



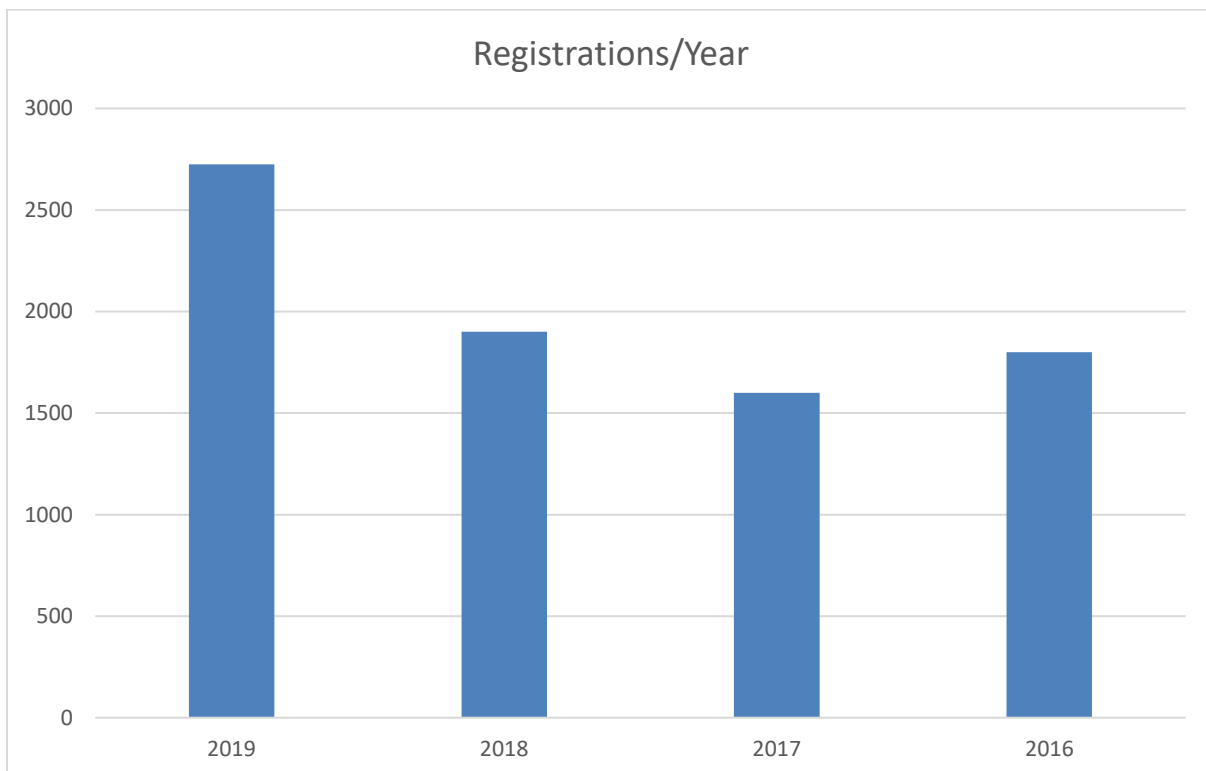
2019 Eco-Friendly Garden Tour Recap

The 2019 Eco-Friendly Garden Tour (tour) featured 42 gardens in Windsor, Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, Sonoma Valley, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Petaluma, Novato, Point Reyes Station, Fairfax, Kentfield, Mill Valley, San Anselmo, San Rafael and Sausalito.

The tour included 7 gardens presented by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) - Milo Baker Chapter located in Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, Kenwood and Sonoma. These gardens were supported by CNPS volunteers and included greeters, horticulturalists, informational posters, information tables, and a plant sale. Daily Acts was also a supporter of the garden tour, hosting the Resilient Homes Tour and featured 5 gardens on a guided tour. The Resilient Homes Tour presented gardens in Petaluma, Cotati and Windsor.

