

OVF NEWS

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Melody Girard, Editor



SAVE THE DATE
7TH ANNUAL
TOMATO-BRATION
MARCH 27, 2011

Changing of the Guard

OVF BOARD CONFIRMS NEW PRESIDENT

At a special meeting in December, the OVF Board of Directors confirmed Vice President Lisa Carnahan Miller as the new president. Her first task was to prepare an emergency petition requesting that L.A. Department of Recreation and Parks waive its planned imposition of exorbitant fees. Lisa's vision for Ocean View Farms builds on former President Frank Harris' strategy to secure the garden alliances through community service.

Since his 2004 election, Frank opened OVF's education events to the public, spearheaded the Grandview Parkway Neighborhood Beautification Project and developed OVF's Web site. He also computerized financial functions and membership data. Frank will stay on the board as vice president and webmaster. He will continue to automate and streamline OVF's databases and Web site.

Since its inception in 1977, OVF has engaged in a rather unique experiment of self-governance and self-sufficiency. Paying our own bills, enforcing our own bylaws and rules, and maintaining every inch of this six acre parcel of land through work exchange, we have done more than just work the land—along the way we have created a community.

What's in this issue...

- NEW OVF PRESIDENT INSTALLED
- HIGHER GARDEN FEES HOTLY DISPUTED
- ELEPHANTS IN YOUR GARDEN?
- OVF IN THE COMMUNITY



Letter from the President

As we enter this spring, it is an auspicious time for Ocean View Farms and our 35th anniversary as a community garden. With the impending fees we are facing from the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, adjustments are being made to meet this challenge. For those of you who have not heard, we are actively opposing the city's imposition of a \$120 fee for each garden plot.

In exchange for the proposed fee, the city has offered nothing. We would say that it is not fair. The rebuttal to that statement would be that life is not fair and Ocean View Farms exists solely at the discretion of the City of Los Angeles.

The city is looking to make its community garden structure more defined. Fortunately, OVF is a wonderful example of a successful community garden. With that said, we are embarking on making our garden even better by offering more park services to the community. We hope to show the city officials how much OVF contributes to the city and therefore, have the fee waived.

To accomplish our goal of becoming a more visible partner in the community, OVF will endeavor to:

- Open more gardening classes to the community.
- Install signs posted with an email address and a phone number people can call for a tour of the garden.
- Offer docent-led tours of the garden.
- Encourage schools to bring children for tours.
- Show off OVF as a living classroom in biology, botany, entomology, water and soil conservation.

This offers a great opportunity for members to gain their community hours by assisting with classes and tours for the garden and community.

I want to encourage people to keep in mind that it is important to maintain a positive perception in the eyes of visitors to the garden that OVF is a valuable asset to the community. It is very important that we make an extra effort to have beautiful, tidy garden spaces that are attractive to visitors. Membership at OVF is a unique privilege that we can only preserve if we act to demonstrate the importance of all that we do.

— Lisa Carnahan Miller Presi-

Garden Master's Report

SORRY, NONMEMBERS ARE A NO-NO Hire workers from member only. Please do not bring nonmembers to the garden to work on your plots; they are NOT insured on our policy. If you need help, see the Garden Master for information about members who will work for wages.

PLASTIC IN THE GREEN BARRELS IS A NO-NO Use the green barrels by the shredding area for false garlic and nutgrass, but not for plastic bags. LADWP collects the barrel's contents from the curb weekly to use in their compost, and plastic doesn't compost. I repeatedly find plastic bags containing nut grass and false garlic in the green barrels, although the sign states that plastic bags and other trash do not belong in there. Put all plastic material that cannot be composted or recycled in the black barrels.

MULCHING PATHWAYS WITH WEEDS IS A NO-NO Pathways. Mulch them, but never with weeds that you've pulled up. NO EXCEPTIONS. Take weeds to the shredding area. Putting weeds on a path is equivalent to replanting them!

MOSQUITO 911: DUMP ALL STANDING WATER We have had a lot of rain, which is always nice at OVF, but I have noticed a lot of standing water on plots. This creates mosquito breeding sites that will come back to haunt us very soon. Vector control will be out inspecting OVF, probably in February and will cite us for violations. Phase Reps will be checking and they have the authority to take action if you leave water standing your plot. Mosquitos are already out—and biting!

HEED THE "TWO-FOOT RULE" ALONG YOUR BORDERS Maintain at least a two foot border between trellises and plants on your plot and the perimeter of your plot. Be mindful of the "Two-foot rule," so that you don't shade or encroach on others' plots or pathways.



GOPHERS BEGONE If you find them living in your plot and want them trapped, leave me a note with your name, phase number, plot number and phone number. I will ask Fatemi to take care of it.

