

Gardens of Sutro Heights

Adolph Sutro created Sutro Heights as a place where everyone could enjoy nature's beauty in the form of ocean and shoreline vistas and an elaborately designed garden. Sutro Heights gardens included a maze, sculpted hedges, carpet and patterned flower beds, open lawns, and forests. Many of the plants were drought tolerant species imported from similar climates in the Mediterranean, Australia, New Zealand, and South America.

After Sutro's death the expense of maintaining Sutro Heights became too costly for his heirs and the gardens became overgrown. In the early 1900s management of Sutro Heights was given over to the City. After Emma Sutro's death in 1938 ownership was transferred to the City Parks Department. The National Park Service took over in 1976 and the grounds were rehabilitated.

Some of Palm Avenue is still lined by palm trees and groupings of historic trees and shrubs have survived throughout the park. Though there are no longer intricate flower beds, manicured hedges, and grand lawns, Sutro Heights still offers a peaceful open space with exquisite ocean views.



Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, Interpretation Negative Collection, GOGA 2316



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Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, Sutro Heights Photo Album, GOGA 138901.011

Top left: Flower carpet bed on slope, 1880s; *Right:* Adolph Sutro in front of flower bed that spells Sutro Heights, 1880s; *Bottom left:* The "Old Grove" forest in Sutro Heights, 1880s.