

## A SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF STANFORD GARDENS

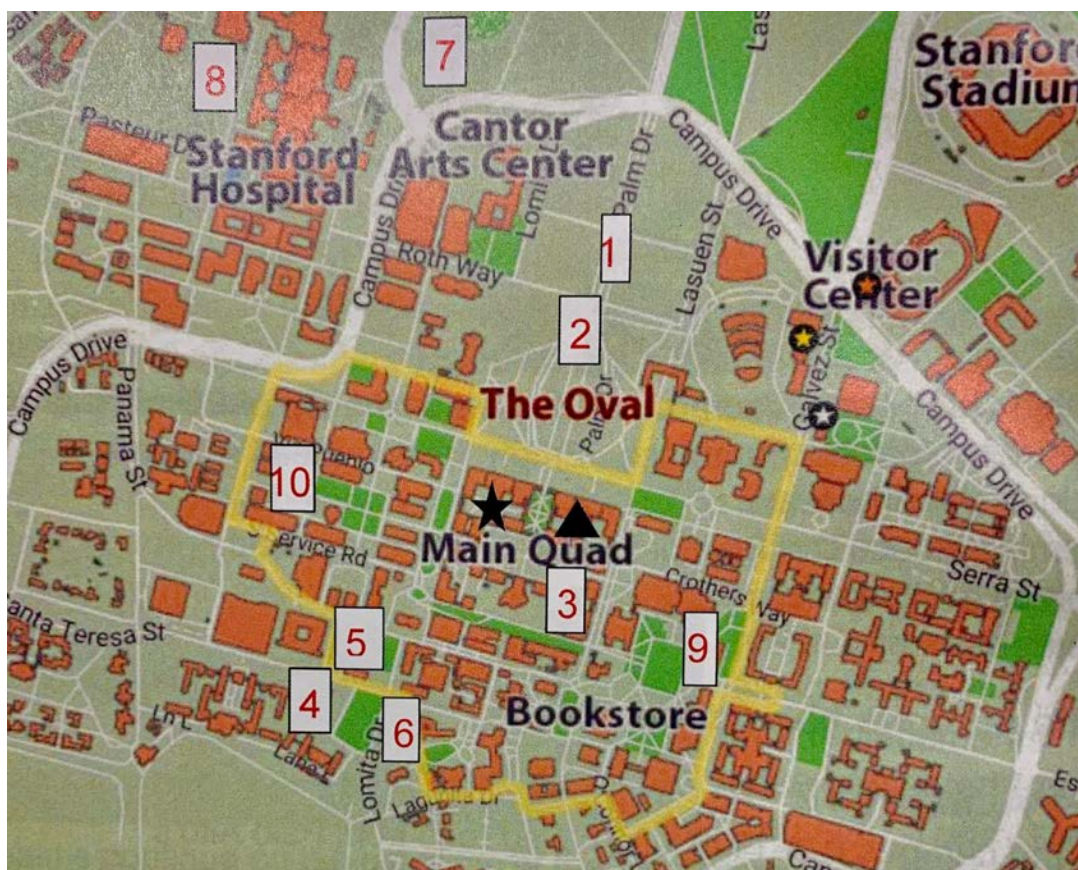
*(This general and casual guide to various garden areas on the Stanford campus was written by students in 2017 in conjunction with a class project for an Introductory Seminar; descriptions may not reflect updated garden features.)*

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Stanford! Those who work and study on this beautiful campus are fortunate to enjoy a variety of diverse gardens with an ever-changing palette of colors, scents, and animal visitors. If you love gardens and trees, Stanford is an excellent place to experience them.

This guide was assembled by *Vision of Paradise*, an introductory seminar given in Spring 2017 (Bio 24n). The class visited numerous Stanford gardens together, and students created illustrated guides to many of them. These essays have been edited to fit in this format, as well as to correct minor discrepancies, inaccuracies, and changes that have taken place since their writing. It is intended to provide you with the location and background information about each garden (numbered on the map), including student comments about some of the major highlights.

If your time is limited, we suggest sites ①, ②, ③, ⑥, ⑦, and ⑨ as the most popular and iconic “must see” locations.



