View this email in your browser

OVF NEWS

December 2025

President's Message

Grateful Heart

First, I want to say a belated Happy Thanksgiving! Besides our beautiful surroundings, I am grateful for the OVF family and friends. I am so grateful. What a great autumn day we had! I am so glad we did it through the year as the dry winds could come in any day. I noticed the water bill was almost 40 percent less than last year! Thanks to everyone who helped water the much-needed orders have come in! Updates, continued numbers of chayote squash and remodeled on nature's essential gifts. Thank you all for your continued dedication and care to your garden and OVF overall.

At our last board meeting, we welcomed two new members. Dede Cooley has stepped up to be our treasurer, replacing secretary, and Roger Wallingford is now our new Independent Project Monitor. Tanya Brokaw has stepped down as secretary, and we thank her for her service for years. Thank you Tanya, Dede, and Roger.

Important December Meeting & Workday

Saturday, **December 13th**. Workday from 9am to12pm, holiday potluck at 12:30pm, and then our general meeting at 1:00pm. This meeting is our December meetings is particularly important as the membership will be voting on the Bylaws. Please, if you are able, attend to help encourage everyone to attend and participate.

The proposed budget, which was approved by the Board of Directors in November, will be posted on our community bulletin board near the office and online. This budget is a conservative budget based on our income for the past year and previous year expenses and are looking plans for OVF improvements in the coming year. Also, copies will be handed out the day of the meeting.

RAP updates

You may have remembered that I have reported to the membership that we are working with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks expires in January 2026. I am in the process of renewing our new agreement with (the Partnership Division) and am awaiting a new signed agreement from the City. I will keep you updated. Thank you for continuing gardeners and the members and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Other News

I am so happy and thankful to our Native Plant Club for taking on the job of caring for the driveway, with a plan of action. Please be mindful of their plants and seedlings in the driveway.

Your community service hours are crunch time of year, and if you are renewed, so is your membership fee due in January. Missing important workdays, community service hours, and dues are a loss of your membership secretary. Let me know you know we are all volunteers, so please respect their time and efforts and do your part.

As we head into the holiday season, I wish you and your families joy, peace, and good health. Thank you for being part of what makes our garden thrive.

See you on the 13th!

Sincerely,
Shirley Verrales

Garden Master's Message

Hello everyone,

As we near the end of 2025, we can look back on the last year with a feeling of accomplishment. There was a smooth transition to a new Garden Master, the Garden Committee was formed, and a number of workgroup leaders and department heads have continued to ensure that all garden operations continue to function as before. Nothing has been lost in the transition. And we have begun to make improvements in our problems and new opportunities.

In the second half of 2025, Contractors has been cleaned up, the Phase 4 organics operation relocated (and the trailer put back into use), a Greenhouse Committee formed, and a Greenhouse established for organic-based custers. There remain areas that need improvement, including the plumbing repair process, pest control, and infrastructure, the wheelbarrows and waste disposal. In the new year, we'll be moving forward with ways to refinen these aspects of the gardener's operations.

And some things will change in 2026. In the Sun Crest Newsletter, I referenced that we are in a time of transition. We must adapt to the changing environment, and I again urge you to go online and make changes that are coming. There is untapped potential all around the garden and we have only to set it free.

In the new year, we'll move forward with developing new community spaces for the members to enjoy. A new community grow garden will be completed to benefit both school children on tours and the OVF Donates program. And the native gardens of OVF will expand and grow.

Changes will also impact how things were done in the past. For example, in 2026 there will be no workdays scheduled for the holidays in August, November and December. And workday sign-ins will now happen within the first two hours of the workday (no last hour sign-ins).

For 2026, workday supervisor and timekeeper spots are being filled on a first-come first service basis. In the last Newsletter, notice was given that sign-ups had begun. I'm pleased to inform you that all of the 2026 workday supervisor and timekeeper spots have been filled. Volunteer service spots have been filled. If you're interested in being a workday during a 2026 workday, please email me at ovfgrowings@gmail.com.

Project Updates

The Eucalyptus Harvest:
At the last workday, the trunks and large branches were cut into usable lengths and stacked for two piles. Members moved large branches into the central community area to frame the walkways. Unfortunately, the smaller branches, twigs, and leaves, were left behind. Unfortunately, some of the wood that had been carefully cut and stacked during the workday was then stolen during the rainstorm. Consequently, we moved all the smaller branches inside the gate. Please do not take this wood, it's going to be used in community garden projects.

North Vernon Lake Drainage collaboration:
OVF worked with NVLL in the installation of a new retaining wall between NVLL's space and OVF's newest multi-plot. OVF assisted and moved the soil so that NVLL could install the mortarless retaining wall. We hope to continue collaborate with NVLL on other projects in the near future.

OVF Community Grow Garden:
The space for this new garden has been cleared, new acquisition of gardening tools has been completed and new eucalyptus stumps will be installed once they are cut to size. This is a joint project between OVF school tours group and the OVF Donates group. The new garden will grow food for the benefit of both the schoolchildren and the OVF Donates food banks. It will also provide members with the opportunity to help their community by doing what they like to do – garden.

