

Just like old times...

Volunteers arriving for our work-day in April were greeted by a huge pile of gently steaming mulch, courtesy of the county mulch program. A few people commented that it was just like old times; when we started out, sheet-mulching the entire area looked like an impossible task. We were bouncing our shovels and picks off the hard clay, wondering how we were going to turn the stubborn dirt and weeds into a fertile engine of growth. But mulching must be great fun, because as soon as we'd shifted the first mountain of mulch we got straight on to the county to deliver another one. Now we're at it again.

Mulching is certainly one of the easiest ways to get your garden back in harmony with nature. Mulch retains moisture in the soil, controls weeds, insulates to reduce temperature variations, and can improve soil aeration, structure and drainage. At Mesa Harmony Garden we're reaping another benefit of all that mulch – the ground is so much softer. In fact, we planted 10 more fruit trees one morning a few months ago, with no trouble at all (thanks to everyone who harmoniously helped out). Check out www.lessismore.org and search for *mulch* to find out more.

The limited amount of rain we do get in this part of the world tends to come all at the same time, so the more water we can store in the soil the better. It's really worth giving some serious thought to rainwater harvesting. How many thousands of gallons of rainwater fall on your roof every year, only to disappear down to the street and from there to the ocean? Imagine keeping hold of all that water to feed your plants. According to the Surfrider Foundation, urban runoff from gardens and hard surfaces is the #1 source of ocean pollution... check out their Ocean Friendly Gardens program to learn about CPR – conservation, permeability and retention.

With growing concern about the security of food supplies, it seems odd that the largest irrigated, fertilized 'crop' in the USA is, apparently, grass. Little by little, we could start eating into all those lawns – literally: there's no fresher, healthier, more satisfying food than the food you grow for yourself.

Taking care of the earth, growing our own food, living in harmony with nature... sounds just like old times!

Volunteer days every 1st Saturday, 9am – 12:30
Join us in creating our neighborhood food forest on the Mesa
May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, August 4th ...
Corner of Meigs Road and Dolores Drive.

For more information about the garden, and to join our email list, visit:
www.mesaharmonygarden.org

Please support our work by volunteering, or by sending donations (we're a 501(c)3 nonprofit) to:
Mesa Harmony Garden, c/o Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109