Registration

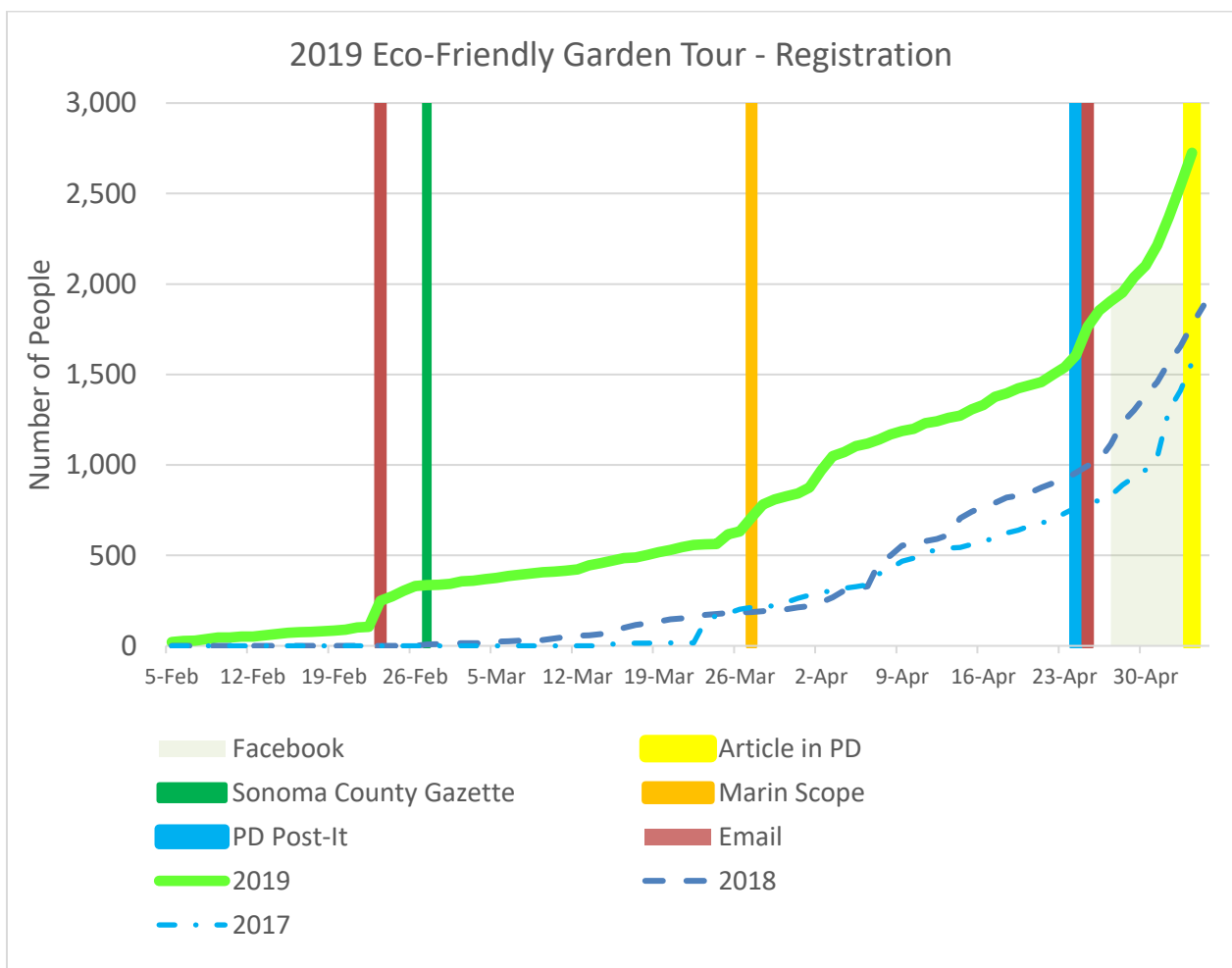
Over 2,700 people registered for the 2019 tour. This number includes hosts and volunteers. Registration for the event was opened on February 1st of this year, corresponding with the distribution date of the City of Sonoma's bill stuffer that was included in their