

# Mission gets a garden

By Karin Stanford

Special to the Chronicle

Through the efforts of Master Gardener Steve Chandler and San Luis volunteer Dave Mitchell there is now a beautiful and drought-tolerant garden at the entrance to the Mission on 2100 West Tennessee Street.

Steve says that his objective was to design and create an attractive garden that is both low maintenance and self-sustaining. Steve and Dave planted the plants, some of which Steve donated, and continue to weed the garden. Funding for the project was provided by the Friends of Mission San Luis.

This "xeric" garden's plantings also help control erosion and runoff from the steep slope at the entrance. Plant choices reflect the Mission's theme and include local natives and those with "Spanish flair." The garden provides a habitat for wildlife, offering appropriate food and shelter for birds, bees, and butterflies. Some of the standout plants include Mexican Red-Bird-of-Paradise, Agarita Bush, Texas Sage Bush, Fragrant Red Sumac, Cacti such as Agave, and grasses such as Sis-kiyou Blue Idaho Fescue. One native, the Coontie Palm (*Zamia integrifolia* or *floridana*) is not only attractive in form and color, it was likely used for food at the Mission. "Coontie" is the Seminole term for "flour root."

Stop by a take a look and get some ideas for problem areas in your yard. There will be a free presentation



Mission San Luis garden volunteers David Mitchell, left, and Steve Chandler hard at work.

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Portulaca SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE



Desert Evening Primrose (*Oenothera speciosus* 'rosea'). This attractive white to pink flower blooms at evening and throughout the night in spring and summer; bees enjoy them; medicinal history; ubiquitous on the Great Plains in the colonial period. SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

on the gardens on Thursday, July 26th at 8:30 a.m. in the Mission's Visitor Center. Call 245-6406 for more information.