

OVF NEWS



Published by Ocean View Farms
P.O. Box 66534 Los Angeles, CA 90066

Spring 2009
Melody Girard, Editor

5TH ANNUAL TOMATO-BRATION



A SPECTACULAR TOMATO SALE & LECTURE

Saturday, April 4

10:00 am

GUESTS WELCOME

Stock up on rare, heirloom tomatoes
and get the scoop on up-to-date tomato
growing tips from esteemed tomato grower

Barbara Spencer

owner of Windrose Farms, Paso Robles

Saturday, April 11 - Election Day

Workday 9:00 • Potluck 12:00 • General Meeting 1:00

Election Slate

OVF will hold its annual election during the
General Meeting on April 11th, 2009.

- Garden Master - Ed Mosman
- Membership - Carrie Manaugh
- Ind. Projects - Stephen Strati
- Vice-President - Open **new position!**
- Phase I Upper - Andrew Sacks
- Phase II Upper - Haidy McHugh
- Phase III Upper - Ron Fine
- Phase IV Upper - Ronda Ross

Please contact Frank if you are interested in
running for any of these positions.

LADWP SHUTS OFF THE TAP FROM 9 AM TO 4 PM

NO EXCEPTIONS FOR LADWP WATERING BAN. MORE SEVERE RESTRICTIONS EXPECTED IN APRIL.

The LADWP Water Conservation Team will patrol communities across the City looking for wasteful uses of water and educating customers about the importance of practicing conservation. After one warning, the City will levy a \$200 fine for a violation. Community garden members must observe all water use restrictions. Below you will find a list of the water-use restrictions most relevant for OVF members.

OVF WATER USERS MAY NOT:

- Irrigate or apply water to plants or landscaping from a spigot, hose, sprinkler, watering can or any container between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Permit any surface runoff, such as overflow from planters, raised beds or planted areas
- Permit pipes or hoses to leak

AND THERE'S MORE...

Water use restrictions may soon become more stringent. "The Water Commission has already approved Phase III. That means you will only be able to water on Mondays and Thursdays starting sometime in April," stated a member of the LADWP Water Conservation Team in a phone interview. It remains for the L.A. City Council to finalize these rules some time in April.

The ordinance prohibits any requests for exemptions from these rules. By law, OVF must enforce these measures. Any gardener who disregards LADWP water-use restrictions will be subject to an OVF citation. Three such citations during the year will result in termination from the garden.

If you notice any leaking pipes or hoses anywhere in the garden, please fill out a plumbing repair work order, available in the wheelbarrow shed, and place it in the plumbing repair boxes.

We have spoken with LADWP about the possibility of having a speaker address our membership sometime in the near future.

**CHECK FOR BREAKING NEWS ON THIS HOT
TOPIC AT WWW.OCEANVIEWFARMS.NET.**

GardenMaster's Report

GREEN BARRELS The green barrels near the shredding storage area are for nutgrass and false garlic. Thank you for using them. However some members are putting their plastic bags that contain the weeds into the barrels. Please remove the weeds from the plastic bags and put the bags in the black barrel. Only organic material can be in the green barrels, which the city of LA will later compost.

WE HAVE A NEW GOURMET COMPOST SHREDDER in service at the top of the manure bins in Phase I. It was donated by a grant that Warren Miyashiro was instrumental in securing. We will have pictures and information in the next newsletter. Thank you, Warren!

A CEMENT PAD WAS INSTALLED in the compost area on Saturday, March 14th, by the workday members. Juan Arias and Richard Nortman led the work crew. Juan is a retired cement and construction worker and a regular at the shredding crew on Tuesdays.

WORKDAY SIGN-IN LOG Please sign the log carefully and properly. Write your name legibly and only one name on a line. Do not bring non-members to workdays. Only you will get credit for your work. You must know your Phase and Plot number. You can verify this with the Timekeepers and the rosters on hand. If we cannot locate you in the computer because you have signed in improperly, you will not receive credit for your hours. Thanks to all of you who regularly attend workdays and keep OVF the beautiful place that it is.

KEEP BRINGING YOUR RECYCLED BOTTLES AND CANS to us. Recycling provides OVF with money to buy tools for you to use in the garden. You are welcome to use any of these tools in the big tool shed. Sign the tool log and return them before closing time.

WATER VALVES The new plastic water valves on the hose bibs are saving water lost due to bibs leaking. Seven valves are missing from the PH2 and PH3 areas. If you have removed these, please return them and put them on the table near the office. They cost \$4.00 each and we have

had to replace those that were taken. If you need instructions on how to use them, see the Gardenmaster or your Phase Rep.