## The Original Plan

Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park in New York City, was employed by Leland Stanford to help establish the general plan of Stanford University with particular attention to the settings of buildings (the quadrangle, or “Quad” design), the entrance to the University from the train station, and the plantings near buildings and in the Arboretum. Pictured below is the original layout, with not one, but three Quads. The central Quad (referred to on modern maps as “Main Quad”) was built as part of the original University. The quadrangle to the right was not realized until the Science and Engineering Quad was built over a century later. The quadrangle on the left does not exist, although libraries built in this area were at a time referred to as a “Library Quad.” The plan of the Oval is clear on this old map, and the darkened areas indicate plantings, adjacent to buildings or in separated islands within Quads or in and around the Oval at the top of Palm Drive at the main University entrance. Empty looking areas were hay fields. An arboretum of 14,000 trees was planted along El Camino Real. The Stanford property had been used primarily for horses and as a farm, and there were originally very few trees on campus.



### ***The campus has changed dramatically – let’s visit!***

#### ① **PALM DRIVE** (by [student author uncredited])

Palm Drive, the iconic entrance to the campus, is a nearly one-mile long paved road from Palo Alto’s University Avenue to the Oval. It is delimited by more than 160 Canary Island Palm trees. In aerial photos from 1915, the palms continued all the way around the Oval, totaling more than 200.



#### ② **The Oval** (by [student author uncredited])

At the Oval, Palm Drive branches into a circular drive (one-way road) around the Oval. Until around 1990, Palm Drive connected with the Serra Mall (now renamed Jane Stanford Way), the road in front of the Quad. To separate bus and car traffic from pedestrians and bicycles, there is now a barrier

separating the two roads. As trees died along Palm Drive, the “replacements” were harvested from the Oval. Today the palms continue on the outer arc of the Oval connecting to Lomia Drive on the West and with the Lathrop Library on the East.

There are just a few palms remaining on the Oval proper. The primary feature of the Oval is the broad expanse of lawn with a central walkway (formerly a much wider carriage path). Punctuating the geometric center of the Oval is a round emblem garden, typically planted in red and white flowering plants to depict the Stanford blocks “S” or during the most recent anniversary “125” to commemorate the 1891 opening of the university. Note how the emblem garden is surrounded by rings of plants, and each ring is a different color and texture; these plants frame the emblem the way that picture frame and mat both protects and emphasizes the primary object, in this case the red and white emblem.

Surrounding the emblem garden are symmetric beds of red and white roses, symmetrically placed benches, and even symmetrically placed trash cans. When you look at the edges of the Oval, are the oak trees planted symmetrically? Do you find the lack of perfect symmetry disturbing or a welcome relief from the regimentation of the Oval with its central emblem garden?



### ③ **MEMORIAL COURT AND THE MAIN QUAD including the Stanford Memorial Church Gardens and the Oregon Courtyard** (by [student author uncredited])

Proceeding south from the emblem garden, you should carefully cross Palm Drive to reach the safe pedestrian walkway along Jane Stanford Way. You are now facing the main entrance to the University. Take a minute to appreciate the grand scale and the symmetry of the Quad facade...the plantings are also symmetrical. Highly ordered space depicts power and authority. The monumental scale of Palm Drive, the Oval, and the Quad inspire awe — these features recall the layout of the grand palaces of European royalty...but there is no gate, no guard. Stanford is a “palace” of learning, and all are welcome. After walking through the main pillars that separate the Quad from the outside world,” you enter a courtyard of modest size, Memorial Court, which has garden beds amidst symmetrical angled

pathways. But not everything here is symmetrical: look for the drinking fountain and the Rodin sculptures. One feature is 100 years old and the one is much more recent. Both disrupt the symmetry of Memorial Court. Standing in the center of Memorial Court you can now see that the Main Quad is actually a set of two concentric quadrangles. Between the two rings of buildings are a series of small gardens, each distinctive, connecting the inner and outer Quad building. One notably popular garden is located behind Lane History Corner (Building 200 — indicated on the map with a black star), filled with citrus trees. There is a sunken garden on the opposite side of Memorial Court behind the psychology building (Building 420 — indicated on the map with a black triangle). These gardens are not symmetrical or uniform — they are more personal spaces, and most Stanford students, staff, and faculty have a favorite. Small restaurants located next to the gardens in the basement level of adjacent Quad buildings open onto the gardens.



