

# Fieldnotes: solano canyon garden

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I began approaching and talking to a couple of people, asking what kind of plant is that, how tall they grow, and what good they are for. At first, I thought I was getting simple answers. But the way they describe the plants as if they are “ humans” who got preferences and are better able to “ socialize” with particular sets of plants, made me realize how knowledgeable these people are. After that, I went on walking around, trying to enjoy the plants and suddenly realizing that the air seemed to smell sweeter around here. Well if you came from the highways of LA and suddenly went inside a wide area of greenery, you would notice even the faintest smell of grass crushing under the worn soles of your sneakers. Yes, that is what I was wearing then.

I noticed another group of adults who kept tending to different plants for at least 10 minutes non-stop. They exchanged short, clipped statements that were usually about the plants, the soil, or the location of the tools. I noticed most of them seemed to have “ favorites” when it comes to plants since they kept going back to that same plot for the next several minutes. I learned that these plants they were dotting on were planted by their students during a certain planting project. The mention of “ kids,” “ students,” and “ classrooms” provided me all the hint I needed to know that they work either in daycare centers or surrounding elementary schools.

I tried to walk past these people for several minutes, gathering bits and pieces of information from their casual exchanges. I ended up learning something that I always thought I knew, but never really experienced first-hand. We can never judge people from how they dress or their age. There were two youngish females there who I thought at first were new to this activity. First, there were no more than 25 years of age. Second, they kept

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going around several garden plots while the rest are focused on just a few. It made me think they actually did not know what to do so they kept walking, changing places, and changing minds about the places they chose. My curiosity got the better of me and I walked nearer and asked them why they tend to several plots. One of them stopped what she was doing, looked at me, smiled, and explained in a voice full of pride that the plots they were tending to were planted by their previous students in the past years. They have been doing this activity for a long time now.

I have not learned a lot about the history of the place, since my mind was too busy taking in the breathtaking view of the greenery around me. I promised myself I will go back and stay longer, learn more. Besides, the history of the place may be important, but what I am more interested in is the history that these new people are doing for the Solano Canyon Garden.