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OVF NEWS



April 2025



President's Message

Happy Spring Everyone!

We are in full spring mode at OVF, clearing weeds, planting and digging. I am so grateful to welcome our newly elected Vice President Judith Morris, and our new Garden Master Les Hairrell. They will both serve on the Board of Directors as well as working around the garden. Les has moved on from the position of Education Chair and I will be appointing someone new to that position very shortly. Please make an effort to meet them, say hello, and thank them for their service to OVF.

I also want to thank all the existing phase representatives reelected: Steve R., Dean, Marie and Ron, our IP monitor, Tanya and our membership secretary Lisa for stepping up to serve another term.

It is so satisfying to work together on a big project like OVF. Sunday was a fun and busy workday which created a lot of progress towards restoring our native garden in the driveway as well as getting a lot of weeding done around the garden. The compost team was in full swing, chipping wood and flipping piles. Members actually physically working together builds community like nothing else. New friends and beautiful spaces.

What does it mean to be a member of Ocean View Farms, Inc.? Stay informed. Pay your dues in January. Vote in April. Read the minutes from our meetings and plan to help us review the budget in November. Know the Rules and Regulations. Log into your account and confirm your community hours have been entered and your contact information is correct. Actively garden and grow organic food and flowers on the little piece of land granted to you. Keep unnecessary items out of your garden, and your path weed free. Be grateful for the privilege and remember you are part of a whole community! Happy gardening, hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,
Shirley Vernale
OVF President



OVF Calendar

Work Days

Saturdays, 9am-12pm:

May 10, June 14

Sundays, 1-4pm:

May 25

General Meeting

June 14

1:00 pm

(Pot Luck at 12:00)

Board Meeting

May 17

9:30 am



Full Calendar



Upcoming Events at OVF

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

Classes:

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

OVF Member Business:

May 1, 9am - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 2, 6pm - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 3, 1pm - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 4, 12pm - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 4, 1pm - OVF Native Plant Club Get Together

May 6, 9:30am - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 7, 6:30pm - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 8, 8am - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

May 10, 1pm - Garden Master available to chat at pine tree

June 7 - OVF Greenhouse Seedling Sale



OVF Election Results

At the April 12 general meeting, 70 OVF members voted in the elections; 91 votes were cast online and 1 was emailed, for a total of 162 votes. Here are the results:

Vice President: Judith Morris

Garden Master: Les Hairrell

Membership Secretary: Lisa Broderick

IP Monitor: Tanya Brokaw

Phase 1 Upper Rep: Dean Cleverdon

Phase 2 Upper Rep: Marie Green

Phase 3 Upper Rep: Ron Fine

Phase 4 Upper Rep: Steven Reich



Message from the New Garden Master

"I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you about some of the plans and activities going on in the garden." This was the first line of the newly elected Garden Master's message in the June 1995 OVF Newsletter. Thirty years ago, Ed Mosman was elected Garden Master and served for twenty-nine years, until his passing in 2024. There will never be another Ed Mosman. You can see his legacy everywhere you look at OVF.

For example, in his June 1995 message, he talks about the installation at OVF of the forty-foot cargo container which we still use as an office and tool shed.

OVF has survived and prospered for almost fifty years because of the significant contributions of the member volunteers who have stepped up to serve in Board positions, as work group leads, and on special projects. There have always been great people in this garden, people who have given so much of their time and energy to keep OVF growing. For example, when Ed passed away, Steve Ballantine, the Assistant Garden Master, volunteered to step in as Garden Master until the next election. Steve selflessly contributed so much to keeping OVF running after Ed's passing. He continues his vital work at OVF and has been crucial in the current transition. I want to thank Steve for his generosity and support.

All members of the OVF community contribute to the betterment of the garden. On the last workday, over fifty members worked on projects all over the garden. Lumber was chipped, compost piles were turned, paths and empty plots were cleared and a myriad of other tasks were accomplished which you may or may not notice as you walk around, but which are improving OVF hour by hour, workday by workday.

In my first few weeks as Garden Master, I have started a process of outreach to the membership. I believe OVF is at a transition point, and that everyone should be involved in this transition. I will be available under the pine tree for a chat at the times set forth above in the Upcoming Events, and will schedule more times in the future. I can also be reached through the 'contact us' on the OVF website. We're going to start a dialog on the future of the garden. I urge you to be a part of it.