The Quad is a huge space. It was dirt and gravel until the early 1990s, and the 8 oases were islands raised above the “dusty” desert plain. Olmsted recognized that water was precious and that knowledge was equally rare: the oases can be interpreted to represent the chance to acquire knowledge, like travelers quenching their thirst at a desert oasis. Unlike its crossbay counterpart UC Berkeley, which accepted students based on academic excellence, Stanford opened its doors to students with diverse backgrounds and training. You were not required to have a high school diploma. For non-traditional students, the idea of an oasis of knowledge was very apt: they had traveled and had many adventures in the intellectual desert of the “Wild West, and now they were motivated for systematic study at the new university. For the first three decades of its existence there was no tuition at Stanford, and nearly all students worked on campus — as gardeners, cooks, maintenance workers, firefighters, lifeguards, etc., drawing on skills learned elsewhere or taught on campus.

The oases used to have very dense tree plantings with edible fruit, but since the time that the Quad was paved, they have been set off by circular concrete benches and significantly thinned. Do you like the oases? Would you prefer a fountain? Or elimination of a few oases to have a broader view of Memorial Church? The Quad buildings are highly uniform in style. Buildings 1-110 are in the inner ring of buildings, and higher numbers in the outer ring. The subject matter taught or administrative unit housed in each Quad building is listed on the black entrance doors.

## **MEMORIAL CHURCH GARDENS** *(by Amelia Leland)*

There is a series of peaceful spaces accessed down a winding path to the right of the Church. The curves of his path hide different “garden rooms” from view, creating interest and intrigue, but also providing visitors with privacy and tranquility. The first garden room is circular with seating set into the garden wall. Not the inscription on the ground. Next is the Amy J. Blue Garden with greenery and wooden benches. This garden erupts in bloom in springtime, with diverse birds swooping into the birdbath. At the back of the church there is a cardinal and white rose garden with a water feature, all symmetrically arranged to complement the architecture. Next is a forest — a space more wild and natural than the three formal gardens encircling the Church.

## **OREGON COURTYARD** *(by Andrea Lee)*

Located near the Clock Tower, this tranquil garden is behind the current Language Corner (Building 260) of the Main Quad. (Originally this was the Engineering Corner, still historically indicated by the engraving atop the exterior of the building.) The garden recognizes Stanford alumni and friends from the State of Oregon in appreciation of their support following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. Their gifts and donations to The Stanford Restoration Fund helped to make possible the repair



of and renovation of Stanford’s historic buildings for the use of future generations. Such gifts help the University to retain its original beautiful architecture and historical sites. The design of the Oregon Courtyard is very simple, yet elegant and serene. The center of the courtyard is roughly twenty-five feet in diameter, representing a majority of the area. There are four perfectly trimmed rectangular hedges about three feet tall and twenty feet wide that surround the center, creating an enclosed space. The bright green leaves on the hedges are very glossy, brilliantly reflecting sunlight, which adds to the vivid garden atmosphere.

Beds within the hedges contain cherry trees, a gift from the Gifu Cherry Blossom Association. Cherry blossom trees are the national trees of Japan, and their flowers are nearly pure white, tinged with the palest pink near the stem. The cherry trees in Oregon Courtyard tend to bloom briefly in autumn and early spring, offering very short periods where community members can relish their beauty and serenity. Cherry blossoms are a symbolic flower of the spring, a time of renewal, and they show us the fleeting nature of life, because after their beauty peaks about two weeks after the first flowers open, their blossoms start to fall.

#### ④ **WINDHOVER** (by Olivia Rambo, Tiger Chow, Yuka Arora)

**Note:** While the Windhover Contemplative Center is open only to Stanford University cardholders (students, faculty, staff, and alumni/authorized guests with access cards), the exterior and many outdoor features described here are still visible without entry to the facility itself. The outdoor labyrinth is publicly accessible. The Center is generally open from 7:00 am - 7:00 pm daily. A valid Stanford ID card is required for each individual to enter the building; guests, unfortunately, are not allowed. Stanford alumni can obtain a building access card from the Frances C. Arrillaga Alumni Center (located at 326 Galvez Street) front desk during business hours.



The Windhover Contemplative Center is located on Santa Teresa Street near Roble Hall. The gardens surrounding Windhover are well worth a visit, although entry into the Center itself requires a Stanford ID. The Center architects were Aidlin Darling Design, and the Center opened in 2014. Working closely with the architects, landscape designer Andrea Cochran imagined a series of experiences — a choreography — connecting the outside and inside of this new facility.

