

OVF NEWS



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Melody Girard, Editor

Letter from the Editor

THE WORST DROUGHT SINCE 1580 FORCES US TO EXAMINE HOW WE USE WATER

It's hard to write about California's water situation without sounding like an alarmist. The truth is alarming. The state is now in Stage 4 Extreme Drought, the most severe status possible. It is the worst drought in 434 years, according to tree ring evidence. The local impact of global climate change is not yet fully understood, but it's likely to affect the water supply. Thrust into this new reality, OVF members can meet the challenge of water scarcity by revising the way we use what we have.

OVF is a highly visible little island of collective water consumers sitting in the midst of residential users who are subject to mandatory water-use restrictions. In this context, we have no choice but to serve as an example of good water stewardship.

"Conservation" doesn't mean parched plants, a common fear that surfaces when the word comes up. It's about using water efficiently while still having thriving gardens.

The challenge for many members may lie in addressing problems inherent in our hillside location and sandy soil, which causes runoff after barely moistening the soil surface. For others, it may simply mean applying water at ground level, directly to the plants' root zones, rather than losing up to 31 percent of the water through evaporation and drift as a result of overhead and sprinkler irrigation.

OVF has thus far been exempt from mandatory watering restrictions. Some emergency water-use limitations may yet be in our future. Before that happens, why not examine our irrigation methods and gardening practices now to see if we are being the most efficient possible within the limits of OVF's rules and shared water outlets?

Efficient watering methods can conserve approximately 500 gallons a month per person in the average L.A. home garden. Think of how much water we could save collectively at OVF! Sometimes we may feel inconvenienced by having to learn new habits or initially invest more time in plot improvements. As a community, however, we can feel proud that we are contributing to water conservation and setting examples of wise, efficient water use.

— Melody Girard, editor

Ongoing Sunday Program



OVF DONATES

Every Sunday, 3-5 p.m.
Gate 4 - parking area



Help fill bags like this with
vegetables from your garden
for those in need.

Can't be here? We'll pick for you!

contact: ovfdonates@oceanviewfarms.net

Volunteers needed • Earn hours for helping

OVF is a private, nonprofit organization that is entirely member supported and maintained, operating through a collaborative agreement with the L.A. Department of Recreation and Parks.

Don't forget to donate!

WHAT'S INSIDE...

- DROUGHT ALERT: USING WATER WISELY
- FRANK HARRIS: PHASE IV GETS ITS FENCE
- GARDEN MASTER: ALERTS & REMINDERS
- ORCHARD CREW WORKS TO SAVE OVF TREES
- FALL/WINTER CALENDAR .
- OVF DONATES: EVERY SUNDAY!

Garden Master's Report

We are getting many new members at OVF and we welcome you. You all have waited a long time for a chance to garden at Ocean View Farms, but when you start gardening and taking part in the activities that OVF presents every year you'll find that the wait was worth it. May you all enjoy being a member of our community garden.

OBSERVE NEW DISEASE PREVENTION MEASURES FOR TOMATO WASTE. To help put an end to Late Blight at OVF, you need to bag and dispose of all tomato and other nightshade debris in the dumpster, not the compost pile. Even apparently healthy plants may have spores that you cannot see.

KEEP THE NOTORIOUS AND NOXIOUS THREE WEEDS OUT OF THE COMPOST AREA!

NEVER bring nutgrass, false garlic or bindweed into the composting area. Large amounts of nutgrass and false garlic have been showing up in the green materials pile intended for compost, so apparently some people are not aware of the damage it causes. Small fragments of any of these three weeds easily escape detection during shredding, survive in the high temperatures of the compost pile and spread to members' plots. Bag and dispose of small amounts of these bad weeds, without dirt, in the trash. Larger amounts must go to the dumpster.

TREES NOT ALLOWED ON PLOTS

Trees of any type—even dwarf varieties and potted trees—are not permitted in members' plots.

RULES ABOUT PLANT SPACING

The Ocean View Farms, Inc. Rules and Regulations (http://oceanviewfarms.net/docs/rules_and_regulations.pdf) are an easy 8-page read, and Section III of this document will tell you what you need to know before putting in plants or supporting structures, such as trellises.

