

**Eagle Rockdale Community Garden & Art Park**  
**Lanark Avenue at Shelby Place**  
**Mary Tokita, Garden Manager**

South of La Loma Street, long strips of open space belong to the City of Los Angeles and bisect a quiet neighborhood just west of Pasadena. These narrow tracts are the remnants of the Los Angeles Railway that provided trolley service in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The parcel, which extends south nearly to Figueroa Street and continues north to the Rock itself, was once part of a line that ran from downtown and provided city dwellers a destination for picnics and relaxation when Eagle Rock was considered “countryside.”

After the railway was closed and dismantled, the remaining tract was left undeveloped for decades until the 1970s, when a man from Rockdale Avenue persuaded the city to create Shelby Lanark Park.

In 2001, neighbors decided to assume the maintenance of the gravel lot just north of Selby Lanark Park. This lot was ugly, dusty and sometimes strewn with trash and abandoned furniture. Every improvement was donated by local residents and fellow Eagle Rockers. A landscape designer planted California Oaks and eucalyptus trees. As they grow, they will provide shade and eventually obscure the view of the Edison power lines to the north. Since there is no water source, agaves, succulents and cacti were planted. Neighbors stretched hoses from their yards to keep the plants watered. For color, purple sage, some “freeway flowers,” and scattered wildflowers seeds were added. From time to time in the following years, new plants would occasionally appear, donated by anonymous friends of the project. The landscaping has made the street more inviting; there is more pedestrian traffic than ever before.

The agricultural tradition of Eagle Rock’s earliest settlers continues today with LA’s newest community garden, with the support and guidance of The Eagle Rock Association.

A locally created mosaic and ceramic sign arch spells out the garden’s name, and greets visitors above the main entry gate, located at the south end of the small city park.

A Neighborhood Matching Fund grant, which provided \$10,000, funded the project. Many TERA board members and friends contributed hours of sweat equity on Saturday work days. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps provided much needed guidance, materials and labor. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa helped obtain fencing for the entire perimeter of the tract, the single largest expenditure. The Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council also pledged its support.

Without the dream, persistence and dedication of Mary Tokita, the garden’s manager, this community garden would never have been a part of Eagle Rock today.