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OVF NEWS

February 2025



President's Message

Rain finally came! As you know, it is such a joy to work in a garden after the rain. The color of the soil, shining leaves everywhere, and the laying down of seeds in fresh beds. There is nothing like it. Let's hope for a few more rainy days this year before our "winter" has passed.

The photos, videos, and reports of the devastating fire right up the road from us remain unbelievable and sad. So many homes, structures, schools, theaters, churches, and gardens are gone. So many people have had to adjust to their losses and set up homes elsewhere. The fires have directly affected the OVF community as some members have lost homes and been forced to relocate. OVF is an oasis for its members and should have a role to play in the larger community. I welcome your ideas for how OVF can play a part in the restoration of our environment and community after this tragedy.

If your OVF garden is your happy place, please take a moment to appreciate the enormous amount of time and effort the elected volunteers contribute to keeping OVF a viable and healthy organization. OVF is administered by a Board of seventeen elected volunteers. Every year, half of the Board members are up for election. This April, members will vote for the following positions: Garden Master, Vice President, Membership Secretary, IP Monitor and the Phase Representatives for Phases 1U, 2U, 3U and 4U.

Again, I'm reminding everyone of the gift we have that is OVF. In gratitude for this gift, I hope this inspires the desire to give in return. Please share your skills, time, and friendship with OVF, and fellow members as community service. Contact me, the garden master, the education chair, or your phase rep with your interests and availability. Thank you!

I look forward to new projects this year, meeting everyone, and inviting new members to our community. As of right now we have 30 plots open for new gardeners! Hope to see you soon enjoying the work that grows and gives – Gardening!

Sincerely,
Shirley Vernale
OVF President



OVF Calendar

Next Board Meeting

March 15
9:30 am

Next General Meeting

April 12
1:00 pm
In person voting!
(Pot Luck at 12:00)

Upcoming Work Days

Saturdays, 9am-12pm:
March 8; April 12
Sundays, 1-4pm:
March 30, April 27



Full Calendar



Upcoming Events

(All events are held at the main OVF meeting area unless otherwise stated.)

Community Events:

March 9 - OVF Native Plant Club Get-Together

March 22 - OVF New Member Meet-Up

Classes:

March 29 - OVF Tomato Growing Class

April 19, 26, May 3, 10 - Master Gardener Grow LA Class

OVF Member Business:

April 5 - OVF Greenhouse Seedling Sale

April 1 - OVF Election, Online voting start

April 12 - OVF Election, In-Person Voting



Greenhouse Seedling Sale

April 5, 10:00-11:30 am

The OVF Greenhouse crew is growing a new crop of seedlings!

OVF Election Calendar

April 1 - Online voting begins

April 11 - In-person

Hundreds of seedlings will be on sale, in 4" pots and six-packs, including twelve varieties of tomatoes, six varieties of peppers, five kinds of basil, and multiple varieties of melons, cucumbers, eggplant, squash, lettuce, and flowers. With years of experience growing at OVF, the Greenhouse crew specially selects plant varieties that do well here.

voting

Every April, the OVF membership elects half of the volunteer Board's seventeen positions. This year, the following positions are up for election: Garden Master, Vice President, Membership Coordinator, IP monitor, and Phase Representatives for Phases 1U, 2U, 3U and 4U.

If you wish to be a candidate for any of these positions or if you have any questions about the election process, please email OVF President Shirley Vernale at svovf47@gmail.com.

March 27 is the deadline for submission of nominations to be included on the online ballot. Any candidate statements should also be submitted by March 27 for inclusion on the website.

OVF members have several ways to vote: on the OVF website, by email, and in person at the April 12 meeting. Online voting will start on April 1. Only one vote per member household.





Master Gardener Grow LA Gardens Class

**April 19, 26, May 3, 10
9:30am - 12:30pm**

The University of California's Master Gardener Program's Grow LA Gardens Class Returns to OVF in April, with classes on four consecutive Saturdays. Class size is limited so act fast if interested. To register, click [here](#).

Led by UC Master Gardeners, the class will teach you the basics of creating and maintaining a healthy vegetable garden, including how to:

- Plan your garden and

OVF Tomato Growing Class March 29, 10:00am

What do you think is the most popular plant grown at OVF? The tomato of course! On March 29, a group of experienced OVF tomato growers will teach a class on the ins and outs of growing tomatoes at OVF.

The class will cover the basics of planting, growing, and harvesting, as well as related issues like pests and diseases. The expert instructors have been growing tomatoes at OVF for decades and with their help you will turbocharge your tomato crop this season.

improve your soil

- What, how, and when to plant
- Manage insects and pests, and encourage “good bugs”
- Harvest your crop and save seeds

The 2024 Grow LA class was very popular with OVF members and filled up fast. Register now to ensure your spot.



OVF Native Plant Club Get-Together

**Sunday,
March 9, 1:00pm**

OVF New Member Meet-Up

**Saturday,
March 22, 11:00am**

OVF has a newly formed Native Plant Club, to celebrate members' interest in California native plants and pollinators. The Club invites everyone to their first get together on March 9th. There will be a presentation on the project to develop a native habitat on the driveway garden. If you share an interest in promoting, growing, and learning about California natives, and would like to meet like-minded OVF gardeners, please join us on March 9. Everyone is welcome!

