

Ocean View Farms

"Cultives ton jardin!"

BY ANDY MORRIS

Ocean View Farms Community Garden (OVF) is a private nonprofit cooperation operating a six-acre organic garden near the Santa Monica Airport, under an agreement with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

OVF's mission is to provide the surrounding urban community with a place to garden, promote and practice organic gardening techniques, maintain a green space in the community, provide education and guidance in the growing of plants and the recycling of waste through composting, and encourage member participation in gardening activities that benefit the community. OVF strongly promotes activities that minimize waste generation — those that reuse, reclaim or recycle all possible materials — thus ensuring a minimal impact on the environment.

Ocean View Farms was founded in 1977 by a group of people interested in growing produce on a hillside overlooking Santa Monica Bay. The use of public lands for gardening was originally Mayor Tom Bradley's idea. OVF was launched with federal funding from the CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program, which was signed into law by President Richard Nixon December 28, 1973 to train workers and provide them with jobs in the public service. The land where OVF is situated is owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and administered by the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

OVF quietly developed from the first couple

of acres, expanding four times to fill the six acres it occupies today. Over 300 gardeners work 500 garden plots. OVF's members vary in age from 18 to 90 years old; they come from a wide range of backgrounds and speak many languages. OVF is the largest of more than 60 community gardens in Los Angeles County.

Our community garden began as an open field that once grew soy beans. The founders laid the plan, leveled and terraced as needed. They established plots approximately 15 feet by 15 feet separated by pathways. A water system was installed to make water accessible to every plot. Included in the layout was a substantial orchard with numerous fruit trees, whose fruits are enjoyed by all members.

From 1995 through 2006, Ocean View Farms was honored with the distinction of being a Waste Reduction Awards Program (WRAP) winner for 12 consecutive years. In bestowing this award, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, now CalRecycle, recognized OVF for its long-term contribution to waste reduction and resource efficiency. CIWMB applauded our voluntary efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Our activities have helped cut California's trash in half and saved both OVF and the City of Los Angeles money. OVF's efforts have helped to protect the environment while saving real business dollars.



We like to think that OVF is a community garden where the term "community" signifies an organization of friends banding together through a common concern about how our food is grown, passionately concerned about our environment, and dedicated to the idea of sharing.

Now our thriving community engages in a number of recurring events, including an annual tomato festival called Tomato-Bration, bi-monthly composting utilizing donated stable waste, and weekly donation of unused garden produce to local shelters, a program we call OVF Donates. Though many activities were cancelled during the stay-at-home period, OVF Donates remained supported by members and was never suspended.

Our community includes experts ranging from Certified Master Gardeners to complete beginners. If you're interested in becoming part of our community, there's an easy-to-complete downloadable application for a garden plot, as well as more information about the fascinating history of OVF. You can also keep up with the latest news / events from OVF by following us on Facebook or Instagram.

Andy Morris is the Communications Director of Ocean View Farms.