RETURN OVF TOOLS DAILY Tools must be returned on the same day you borrow them. Please return OVF's tools to the shed before you leave the garden. There are not enough tools to allow you to keep them overnight in your plots.

Hope you all have a wonderful spring and enjoy your gardens.
— Ed Mosman, Garden Master

OVF In The Community

Upcoming Events

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 9:30 - 11:00 AM
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Smart Gardening Composting Workshop.
Learn how to enrich your soil by composting yard waste and raising worms.

SPECIAL EVENT

SUNDAY, MARCH 27
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

OVF's 7th Annual Tomato-bration
Tomato season begins with Windrose Farms' heirloom tomato sale and talk. Pre-sale begins 8:00 a.m. Barbara Spencer will share cultivation tips at 10 a.m., and a seedling sale will follow until 1 p.m. Don't miss one of our most popular annual events!

Recent Events

JANUARY 9

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Rose Care Class Draws Local Aficionados
Keen community interest was reflected in the high percentage of nonmembers who attended Nina Rumley's annual Rose Pruning Workshop. Almost 90 percent of participants were nonmembers. It was a fine way to welcome neighbors and the new year.

OVF Provides Design Inspiration
Kevin Shen, design student at Art Center, visited OVF in September, 2010, in search of inspiration for creating an ergonomic garden collector/hauler and tools. His LEAF prototype is shown here. We're looking forward to experimenting with the production version!



Gather. Transport. Spread.
Leaf is the only family of tools that's designed to maximize the efficiency in the collection, transportation, and distribution of gardening materials.

Challenging Higher Plot Fees

by Robin Berger

Commissioners at the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) suspended higher fees for community gardens that were scheduled to take effect January 1—at least temporarily.

Although RAP staffers noted rate hikes for community gardens and others were considered every year (and generally dismissed), they conceded that this year's severe budget cuts for the department by the city of L.A. prompted a second look this time around.

These higher fees, along with increased payments from several other entities, would generate an estimated \$2 million dollars of increased revenue, according to the July 14 report prepared by Noel Williams, chief management analyst for the budget section of RAP's Finance Division. This added income was slated to help fund the department's staff and maintenance needs.

Simultaneously, the new fee policy would have also forced some community gardeners to pay almost five times what they paid last year for a plot. And it would have added a financial burden to Ocean View Farms' gardeners. Note: OVF has never paid *any* fees to RAP.

This radical change in policy, approved last July (with fees payable by January 31, 2011), was not widely publicized. Ocean View Farm's board first heard of the rate hike four months later, when board member Ron Fine alerted the board to a posted RAP notice of a public hearing in Encino on "New Plot Fees."

RAP held the public hearing on November 23. Gardeners from community gardens all over Los Angeles attended that hearing, and the RAP board's December meeting, when its commissioners requested a special report on the operations of the department's community gardening program.

RAP'S LATEST DECISION: WHAT IT MEANS FOR US

The resulting report (No. 11-012) recommended that RAP's Board suspend the hike in garden fees approved on July 14, 2010, through Board Report 10-180 until it could better evaluate the situation. It specifically recommended that RAP develop a methodology for determining an appropriate fee.

"RAP, moving forward, should aim for full cost recovery for all costs associated with the operation of all community gardens," the report stated on page 4. "The fees per person may need to be increased, or the level of services decreased, or in some cases both."

The report urged RAP to develop a comprehensive policy for community gardening, as the department had "no uniform set of pricing, policies or procedures" and provided "varying levels of service and financial assistance." For example, *while OVF is self-sufficient and runs at zero cost to RAP*, RAP directly operates other community gardens, and has historically charged \$25 per plot.

On January 5, Board members unanimously upheld these recommendations to go back to the drawing board re fee increases, with one modification, according to Darryl Ford, Management Analyst, for RAP's Planning & Construction division.

"They made a clarification to make sure that it was clear that

they were suspending the billing due date versus suspending the increase in the fees," said Ford. "The increase that was approved in July is still in force – the amount of the fees may change."

Ford helped create the January 5 report and will help prepare new recommendations to the board. He said that the deadline for these recommendations was not scheduled at press time. He and his colleagues were shooting for the March board meeting, though he conceded that the report might arrive in April.

Although gardeners at RAP's January 5 meeting recommended having gardeners involved in the development of a new policy, Ford said the actual development was, so far, limited to RAP staffers.

"The Board did not authorize or direct us to create any sort of standing committee [of advisers]," said Ford. He did note that the staff assessment would be based, in part, on interviews with community garden operators.

Three OVF members, Christy Wilhelmi, Ron Fine and Emmanuel Annor attended the January meeting. Though happy about the temporary suspension of added fees, they were concerned about RAP's pursuit of what Fine described as a "cookie cutter approach" to community garden policy.

"Our job is to convince them there really should not be one program," said Fine at OVF's January 6 board meeting.

