

Carlmont High School Sequoia Union High School District



Climate Resilience, Land-Based Ecosystems, Zero Waste

Level: Mid

Pathway: Campus: Facilities
and Operations



Aran O'Sullivan, student at Carlmont High School and member of the Carlmont High Green Team, nominated the Green Team for the creation of the Carlmont Native Pollinator Garden. Over the course of the 2021-22 school year, the 35-member Green Team constructed benches, planter boxes, and tables; worked with local businesses to cover the ground with gravel; and planted plants that provide habitat for California-native pollinators. The garden helps mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on vulnerable species, and also supports the transition of Carlmont's largely concrete campus towards a greener, more sustainable one. The student leaders noted that increasing green areas at schools has been shown to reduce stress and increase student performance. The students also planned from the start for the garden to promote equitable access to nature for all students on campus, and worked to ensure that supplies they purchased and people they worked with were all from organizations doing equity work.

The garden is located in a key thruway on campus, and also includes compost bins and educational signage. Hundreds of students regularly see the garden as well as posters about the importance of composting and biodiversity for reducing carbon and ecological footprints. The project required extensive multi-generational and multi-role cooperation; the combined efforts of students, school faculty, administration, parents, and private businesses were necessary. Students who worked on the garden learned that when it comes to large-scale problems such as climate change and sustainability, widespread cooperation is necessary to create lasting, meaningful change. Carlmont High is already planning to create more gardens, which will be the main focus of the Green Team next school year.