REMEMBER THE TWO FEET, FIVE FEET AND SIX FEET RULES

Two feet is the minimum space that plants and trellises, or any structure that casts shadows, may be from your plot's borders. Five feet in maximum allowable height perennial plants may reach. Six feet is the tallest "permanent" trellis. Trellises for annual plants have no height limit, but must be removed at the end of the season

TALKING TRASH

OVF has very specific requirements concerning disposal of trash, green waste, woody materials, pernicious weeds and diseased nightshade plants. Separate woody branches—including those from rose bushes—from green material before dumping material in the shredding area. Woody and green materials must be processed separately. When they're tossed together, it is very difficult to sort them out. Just take an extra few minutes and separate them ahead of time.



photos Paul Zelman



Ray Vaczek, Phase U-IV, won first place for his Cherokee Purple, and Dean Cleverdon and Nancy Nyberg won second for Sun Gold in OVF's 7th Annual Tomato Tasting.

57 VARIETIES AT OVF'S 2014 TOMATO TASTING

OVF's 7th Annual Tomato Tasting on Saturday, July 26, 2014 was an indisputable success, with 66 tomatoes entered for the tasting table and 57 tomato varieties (nine entries repeated other varieties). We were glad to see so many new faces at the entry table in 2014. Fifty-eight people tasted and voted on their favorite tomato variety.

The winners of the taste test were: Ray Vaczek, first place for Cherokee Purple, Dean Cleverdon and Nancy Nyberg, Second Place for Sun Gold Cherry, Anna Dekker and Mark Emerson tied for third place with Cherokee Black and Costoluto Genevese, respectively.

This event has grown from the contributions of a few generous people who donated most of the tomatoes in the first years to become one of the largest and most popular events at OVF.

In 2014, about \$400 worth of gifts were donated by businesses and members for prizes in the tasting and the raffle for members who entered tomatoes.

This year, about 18 volunteers contributed their time between 8:30 am and approximately 3:00 pm. The Education group extends its genuine thanks to all the members who chopped, plated and helped to keep track of the many entries while maintaining the objectivity of the blind tasting. Without these people, we would not have been able to present this event. Special thanks go to Amanda Goodpaster and Galen Goodpaster for coordinating the activities of the day.

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Put all trash items in the black barrels. Kitchen scraps should be bagged and put below the deck in the lower part of the shredding area; they should not go into the shredder with dry materials.

BEWARE OF BACKFIRING HOSES

Some handheld hose attachments can backfire. Be cautious if you're using a handheld hose attachment with a shutoff valve. There is a chance of "sudden showers," if you use the shutoff to interrupt water flowing from the main OVF faucet for more than a few seconds. The ninety pounds of pressure in our water lines rapidly backs up in and has been known to rupture the hose, and you and your neighbors will be without a hose for a while.

— Ed Mosman, Garden Master



PHASE IV GETS FENCED IN... AT LAST An Interview with Frank Harris

There is a shiny, new, chain-link fence now enclosing Phase IV, a section of the garden that has long been vulnerable to theft, vandalism and the odd (in more ways than one) intrusions from strangers who insisted on working on plots, in spite of the members' protestations. Phase IV members have been asking for a fence for many years. It has taken a little over four years from proposal to the City of L.A. to completion. The Board of Directors and the members in Phase IV wish to extend their thanks to the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) and to the many OVF members who have contributed their time to this project.

OVF first presented a request for the fence to the City of Los Angeles DRP in the spring of 2010. On May 8, the DRP issued the "Right of Entry" permit, then construction proceeded rapidly.

On Tuesday, May 13, the fence posts were installed at the top of Phase IV and continued west to about the palm tree near the top of phase IV. On Wednesday, the remaining posts were installed and on Thursday, most of the actual fencing was installed. The installation was completed and the four gates installed.

In an interview with the OVF News, Frank Harris, OVF President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, reviewed the events and activities that led to the completion of this long-needed security structure.

News: What were the barriers to approval? Why was it delayed for so long?

FH: One of the biggest barriers [to getting the fence] was making sure that we had the correct people at the table. This was complicated by some turnover and restructuring within the Department of Recreation and Parks, in conjunction with the new Partnerships Division and our Partnership Agreement, which took nearly 24 months to finalize. In addition, the city wanted to do their due diligence and make sure that the Hilltop Neighborhood Association was properly informed and all concerns they had were addressed.

News: Who among the members was particularly helpful in getting the fence project completed?

FH: From within the garden, Judith Morris (Phase III) and Juan Beccera (Phase III) were extremely helpful in preparing and clearing the border of the Native Garden to allow for the installation of the posts and Bob Gallion (Phase I) and Jay Felker (Phase I) helped immensely in

removing the old telephone poles that were installed at the top of phase four. Jay also installed all the locks, which are keyed to open with the same key that opens all the gate locks.

News: How much did the fence cost?