customer water bills. The bill stuffer was followed by a Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership email to a subscribed email list of over 3,000 people and the Sonoma County Gazette's Gardeners Resource Guide printed ad.

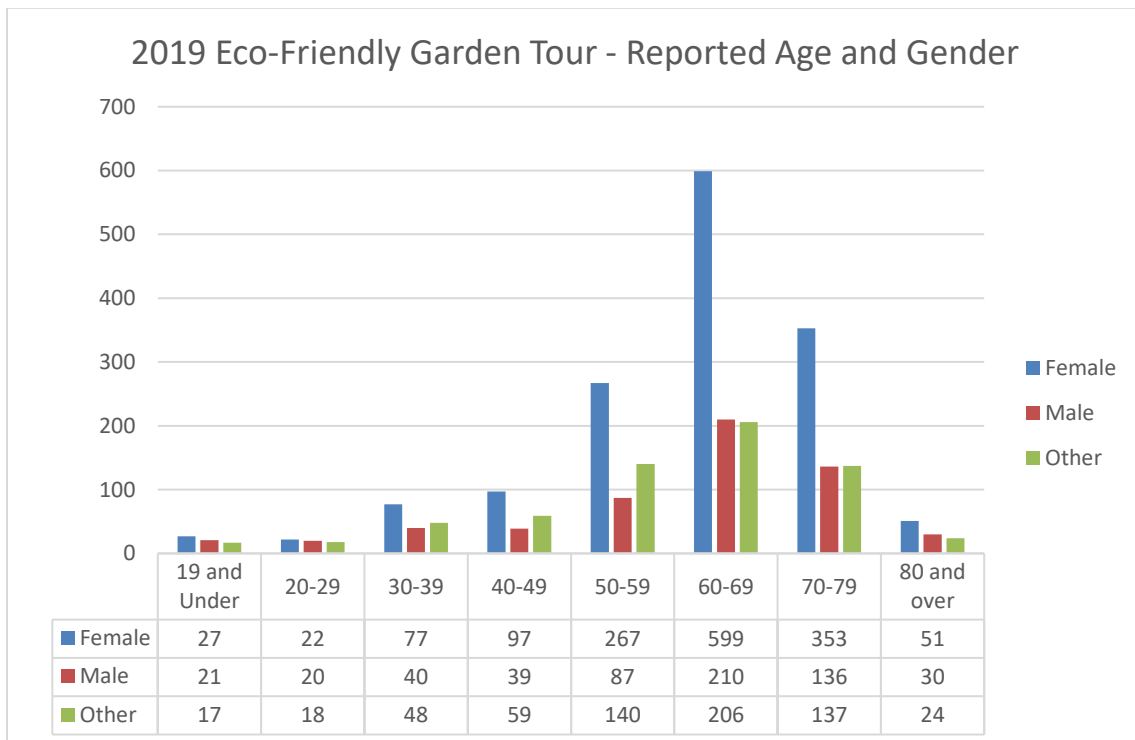
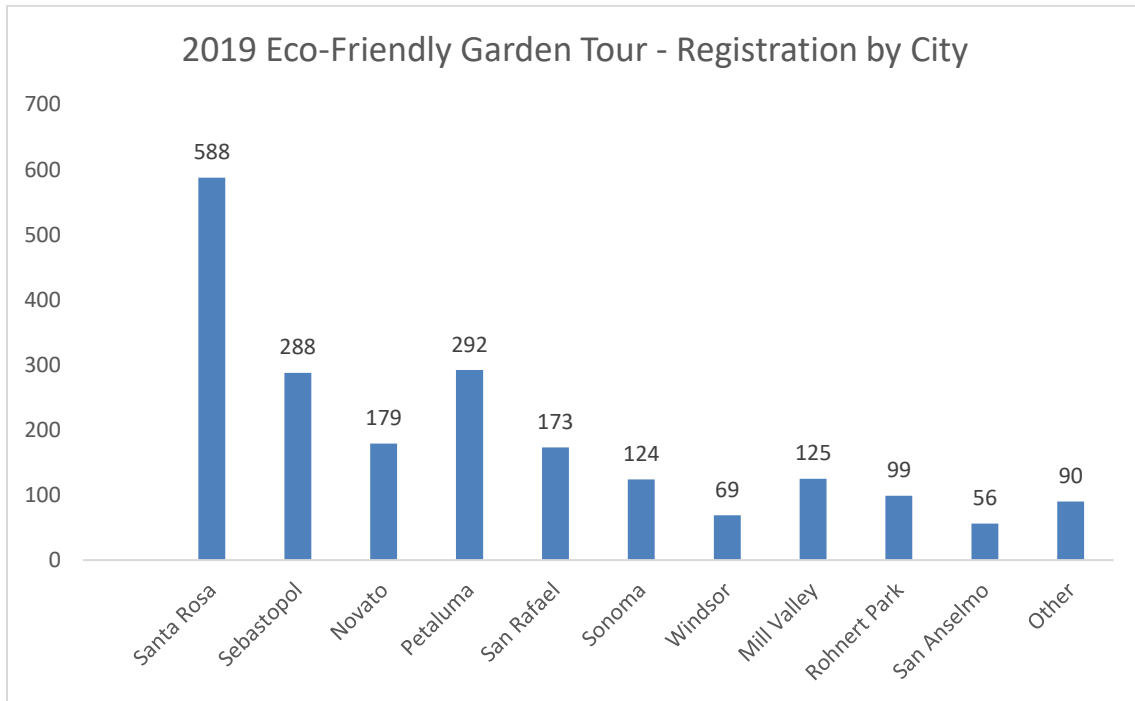




