

GARDENS

10 Best Community Gardens in Los Angeles County

Thursday, November 4, 2010, by Dakota Smith



Well, hello farmer. Wattles Farm, a 4.2 acre community garden in Hollywood [Web site](#) [Spot Us](#) funded the following story, written by Will Coley. From Santa Monica to San Pedro, here are Coley's picks for the top gardens, a list which includes the most unique location (Pacoima, anyone?), to the most distinctive vegetables (see what they're growing in Alhambra), to the most unlikely garden oasis (hurray for Hollywood!). His list and story after the jump.

I was one of those kids that rarely ate his vegetables. But despite my shameful past, I recently toured Los Angeles County to seek out the "best" community gardens and find out why these gardeners are so passionate about them. More Americans, either concerned with saving the environment or money or simply for the love of it, are growing their own food. With limited space on balconies or in window boxes, some Angelenos connect with thriving community gardens for as little as \$25 per year... L.A. gardeners, despite pride in their work, resist the idea of any gardens being "the best." Instead they point out what makes their garden unique. Folks also frequently stress that gardening generates a sense of spiritual renewal or accomplishment in their lives and communities.

Best Collaboration between a School and Community: [North Hollywood Community Garden](#)

Tucked in a corner of NoHo High School's campus, this community garden offers a bucolic respite with the sounds and smells of a real farm with goats, ducks and rabbits.

Most Inspiring and Unique Location: [Project Youth Green](#)

Project Youth Green, an initiative of the Project Youth Speak Collective, has carved out an inspiring dale within Pacoima's limited parkland. Young gardeners share and jointly run the garden with their elders.

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Most Distinctive Vegetables: [Alhambra Community Garden](#)

Alhambra's diverse community expresses itself with a variety of herbs and plants from Asia and Central/South America in carefully tended plots.

Best Urban Maze: [San Pedro's Gaffey Street Gardens](#)

Much like the hilly neighborhood where its gardeners live, this garden next to the freeway is a maze of chain link fence and vines, opening unexpectedly into small outdoor areas for socializing.

Most Impressive Compost: [Ocean View Farms](#)

Yes, its size and view are impressive but gardeners of these plots are proudest of their extensive composting operation fueled by a large cadre of enthusiastic volunteers.

Most Integrated into the Neighborhood: [Santa Monica Main Street Community Garden](#)

Right on Main Street in Santa Monica, these Westside gardeners proudly grow their flowers and vegetables for all to see.

Best New Garden: [Milagro Allegro Community Garden](#)

As one of the newest gardens, Milagro Allegro burst onto the scene in Highland Park and is quickly making a name for itself by fostering green thumbs in the neighborhood.

Most Unlikely Oasis: [Wattles Farm](#)

Just beyond the hubbub of Hollywood Boulevard and behind an inconspicuous tree-lined fence, L.A.'s oldest community garden quietly breathes life back into the gardeners that watch after it.

Most Unifying Garden: [Crenshaw Community Garden](#)

In an area with few green areas, this garden provides a central location for diverse neighbors to work side by side.

Best Happy Ending to a Sad Story: [Stanford Avalon Community Garden](#)

After the destruction of the South Central Farm in 2006, many of the farmers found new plots in nine acres space under the power lines in Watts.

Admittedly, there are many equally deserving gardens not listed above (visiting all seventy would have been a Herculean task). Even so, you can find a garden near you or learn how to start your own on the L.A. Garden Council website.