Starting at Santa Teresa Street, you encounter the weathered steel fence and the facility name Windhover incised within it. Slits in the steel wall and low hedging give a glimpse of the path to the building's West side...leading to the reflecting pool. On the way, touch the building. It is rammed earth built on site with La Paz gray river rock anchoring the building to the ground. There is a green wall of bamboo and Ginkgo trees with pale green leaves in spring and golden leaves in fall shielding you from the Roble parking lot. The path itself is interesting with changes in texture and spacing of inset rock.

Keep walking to the back of the building, and on your left you'll be able to enter a serene reflecting pool contemplation area. The designers used many materials found in the boneyard — Stanford's name for unused/leftover materials from other projects — to create rock benches, chairs, and the sculpture in the reflection pool. There were also some "happy accidents" that occurred which enhance the space. For example, when the sun hits the reflection pool at a certain angle, the very shallow pool has light dancing on water. The pool reflects water ripples that light up the roof overhanging the water. When the sunlight that leaks through the trees at the right angle, the trees create dancing shadows across the inside of the building. These elements were not planned, but they come alive and evolve over time.

Surrounding the edges of the pool, there are two benches made from rocks found in the boneyard. They are placed in such a way that two people can both have private moments at the reflection pool without being interrupted by the other person. The material enclosing the reflection pool area varies

between tall plants, concrete wall, and the same weathering steel fence used at the front entrance. Using these different materials, the design avoids tight corners and has a permeable fence for privacy with a glimpse of the outside world. Water drains from the roof down a heavy chain into the planting beds.

Walking around the back of the facility, you enter an oak woodland and midway back to Santa Teresa Street you'll have the chance to sit on the outside of the dry rock garden with a fountain and maple tree. Notice how the roof was built around a California pepper tree that reaches for the sky above the building.



Now, off to your right is the double labyrinth, an ancient exercise for the mind. There are two colors and hence two paths. Start on the outer edge and carefully follow a path to the center while thinking of the true purposes of life. This labyrinth is modeled on a 13th Century installation at Chartres Cathedral in France; there is a similar installation at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

#### ⑤ **Terman Court/Park** (by Cynthia Hao)

Previously the site of Terman Engineering Center, the space next to the Thornton Center and Roble Arts Gym has since been renovated into a “hidden” park for everyone to enjoy.

Terman Park features a huge rectangular fountain in a gravel bed, set deep into the ground. To get there, walk down the steps or take the scenic path down the side of the park that cuts diagonally through a wall of lush greenery. Once you get to the fountain edge, feel free to lounge on one of the benches and sunbathe. On warm days or when you're feeling particularly



adventurous, you can even take a dip in the cool water.\* (\*\*“Fountain Hopping” is a longstanding and authorized Stanford tradition!)

While you rest, enjoy the sight of stretches of green lawn interspersed with young trees, or spend some time in the rose garden to the right of the Thornton Center. The height gradient from tall trees around the periphery of the park to low plants and short grass and finally to fine-grained gravel in the center directs attention up and out towards the wide sky, producing an expansive, sprawling effect. The park’s already large capacity is made even more impressive with strategic tree plantings that seem to continue outwards to viewers in the center, while managing to avoid blocking any upward lines of sight. Oaks, ash eucalyptus, cypress, and cedar trees are interspersed on the field, giving visitors a variety of shades and textures to enjoy.

### ⑥ **PAPUA NEW GUINEA SCULPTURE GARDEN** (by *Olivia Rambo*)

**Note:** Detailed information about the sculpture and flora of the Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden (PNGSG) is provided on podiums throughout the space.

Guided tours of the PNGSG are managed by the Cantor Center for the Visual Arts at Stanford, and are open to the public. For more information, see:

<https://museum.stanford.edu/visit/tours-and-group-visits>

Images of some of the sculpture and flora located in the PNGSG are available at:

<http://web.stanford.edu/~siegelr/stanford/pngsculpture.html>

Nestled in an oak grove this garden was inspired by a multiculturalism movement in the early 1990s. Stanford student Jim Mason initiated this project by arguing that the physical environment at Stanford should reflect the expanded global canon now being taught, rather than just the Western Civilization canon that had been the focus for decades.



Planning started in 1994 and the garden was opened in 1996. Mason collaborated with 10 artists from Papua New Guinea and landscape architects Kora Korawali and Wallace Ruff to recreate an environment that reflected this academic expansion. Nestled among the trees, the sculptures and garden hold a unique Stanford history. The physical setting of the garden was highly complicated by the political setting, in which Mason sought to challenge the “construction and uses of ‘primitivism’ in the west” by connecting two cultures.