1,548 registrations were from Sonoma County and 691 were from Marin County. Registration in Sonoma County and Marin County both increased compared to last year.

- In Sonoma County, 588 registrations were from Santa Rosa, 288 from Sebastopol, 292 from Petaluma, 124 from Sonoma, and 69 from Windsor. In Marin County there were 179 from Novato, 173 from San Rafael, 125 from Mill Valley, and 56 from San Anselmo. (Others within Partnership: Cotati - 31, Rohnert Park - 99)
- 55% of participants registered as female, and 21% as male. 24% registered as other.
- 85% of participants registered as over 50 years old. There were 60 registered that were 20-29 years old and 65 participants were under 20.



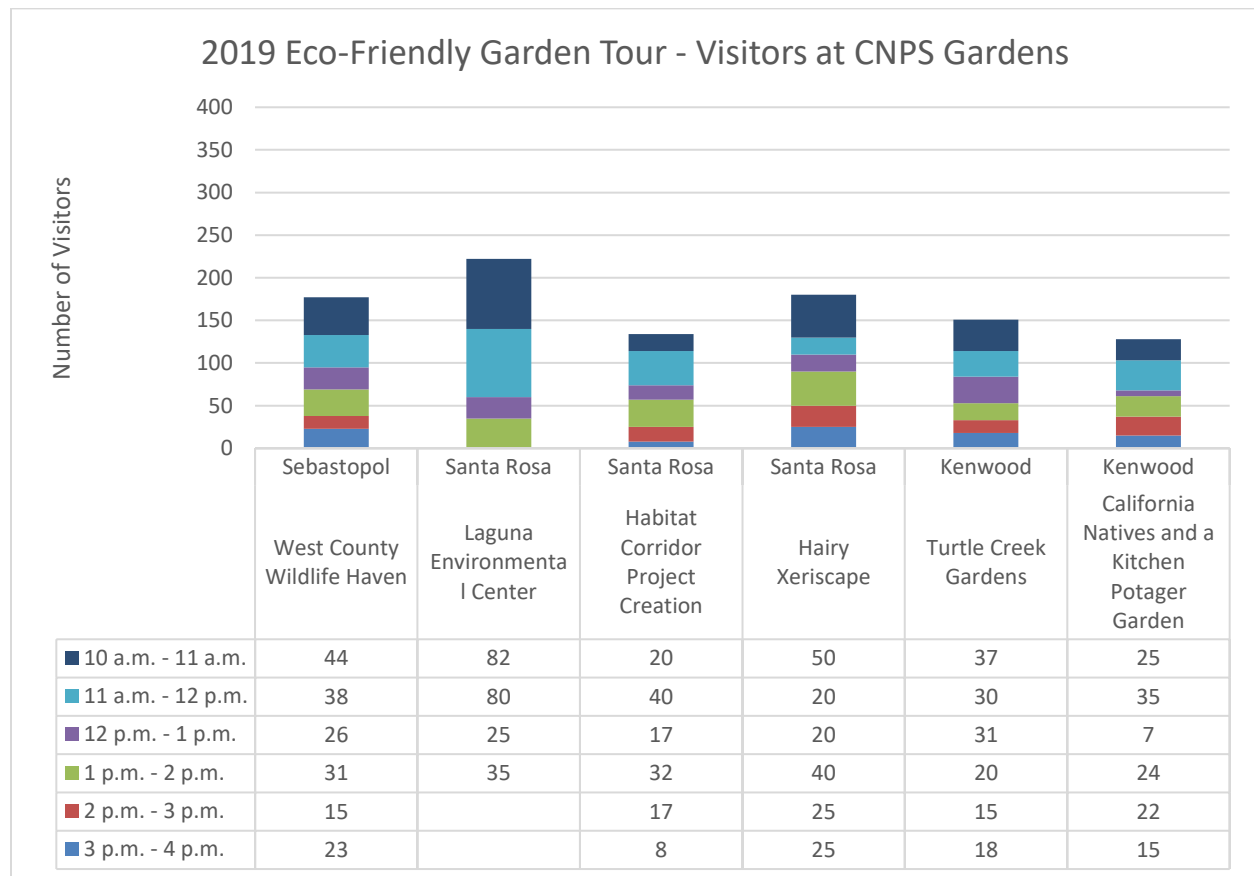


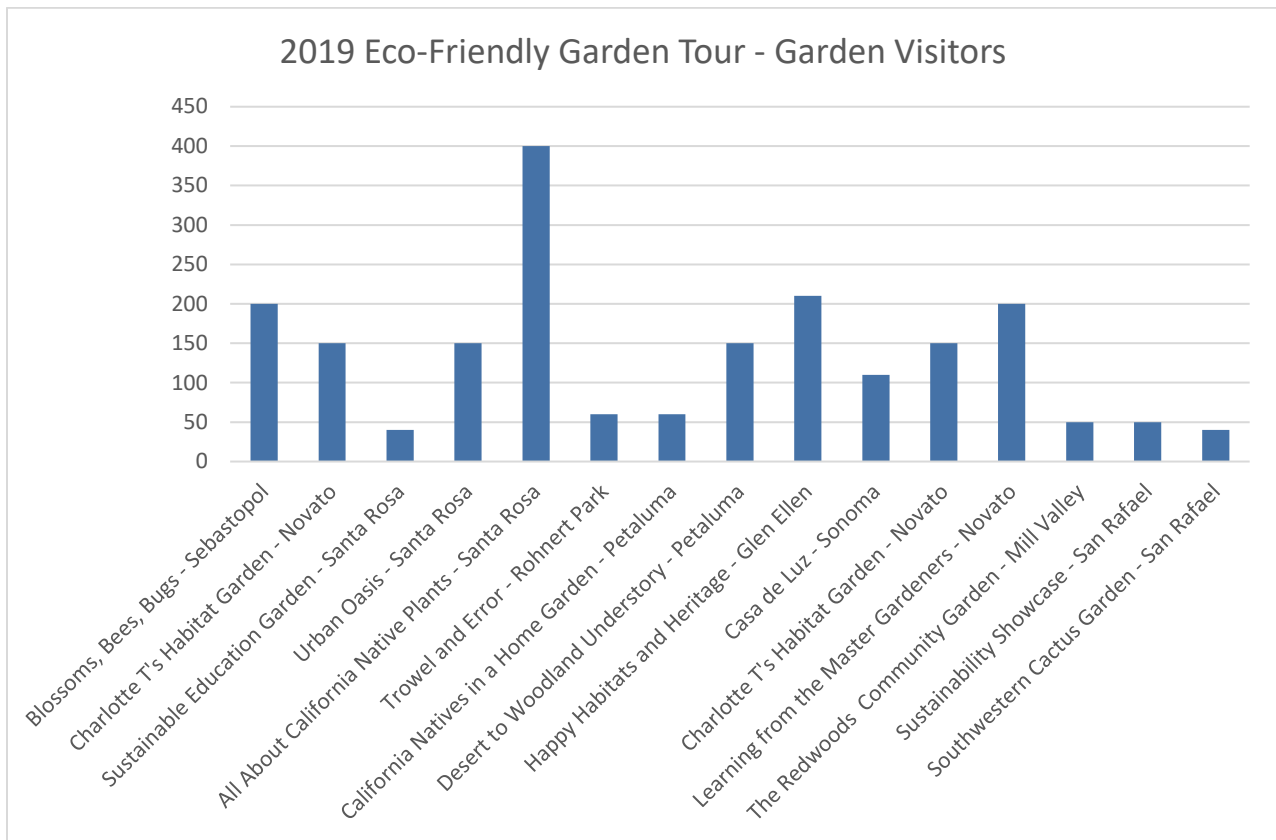


Attendance

Continuing this year we offered the opportunity for people to sign up for the tour through our local library services. The Sonoma County Library allowed those that were interested or needed assistance with signing up for the tour, to use all of the library branches as a resource. This allowed people without computer or email access to sign up online and print tickets for the event. Information on this available resources was posted at all libraries and all staff was informed prior to open registration.

Volunteers at 6 CNPS gardens tracked the number of visitors throughout the day. More than 1,100 total visitors attended the 6 CNPS gardens. 2019 experienced an average of 160 visitors per garden, in 2018 there were 280 guests per garden. The busiest CNPS garden received 222 visitors during the day! The Laguna Environmental Center hosted the CNPS plant sale which experienced net proceeds of \$4,911 (50% more than their plant sale in 2018), helping CNPS continue its great work in our community. CNPS also provided presentations at various gardens which drew in a large amount of visitors including a California Native Pollinator’s presentation that drew in an audience of 75 visitors. CNPS has begun searching for gardens for next year’s tour as well as coordinating with SMSWP staff on next year’s tour date.