OVF in 2026:
In 2026, new community gardens, with members growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers in their own spaces surrounded by others with a similar interest. We are tied together through this shared space and shared goals. In 2026, OVF will continue to grow and evolve, as a garden and as a community. We can appreciate our fellow gardeners, who make this garden more that just a place to grow. We have friends in OVF, and we are grateful to the people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our stock blossom."

Happy New Year to OVF's charming gardeners, and I'll see you in the garden in 2026.

Les Hamrol
OVF Garden Master

OVF Calendar

Work Days	General Meeting	Board Meeting
December 13 Saturday 8 am - Noon	December 13 1:00 pm	January 17, 2026 9:30 am
December 28 Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm	Potluck lunch at Noon	

Upcoming Events

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

Dec. 7, 1 pm OVF Native Plant Club Get-Together

Dec. 10, 9am Garden Master Office Hour at OVF office

Dec. 14, 6pm Garden Master Office Hour at NBB

Dec. 30, 9am Garden Master Office Hour at OVF office

2026 Workday Changes

In 2026, there will be no workdays on the Sundays in August, November and December. The Saturday workdays will continue in these months.

At 2026 workdays, members will sign in during the first two hours, but not the last hour. Sign-in will be at the OVF office unless a workgroup leader or supervisor is signing in before 11am, and on Sunday 12pm-4pm workdays, members must sign in before 3pm.

Sign Up Now for 2026 Tasks

Members can sign up now to reserve spots for the following community floor tasks: workday supervisor (timekeeper slots are full), Sunday 12-4pm Thursday 1am club and Friday 1am club duty. These spots are filled on a first-come first-served basis. Please email Garden Master if you are interested in these tasks. If interested, email the Garden Master at ovfgrowings@gmail.com.

Important Membership News!!

Check the OVF website in mid-to late January for the latest updates and information on renewals and deadlines.

If for any reason you do not receive a bill via email/snail mail in January, renewal fees are still due. Your bill will be available by logging into your profile and clicking on the "Bill Pay" link to pay prior to the deadline.

A reminder: OVF does not store payment information so there is NO auto-renewal. You are responsible for annually and manually renewing your membership every year.

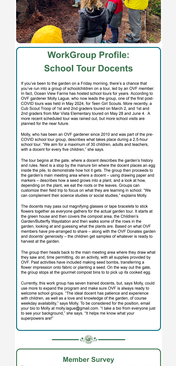
Food Forward Visits OVF

Did you know that one in five households in California are food insecure and 1 of 10 Californians live in poverty? In the U.S. is second only to Washington state and DC.

OVF member Catherine Hess learned these facts on Sunday November 2 when she and Carole Marquez-Lewis hosted had the pleasure of offering a tour of OVF to 10 members of Food Forward, an organization that grains otherwise wasted fruits and vegetables for distribution to people experiencing food insecurity.

Food Forward team members and volunteers recover produce from backyard fruit trees, public orchards, farmers markets, and the downstream food supply chain. Food Forward's mission is to nourish people, strengthen local economies and advance solutions to food waste.

During the OVF tour, Food Forward staff and volunteers learned about our membership organization, membership process, and of course, our own "OVF Diversion" program and admired some of the gardener more unusual and beautiful finds. We hope to maintain contact with this soulful organization.



WorkGroup Profile: School Tour Docents

If you've been to the garden on a Friday morning, there's a chance that you've run into a group of schoolchildren on a tour, led by an OVF member. The tours are the brainchild of Carole Marquez-Lewis, a longtime OVF member Willie Lopez, who now leads the group, and one of the first post COVID tours was held in May 2024, for Sem Old Scouts. More recently, a group of 3rd grade students from Sunshine Elementary in Sun Crest, and 2nd graders from Mar Vista Elementary toured on May 20 and June 4. In more recent schedulled tour was rained out, but more school visits are planned for the near future.

Molly, who has been an OVF gardener since 2010 and was part of the pre-COVID school tour group, describes what takes place during a 2 hour school tour. "We are for a maximum of 30 children, adults and teachers, with a docent for every five children," she says.

The tour begins at the gate, where a docent describes the garden's history and rules. Here is a stop by the tractors for where the docent passes an egg inside the pile, to demonstrate how hot it gets. The group then proceeds to the Contractors area, where they see the chickens and visit the farmers' markets – describes how a seed grows into a sprout, and a tree or flow, depending on the plant, we eat the roots or the leaves. Groups can sometimes visit the Bee Hive, and the Native Plant Garden, depending. "We can complement their science curriculum, and they love it," she says.

The docents may pass out magnifying glasses or tape lycedes to stick flowers together as everyone gathers for the actual picnic lunch. It starts at the green house and then covers the compost area, the Children's Garden,Butterfly Habitat,the Greenhouse and ends at the Contractors area the garden, looking at and guessing what the plants are. Based on what happens, the tour can last from 1 hour to 2 hours. Molly says that the garden and docents generously – the children get samples of whatever is ready to harvest at the garden.

