

## Volunteering and nature-related events with others, April 2024

Purple text indicates links. Events for Earth Week marked with asterisk.

Scroll down for:

Hands-on volunteering  
Outdoor fun and learning, including festivals  
and gardens to visit  
Talks, classes, conferences, exhibits, contests  
- mostly indoor or online  
Garden- and waste-reduction events and  
resources  
Electrification and other climate-change  
events and resources *More calendars*



This list is now being updated through the month. Check back!

### Hands-on volunteering - Events for Earth Week marked with asterisk

- **Baxter Creek volunteers in El Cerrito** (under 18 with guardian) enhance Baxter Creek in Gateway Park, on the Ohlone Greenway at El Cerrito's north border, 10 AM - noon most first Sundays, meeting at 10 AM at Conlon and the Ohlone Greenway. [Info, and RSVP appreciated, here.](#)
- **Berkeley Adopt-a-Spot:** By caring for your local storm drain or traffic circle, you can reduce pollution and street flooding, or encourage pollinators, increase neighborhood beauty, and boost traffic safety. The City of Berkeley provides materials. [Info on signing up to adopt a storm drain here.](#) including a map of drains, here. [General info here.](#)
- **\*Berkeley shoreline cleanups** are held on most third Saturdays starting 9 AM at Shorebird Park. [Info here](#) (you have to scroll down among many events). [Cleanup Meetup](#) cleanups start same time and place. [Info here.](#)
- **Blake Garden** welcomes volunteers to help tend the Kensington garden with spectacular views, run by UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. For info contact the garden manager, [meghanray@berkeley.edu](mailto:meghanray@berkeley.edu).
- **Chavez Park Conservancy** on Berkeley's Bay edge works to rescue native shrubs and trees in the 3-acre DAWN project, one of the Bay Area's pioneer native plant installations. For info contact [huttarbob@gmail.com](mailto:huttarbob@gmail.com).
- **\*The Contra Costa Resource Conservation District offers Earth Week Events** Apr. 20 in Rodeo, Crockett, and Antioch; Grayson Creek in Pleasant Hill Apr. 27; and McNabney March May . [Info and registration here.](#)
- **\*The East Bay Regional Park District** sponsors [varied volunteer programs](#), including [habitat restoration](#) -- and [invasives removal](#).  
**On April 20, Earth Day shoreline cleanups are scheduled** at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline (two locations,) Hayward Regional Shoreline, and Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline. Invasive-plant removal is scheduled at Coyote Hills and Reinhardt Redwoods Parks. [Details and signup here.](#) **Other volunteer events are set for** Wildcat Canyon, Roberts, Huckleberry, Sibley, and Crown and Encinal Beaches in Alameda. [Details and signup here.](#).. Four successive Sundays removing milk thistle begin Sun., Mar. 31, in Claremont Canyon Regional Park. [Info here.](#)
- **\*El Cerrito Earth Day** offers volunteering citywide 9 AM - noon Sat., Apr. 20. Opportunities include removing invasives at the Schmidt Lane entrance to the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area, a cleanup at Centennial Park/Fairmount Elementary and school garden; and planting at Cutting Triangle, 6722 Cutting (Cutting at Elm). [Info and full list here.](#)
- **El Cerrito Green Teams** hosts monthly work parties in different areas. Tools, gloves, and bags supplied. [Info here.](#) RSVP helpful to 510-215-4350 or [green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us](mailto:green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us).
- **\*Friends of Rotary Nature Center lead Earth Day volunteering at Lake Merritt** 10 AM - 1 PM Sat., Apr. 20, to tend the landscape, remove trash, and test water. Meet at the Boathouse parking lot, 568 Bellevue Ave., Oakland. Drop-in OK, but pre-registration for this and other Oakland events [available here](#). Third Saturday work days held most months at the center and a nearby marsh. [Info and registration here](#)
- **\*Friends of Sausal Creek** hold Earth Day/month volunteer events at Barry Place,

Beaconsfield Canyon, Dimond Canyon, Montclair Railroad Trail, and Wood Park Sat., Apr. 20; Bridgeview Trailhead Sun., Apr. 21; and Marj Saunders Park Sat., Apr. 27. [Info and RSVP here](#). Opportunities every week at their native-plant nursery and several Oakland restoration sites. [Info here](#).