For now, we can take inspiration from another prior OVF Garden Master; Warren Miyashiro was Garden Master before Ed Mosman, and he continued to run the gourmet composting with creativity and energy for decades until his passing in 2023. In the Fall 1993 OVF Newsletter, Warren's message to the members was this:

"I have learned so much from the people whom I have worked with. The rewards have been great by giving of myself, being unselfish and listening and caring for the needs of the gardeners. The love and kindness I have received from each and everyone I have come in contact with has made me a happier gardener. It is a lot more than anything I can give back to the garden."

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as OVF Garden Master. I will try my best to live up to the standards set by Ed, Warren, and everyone who has in the past fifty years contributed to make OVF such a wonderful place.

See you in the garden,

Les Hairrell
OVF Garden Master



Free Soil Testing

Soil testing (for lead only) is available and free thanks to a collaboration between USC Department of Earth Sciences and Public Exchange. They just launched CLEAN, the Contaminant Level Evaluation for Neighborhoods.

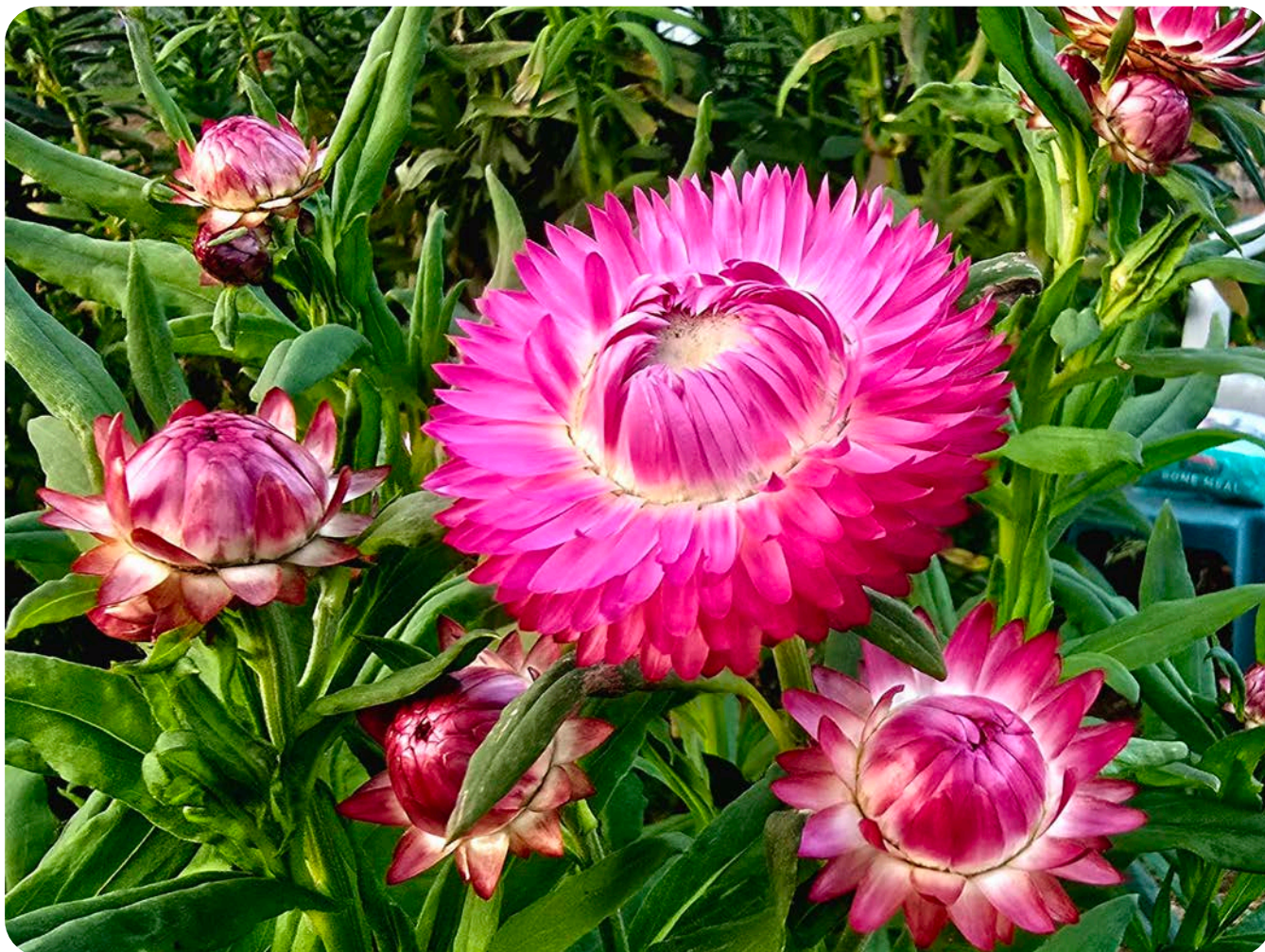
Their [website](#) states that, “this is a developing initiative that aims to quickly evaluate and communicate the levels of lead contamination in soils and playgrounds.” FAQs and mailing instructions can also be found on the site.

