

|||||GARDENS AND PARKS|||||

CHILDREN'S GARDEN NURTURES THE WHOLE FAMILY

Sowing seeds of wonder

Nestled in a pocket of the Quail Botanical Gardens in Encinitas, the Seeds of Wonder children's garden is a place where kids can get dirty, parents can take a breather, and everyone will go home happy.

Pocket-sized and built for the knee-high crowd's comfort, the garden gives little hands a

chance to dig and growing minds room to explore.

There is a sandbox where budding paleontologists can borrow a shovel and sifter and dig for fossils. A working water pump is equipped with plenty of water toys, and in the Wee Herb Garden, future chefs can get a whiff of fresh tarragon and thyme.

The Kids' Cottage features a play kitchen inside and a real patio garden outside, and the giant wind sculpture will hypnotize parents and toddlers alike.

The Quail Botanical Gardens plans to open a larger children's garden in 2008. But in the meantime, Seeds of Wonder is a peaceful addition to one of the

county's loveliest retreats. Admission is good for the whole park, so you and the family can cool off by the water fall, look for frogs in the lily pond, and have a mini retreat (or maybe a nap) in the walled garden.

There is plenty of wonder to go around.

— KARLA PETERSON



There are ferns, frogs and oodles of shade at the Quail Botanical Gardens in Encinitas. *Fred Greaves photos*



Genevieve Mellusi (top left) and her twin brother Christopher test the water pump at the Seeds of Wonder Children's Garden.

QUAIL BOTANICAL GARDENS

230 Quail Gardens Drive, Encinitas. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Admission is \$8 for adults; \$5 for seniors, students and active military; and \$3 for children 3 to 12. Children 2 years and under get in free. Call (760) 436-3036 or log on to www.qbgardens.com.