- [Garber Park Stewards](#) has restoration work days on 1st and 3rd Saturdays of most months in the forested 13-acre park off Claremont Avenue on the Berkeley-Oakland border. New web site under construction; contact them at [gpstewards@gmail.com](mailto:gpstewards@gmail.com). Sat., Feb. 3, cancelled due to slippery conditions.
- [\\*Golden Gate Bird Alliance \(formerly Golden Gate Audubon\)](#) offers monthly volunteer restoration events including at [Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline April 20](#) [Information and links to event list and registration here](#).
- [Love the Bulb](#) hosts gardening days at its native-plant garden at 2 PM on first and third Saturdays on the Albany Bulb. [Info here](#).
- [Ohlone Greenway, Berkeley](#): Help maintain native plantings along Berkeley's Ohlone Greenway from the Peralta Community Gardens to Gilman, 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM. [Info here](#).
- [Mount Diablo Interpretive Assn.](#) has opportunities with its trail crew and back-country patrol. [Info here](#). [Save Mount Diablo](#) has varied hands-on volunteer events. There also are restoration and trail building opportunities with the Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT) and Trail Dogs. [Info here](#) or contact [hsutton@savemountdiablo.org](mailto:hsutton@savemountdiablo.org).
- [Mount Tamalpais area](#) opportunities, from being a wildlife docent to pulling out French broom, are generally described on the [One Tam volunteer page, here](#). Calendar of all events including habitat restoration is [here](#).
- [The San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club](#) usually hosts a cleanup monthly, with an Earth Day Oakland cleanup scheduled for April 20. [Info here](#).
- [SODBlitz, the annual citizen-science survey for Sudden Oak Death](#), seeks volunteers April 27-29 to sample infected bay laurel trees (the main carriers of the water mold that kills oaks) on both sides of the hills (after a short online training). [Info here](#).
- [\\*SPAWNERS \(San Pablo Creek\)](#) celebrates Earth Day 9 AM - 2 PM Sat., Apr. 20 with gardening and a creek cleanup followed by food, music, and fun at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way. Volunteer days monthly, usually on third Saturdays, at their Wilkie Creek Outdoor Classroom. [Email here](#) or [here](#).
- [Skyline Gardens Alliance](#), restoring beautiful and varied native vegetation along an EBMUD-owned segment of the Skyline Trail, seeks committed volunteers for sessions Thursday afternoons or Sunday mornings. [Contact info here](#).
- [Take to the Hills](#) weeds and plants in Derby Canyon in the hills above the UC Berkeley Clark Kerr Campus, usually Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Email [Jim@thisintothat.com](mailto:Jim@thisintothat.com).
- [\\*The Watershed Project](#) hosts a day planting tough, drought-tolerant, and colorful natives in North Richmond front yards, and a Wildcat Creek stewardship day, both 9 AM - noon in North Richmond. Thurs., Apr. 25, 9 AM - noon, join in cleanup and restoration on the Richmond Greenway. [Info here](#).
- [On Albany Hill, Tending the Ancient Shoreline Hill \(TASH\)](#) leads volunteers weeding and planting on last Saturdays. [Email here for info](#).
- [Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation](#) has varied weekend and weekday opportunities in its 2700-acre open space adjoining Mt. Diablo and at its native-plant nursery. [Info here](#).

## Outdoor Fun and Learning

### *Walks, field trips, tours, festivals continued*

- [\\*Join Love the Bulb and environmental artist Zach Pine making sand globes](#) on Albany Beach (foot of Buchanan Street), 10 AM - 3 PM Sun., Apr. 21. It's magic to make, juggle, and toss balls from just sand! [Info and registration here](#).
- [\\*Berkeley's Bay Festival](#) offers music, food, free boat rides, educational events, and more for all ages, 11AM - 4 PM Sat., Apr. 27, at Berkeley's Shorebird Park. [Info here](#).
- [\\*City Nature Challenge](#), a global fun competition to make citizen-science observations of wild plants and animals using the free iNaturalist app, is coming April 26-29, with events throughout the Bay Area, and opportunities to participate on your own. [Join a bioblitz in the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area 10 AM - 1 PM Sat., Apr. 27, from the north end of Regency Court](#). [Info here](#).
- [El Cerrito Trail Trekkers' annual Hillside Festival](#) in the 100-acre Hillside Natural Area, Sat. and Sun., May 4 & 5, offers free hikes on everything from medicinal plants to fire safety, art making for kids, poetry, and more. [Info and registration here](#).