There were various workshops held at different gardens to help promote different local landscaping practices. These activities included: two irrigation controller programming workshops, plant sales at two different gardens, a residential landscape design display, a harvest market, a propagation demonstration and a landscape watering talk. One of the events was held at the new Sustainable Education Garden, where City of Santa Rosa staff demonstrated how to operate and program residential irrigation controllers, followed by tours of the newly installed landscape.

Marketing

The tour was promoted using a combination of paid advertising, bill stuffers, postcards, email marketing and social media.

- Paid advertising included:
 - 1 ad in the Sonoma County Gazette.
 - 1 post-it ad in the Press Democrat.
 - 1 calendar event post in the Press Democrat.
 - 1 sliding billboard ad in the Sonoma Magazine online.
 - 1 ad in the Marinscope.



- North Marin Water District bill stuffer – 18,000 printed copies.
- City of Sonoma bill stuffer – 4,400 printed copies and 4,400 e-bill inserts.
- Facebook ads.

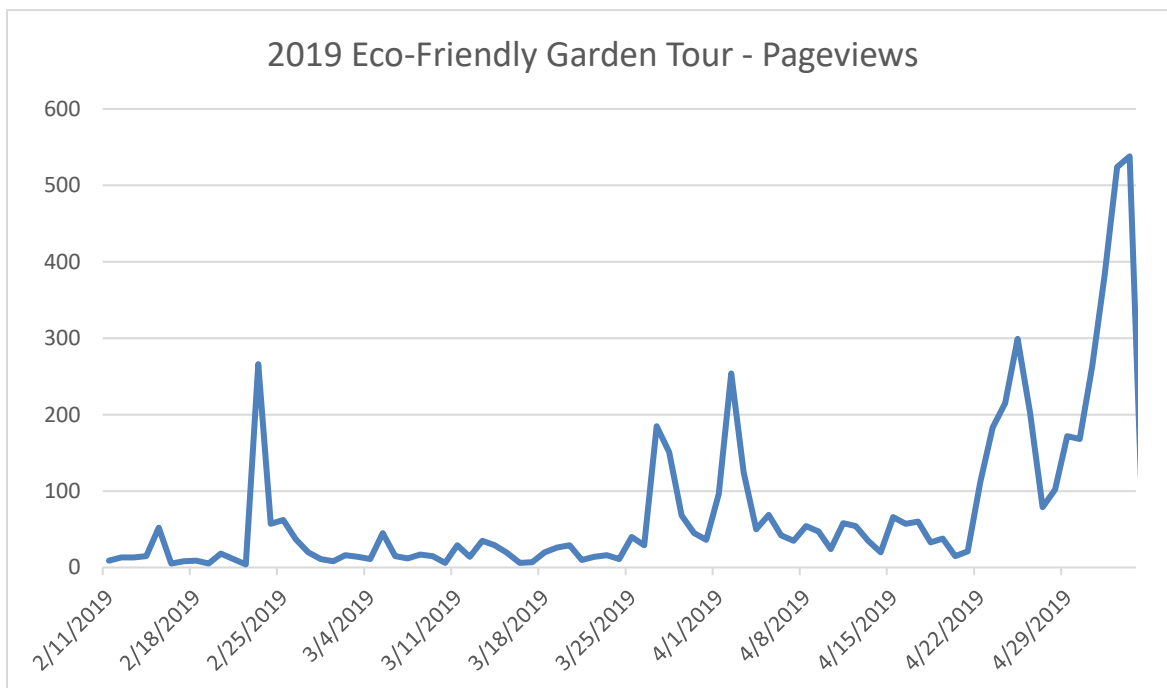
Below is a table indicating when marketing sources were submitted and released for the tour.

Source	Type	Submission Date	Publication Date
Sonoma County Gazette	Advertisement	February 14 th	February 27 th
Sonoma County Gazette	Earned Article	February 14 th	February 27 th
Press Democrat	Calendar Event Advertisement	April 26 th	April 26 th – May 4 th
Press Democrat	Earned Article	April 23 rd	May 4 th
Sonoma Magazine	Advertisement	April 2 nd	April 29 th – May 2 nd
Marinscope	Advertisement	March 22 nd	March 27 th
Facebook	Advertisement, Event	April 20 th and April 30 th	April 22 nd – 26 th April 31 st – May 3 rd
Nextdoor	Event	April 2 nd and May 2 nd	April 2 nd and May 2 nd

- An earned article was secured in the Gardeners Resource Guide edition of the Sonoma County Gazette, resulting in a full page description the tour as well as the Landscape Design Templates. There was also an earned article written by Meg McConahey, in the Press Democrat released on May 4th and in the Sonoma Magazine on May 5th.
- A Crop Monster Event was posted on April 12th – May 4th.
- A Post-It was created and placed on 27,000 copies of printed Press Democrats on Wednesday April 24th.
- A Sliding Ad was placed on the Sonoma Magazine website and ran from April 29th – May 3rd.
- An interview on KSRO with Clark Wolf was aired on the day of the tour with Avalow. Avalow was a garden on the tour and helped promote the tour within Santa Rosa’s art district.
- SMSWP E-News was sent out to subscribers during registration to notify them of the tour and registration. Current subscribers list at over 3,000.
- The City of Santa Rosa, the City of Sonoma, Marin Municipal Water District, North Marin Water District, the City of Petaluma and the Town of Windsor all put out bill stuffers to its local residents.
- Several utilities including the City of Santa Rosa, North Marin Water District, the Town of Windsor and Marin Municipal Water District actively promoted the tour on Facebooks, Nextdoor and other channels to help promote the event.