Although CLEAN currently only tests for lead, a spokesperson stated it plans to keep the samples and test them for other contaminants down the road.

Here are the steps to getting your soil tested:

1. Review the sampling guide available [here](#). Don't collect more than ¼-cup of soil.
2. Complete the intake survey and receive a Unique Sample ID number.
3. Bring your sample to a drop-off center; the closest one is the Santa Monica YMCA on 1332-6th Street, or mail it to:

CLEAN c/o Professor Seth John
3651 Trousdale Parkway
USC ZHS 117B
Los Angeles, CA 90089



Meet Vice President Judith Morris

OVF's new Vice President, Judith Morris, a garden member since 1995, has contributed to many projects over those years. This year, she felt compelled to contribute in a more formal way. "Part of it was how inspired I was by Shirley [Vernale, OVFpresident]," she says. "She's done an amazing job so far in tackling issues that have never been addressed." Judith also brings with her a 30-year background in community mental health nonprofits. In that role, she learned a lot from observing a group director who, "knew how to govern rather than rule." "I learned how to be part of a group and how a good group functions," she says.

Judith also brings a lived experience of the garden's earlier decades. "I appreciate the OVF founders who planted all those trees at the boundary of the garden," she says, noting that a team of early members — including 40-year Garden Master Ed Mosman and Carl Bierle — brought electricity to OVF. "These founders put in hundreds and hundreds of hours of heavy labor,

organizational thinking and infrastructure. They built the groundwork for what we have.”

She participated in some of this early work, asking then-president Frank Harris if she could take care of the garden alongside the driveway. A team of volunteers terraced, weeded, amended the soil and maintained some of original plants, adding natives and other drought-tolerant plants. She and her associate Juan Becerra tended it for 15 years, before turning over that job to the newly formed Native Plants Club. Judith is also proud of her meticulously weeded garden in Phase 3, where she is currently growing a cornucopia of vegetables and flowers, including asparagus, fennel, ginger, turmeric, tomatoes, garlic, potatoes, chard, and more, with a flagstone path winding its way through her three contiguous plots.



Recent Events at OVF.



OVF Experts Shine a Light on Tomatoes

On March 29, three OVF gardeners – Dean Cleverdon, Nancy Nyberg, and Christy Wilhelmi – shared their combined decades of experience in growing tomatoes in an organic garden, focusing on planting and pests. They also gifted attendees a 75-page booklet on “beneficial insects” published by NaturesGoodGuys, a provider of such bugs.

With approximately 30 OVF members in attendance, Christy opened the presentation by describing the difference between determinate and indeterminate tomato varieties (hint: the majority are indeterminate, which produce staggered harvesting), and revealed the recent trend of dwarf tomatoes. She also noted that there is “a whole line of tomatoes that grow better in a cooler climate” such as OVF. Dean pointed out that, “the bigger the tomato, the more hours of direct sunlight it needs to ripen” – something in short supply in May and June in particular.

Christy encouraged attendees to start from seed or a seedling that is “no bigger than the pot it’s in.” “The smaller the better, so they put roots in the ground,” she says. Here’s a [link](#) to that list.

Dean and Nancy focused on pests and blight, emphasizing that only pesticides approved by the [Organic Materials Review Institute](#) should be used. For ants, he recommended [Sunday’s Ant Adios](#), which “kills ants, earwigs, cutworms, sowbugs, pillbugs, and crickets,” and is based on Spinosad, derived from a soil bacterium. Other helpful organic pesticides include neem oil, diatomaceous earth, or a mix of baking soda and borax. Dean mentioned that reflective mulch can deter pests but is both expensive and needs to be removed at the end of the season.

For rats, Christy recommended net bags, which she folds over because rodents do not like climbing on loose netting. Dean and Nancy noted that popular solutions such as Irish Spring soap or pepper spray are not typically successful. But keeping a well weeded garden can help. “If you can’t see between your plants, they breed there,” says Dean.