- [The East Bay Regional Park District's 2024 Trails Challenge](#), to hike or bike five of 20 designated trails of all levels of difficulty, continues through Dec. 31. [Info and guide to trails here](#).
- [Bird walks: Golden Gate Bird Alliance \(formerly Golden Gate Audubon\)](#) leads frequent free field trips including Lake Merritt and Hilltop Lake, Blake Garden, John Hinkel Park, Tilden Park, and others farther afield. Required reservations open at 1 PM on third Tuesdays of the prior month. [Info here on registration](#). [Outings list here](#).
- [El Cerrito's Recycling Center](#), 7501 Schmidt Lane, offers a free public tour 3-4 PM most first Wednesdays. [Info here](#).
- [Greenbelt Alliance](#) leads varied walks including Shell Ridge and Mt. Diablo. [Info and signup here](#).
- [Mount Diablo Interpretive Association](#) offers walks that often fill quickly, including new monthly Wednesday Bioblitz hikes (recording observations of plants and animals). Recordings of many past talks on nature also available. [Info and links to signup here](#).
- [Save Mount Diablo](#) offers varied hikes. [Annual schedule can be downloaded here](#). Registration opens one month before events. [Calendar and signup here](#).
- [Wholly H2O](#) leads bioblitz and watershed tours. Watershed tours designed to be useful for California students and teachers, are available on your cell phone through [Pocketsights](#).

### *Gardens to visit, with their events including plant sales*

- [The annual Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour and Green Home Features Showcase](#) offers in-person tours of 60 bird- and butterfly-friendly gardens in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, including many with homes that have gone electric, are held 10 AM - 5 PM Sat. and Sun., May 4-5. [Registration here](#); register early to get mailed info.
- EBMUD's self-guided Waterwise Gardening Tour lets you tour 22 drought-tolerant gardens in Walnut Creek and Concord, 9 AM - 2 PM Sat., Apr. 27. [Info and registration here](#).
- The [East Bay Regional Park District's Botanic Garden](#), in Tilden Regional Park at Wildcat Canyon Rd. and South Park Dr., lets you enjoy California native plants daily and free. [Docents lead free, no-reservation tours](#) at on non-rainy Saturdays (11 AM) and Sundays (11 AM and 2 PM). [Native-plant sale open to the public](#) 10 AM - 1 PM Sat., Apr. 20, with 9 AM admission for members. [Info and rules here](#). After April 20, native plants are on sale 10AM - noon Wednesdays and 10 AM - 2 PM first Saturdays.
- The [UC Berkeley Botanical Garden](#), Centennial Drive, offers a sick-plant clinic first Saturday mornings and varied programs including a [California native-plant sale](#) Apr. 16- May 5, and a talk on Native California Foodways May 7, spring bird walk May 15, and nature journaling for garden enthusiasts May 18. Summer camp registration is open. [Events calendar and links to registration here](#).
- [Blake Garden](#), 70 Rincon Rd. in Kensington, run by the UC Berkeley Department of Landscape Architecture, is open free weekdays 8 am - 4:30 pm. [Info here](#). Check the calendar monthly bird walk and tours. [Info here](#).
- [Ruth Bancroft Garden](#) and nursery in Walnut Creek is home to a stunning collection of dry-adapted plants. Informal talks with landscape designers, professional advice on water-wise gardening, plant sales, guided walks, and webinars on types of succulents in the collection, and story times for also offered. [Info here](#).

### *Indoors: Talks, Classes, Meetings, Exhibits, Contests*

Also see Gardening and Waste Reduction below

Classes, talks

- [\\*Earth Day Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#): From 7-9 PM Sat., Apr. 20, at Berkeley's Brower Center, 2150 Allston, enjoy audience favorites from the 2024 [Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#), with films exploring nature, community activism, adventure, conservation, water, energy and climate change, wildlife, environmental justice, agriculture, and more. Info and tickets at [www.tinyurl.com/wsff24](http://www.tinyurl.com/wsff24). [\\$5 discount on tickets with code CCLALA](#).
- [Registration is open for the annual State of the Alameda Creek Watershed Conference](#) offers talks and presentations on the East Bay's largest watershed, 9 AM



