

Fresh Dirt

our latest garden finds, ideas,  and what to do now

August 26, 2008

Donate your old books to a library -- it might result in a garden

By Sharon Cohoon, [Sunset](#) senior garden writer

I donate a lot of used books to the library. But I didn't really think these donations added up to much. I was wrong. The cumulative effect of these donations can lead to big change. The Sun and Sea Discovery Garden at the [Newport Beach Public Library](#), shown below, is striking evidence. It was funded entirely from [Friends](#) of the Library book sales, according to Support Services director, Melissa Kelly.



Eric and Chris Fenmore of [Front Porch Creations](#), a Corona del Mar, California design/build firm designed and installed the garden.

The primary purpose of the garden, says Chris, was to provide an outdoor reading room for children ages 3-7, either as a group with a librarian, or one-on-one with a parent. But Chris also designed in opportunities for individual exploration as well. Children can walk--or more likely run--the maze created by the clipped boxwood hedges. Or they can play with the sea pebbles in the fountain. Or they can pick up the coloring book designed specifically for the garden, find the sea creatures illustrated in it depicted in mosaic tiles here and there on the paths, read a little about them, and then color the images.



"Kids try so hard to be quiet and good when they're in the library, says Chris, speaking from experience--the mother of three young boys and a frequent visitor to the children's library. "So I wanted them to be able to burn off a little of that energy here."

Adults feel as comfortable in this garden as children do, says Chris. "It's sophisticated, not cute." If you're tempted to visit, though, better not come alone. Children aren't allowed in this space without an adult, but the reverse is also true.




 City of Newport Beach
 1000 Avocado Street
 Newport Beach, California
 92660-1000

Newport Beach Library
 1000 Avocado Street
 Newport Beach, California

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