

# Sobrato horticulture students plant hedgerow around school farm

Scott Forstner • Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, April 23, 2015 12:15 pm

Ann Sobrato High School's horticulture students got their hands dirty April 17, planting a pollinator and harvestable hedgerow of fruit trees, herb shrubs and native plants along the western edge of the school's two-acre farm.

"We're delighted that the students have this opportunity to learn about planting and about the many ways that hedgerows can benefit farms," said Vera Gomes, Sobrato's Assistant Principal and a long-time agriculture program teacher.

The high school has a long-term goal to develop a 10-acre organic row crop and orchard demonstration farm next to the current farm, which mainly focuses on animal husbandry.

Later in the spring, the students will plant a windbreak hedgerow of native shrubs and trees along the northern edge of the school farm. These two hedgerows—over 10,000 square feet combined—will have habitat and windbreak functions and will also be used as a teaching tool. The hedgerow design and planting is overseen by Sam Earnshaw of Hedgerows Unlimited, which has established over 400 miles of hedgerows in California.

The hedgerow planting is a partnership between the high school's acclaimed agriculture program, in which about a third of the school's 1,500 students are involved, and Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), a nonprofit dedicated to supporting agriculture near cities.

SAGE is working with the high school on the hedgerow and the demonstration farm planning as part of the project Revitalizing Specialty Crop Agriculture in the Coyote Valley, which is funded by a



## Learning by planting

Sobrato High School horticulture students help plant a hedgerow of fruit trees and herbs along the school farm April 17. The project was completed in partnership with Sustainable Agriculture Education, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting agriculture near cities.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Specialty Crop Block grant. This project is guided by the Coyote Valley Agricultural Enterprise and Conservation program Advisory Committee.