

city Hall
Santa Cruz has

... Been A City Of Flowers

By IDA HILLS
Sentinel Garden Writer

Santa Cruz has been a city of flowers since the early settlers planted their seeds and slips from "back home" among the spectacular native plants of the area. The city began its role as a commercial shipper of cut flowers during the period when most florist flowers were field grown.

Many homes in the older sections of town have handsome specimens of rhododendron, camellia and other slow growing shrubs planted around the turn of the century that have reached the maturity of their beauty. There is a native azalea, rooftop high, which was planted by the mother of the present owner, that is a cloud of bloom in the spring.

The "Historic Trees of Santa Cruz" were catalogued by Albert Wilson, San Francisco garden authority, in 1938. Santa Cruz Garden Club sponsored the survey and assisted in making it. The results in loose-leaf form are kept in a locked case in the city library.

City Hall exerts a strong effort to maintain and extend the theme of Santa Cruz, a city of flowers. The unique and charming Spanish style buildings were built on the old Hihn Estate in 1938, and the gardens were designed at that time. Starting in 1965, the late Tod Greshman rejuvenated the original design, beginning with the soil itself. The work is being continued by Richard Criswell.

The City Hall gardens are a rare combination of precisely sculptured lawns and trees and brilliant color. For background there are fine old specimens of roses, rhododendrons, camellias, and hibiscus. The flower beds are filled with an ever changing display of colorful annuals and perennials. Most of these are grown by Criswell in his own greenhouse. They are planted in place as they approach their peak of beauty, and then replaced by others when that peak is past. He uses Silverspade as a mulch and dressing in these beds which gives them their perfectly manicured look.

Criswell has designed a number of innovative containers for maximum effect in the available space. Octagonal redwood planters three feet in diameter mounted on pedestals have been added to flank the front fountain. These have been planted with tall yellow Lady Marigolds in the center surrounded by trailing double red petunias. The bed at the base of the planters also contains yellow marigolds.

Criswell is currently working on tall chickenwire columns filled with spagnum moss to hold plants to dramatize the pillars in front of the water department. He has created interesting topiaries by planting red sweetpeas on a wire frame of the type used to support fuchsia standards. The pot at the base of the supporting pole is planted with blue pansies. A

bed on the left side of the front entry has City Hall spelled out in marigolds.

The Gardens own a fine collection of cymbidiums which are a featured part of the spring display. Shaffer's Tropical Gardens contributed a quantity of cymbidiums this spring for use on the Garden Mall and in other Park and Recreation Department plantings. The Department has recently received a contribution of \$4,000 worth of hybrid cymbidiums from Rudolph Pabst of Hillsborough to further add to their fine collection for spring use throughout the city.

The Pacific Garden Mall, created and maintained through the cooperation of the Downtown Merchants and the Park and Recreation Department, further emphasizes Santa Cruz as a city of flowers. Mario Cruci is the gardener in charge of these plantings. These too are a combination of handsome permanent plants with special seasonal bloom adding interest. The beauty and richness of the spring planting with dozens of cymbidiums and potted rhododendron and azalea is unique among street plantings.

The current project of the Park and Recreation Department is a street tree planting program in which the department cooperates with residents of a street or area. California Street has just been planted with European Sycamore and liquid amber. A group on Morrissey are working on a similar project. Two years ago an extensive planting of Star Pine was placed on Ocean Street from Water Street to Soquel Avenue. Almost a thousand one and two-year-old trees from the state nursery are planted in De Laveaga Park each year. These have been mostly pine and different varieties of eucalyptus. There is also a cooperative tree planting project between the school district and the Park and Recreation Department. These trees are principally at Harbor High and Natural Bridges school.

The Downtown Merchants Assn. hopes to provide an opportunity for everyone interested in Santa Cruz' as a city of flowers to display their specialty on June 2 and 3. They are inviting commercial growers, individual gardeners and garden groups to participate. The show is planned merchants will provide window space for flower arrangements and plants too tender for outdoor display.

The committee asks all interested in participating to fill in an entry blank at Marcenaro's Little One, Schipper-Dillon or the Park and Recreation Department. These entries are necessary in order to plan the required space.

Soil Is The Key To Good Garden

The sooner a gardener comes to terms with his soil, the greener will be his garden. If there is one secret to that proverbial green thumb, it lies underground.

Some gardeners realize this instinctively, but others learn

the soil is too compact to make food readily available. Or, perhaps, the soil is too sandy, and loose, and the food that is added is hurriedly leached-out. The answer to either soil situation is humus.

Proper humus content makes

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