- 4,500 postcards and 100 posters were printed and distributed at many nurseries and businesses around the counties.
- The tour was advertised in various free event listings including; the Press Democrat, Bohemian, Sonoma West, Happening in Sonoma county, the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau, Kenwood Press and on the Froggy radio station.
- The Saving Water Partnership website was used to host the tour information.
- The Saving Water Partnership website had more than 43,000 page views and 30,000 unique page views in the period February 11 to May 5, with the garden tour site representing 64% of traffic to the website during the period.
- Eventbrite was used to manage registration for the tour.



Suggestions/Improvements for 2020 Tour (based on comments/suggestions from attendees, garden hosts and supporters)

- Have tour and parking signs visible for attendees and detailed information on parking for each garden.
- Indicate on website if gardens have been on previous tours.
- Have more presentations and plant information at each garden.
- Create an easier system for garden hosts to make sure guests are registered.
- Encourage garden hosts to have volunteers.



- Notify garden hosts of registration numbers for each city so they can prepare for the amount of anticipated visitors.
- Better pre-screening of properties.
- Put effort into attracting younger demographic.
- All new gardens on 2020 tour.

Participant Survey

A survey was sent out to obtain participant feedback on the tour. To date, 255 responses have been received.

- Overall rating: 60% excellent, 30% good, 8% adequate, 2% poor.
- Do you feel that the tour inspires and educates people about sustainable landscaping:
 - Yes – 97%
 - No – 3%
- Participants planning to do garden projects:
 - 42% attended to look at gardens
 - 28% planning a project in next 12 months
 - 18% about to do a project
 - 13% considering a project over the next few years
- Most survey participants are already doing the basics of:
 - California native planting (164)
 - Drought tolerant plants (178)
 - Soil amendment with compost (168)
 - Mulching bare soil (158)
 - Composting at home (127)
 - Edible gardening (157)
 - Drip irrigation (143)
 - Gardening for wildlife (148)
 - Pesticide free (176)
 - Rainwater harvesting (27)
 - Weather based irrigation controller (39)
- Projects that participants plan to do include:
 - Graywater systems (61)
 - California native planting (59)
 - Rainwater harvesting (84)
 - Rain gardens (50)
 - Urban homestead (18)
 - Lawn conversion (33)



- Weather based irrigation controller (71)
- Projects that participants do not plan to do include:
 - Graywater systems (101)
 - California native planting (3)
 - Rainwater harvesting (73)
 - Rain gardens (91)
 - Urban homestead (97)
 - Lawn conversion (32)
 - Weather based irrigation controller (64)
- Most respondents indicated which areas they visited:
 - Sebastopol 22%
 - Santa Rosa 36%
 - Marin 17%
 - Novato 17%
 - Sonoma Valley 30%
 - Petaluma 17%
 - Cotati/Rohnert Park 6%
 - Point Reyes Station 4%
 - Windsor 2%
- 93 respondents indicated that they attended a tour activity:
 - Santa Rosa, Laguna Environmental Center - Plant Sale (41)
 - Santa Rosa, City Hall Sustainable Education Garden - Controller Programming Tour (17)
 - Novato, Charlotte T's Habitat Garden – Plant Sale (16)
 - Novato, Charlotte T's Habitat Garden – Propagation Demonstration (16)
 - Sonoma, Sonoma Garden Park – Harvest Market (14)
 - San Anselmo, Gardening with Natives – Presentation (4)
 - Fairfax, The Art of Lawn Replacement – Presentation (4)
 - Sausalito, Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change Exhibit – Exhibit (3)
 - Sebastopol, Pollinators – Presentation (12)
- How did attendees rate the registration process?
 - Eventbrite Registration Process – Excellent (176), Good (52), Poor (6), Didn't Use (2).
 - Online Garden Tour Descriptions – Excellent (117), Good (83), Poor (4), Didn't Use (6).
 - Garden Overview – Excellent (111), Good (83), Poor (4), Didn't Use (8).
 - Maps and Directions – Excellent (106), Good (72), Poor (13), Didn't Use (6).
- Positive comments:
 - I've been on this path for a while but still always take something away from each garden.



- Great examples and ideas for our own yards and for looking at nature.
- Each of the gardens we visited demonstrated effective water conserving approaches within their sustainable landscapes.
- It was a good variety of smaller, residential homes and larger properties.
- It gets better and better each year!
- The example gardens suggests the variety of options available for sustainable landscaping.
- When you can see sustainable landscaping principles in action, you can better implement them in your own backyard.
- Everyone was eager and helpful in answering our questions.
- Many ideas. Many knowledgeable gardeners.
- So many ways to formulate gardens and make them sustainable.
- The booths at some of the houses with info & people to talk to were good.
- Gave me a number of good ideas.
- Low water, gray water, native plants - wonderful!
- The local gardeners were very informative and friendly!
- The volunteers from CNPS were great.
- Volunteer "hosts" and "greeters" are full of knowledge and eager to share!
- Love learning about drought tolerant plants.
- The work of the CNPS volunteers really makes this event sing!
- It's important to visualize the possibilities. There's a sense that if they can do so can we.
- I plan to join the Marin Native Plant Society.
- So helpful to see what can be done with an ordinary sized garden, even when it suffers from past neglect.
- Some gardens had educational literature about soil health, ways to attract butterflies, birds, etc. This was very useful.
- Definitely! I have been gardening for years and still learned many new things!
- Great to see regular yards and the various options for going lawn free.
- I did not know that you didn't really have to water native California plants.
- I enjoyed the diversity of gardens that I visited.
- I find it helpful to see firsthand how these systems have been integrated - People are so clever and resourceful.
- Everyone curious, asking lots of questions, taking photos!
- Seeing was believing.
- Great advice, especially from the UC Master Gardeners.
- Loved diversity of gardens! & welcoming enthusiasm of garden home owners to share.
- So many wonderful and inspiring ideas!
- Very creative people and great ideas.