FH: The final cost of the fence was just under \$6,000 (\$5,988.24)

News: To what part of the budget will the cost of the fence be charged?

FH: The cost of the fence will be absorbed by donations to OVF. One-half of the cost comes from a donation from the Lee Iaccoca Foundation received in 2013 and the other half from a donation received from Whole Foods Market in 2012.

News: How many gates and what will the gate numbers be?

FH: There are two primary person gates, one at the bottom of phase IV and one at the top. There is also a gate in the middle of phase IV to allow access to the native garden and finally a set of double gates at the top to allow vehicle access to the overflow parking area when needed. Gate numbers, if any, are still to be determined.

News: Are there any lessons to be gained from this experience interacting and negotiating with the City?

FH: Patience, grasshopper.



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PRIZE DONATIONS FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL TOMATO TASTING

Ocean View Farms extends its thanks to the following members and local businesses who donated prizes for this event:

Businesses

The Marina Garden Center donated three gift cards valued at \$20, \$30 and \$50 for the top three tasting tomatoes, and five bags of Bumper Crop soil amendment for raffle prizes. Merrihews Sunset Garden donated two \$25 gift certificates.

Gifts Donated by Members:

Tanya Brokaw donated one box of Dr. Earth Tomato/Vegetable Fertilizer and two \$20 gift certificates for Merrihews. Luna Gooding, owner of Relax, donated one hour of massage therapy. Amanda Goodpaster donated one Topsy Turvy Tomato Planter.



Saving OVF's Orchard Trees

by Joan Silver

OVF has reached a critical point in maintaining both landscape and fruit-bearing trees. We must use different gardening procedures to adapt to drought and climate change.

By the end of last summer, we had lost five seemingly healthy plum and peach trees. In March, when the annual pruning was completed, all the trees were healthy. By June, four were dead, although there were no outward signs of disease.

Following a September walkthrough with Steve Hofvenstahl, an arboriculturist from Tree People, we began to implement suggested changes in the main orchard.

The easiest change was to start using moisture meters to determine watering schedules. Unexpectedly, we immediately found our basic problem. *Within 24 hours of watering the trees, water had disappeared.* The soil has become so sandy that no matter how often or how much we water, the trees are dying of thirst.

We must also tackle how we water and how much we use. Currently, we use soaker hoses or hand water and have started to water only when moisture gauges show that it's necessary.

One of our members suggested that the heavy use of mulch was helping in another community garden. How right he was. Weeds and plants that compete with the trees have been removed from the crucial areas from the tree trunk to the drip line.

From the trunks to the drip line, we amended the soil with compost. Between the trees we've spread OVF's manure, and covered the area with four to six inches of mulch, a crucial measure. At intervals, we will continue to add layers of compost, topped by mulch. As the layers of manure and mulch settle and decompose, the soil should begin to hold more moisture. We're leaving six or eight inches around the trunk free of mulch to prevent disease, sometimes present in mulch.

The sun's rays are now so strong and the moisture so low that trees bake and their barks split open. To reflect the sun, we are whitewashing all trees from two inches under the soil line to as far up the trunks as reachable, and on the south and west sides of limbs and branches. Going below the soil line helps prevent a type of borer insect which enters the tree through the roots.

The news media has covered in depth California's drought and water shortages. Two images stick in my mind. One was of a Central Valley almond grower ripping up and destroying all of his trees; the other, the huge, beautiful, overhead watering systems of the Central Valley growers which lose 70 percent of the water to evaporation before hitting the plants. *We can do better.*

What I have outlined will not save every tree in the garden, but it is a start. We will experiment and make adjustments as we go.

I welcome your comments, suggestions, questions. I would also like to consult

Calendar

August

31 Sun 1-4 Workday

September

13 Sat 9-12 Workday

20 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.

28 Sun 1-4 Workday

October

11 Sat 9-12 Workday

12 Potluck

1 General Mtg.

1:30 GREENHOUSE SALE

26 Sun 1-4 Workday

November

8 Sat 9-12 Workday

15 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.

30 Sun 1-4 Workday

COMPLETE 2014 CALENDAR

www.oceanviewfarms.net

with any members who are experts in this field as we strive to understand irrigation practices that will be the most successful. You can reach me by dropping a note in the Garden Master's mail slot. If you wish to help, join the workday orchard crews, or better yet, if you can supervise work crews, let me know by emailing me: joansilver1@me.com.

A Word For Summer

We are back again in autumn.

Summer,

Like a copybook which has
wearied us, remains

Full of words crossed out, pen
strokes scribbled in the margin

And question marks.

--George Seferis