In response to this concern, Ford noted that the RAP Board directed staffers to come back with a comprehensive policy—but not necessarily a uniform policy.

"We're going to investigate whether or not it actually makes sense to have standardized rules," he said. However, he conceded that, "There will likely be some standardized rules that affect all operators."

Ford encouraged operators to contact his group with their comments.

The OVF board did not discuss plans to further address the policy overhaul at its Jan. 6 meeting.

OVF membership renewal letters were mailed out on January 7. Fees are due by February 2, 2011.

Robin Berger writes about technology and general interest subjects for print and online periodicals.

VOTE AT APRIL 9 GENERAL MEETING

Select OVF Board positions will be on the ballot. Vote, enjoy lunch, and catch up on the latest garden news. How convenient is that? Offices up for election will be posted by gates and listed on the Web site. Now more than ever is the time to participate.

Do You Have Elephants In Your Garden?



Tanya Brokaw

by Dean Cleverdon

An article in the September 2010 issue of *Current Biology* suggests that if you have elephants in your garden, then having an ant colony might drive them off. Elephants do not like ants crawling into their trunks and will avoid the area. However, if you do not have a problem with elephants you might want to get rid of the ants instead.

Ants themselves are not a problem. In fact, they could be beneficial because they aerate the soil when they tunnel through it. They also predate on other insect pests. No, the problem with ants is their ability to 'farm' white flies, keeled treehoppers, aphids and other harmful insects (see October 2010 issue *OVF News*). Ants value the honeydew excrement from these insects as a food source because of its high sugar content. According to a 2007 research study in the United Kingdom, aphid herds are tranquilized by chemicals released from the ants' feet. Also, ants bite the wings off their aphid 'cows' to keep them from escaping. When relocating their colonies, ants will carry the eggs of their insect herds with them.

These herds are the source of all the damage. First there is the honeydew which forms a nutrient rich base for a fungus called sooty mold. While a little bit of mold is no big deal, too much mold blocks sun-

light, causing chlorophyll deficiency. Then there is the physical damage done to plants. Some insect vectors inject a toxin into the cell after they penetrate it to aid in digesting the sap that they are sucking out of the plant; a double whammy of hurt to the plant. Viruses can also be transferred to the plant once it has been compromised.

Hard sprays of water will wash away the herds and sooty mold from your plants but that is only a temporary fix. To get rid of the problem get rid of the ants. There are organic pesticide sprays on the market but these kill all insects including beneficial ones. A better solution would be to find an organic ant bait to kill the ants on the ground. The Organic Materials Review Institute (www.omri.org) is an excellent place to research products which meet National Organic Standards. Create a healthy garden by removing weeds which attract pests. Plant a variety of flowers to attract beneficial insects such as lacewings, ladybugs, praying mantis and mini-wasps which are ant predators. A coordinated ground and air attack will soon drive the ants from your garden.

Unless, of course, you have elephants. Personally, I prefer the elephants; they are easier to see.

But, you *can* succeed in growing spectacular poppies by helping fake winter until they make it. Here's how:

Store seeds in the refrigerator from one to three months in a lightly moistened paper towel sealed in a plastic bag. Then plant them in spring and stand back!



Fake Winter, and Yes, You Can Grow Those "Impossible" Poppies

The most fabulously beautiful poppies are natives grown at high altitudes requiring cold and moisture in order to germinate. In a process known as stratification, a poppy's hard outer seed coat softens when exposed to long periods of below-freezing temperatures. Then, when the weather warms, the seed receives moisture from the melting snow and the germinating plant can penetrate the outer shell.

Well... not in our Zone 10 climate.

WORKDAY SCHEDULE

First quarter - 2011

JANUARY

- 6 Th 6:30 pm Board Mtg
- 8 Sat 9-12 Work
- 30 Sun 1-4 Work

FEBRUARY

- 12 Sat 9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 General Mtg
- 27 Sun 1-4 Work

MARCH

- 12 Sat 9-12 Work
- 19 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg
- 27 Sun 8:00 - 12:00 **Tomato-bration**
1-4 Work

Visit our Web site for the complete calendar

WANTED

ARBITRATION COMMITTEE

Seeking arbitration facilitator and volunteers to serve on the committee for community hours. Leave a note in the president's mailbox in the wheelbarrow shed, or lisa@oceanviewfarms.net.

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Contact educationchair@oceanviewfarms.net or leave a note in the education chair's mailbox in the wheelbarrow shed. Contact in advance to reserve your place.

TOMATO-BRATION VOLUNTEERS

Sunday, March 27

Help unload the tomato truck at 6:30 a.m., set up chairs, greet and sign up attendees, and clean up afterwards.

MAR VISTA COMMUNITY TOUR

Saturday, April 30th, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Assist with Mar Vista Green Garden Showcase.