

Carmel High School ROP Ornamental Horticulture Course

We decided the time had come to increase student exposure to our incredible Carmel Middle School Habitat Project, so a field ROP course called “Ornamental Horticulture” was born! In the class, we focus upon plant use (aesthetic beauty and utilitarian value), plant biology, propagation & restoration, and long-term research monitoring. Students assist with ongoing gardening & restoration projects, as well as new long-term research projects that are being conducted at Carmel Middle School Habitat, and the Carmel River Lagoon Restoration Project. Our kids gather and manage field data, map native plant communities, assist with the planting and maintenance of the CMS Organic Garden, assist with the CMS Native Plant Propagation and Restoration Program. Examples of our long-term surveys & monitoring projects include: soil & plant nutrient studies, native seed collecting, soil and plant maintenance, genetic studies on native plant ecotypes, Carmel River water monitoring, bird banding & monitoring, native plant propagation & management, and initiating native plant and organic gardens. The course is taught at the CMS Habitat site on most occasions; however, one-day per week we do research and native plant restoration work at the “Carmel River Lagoon Restoration” site.

In addition to our daily plant design, maintenance, and monitoring, the class incorporates a number of local professional guest speakers who give students insights into practical planting techniques, careers, restoration, and other Horticulture associated applications.

Scheduled field trips have taken us to the “Lester Rowntree Native Plant Garden” in Carmel to study the incredible array of California Native Plant diversity. Recently, our students just finished designing and planting a native plant garden at the site (see photo below). Later in the year, we plan on visiting other nearby native plant and horticulture organizations such as Rana Creek Restoration, Hastings Natural History Reserve, and City of Carmel Project sites.



Lester Rowntree Native Plant Garden