- This was our first tour. We were very impressed!
- This was my first year to attend and I will defiantly come again.
- Great descriptions, great directions and great staffing! Couldn't ask for more.
- It was a good combination of gardens in all areas, and with good descriptions and maps.
- I thought the tour was planned well with a variety of gardens --something for everyone.
- Article in the PD on the day of the tour was wonderful and motivated me to see that garden.
- Negative comments:
 - One of the Santa Rosa gardens had very little in its front yard. Was expecting more.
 - Make sure someone is at the location. The Windsor location had no table and no one was home. It was 11 a.m.
 - I really don't like the look of an unkept yard that looks like no one has pulled the weeds. Only one yard on Corby was appealing. I went to the Santa Rosa gardens only.
 - Don't write off seniors with disabilities or handicaps. For you just to say ADA doesn't apply is pretty insulting.
- Suggestions
 - It would be great if the hosts spoke more about their grey water gardens. Got some info, but not a lot.
 - Examples in different landscapes is helpful.
 - But some people may not understand how a particular landscape qualifies as sustainable. Volunteers sometimes could verbalize the intent but it might be more influential if there were either handouts to explain or some prepping of the volunteers.
 - 2 days—including a Friday; or 2 consecutive Saturdays or Sundays; there is so much going on and so many gardens to see across the county. Better timing this year to not conflict with Farm Trails. Very well organized. Looking forward to next year! Thank you!!!
 - I couldn't find one of the sites. The address was wrong. There was a sign indicating the correct address, but no directions. If you could print a map like the wine tour does it might be helpful.
 - Maybe if it were a 2-day event more people would be able to attend. We had another commitment and were only able to go to the Novato gardens.
 - Maybe more info or pictures of the garden before it was improved and why, (the garden on Lamont Ave in Novato had a story). If possible more labels on the plants. Look forward to next year's event.
 - There were so many gardens that one could not visit them all. Although the list was divided by area, I think it would be helpful to make separate "blocks" per area rather than trying to find them within the long list. I didn't find the spreadsheet that listed the



elements of what was in each garden very useful. I mainly used the addresses in the area we visited.

- I would like to see more examples of ways to save water such as rain gardens.
- We enjoyed seeing the Before-After Sebastopol garden, but it was not a CA native's garden, although it had a lot of them. The Laguna de Santa Rosa had all CA natives, but it is a large-scale place, not a typical garden. We went to the Milo Baker CNPS plant sale at the Laguna, and the next-closest garden was in Sebastopol. Then we ran out of time. So...it would be better to specify on the website when a garden is all CA natives and to cluster them better. The distances to other gardens were too great for us to visit more than what we did.
- The first house we saw was insanely amazing. The next one was fine, but not so impressive. Maybe you could have stars or "do not miss!" indications for the top ones-- even if it were just the top three or something.
- Lists of contractors who can actually help install some of these ideas would be very helpful.
- More plant signage. When the owner was not available to chat due to high volumes of people, it was tough to tell what's what.
- Have more gardens within walking distance. Last year we could park and walk to several in Santa Rosa. This year we drove over 50 miles to visit three gardens.
- Parking and narrow driveways and one way traffic could be handled better.
- Better maps tied to the list and addresses.
- Explain more clearly what is involved in the Garden Tour.
- Could you do half the gardens one day and the other half another day so we could see more? With them all on one day we have to pick a geography to focus on.
- I'd love to see more of the plants tagged in each garden so that we know what they are.
- This year seemed to be lacking in more variety spread out throughout the county. Wondering why not very much in Windsor, Healdsburg.
- Please have better signage at each garden that directs us to the correct address...the Kenwood garden this year was never found by our group.
- Make it easier to sign up without a ticket in hand. Not having an iPhone I could not get a printed ticket (printer not working either). Just allow us to use a Confirmation number, i.e. No paper or printed confirmation to show. This year I took a picture of my computer screen confirming that I was properly registered and showed the camera image (a pain). As it turned out, this would not have been necessary.
- More detail in description of the different gardens, i.e. swales, water tanks, bees.
- Would like to see more focus on domestic and non-native food plants. I was one of very few 30 year olds. Might try marketing to OAEC, Permaculture skill center or other



younger audiences. Would like to see urban homestead examples that are doing more subsistence-based gardening and animal-based systems.

- I'm glad that you included more Marin gardens. Lots of good information on the website to help decide what gardens to visit. I tried printing out maps to take with me, but they were too small to read.
- Vet the gardens better so that each really inspires. Some were amazing! Some were either unattractive or uninspiring. Fewer but better gardens! Also put pictures to allow us to better choose what fits with our interests/situation.
- More onsite experts "touring" the garden and educating those that are visiting.
- Strictly physical: water coolers at each site! I ran out of water at one point and didn't want to ask to go inside or impose upon the host.
- There be an informational table at each residence.
- At least 3 of the 5 Petaluma gardens are repeats. I would enjoy seeing a greater variety.
- Some directions in Sonoma were confusing. Better signs would help.
- More in Santa Rosa closer together would have inspired me to attend more.
- Pre-screening the property to be sure it is a source of beauty and connection with nature as well as an example of eco-friendly and native plantings.
- Bigger signage.
- Please don't select gardens like Lowell (Mill Valley) which are on very narrow windy roads in the hills where parking is difficult. I never found them but gave up when it was very difficult to pass traffic coming the other way.
- I'd love to see a little more clustering of sites to visit -- cutting down on driving, although I know this depends on which gardens are included.
- Please don't make the tours get crowded.
- Perhaps a handout offered to each person when they came to the garden, pointing out things of interest? In some cases the owner was there, but in others not, and although it was nice to see the garden there wasn't a lot of information / education.
- You need to create online zone maps so attendees can easily drive from one site to the next closest and so on. Maps like those in Art at the Source or Open Studios. Current maps.
- Improve your web site to make it more user friendly.