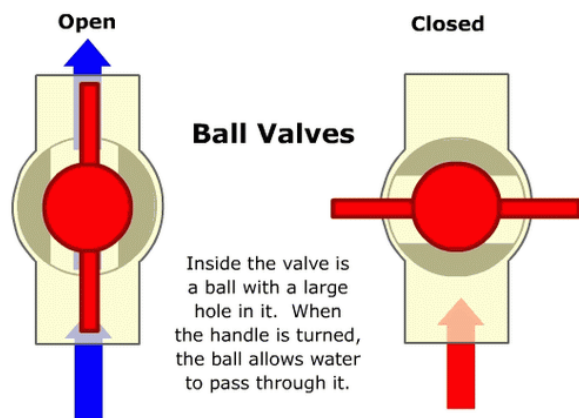
THANKS FOR READING AND RESPONDING!

— Ed Mosman, Gardenmaster



Are Water Keys Going Out of Style?

The water keys that turn on the hose bibs at OVF are almost a constant accessory. We sometimes forget to carry them, and then, flustered, have to wander about asking for a loaner. Other times, we forget that we are carrying them. Ever dump the contents of your pockets or purse out while looking for change and then have to explain what that butterfly-shaped piece of metal is? One OVF member was found in possession of this hunk of metal at LAX; she was pointedly queried by airport security, and her key was confiscated.



Gardeners can now turn water on and off without water keys. When it's a cross it's off.

Someday soon, however, we may not need to weigh down our pockets and handbags with these bits of steel, thanks to the green, plastic ball valves that OVF volunteers are installing throughout the garden. Please do not remove new valves. Remember to leave the water bibb in the on position, so subsequent users can use the off and on functions of the new valves. It will take a while for gardeners to remember to turn the water off at the ball valve, rather than using the water key, so don't throw away your water keys yet.



Delicious Corn Varieties You Can Plant Now, with an Easy Planting Guide

by Ed Mosman, Garden Master

There's an old adage about corn: "Call home to tell them to start the kettle boiling, pick and husk the corn and rush it into the pot." This saying alludes to the sugar in corn changing to starch immediately after harvest. Sugar also degrades when an ear stays on the stalk too long. For best flavor, pick corn just before cooking and harvest just as it becomes ripe, no later. This rapid transformation from sugar to starch is one of the reasons why corn from the grocery store or even the farmers market can never approach the sweetness of a fresh picked ear.

Agribusiness and grocery chains favor vegetables that have long shelf lives, thus some delectable vegetable varieties cannot be bought at the supermarket. You'll find many delicious varieties of eating corn in garden centers and seed catalogs, and it's an easy plant to grow at OVF. Eating Corn is divided into 3 types, according to its genetic background:

- SU is normal sugary (standard)
- SE is sugary enhancer
- SH2 is super sweet (Keeps longer)

Field corn is sometimes known as "dent corn," because of the little dent in each kernel. It is generally used for food processing and animal feed.

My favorite corn variety is NK 199 *Elephant Ear* from Northrup King. It's a big, yellow SU variety. *Bodacious*, an SE variety, is another good yellow corn that keeps a little better than NK 199 (Botanical Interests Inc. Seed Company.) For white corn, *Silver Queen* is the standard today, but others are coming on. Personally, I do not care for the white corn. It lasts longer on the shelf, which is probably why super markets stock it. *Jubilee* is a super sweet SH variety that keeps well in the refrigerator.

I try different varieties every year. This year I am planting 2 varieties: *Early Sunglow*, a yellow SU [standard sugar] from Lake Valley Seed Co. and *Country Gentleman*, a white, open pollinated SU. Janet Williams gave me the seeds. I will plant them in different plots to avoid cross pollination. Although some people claim you can put 2 SU together, I am not taking

that gamble. I am in the process of planting *Country Gentleman* now in my upper plot. I will put the *Early Sunglow* in the lower plot.

Here are some simple steps to a successful corn crop:

1. Plant only one variety per field. Do not mix varieties, because they will cross pollinate, resulting in stunted ears with black fungus growth on the end.
2. Use new seeds. Plant in rows on flat ground, spacing as directed on the seed package.
3. Soak seeds for 24 hours or at least overnight before sowing them.
4. Be considerate of your neighbors; leave enough room at your borders to prevent shading their plot. Corn grows to a height of 6 to 12 feet, depending on the variety.
5. Water seeds every other day after they are planted to ensure germination.
6. When stalks reach a height of 10 to 12 inches, dig a furrow between the rows piling the soil up against the stalks on both sides. This will provide a watering ditch and support the stalks when the wind blows.
7. Put manure in the ditch to feed the roots. Water every 3 days by filling the ditch. You will get two ears per stalk and you can harvest them when the silks turn brown and are dusty when you touch them.