OVF is in a constant state of renewal, with old members leaving and new members joining the garden. Over 40% of the membership joined OVF during or after the 2020 pandemic. These members never experienced a pre-Covid OVF. But it's never too late to build community.

Over thirty new members will be join OVF in 2025, and forty members joined in 2024. To foster a welcoming community for new members, OVF will hold a New Member Meet Up on March 22. If you are new to OVF, we invite you to come meet other new members, and share your garden hopes and experiences. And if you are not so new to OVF, you're welcome too to come greet our newest members.

This is a purely fun and social event (no hours for attending) - the meet up is intended to support those new to the garden and build the community that will help new members succeed on their gardening journey. Come to the event on March 22 and help us put the "community" in Community Garden.





OVF DONATES

When OVF Donates was founded in 2011, it quickly found takers. The idea behind OVF Donates is that many gardeners can't eat or give away all of their produce and would be happy to donate some of their harvest to feed the hungry. The first taker was Meals on Wheels, which particularly liked tomatoes and lettuce for their sandwiches and flowers to brighten up the days of shut-ins. But since that organization was focused on ready-to-eat food, they left. Since then, the Westside Food Bank is the sole recipient of OVF's donated produce, receiving weekly donations of fresh vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers.

Find out how to get involved at the end of this article!

According to its website, the Westside Food Bank "provides nutritious food for 72,000 households, which equates to 153,000 people in need, with the help of 60+ member agencies throughout our service area." Among its clientele are places of worship, homeless facilities, military veterans and school and college student food pantries. Since government surplus (think cheese) forms a portion of the food, the most requested items are fresh

vegetables and fruit, some of which is supplied by OVF Donates. Herbs are also very popular. Alicia Bacon, an OVF farmer since 2001, who started OVF Donates recalls that a batch of fresh basil was “a huge hit.” Whatever OVF Donates provides is gratefully accepted and used.

The need for fresh produce has grown even more urgent since the recent Palisades and Altadena fires created an emergency to feed, house and clothe more than 100,000 newly homeless people as well as the firefighters and emergency personnel who flooded into Los Angeles during that time. Although the number of gardeners active in OVF (and therefore offering produce to OVF Donates) slumped during COVID, the program has grown since then, with the addition of two small plots dedicated to produce for donation. Two OVF gardeners and regular OVF Donates volunteers – Tatiana Gray and Lynn Signman – took over care of these new plots.

How to get involved

If you'd like to join the hardy band of volunteers that harvests, sorts and prepares donated produce – and earn some community work hours at the same time – you can sign up in advance at Gate 4, where volunteers meet every Sunday between 3 pm and 5 pm. Or, you can call or sign up in advance by phoning, texting or emailing Alicia Bacon at 310-717-9070 or gardengofer@aol.com.

Or if you just want to see more about how OVF Donates work, Alicia invites those interested to stop by and take a look.

If you want to donate produce

OVF Donates is happy to accept all donations (except nettles) every Sunday between 3 pm and 5 pm. If that isn't convenient and you'd like to donate produce at another time, again, contact Alicia via phone, text or email (see above). “We'll even take one radish,” she says. “You'd be surprised how fast it adds up.”



OVF By the Numbers

OVF is a large and thriving community garden: It contains over 500 garden plots and has more than 440 members and 90 associates.

In the last five years, the total number of members has increased by more than thirty new members. If the number of plots has stayed the same, how did the number of members increase? Because some of the members who had multiple plots either voluntarily gave up their second, third, or fourth plots, while remaining at the garden, or left the garden altogether.

For the foreseeable future, no member will be allowed to get a second plot: OVF Rule IX(2) states “No existing member will receive an additional plot if there are any applicants on the waiting list.” There are currently hundreds of people on the waiting list.

So why does anyone have more than one plot? In earlier days, it was difficult to find enough people to garden all the plots. Thus, members were allowed more than one plot and some members still hold on to these extra plots.

With the growing popularity of community gardening, OVF’s waitlist grew and the garden stopped allowing members to obtain additional plots. OVF records show that no one has received a second plot for over fifteen years.

As members leave or give up their extra plots, there will be more plots for new members and OVF membership will continue to grow.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Play Ball!

North Venice Little League’s 2025 Opening Day is this Saturday, March 1. With the start of the season, you may find the main parking lot full on the weekends. The Phase 4 overflow parking lot will be opened on game days, but it can also fill up. Please keep in mind that pop fly balls can hit cars parked in the main lot, and as the posted signs point out, NVLL will not cover any damage. On the upside, the NVLL snack bar is usually open during games and their breakfast burrito has received rave reviews from OVF members.



Help Wanted

We are in the process of revamping OVF's social media outreach. If you have social media experience and want to improve communication at OVF, please contact the Education Chair at ovfles@gmail.com.

Member Feedback

If you have any suggestions, ideas, feedback, or any other comments regarding the newsletter, please send them to the Education Chair at ovfles@gmail.com

Land Acknowledgement

Ocean View Farms recognizes that we garden on land originally and currently inhabited by the Chumash, Kizh, Tongva, and Serrano peoples. We respect them as the first caretakers of this land, with gratitude for their wisdom and skills.



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