- 2 PM Thurs., May 9, at the Fremont Downtown Event Center. [Info and registration here.](#)
- [Bay Nature](#) offers frequent online talks. [Info and past talks on line here.](#)
- [Rotary Nature Center Friends](#) offers monthly free Lakeside Chats on First Fridays, with a free virtual bird walk at the Lake Merritt bird refuge (the nation's oldest) 7-8 PM Fri., Apr. 5. [Info and free tickets here.](#)
- [Golden Gate Bird Alliance \(formerly Golden Gate Audubon\)](#) online talks are scheduled on third Thursdays in many months, with "Flight: Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research," 7 PM Thurs., Apr. 18. [Info and registration here.](#) [Recordings of some past talks are available here.](#)
- [PG&E](#) offers an online talk with the author of *Green Metropolis*: Why living closer, living smaller, and driving less are the keys to sustainability, 11:30 - 1 PM Thurs., Apr. 18, [Info and registration here.](#)
- [EBMUD's Water Wednesdays online talks](#) cover a wide range of information on our water and sewage systems, 6 PM in many months. [Info and past talks online here.](#)
- [Coastside Land Trust](#) offers [info and recordings of past webinars here.](#)
- [The Jepson Herbarium's](#) has videos from 86 mini-workshop are [now available on its YouTube channel here.](#)
- [The California Native Plant Society's 2024 workshops](#), beginning Mar. - Aug. and mainly for specialists and professionals, are open for registration [here.](#)
- [The Brower Center's annual Youth Art/Act Exhibit, "Burning Questions,"](#) shows work by students at local high schools through May 16, in the Center's Hazel Wolf Gallery, 2150 Allston.
- [The Coastal Conservancy's Climate Video Challenge for high-school and middle-school students](#) runs through May 30. The contest seeks answers to the question, "How is your community responding to the climate challenge." [Info here.](#)
- [The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's annual Invasive Species Art Contest](#) is open until May 3 for students through high school. [Info here.](#)
- [UC Berkeley Summer River Restoration Short Course](#): Registration is open for the 29<sup>th</sup> annual five day course, Geological and Ecological Fundamentals for River and Stream Restoration, Aug. 19-23, at UC Berkeley Sagehen Creek Field Station in the Sierra Nevada. [Info and registration here.](#)

## *Gardening, waste reduction*

- [Native Gardening talks](#): The [California Native Plant Society](#) offers free first Thursday "Naturehood" online native-gardening chats, usually at 5:30 PM, with how to access and enjoy new national monuments May 2. [Info, registration, and links to past talks here.](#)
- [Alameda StopWaste's garden events calendar](#) lists events and resources for Bay- and climate-friendly gardening. [Alameda StopWaste's](#) comprehensive guide to [replacing your lawn with drought- tolerant plantings is here.](#) A [list of tool and seed libraries is here.](#) Information is available for [homes](#), [schools](#), and [businesses](#) on reducing food and other waste, dealing with hazardous waste, and other topics, including a [searchable guide on how to reduce, re-use, or recycle specific products.](#)
- [Contra Costa Water District water-efficiency webinars](#) including rebates and getting rid of lawn are online [here.](#)
- [EBMUD](#) offers online office hours on landscape rebates noon-1 PM on first and third Tuesdays. [Info and registration here.](#) EB MUD also offers rebates and [extensive information on water saving and low-water gardening here,](#) including lists of low-water-use plants, information on mulching and firescaping, lists of plants for specific needs, and information on grey-water systems.
- [Neighbors for a Sustainable Berkeley](#) seeks to connect neighbors to share knowledge on sustainable gardening, eating, transportation, energy, water use, and more . [Info and signup here.](#)
- [ReScape's courses](#), mainly certifying professionals at all levels, offer environmentally friendly, nature-based landscaping, including integrated pest management, firescaping, choosing and caring for plants in green stormwater infrastructure, and advanced mulching and composting. Qualification trainings resume in fall with Firescaping, Aug. 26-7. [Rescape's directory of professionals trained in environmental practices is here.](#)
- [StopFoodWaste.org](#) has [dozens of tips](#) from keeping food fresh to using leftovers, a [blog](#) with waste-reducing tips from chefs from nonprofit cooking school 18 Reasons, and [resources](#) from deciphering dates on labels to how schools or businesses can

donate food. Check out tips for [re-growing vegetables from scraps](#).