Mason had the sculptors work within the oak grove in which the sculptures would be placed. This setting of the carvers and the progression of the sculptures in a public location was a part of Mason’s efforts to focus on interpersonal understanding. The University implemented programming for the garden to engage the Stanford community including tours, stories, musical performances and weekly



lectures. Two translators facilitated exchange between the carvers and visitors. Some thought this venture would be exploitative, but Mason notes that instead, the project built interpersonal relationships and drew a huge interest from community members, with about 3,000 attending the opening day ceremonies. This great success of connecting cultures aided Mason's message that the carvers' artistic process was an intentional, creative process, characteristics often ascribed to western art.

The design process shows intentionality and attention to detail — concrete expressions that visually challenge the constraining narratives of art/artifact, authenticity/inauthenticity, and primitivism that are often forced onto non-western artists. The Rodin sculptures on campus, specifically “The Thinker” and “The Gates of Hell”, are reinterpreted in the Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden. The space for the sculptures takes the shape of a diagonal path through a groundcover of wood chips that weaves from a sunnier, open space to a more forested bridge at the back. This path represents the Sepik River, the main waterway in the region where the carvers live. The open space mimics the ceremonial grounds where these animalistic sculptures would be located, but these sculptures are decorative and not ceremonial (and would not be located outside, in public, if they were of this ceremonial status).

During the project, Mason's pet cat died. Traditionally, honored community member's skulls are buried under ceremonial sculptures to ritualize them. The sculptors made an American adaptation to this ritualization, burying Mason's cat's skull under the center pole of the garden, where it remains today.

### ⑦ **ARIZONA GARDEN (commonly referred to as “The Cactus Garden”)** (by Cecilia Cavelier Riccardi)

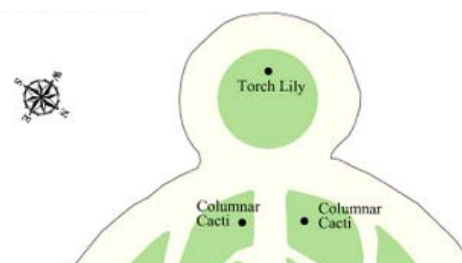
Lushness in a desert would seem to be a contradiction, but this image is the essential characteristic of Stanford's Arizona Garden. This Garden, established around 1883, was designed by landscape architect Ruolf Ulrich as a private garden to flank the (never built) Stanford mansion on the original Palo Alto Stock Farm.



Like much of the Stanford estate, the cactus garden was intended to impress, here through the rarity of its specimens. At the time, cacti were not available for purchase, and the only way to obtain them was to take a train to the Sonoran Desert and pick them yourself — as Ulrich did. The trickier that it was to obtain a garden's plants, the more stature they afforded its patron. In this, the Arizona Garden served as an ostentatious display of money and power.

Ulrich's design generated this effect by using rare plants to create a design based

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on lushness and abundance. There are four tiers of plants in each major bed: ground covers flanking the paths, mid-size specimens, then levels of tall and centrally placed monumental plants. Taking advantage of desert plants' convivial nature, Ulrich designed densely populated beds of cacti, juxtaposing a great variety of species that would not naturally be found in the same environment. The unlikely groups of cacti were kept alive and pristine by a small army of gardeners dedicated solely to this task. The result would undoubtedly have impressed the Stanford's guests.

After falling into disrepair after 1920, the Arizona Garden was restored by dedicated volunteers at the end of the 20th century who replaced missing plants in keeping with Ulrich's original masterpiece. The Stanford Family Mausoleum is a short walk from this Garden.

### ⑧ **MEDICAL SCHOOL FOUNTAIN AND GARDEN** *(by Ellen Ouyang)*

Located at 300 Pasteur Drive, A spacious fountain at the front of Stanford Hospital welcomes incoming patients, family, and visitors. This space permits reconnection with calming natural elements in contrast to the rushed activities in the surrounding facilities. With wide and even paths, the garden is easily accessible to those in



wheelchairs. Stanford's dedication to accessibility even extends to providing a short flight of stairs into the fountain pool for the resident families of ducks (as well as maintenance workers). The fountain is the primary focus of this garden. All of the benches face toward the fountain. Turning your back on the Hospital, one can focus on the peace and the joy of water and nature. There are multiple fountains to enjoy, and they are placed irregularly to generate a more organic mood. Within the flower garden there are calming blue, purple, and white flowers with pops of baby pink. The garden has symmetrical plantings in terms of color, but different plants are used to generate the same palette. The floral sections separate the fountain from the bustle of activity at the Hospital entrance. The floral plantings are segmented, allowing you to enter through the gaps in many places. The fountain garden is a soothing site that invites all visitors to enjoy some peace from hectic and work-driven lives.

