALIFORNIA BASIL SWEET SWEET

JESSICA S 2014
WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A LAWN?

YOU CAN PLANT NATIVE PLANTS IN PLANT CONTAINERS.

Dudleya
Purple Sage

CLOTHING: MAKE SURE TO WEAR COMFORTABLE CLOTHES THAT YOU DON'T MIND GETTING DIRTY.

Boots
Sneakers

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook:
Another thing you can do is volunteer work. You can volunteer at the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. For example, you or you can go to the beach and practice clothes.

Volunteer here.
Sources that were useful to us and might be useful to you too…

This comic book was based on and inspired by Garry George’s original “Kill Your Lawn” article, published in the Western Tanager, Los Angeles Audubon’s newsletter (Vol 69, Issue 1, September/October 2002). You can view an updated version of this article (Vol 77, Issue 2, November/December 2010) in the newsletter archives at www.losangelesaudubon.org

Native Plant Nurseries near Los Angeles:
Theodore Payne Foundation - theodorepayne.org
Las Pilitas Nursery - laspilitas.com
Tree of Life Nursery - californianativeplants.com

Great online resources:
Audubon at Home – just type “audubon at home” into a search engine for the most up-to-date web address
Calflora - calflora.org
California Native Plant Society - cnps.org
California Invasive Plant Council - cal-ipc.org

Stuff we read that helped with this comic book…

Books:

Articles (you can find these online with a little detective work):
“Turf Grass Madness: Reasons to Reduce the Lawn in Your Landscape” by the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, Sustainable Landscape Series Bulletin #130 (March 2010).
“Turf War” by Elizabeth Kolbert, The New Yorker (July 2008).

Crazy about backyard wildlife? Here’s more to think about…

Once you’ve killed your lawn and replaced it with native plants, you might also want to consider adding a water feature to attract even more wildlife. There are many options out there for water-wise water features. They can be as simple as a birdbath or as fancy as a stream with a pump for recycling the water used. There are also ways to collect and use our seasonal rainwater as well. The National Wildlife Federation offers some good advice on their website: www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create-a-Habitat.aspx

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THANK YOU FOR TAKING AN INTEREST IN YOUR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA!

BY PICKING UP THIS PARTICULAR COMIC BOOK YOU...

- CONSCIOUSLY MADE THE DECISION TO CARE ABOUT THE AREA IN WHICH YOU RESIDE.
- ARE OPEN TO THE IDEA OF TURNING YOUR YARD INTO A LIVING, THRIVING WORK OF ART, MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD A LITTLE SPIFFIER.
- JUST MIGHT ALLOW FRIENDS, LIKE MR. ELDERBERRY AND MS. CACTUS WREN, THE CHANCE TO FLOURISH AND PROSPER.
- STARTED ON YOUR WAY TO MAKE LIVING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA’S DRY CLIMATE ALL THE MORE SUSTAINABLE.

This project was made possible by a grant from the TogetherGreen Conservation Leadership Program and a generous donation to Los Angeles Audubon. For more information about these organizations visit their websites at

togethergreen.org
losangelesaudubon.org

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