- [Berkeley's Ecology Center](#) offers [a list of places to drop off things not eligible for curbside pickup here](#). [Albany's guides are here](#) and [El Cerrito's guide is here](#). These include pickup of bulky items and where to drop off batteries or other hazardous materials.

### *Materials*

- [Berkeley residents city-wide can schedule free chipping of woody debris and flammable vegetation - info and online signup here](#).
- [The City of Albany offers free indoor pails for compostable waste](#) to residents of multi-family buildings. [Delivery appointments can be scheduled here](#).
- [Free compost and mulch: El Cerrito](#) offers local residents and businesses up to 5 cu. ft. of free compost while supplies last, on third Saturdays at the upper Cerrito Vista Park parking lot, Avis Drive south of Moeser. Bring your own containers. [Info here](#). [Berkeley's load-it-yourself free compost](#) is available while it lasts, starting Fri. AM, Marina Blvd. [Info here](#). [Albany](#) offers free compost for all at the Gill Tract Farm noon-4 PM Sundays; [instructions and map here](#). Free mulch is available at Ocean View Park; [info here](#). [Richmond residents](#) can get free compost on first 9AM - 4 PM first Wednesdays at 101 Pittsburg Ave., Richmond. (This is also the [West Contra Costa Hazardous Waste facility](#), where El Cerrito, Richmond, and other West County residents can drop off hazardous waste free.)

### *Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions; climate change*

- [Free Earth Day electrification fair](#): Citizens Climate Lobby sponsors a free Home Electrification Fair 2-5 PM Sat., Apr. 20 at the Brower Center, 2150 Allston, Berkeley (followed by the Wild and Scenic Film Festival at 7 PM; see above. [Info and registration here](#)).
- [Free webinars and events on EVs and Ebikes](#) from [Ride and Drive Clean](#) include an Oakland EV and Ebike show at the Lake Merritt Boathouse May 23. [Info here](#).
- [PG&E offers free webinars on electrification and energy saving](#). Recorded, on-demand talks are available on induction cooking, heat pumps, and more. [The catalog for on-demand recordings and live events is here](#). PG&E offers rebates for "smart" thermostats and replacing electric water heaters with heat-pump heaters
- [BayRen](#) and [Rising Sun Center for Opportunity](#) offer free house calls on making your home more energy efficient, with kits that include free LED bulbs. [Info here](#).
- [BayRen's](#) guide to rebates for heat pumps, induction cookers, electric vehicles and more is [here](#). The organization trains electricians and other professionals and offers a [list of trained professionals here](#).
- East Bay residents who commute across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge can qualify for rebates of \$500 - \$1000 (depending on income) for new Ebikes. [Info here](#).
- [QuitCarbon](#) offers free plans for electrifying your home, including info on rebates and estimated costs (they do work with contractors). They also make presentations to groups. [Info here](#).
- [Albany's guide to electrifying your home, including rebates, is on line here](#). [The city offers rebates](#) of \$500 to \$1500 for installation of heat pumps, with rebates doubled for low-income households. [Info and application here](#).
- [East Bay residents can try an induction cooker](#) and pot for three weeks free, and [rebates of up to \\$750 for exchanging your gas stove for induction cooking are available](#) through Bay-Ren, a coalition of utilities. This low-energy, safe cooking plate stays cool while it heats your food with magnetized copper coils. [Info and registration here](#) for AVA (formerly East Bay Community Energy), [here](#) for PG&E, and [here](#) for Albany residents. Borrow an induction wok -- [Info here](#).
- [Solar Rights Alliance](#) offers [consumer info for rooftop and other home solar](#), from finding the right installer to getting repairs.
- [Low-income residents of East Bay ZIP codes deemed to have high pollution levels](#) may qualify for rebates to replace high-emission vehicles with electric ones, through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. [Info here](#).

### *More calendars, more to explore*

This list focuses on the East Bay, mainly west of the hills. Volunteering and exploring nature are great ways to experience the entire Bay Area!

- For more opportunities check out the [Bay Nature Calendar](#). [Subscribe to the magazine, too](#).

- The [Green City Calendar](#) has lots on San Francisco.
- For events east of the hills, check out [Sustainable Contra Costa's events list](#).

This list is put together by [Friends of Five Creeks](#). To suggest an event to include, please email [f5creeks@gmail.com](mailto:f5creeks@gmail.com) with basic information, preferably by a few days before the first of the month.