

The Crack Garden

San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

Inspired by the tenacious plants that pioneer the tiny cracks of urban landscapes, a backyard is transformed through hostile takeover of an existing concrete slab by imposing a series of "cracks." The rows of this garden contain a lushly planted mix of herbs, vegetables, flowers, and rogue weeds retained for their aesthetic value.

Originally, the large concrete area acted as a complete impermeable space that retained excess heat in the summer. The goal of the Crack Garden was to create a new, beautiful and sustainable space with little investment for the residents in a four-unit building.

The side of the garden along the residents' building is kept open for social activities, and plants selected for the cracks can tolerate foot traffic, allowing for multiple uses throughout the garden. A Jacaranda tree adds scale, creates an anchor for the garden, provides needed overhead definition to help contain the space, and offers filtered shade and summer color. Potato Vine is planted along the fences and back wall to grow on the cable trellis, and a beautiful Five-Leaf Akebia vine creates textural interest on the back wall. The planting within the cracks is somewhat random, changing regularly depending on the whims and desires of the resident gardeners, but usually includes a wide range of vegetables, herbs, flowers and weeds.

Project Resources

CMG Landscape Architecture