### ⑨ **MEYER GREEN & COURTYARD** *(by Ethan Cruikshank, with updates by Stanford Visitor Center)*

Stanford's Meyer Green is a bustling center of activity on campus. Until 2015, the four-story Meyer Undergraduate Library (known to generations of previous Stanford students by the creative acronym "UgLy") stood in its place! Located between Green Library and the Stanford



Law School, it is one of the newest gardens on campus, and a popular hangout spot for students on our many sunny days.

Now you can go there to appreciate the sun, relax, or picnic at one of the green's many sitting areas. (The entirety of Meyer Green is scattered with Adirondack chairs.) Students often spend afternoons with nice weather studying on the lawn of Meyer Green. Stairs and an accessible ramp lead down to a center stage, where both scheduled and ad hoc performances and oratory occasionally take place.

The circle of sloping grassy areas at the heart of Meyer Green are surrounded by an abundance of newly emerging flora. In the spring and summer, look for the white blooms of star jasmine and fortnight lilies.

Four groves encircle the center of Meyer Green. Each is covered in a mulch pathway that is soft underfoot and notoriously difficult to ride a bike over, making each of them friendly only to pedestrians. There are many low shrubs and flowering plants in the mulch, as well as a few larger trees along the interior and exterior edges. The groves also contain the tallest trees in Meyer Green, which are eucalyptuses and cedars. These trees were preserved when Meyer Library was razed. Each grove also features shady several places to sit, including tree stumps, benches, and picnic tables.

On the Green Library side, you can experience the sight, sound (and water) of the unique, showering red fountain (often referred to as “The Hoop” for its resemblance to a basketball rim). On the Law School side sit a number of unique sculptures, including a traditional Haida totem pole entitled “*The Stanford Legacy*”, an obelisk, and numerous metallic structural pieces. (2022 update: Don't miss the large, snake-like architectural column entitled “Hello” as part of the Meyer Plinth Project – the first installment of a rotating-every-two-years art installation which emulates the Fourth Plinth Project of Trafalgar Square.)

## **10 SCIENCE & ENGINEERING QUAD (SEQ)** (by Jessica Eggers)

Refer back to the original plan for the Stanford campus in the Introduction. Not until 2014 was the 8.2-acre quad with four engineering buildings completed. An east-west path lined with tall palm trees connects the Main Quad with the SEQ through the Lomita Mall. Running north-south is a second axis running from the Green Earth Sciences building downhill toward the Biology and Chemistry buildings, including the newly renovated SAPP Center (occupying the building referred to as “Old Chemistry”).

The expansive plaza of the SEQ showcases modern and beautiful landscaping. Artistic circular designs are the primary landscape feature in SEQ, including grassy knolls crowned with trees, amphitheaters, and geometrically planted flower beds. Five knolls are scattered throughout, providing shady areas for talking, resting, and — in the case of children and students — rolling down!

The SEQ contains two amphitheaters that encircle Coast Live Oak trees, creating a wonderful space for performances, studying, and chatting outdoors. Interspersed between these are five circular beds,

each with a unique arrangement of trees, shrubs, and flowers in varying colors, textures, and heights. This layout permits a diversity in plants and bed style, but maintains an element of similarity that unifies the design. Adjoining many of the circular plantings are rectangular beds and long, block seating areas. One of the most popular beds is the beautiful arrangement in the northwest corner of SEQ, next to Coupa Café. It features tall, vibrant red, fuzzy-stalked Kangaroo Paw plants that are whimsically reminiscent of a Dr. Seuss book, and a leafy shrub with gorgeous, pink cylindrical flowers that complement the delicate, yet bold red plant to the other side. Although better-known gardens exist elsewhere on campus, the SEQ's diverse, beautiful, and artistic landscaping makes it a special addition to the Stanford campus and is well worth a visit.



## **FINAL NOTES**

There are lovely gardens near the Visitor Center, around the Arrillaga Alumni Center, and near athletic facilities. These sites are starred on the map provided in the Introduction. Many small courtyards exist throughout the campus, and we encourage you to explore on your own to discover the many garden treasures of Stanford University.

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