

Southern California LIVING



ANNIE WELLS / L.A. Times

On a tour of local gardens, visitors will see a banana tree adorned with glass balls. **E2**

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Kids' Reading page

Welcome to My Garden

By **ROBERT SMAUS**
TIMES GARDEN EDITOR

To really understand how a garden works, you need to travel through it to experience all its dimensions. Walking down a path, rounding a corner and ducking under an arbor lets you *feel* a designed space, as opposed to simply seeing how it looks. You can smell the jasmine overhead and the sage at your feet, or hear the rustle of bamboo leaves. These sensations cannot be gleaned from gardens seen on a glossy page.

Garden tours—where owners bravely open their gardens for a day or two to benefit a good cause—let you experience landscapes firsthand.

Over the next three weekends, a baker's dozen of tours are scheduled in the Southern California area, from Redlands to Pacific Palisades, from Thousand Oaks to Corona del Mar. The tours "are a lovely peek at other people's gardens," said Judy Horton, who organized the garden tours that benefit the Garden Conservancy, a national organization dedicated to preserving historic and unique gardens.

"People travel to other states and other countries to look at gardens, but often the gardens don't translate well. What you see probably won't work here," said Horton. On a local tour, you know that what you see, you can indeed grow and probably get at the local nursery.

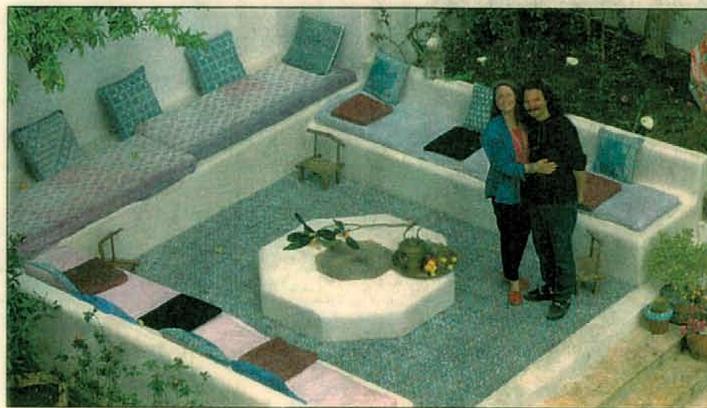
All garden tours are self-guided—you follow maps that come with the tickets. It's a good idea to carpool, since parking can be a problem in some neighborhoods.

• Saturday, 2-6 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., a tour of five gardens is part of a flower show by California's oldest garden club, the **Redlands Horticultural & Improvement Society** (founded in 1888). Tickets cost \$5 at the show, held in Cope Middle School, 1000 W. Cypress Ave., Redlands, (909) 793-1553.



Setting Off Sparks

Objects on a potting bench, left, complement the Moroccan-inspired setting of the Hollywood backyard of garden and jewelry designer Laura Morton and photographer husband Jeff Dunas, below left. "Being a jewelry designer, I'm always looking for things that sparkle," said Morton, whose home, on the Garden Conservancy Tour, features semiprecious stones and bits of glass embedded in the paving. On the Venice tour, a patio designed by Jay Griffith for Todd Piccus, below, is anchored by four pillar-like palm trees a dramatic fireplace and an enticing hammock.



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