The group there heads back to the main meeting area where they draw what they saw and, time permitting, do an activity with all supplies provided by OVF. Molly says that the tours have been "very successful, and very welcome school groups. Their school day has gotten very, very restrictive with children, as well as a love and knowledge of the garden, of course they love the garden, and it's a great place for them to come and learn about life by Molly at molly.lopez@yahoo.com. "I take it for granted everyone just is see your background," she says. "It helps me know what your superpowers are!"

Member Survey

Thank you to all who responded to our survey about the newsletter and how members prefer to receive information. The results were very interesting (based on received feedback. We're going to keep plenty of surprises up for one more issue in case some members forgot, or want to update their feedback. The survey takes about five minutes and is completely anonymous.

Next month, we'll survey members about social media and how you'd like to see social media to interact with OVF (but don't worry, surveys won't become a regular thing).

Link to the Survey

HOW TO GROW ... Spinach

Welcome to a new monthly column we hope you will enjoy. Every month we will feature a different vegetable or herb and provide tips on how to grow it on our local weather conditions. Co-editor Rachel Judd chimes in the month on how to grow spinach, a perfect crop for December since, as Rachel points out, "spinach only needs about four hours of direct sunlight a day.

OVF's sandy, well-drained soil is ideal for spinach. To plant spinach, prepare your soil by mixing in some fresh gourmet compost. Organic amendments like earthworm castings can also help boost your eventual harvest.

Spinach doesn't need to be planted deep, but it does need space. Sow seeds about 1 inch apart and 1 inch deep in rows spaced 12 inches apart. Water regularly moist, and you'll see your spinach plants emerge within one to two weeks. Spinach is rather particular about water. It's better to water it a little bit every other day than to water it deeply weekly.

If some of your spinach plants end up too close together, then and enjoy your microgreens on a nice sandwich or salad. Baby leaves are tender, which have turned yellow, show signs of disease, or have been nibbled by pests.

Want to give your spinach some friends or neighbors? Lettuce, marigold, chard, and garlic also grew well in the same conditions as spinach.

Once your spinach is established, you can regularly trim the outer leaves to harvest them. More inner leaves will grow outward for you to harvest later. As the weather warms up, you'll notice your spinach beginning to think certain stalk. This plant is about to bolt, and will devote its remaining energy to producing flowers and seeds. Harvest your spinach before it starts to grow producing leaves, and, if you're a seed saver it's time to pick the harvest spinach seeds for planting next season.

Looking for more winter planting ideas? Plant vegetables like carrots, turnips, and beets often run out sweeter when planted during the winter. Among herbs, dill and cilantro do well in cool weather. Kale is a hardy stock, find a planting chart posted on the outer wall of the remodeled greenhouse.

Recipes from the Garden: Latkes/Potato Pancakes

Latkes: State Pancakes

You don't have to celebrate Chanukah to enjoy potato pancakes, a culinary feature of other European cultures. Most latke recipes are grated potatoes held together by eggs: for me, the result has always tasted more like hash browns than pancakes. That's until I got a recipe from a friend which added a magical ingredient: matzo meal, which you can buy at Ralph's or any other major LA-area supermarket.

If you love the results as much as I do, drop me a note (OVFdeb@gmail.com) and let me know what you covered them with - applesauce? Sour cream?
Enjoy!

6 large Yukon gold potatoes
1 large onion
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 eggs
1/2 cup flour
Matzo meal
Oil for frying

Grate onion and set aside; mix salt, baking powder and flour and set aside. Grate potatoes and wring out the liquid until dry; place in a large bowl, "fluff up," then immediately cover with onion and egg and mix well. The mixture can sit like this.

When ready to fry, heat oil in a frying pan, while adding in dry ingredients to mix; sprinkle matzo meal until the batter is firm. Shape a small amounts and drop into the pan, until the pan is full. Make sure oil reheats sufficiently before starting the next batch.

Be careful to completely dry your hands before going near hot oil! You can keep them in a 200F oven on a paper towel-lined bowl, plate or pan until ready to serve.

Planting Calendar

The season is **Late Fall/Early Winter**. The weather is generally cool and dry, with the sun setting earlier and earlier. Plant during this time, as seeds or seedlings:

Herbs

- Cilantro
- Dill
- Fennel
- Lavender
- Parsley
- Sage
- Thyme
- Verbena

Flowers

- Alyssum
- Begonia
- Forget-Me-Not
- Geranium
- Impatiens
- Nasturtium
- Poppies
- Snapdragon

Fruit & Vegetables

- Beets
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Kale
- Onion
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard

Member Feedback / Submissions

If you have any feedback or comments on the newsletter, please contact the OVF Education Chair Debra Kaufman at ovfdeb@gmail.com. Back issues of this and all other newsletters can be found on the OVF website.

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.

Copyright (C) 2025 Ocean View Farms. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
Ocean View Farms, Inc. PO Box 661425 Los Angeles, CA 90066 USA

Want to change how you receive these emails?
update your preferences or unsubscribe