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Creating community and edible landscapes in Vacaville and countywide

Saturday a chance to cobble together a ‘food forest’ as part of Sustainable Backyard program in Vacaville

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American poet, novelist and farmer Wendell Berry once said that a person growing an organic garden is “improving a piece of the world.”

That appears to partially describe the idea underscoring Sustainable Solano’s Sustainable Backyard program.

Since it began five years ago, the program and members have created 17 food-producing, self-sustaining demonstration “food forest” gardens across Solano County on both public and private lands. The food forests are based on a permaculture design system of food production that draws on “the wisdom inherent in natural woodlands and the understanding of beneficial relationships between plants to create and support landscapes that grow

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These gardens are primarily irrigated by secondary water sources (diverted roof water, laundry-to-landscape graywater systems).

Since the program's launch, sustainable landscape classes have been offered to Vacaville residents. The classes cover sustainable landscape design, wise-water practices and permaculture.

One of those classes, a workshop, will be held in Vacaville on Saturday, when residents will have a chance to tour a sustainable backyard that displays creative uses for more than 20 free items and help create Vacaville's third private food forest garden.

The selected homeowner is a longtime Vacaville resident "with a vision to transform her front yard from barren, dead grass to an oasis of edible and beneficial trees and plants," Newell wrote in the prepared statement.

This food forest garden will be named "Mangia," with "the goal of providing nourishment and serve as a community asset to learn about sustainable landscaping," she added.

The garden will take one full day to complete and each public installation workshop is a hands-on endeavor, including the digging of swales, diverting roof water, planting fruit trees and a community of plants that support a healthy, diverse



Registration is required for these free workshops. Visit www.sustainablesolano.org/events.

The selection process for these sites is based on criteria such as yard access, graywater feasibility and sun orientation, Newell wrote in the release. Sites are assessed and selected by Sustainable Solano's Advisory Board, county residents "aiming to raise sustainability awareness in Solano County," she added.

The project is made possible by funding and support of the Solano County Water Agency.

Sustainable Solano a nonprofit organization is a nonprofit organization dedicated to nurturing initiatives "for the good of the whole," noted Newell.

For more information, email info@sustainablesolano.org.

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