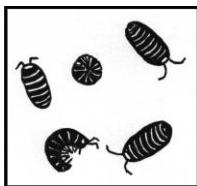


Enclave Butterfly Garden Report: A Garden's Winter Life

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When you pass Enclave Butterfly Garden on Mesa Drive this winter, you might think the garden looks “dead.” But consider the ways that winter gardens are actually alive:

- **Roots:** Though above-ground it may look as if nothing is happening, in our warm climate, many plants’ roots grow during the winter. Each day, they pull in nutrients and water, which gives them a head-start in spring.
- **Seeds:** Many seeds germinate, or begin to grow, in winter. Some seeds even require periods of cold to break dormancy and sprout. Many months before you see a single spring leaf or flower, a tiny seed too small for you to see has sent thread-thin roots into cool soil.
- **Soil:** Many people think of the ground under our feet as being empty of life, but soil contains vastly greater numbers of species and individual living beings than the world we see above-ground. Earthworms and roly-polies? Yes, but also countless microscopic species, for there are more microorganisms in one teaspoon of dirt than there are human beings on our planet. In winter, many of them consume dead plant matter and expel nutrients that will feed spring flowers.

Just as you and I need eight hours of sleep, a garden needs months of dormancy to maintain health. In our culture we prioritize productivity over rest, sometimes to the detriment of our health. We inflict the same priority on our landscapes, insisting on constant green and endless bloom. But the healthiest landscapes are those that include native plants, which work in harmony with nature and thus need rest. The next time you’re tempted to think a native-plant garden looks “dead,” consider that the garden is just asleep and appreciate its deeper life taking place underground.