Let us know which corn and other vegetable varieties have grown well for you at OVF and why. Submit information to: education-chair@oceanviewfarms.net, or drop a note to Melody Gi-

rard, Education Chair, in the mail slot at the wheel barrel shed. Be sure to include your name, contact information, and the source of the seed. Submission deadline is April 30.



From the Editor

DROUGHT BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

Just as I assume the Education Chairman's responsibilities, gardeners are preparing for summer crops, and crucial water-use issues are heating up. Be sure and read about the new LA County watering restrictions and our new ball valve system designed to help OVF conserve water.

THAT CERTAIN SOMETHING

In California, we talk about "microclimate." In France, the term "terroir," from the word for earth, refers to the multiple environmental factors that influence the output and taste of produce. The influence of microclimate on flavor and quality has long been acknowledged in the wine industry. The concept is now gaining ground among growers of all kinds of produce. It describes factors such as the type of soil, drainage, slope, angle, bearing of the sun, the temperature, altitude, wind and rainfall. Subtle differences in microclimate can make the taste and quality of the same produce differ even from that grown on immediately neighboring land.

An additional element contributes to the produce grown in an area. It's a certain unquantifiable something that could be attributed to know-how, or the culture and character of the people who work the land. My experience at OVF has convinced me that community is the all-important, perhaps indefinable, factor that contributes greatly to the experience and the results of tilling the soil here.

A culture that encourages participation and creates a sense of community distinguishes Ocean View Farms from other community gardens. After a brief membership in another garden, I gained even greater appreciation for the OVF community. It's this involvement that maintains the infrastructure and keeps the place going.

For more than 32 years, conscientious individuals at OVF have given their time and effort — hours that well exceed community credit requirements. These volunteers donate these hours because they enjoy gardening and want to perpetuate OVF. It's the people that make the difference. You can make a difference. If you've never coordinated an OVF event, taught a garden class, or led a work detail, we urge you to try it. You might get hooked!

Melody Girard, editor

Leading Grower to Share Tomato Secrets and Offer Heirlooms for Sale, April 4

Anyone interested in growing tomatoes will appreciate Barbara Spencer's presentation on tomato cultivation at OVF's 5th Annual Tomato-Bration, Saturday, April 4 at 10 a.m. in the general meeting area. Guests are welcome to attend the presentation and tomato sale. Ms. Spencer will share secrets gleaned from her years of successful cultivation of organic tomatoes and other produce for high-end restaurants and organic farmer's markets.

Barbara and her husband Bill own Windrose Farm in Paso Robles, and are a key supplier of gourmet produce to some of Los Angeles' premier chefs. Their farm and its produce have been featured on "Good Food," with Evan Kleiman, broadcast weekly by KCRW radio.

Barbara's lively presentations attract an enthusiastic crowd of both novice and experienced gardeners. Her clear explanations of ways of staking and other tips on growing tomatoes organically demystifies the process. Both Barbara and gardeners in attendance take this opportunity to suggest tomato varieties that grow especially well in OVF's microclimate.

Following the meeting, participants may select from Windrose Farm's array of organic, heirloom tomatoes and herbs for sale. To learn more about Barbara and Bill's Windrose Farm, please visit them online at www.windrosefarm.org.

WORKDAY SCHEDULE

APRIL

4 Sat 10 am
Tomatobration Event

11 Sat
Election day! Time to vote!
9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 Gen. Mtg.

26 Sun 1-4 Work

MAY

9 Sat 9-12 Work
16 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg
31 Sun 1-4 Work

JUNE

13 Sat 9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 Gen. Mtg.
28 Sun 1-4 Work

For the entire year's schedule of workdays and other events, visit our website calendar: www.oceanviewfarms.net/calendar.html

OVF BOOKMARKS: ONLINE GARDENING RESOURCES

Cornell University's Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners

<http://vegvariety.cce.cornell.edu/index.php> can help decide which varieties of each kind of vegetable to grow. Extensive database includes consumer reviews of many different varieties. You can narrow your search to specific attributes, such as type (bush or vine, determinant or indeterminate), earliness, color, growth habit and rating.

Dave's Garden - <http://davesgarden.com>

A vast, multifaceted resource. Read consumer reviews of catalog houses on the Garden Watchdog page, find out who sells that rare plant you've looked all over for, or use any of the several *Tools* and *Guides and Information*. Identify an insect or an unusual variety of a plant species in the photo gallery. Discover growth habits and culture needs of hundreds of plants. Highly recommended.

Contact Melody Girard, editor, to share your favorite garden web-sites with readers. Leave a message in the mailbox of the Education Chair or email education-chair@oceanviewfarms.net. Submission deadline: April 30