Blight — which created the Great Hunger in mid-1800s Ireland — is particularly difficult to deal with. Caused by the fungus *phytophthora infestans*, blight can attack any vegetable in the nightshade family. Dean and Nancy

described their struggles to get rid of blight. “Root rot nematodes are terrible,” they said. “You have to fight them with beneficial nematodes.” Beneficial nematodes can be purchased at [NaturesGoodGuys](#) and other sources found on Amazon. Dean added that L.A. city water “kills the beneficial nematodes, which requires a bit of humic acid to allow the good nematodes to do their job.” He suggests FUL-POWER as a solution to this problem, and added that Serenade Garden is a fungicide that acts as a prophylactic for the soil.

The class was a successful example of how powerful it can be to share information among OVF gardeners. Please contact the OVF Education Chair if you have ideas for other classes. And here’s hoping for a happy tomato season this year!



Another Successful OVF Greenhouse Seedling Sale

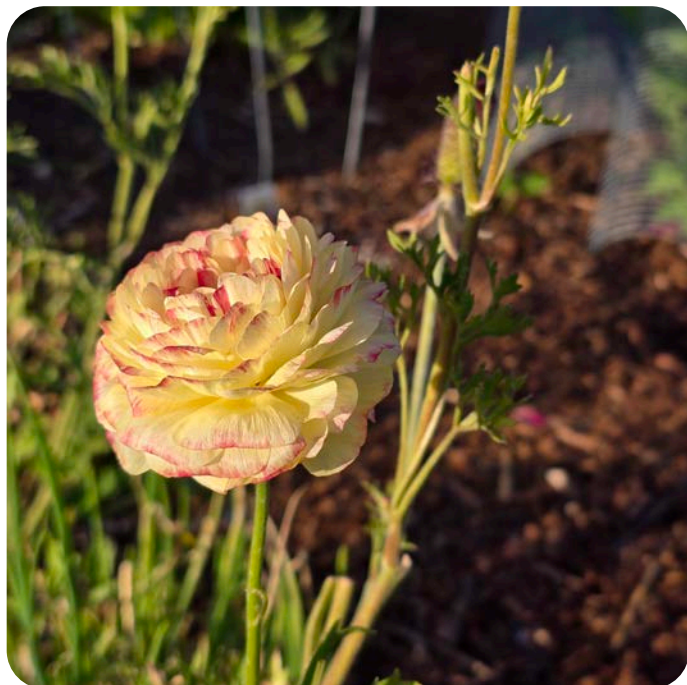
The OVF Greenhouse seedling sale on April 5, bolstered by two successive mini-sales, was a big success, grossing \$921. The next seedling sale will be June 7, says Greenhouse Keeper Nina Rumely. She notes that the seedlings, which are nurtured from seed by the 17 greenhouse volunteers, are chosen for applicability to the season and OVF's location and soil. "You can't just throw a seed in a pot and call it a day," says Nina, who spent 32 years as a garden designer and has been at OVF since 1992. From years of watching the operations of wholesale nurseries, she says she's put a system in place for the best results for creating healthy seedlings.

Do you have any 4-inch square pots available? The greenhouse is in dire need for them! Seeds are started in four-cell containers and moved to 4-inch square pots two weeks prior to the sale (except for melons and cucumbers which start directly in 4-inch pots, and beans and lettuce which are sold in 6-packs). "We recycle as many 4-inch square pots as possible, but that depends on members returning pots or giving me pots from other sources," Nina says. "Please don't throw them away! I'm grateful for the support."

Nina plans to teach a seed starting class in the Fall, when the greenhouse starts the cool season vegetable seedlings. The class will be limited to 24 students; Nina will walk students through her system, while the seeds will be watered in the greenhouse by volunteers. "It's a complete experience," she says.

Another longer-range plan -- which would require approval of the board and membership -- is to replace the rustic redwood greenhouse with a larger and more rat-proof metal version. The current greenhouse, which is now

infested with termites, was built in 2012 with a \$4,000 grant from Deloach Vineyards in conjunction with Organic Gardening magazine. A larger greenhouse would enable more OVF members to start seedlings.



Reminder!

Get those community work hours in while the weather is still cool! (See the Work Day schedule at the top of the newsletter.)

By July 1, half of your annual 12 hours per plot should be completed. If you're running behind, you may get another friendly reminder via email!



Newsletter Gig

Can you meet a deadline? Help guide a publication process from idea to publication? Do you have an eagle eye for typos? Are you tired of weeding for your community hours? You might just be the person we're looking for to work on a very small team putting out the monthly OVF newsletter. For more information or to throw your hat in the ring, please contact the OVF Garden Master or the OVF Education Chair.



Member Feedback/Submissions

If you have any feedback or would like to write an article or provide material for the newsletter, please contact the OVF Education Chair.

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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