Garden Host Survey

A survey was sent out to garden hosts to obtain feedback for future garden tours. To date, 17 responses have been received.

- Overall rating: 76% excellent, 24% very good.
- Did you experience as a garden host match your expectations:



- Completely – 53%
 - Mostly – 47%
- Were you satisfied with the materials that were provided with as a host (guidelines, plant labels, signs, maps):
 - Very satisfied – 69%
 - Satisfied – 25%
 - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – 6%
- Was the event length (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) too long, too short or about right?
 - Too long – 6%
 - About right – 94%
- How many visitors do you estimate your garden received during the tour:
 - Average response – 125
- When do you estimate your garden was busiest during the tour:
 - 10-11a.m. – 24%
 - 11-12p.m. – 53%
 - 12-1p.m. – 12%
 - 1-2p.m. – 29%
 - 2-3p.m. – 12%
 - 3-4p.m. – 12%
 - Consistent throughout the day – 41%
- Were visitors to your garden courteous and respectful:
 - Extremely courteous and respectful – 76%
 - Very courteous and respectful – 24%
- How many people did you have onsite at one time to help with the tour including yourself, family, friends or volunteers:
 - Average response – 3 helpers
- Did the Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership staff that you interacted with provide a professional level of service:
 - Extremely professional – 65%
 - Very professional – 24%
 - Not so professional – 0%
- Were you satisfied with the level of support provided by Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership staff:
 - Very satisfied – 76%
 - Satisfied – 24%
 - Dissatisfied – 0%
- Positive Comments:



- I love sharing my garden on this tour - and am happy to see that it is expanding - hoping there can be more gardens in Marin next year!
- Kristi and Robin and everyone at program was very helpful and professionally engaged in the success of the event. Job Well Done!
- Can't wait to do next years.
- Think I'll take next year off, But if you want me in 2019, I'd love to do this again...It's inspiring and stimulating to be a participant. I have so appreciated the opportunity to be part of the tour now in 2017 and this year.
- The MMWD staff was a pleasure to work with and their professional performance exceeded all my expectations. They were fun to have around!
- Very encouraging demeanor and professional management of the program.
- Really appreciated Chad's quick response when I had questions. Glad that Carrie came by Sat. Was fun talking with her and giving her my list of blooming CA natives.
- Very clear in explanation of what to expect and what to do. Chad and Ryan were great support and resources.
- Very professional.
- Staff was very professional.
- We had a steady flow of people the whole day.
- Better this year than 2017. I was more relaxed and ready to engage with visitors, instead of fretting about things not being "perfect". (Ha!) Letting host know that best thing to do is just be available, and know that no one will know all the answers to questions being posed. And that's ok!
- I was grateful for help from Ryan at North Marin Municipal Water.
- I offered homemade lemonade with honey from local hives.
- Everyone was very interested on what we had done.
- Loved having so many visitors come through here.
- Enjoyed working with Chad; well organized!
- There were ample materials, and volunteers were helpful.
- Negative Comments:
 - It was much tougher to attract folks to register for the controller programming workshops this year. Perhaps because we've had so much rain- not as much concern for saving water?
 - Wasn't prepared for the constant flow & #s.
 - We expected more visitors. However, I think our location and lack of convenient parking limited the turnout.
 - We could have been more prepared to help folks who were confused by the registration process.
 - Impact of Meg's article unpredictable; no blame.



- The small signs are not helpful for a civic setting.
- I only wish I could have walked them all through my garden.
- It appeared that the big problem was the web site and the lack of details/information that would help people understand what the gardens offered and therefore whether they wanted to visit them. Perhaps more photos would help.
- A lot of people who attended at the City Hall garden were confused apparently from a miscommunication or lack of clarity on the tour website.
- Some visitors wished it were 2 days, but as a host I couldn't do that!
- Suggestions:
 - Next time would be good to have two friends to be on "gate duty" out front. Is too long a day to ask someone to be out for 6 hours? But it's great to have a greeter, and general "question answerer when folks first walk up to the place. I LOVED this year's tourers. So many interested garden lovers. Really good questions.
 - Tell hosts to get 2-3 friends to help during day, or it's too exhausting.
 - Some more direction signs, we had 2 ways into our location.
 - A way to make the date /time visible on the big signs. I used sharpie to write in the date and time. But that looked kind of lame. Maybe big post it-printed with the current year's info that could be slapped onto the poster?
 - Could have given away more!
 - Like that they need to register, so few "dropper inners". The only really oddballs were almost last two of the day who just wandered in. (from Mars?)
 - Encourage them to ask about what they want to see.
 - Plant labels would be helpful.
 - In the overview of gardens it would be helpful to know who we could see from the street for drive by viewing. We went out the next day to see some of the other gardens from our car and were unable to see anything as the gardens were in the back areas.
 - I recommend advertising this event on Nextdoor, as well as the bulletin for Marin Conservation league, Sustainable San Rafael, Novato. Most of my friends did not know about the event.
 - It would have been nice to have more experienced gardeners assisting so that I wouldn't have to answer so many questions.
 - Think you may need to go to a registration system where folks sign up for specific gardens. Traffic overwhelmed us and we have no solution except to shuttle people in from off site.