



LINDA J. NOVY & ASSOCIATES

Sustainable Landscape Management

Horticultural Consulting for Residential and Commercial Properties



NEWS FROM LINDA ~ SUMMER 2012

Dear Customers and Friends,

The Hypericum shrubs along my property edge, like Stonehenge, signal the approaching Summer Solstice on June 20, 4:09 PST. Other signs of summer's beginning are the fragrant blooms of the buckeye, Aesculus californica, and the full-on buzz in my edible garden. See the **video clip** for a closer look! The winter and spring season have been filled with a variety of creative consulting projects and below are brief descriptions. If you would like more information about the plants or concepts described, please contact me.

OFFICE PARK IN NOVATO: We have been shifting the landscape of this Class A property to a more sustainable and ecologically based program over the last several years. An excellent arborist was brought in to manage the hundreds of trees, and provide mulch to improve the clay soil and conserve water. Entries and other important areas of the property are being replanted with a blend of native and non-native ornamental plants that really update the appearance, and reduce "inputs" of labor and water. With each phase of improvement, we have focused on the irrigation system and water management to reduce water use and transition to recycled water. Team meetings with the property manager, chief engineer, arborist, and contractor are resulting in a well-coordinated program, that now, after 4 years, is really showing off the property, while moving it toward long-term resource and financial savings!

PRIVATE RESIDENCE IN SAN ANSELMO: This 2-acre landscape is nestled in a native sage-coyote brush plant community that transitions into purple needle grassland and oak woodland. The condition of the native and non-native ornamental plants and fruit trees was boosted through better coordination between the gardener, arborist, and irrigation technician. Over the last two years we have tested and "fed" the soil with vermi-compost and actively aerated compost tea, plus a good mix of organic fertilizers, and tree service mulch. This spring we added more native and deer resistant plants and fruit trees, and the property is bursting with life.

A wild swarm of bees was captured and now resides in the emerging bee pasture!

HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS IN SAN FRANCISCO AND DALY CITY: Working with a landscape architect, I have assisted in the landscape management analysis and plant-community recommendations for these properties. Both have previously been maintained in the "industrial landscape" style, better known as "mow, blow, and go." These high-input landscapes can create "negative feedback loops" that are unsustainable and expensive. For example, at both sites, the gardeners had been applying high-nitrogen, inorganic fertilizers which encouraged excessive plant growth, requiring more labor to prune and edge, and which diminished soil biology and structure. And, the flushes of new plant growth invited insects that fed and damaged the nitrogen-rich leaves. By simply changing the soil management program to an organic one, it's possible to create a "positive feedback loop" with multiple rewards! For more information, see **Bay-Friendly Landscaping and Sustainable Landscape Management**.

As I work with a variety of landscapes, and closely tend my own plot of land, each garden teaches me that life is an interconnected web. It's a real privilege to love one's livelihood and to find continual sustenance from this work. Enjoy the summer...

With gratitude,

Linda

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BELOW: *Hypericum x mose-ranium* (St. Johnswort) with *Helictotrichon sempervirens* (blue oat grass)



BELOW: At a private residence in San Anselmo, we're carefully developing the bee pasture and native grassland by selectively digging out perennial weeds and weed-whipping exotic grasses.



ABOVE: A mix of native and Mediterranean plants surrounds the bee pasture and grassland.

BELOW: *Scabiosa* (Pincushion flower) is an annual or perennial that attracts both butterflies and bees.

