

Santuario Sisterfarm Interactive Tour

The online map is organized according to color-coded Permaculture zones, with “0” being the area closest to the center of daily activities. In Permaculture design, things are placed according to usage patterns, so kitchen herb and vegetable gardens accessed several times daily would be placed in Zone 1. The compost bins and orchard are visited a little less frequently, so they are located a bit further away, in Zone 2. Other features requiring less attention fall into Zone 3.

ZONE 0

1 House

(A) Kitchen/Dining Area

Place where guests gather for communal cooking. Grains and whole foods visible and accessible for ease of cooking.

(B) Recycling

Food scraps and coffee grounds are saved for composting

ZONE 1

2 Gaia Garden

Herbs for cooking are right outside the “Sprout Room” door in a circular garden, surrounding a fountain with paths pointing in the four directions.

3 Water Tank

Two winged women embrace a tree of life in this mural painted on our water tank by Leslie García, sister of Co-Director Elise García.

4 Worm Bins

Three bins hold red wigglers that produce castings—black gold for enriching plants—in exchange for coffee grounds, melon peels, and other worm favorites.

5 Spiral Garden

Nine beds, each named after a goddess or significant feminine mythological figure from around the world—Amaterasu, Yemanjá, Spider Woman—form a vegetable garden, watered by drip irrigation.

6 Afreem Garden of Peace

Dedicated in memory of the father of Iraqi Dominican Sister Aman Miriam Mansoor, OP, the Peace Garden is fashioned as a “keyhole” garden, offering lots of accessible growing space for kitchen herbs, flowers, and plants.

7 Shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe

A *nicho* created by the late Apolinar Rodríguez, father of Board President María Antonietta Berriozábal, holds a clay statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was the last *nicho* he built.

8 Torre de Tonantzin

A two-story tower with a deck above for viewing the Texas Hill Country and night sky has two guest rooms, one on each floor. Built by women using windows recycled from the house.

9 Garden of Ruth

A lovely pond and waterfall surrounded by Texas natives, created in memory of Ruth Wenzel McRae by her late daughter, Kristen Wenzel, OSU.

ZONE 2

10 Mariposa Garden

Suggested by Margot Ruíz, OP and created in honor of Las Hermanas Mirabal of the Dominican Republic, this garden includes a small pond surrounded by a variety of fruit trees, including persimmon, fig, pawpaw, and jujube.

11 Kwan Yin's Bin

Four bins process scraps of produce from our kitchen, as well as those “harvested” for us by Oblate Renewal Center in San Antonio and a local grocer, decomposing and transforming them into rich compost for the gardens. Three other bins nearby transform the “humanure” in our composting toilets into great food for trees.

12 Sor Juana Cabin

This guesthouse is named after Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, Mexican nun, author, scientist, musician—a “renaissance” woman of the 17th century, silenced for advocating women’s right to education.

13 Greenhouse

Here is where all the seedlings get their start.

14 Chicken Coop

More than a dozen diverse hens and a couple of roosters—Ameraucanas, Anconas, Rhode Island Reds, Australorps, Barred Rock, Japanese Bantams, and homegrowns from all of the above—roost together at night after free ranging all day (and laying some delicious eggs!).

15 Rain Catchment Tank

This 5,000-gallon tank captures rainwater that falls on the roof of the house, channeled by gutters and downspouts. All it takes is about four inches of rain to fill the tank, which is then connected to our drip irrigation system to water vegetables and herbs.

16 Turtle Island

(A) Berms and Swales

We fashioned this flat area into berms and swales in order to capture rainwater in the soil rather than have it rush down the hill to the creek. The cheapest place to store water is in the soil!

(B) Orchard

Fruit trees yield plums, apples, pears, and peaches in summer, preceded by beautiful spring flowers.

(C) Graywater

A graywater system captures all the water used in the house (except toilet water), recycling it to irrigate the trees and plants in Turtle Island, with any excess flowing into a pond that is home to dozens of goldfish and assorted frogs, dragonflies, and other water-loving creatures.

ZONE 3

17 Mother-Maiden-Crone Pathway

Created by women friends of a variety of ages.

18 Casa Lupe

(A) Casa Lupe Yurt

Built in memory of Cocky and Sarah Coston, parents of Co-Director Carol Coston, this 20-foot diameter yurt provides a wonderful space for workshops and gatherings, with a very light footprint. Gutters capture rainwater into a 350-gallon tank.

(B) Composting Toilet

A composting toilet is available for visitors who can check out the inverter and control panel for the solar energy system while answering nature's call!

(C) Solar Panels

Two photovoltaic panels provide energy to Casa Lupe, enabling us to show PowerPoints, play music, and run fans powered by the sun.

19 Seven Sisters Pathway

Stone steps lead down to the Joshua Creek.

20 Joshua Creek

Originating from a nearby underground spring, the Joshua Creek wends its way to the Guadalupe River about three miles away. We are part of the Guadalupe River Watershed, so all we do on these seven acres affects the Guadalupe River and the Gulf of Mexico into which it eventually flows, some 200 miles southeast.

21 Lawton Pathway

Stone steps leading up the hill from the Joshua Creek pass by a vortex, center of healing energy. Named in memory of Jim Lawton, Carol Coston's uncle.

22 Mother and Child

Gift of Victor and Monica Fernández, this clay statue of an indigenous mother and child, crafted in Mexico, is held in a *nicho* built by Farm Manager Victor Fernández.

23 Bell

Fashioned out of an old bombshell, this bell, gift of dear friends, calls us to mindfulness and the power of transformation.

24 Sally Patch

Original site of a small orchard, named in memory of Sally Lawton Coston, Carol Coston's mother. We hope this wild patch will soon be the site of a beehive buzzing with activity.

25 Guardian Angel

An angel, created by Rafael Aldave and surrounded by ancient limestones, greets all visitors.