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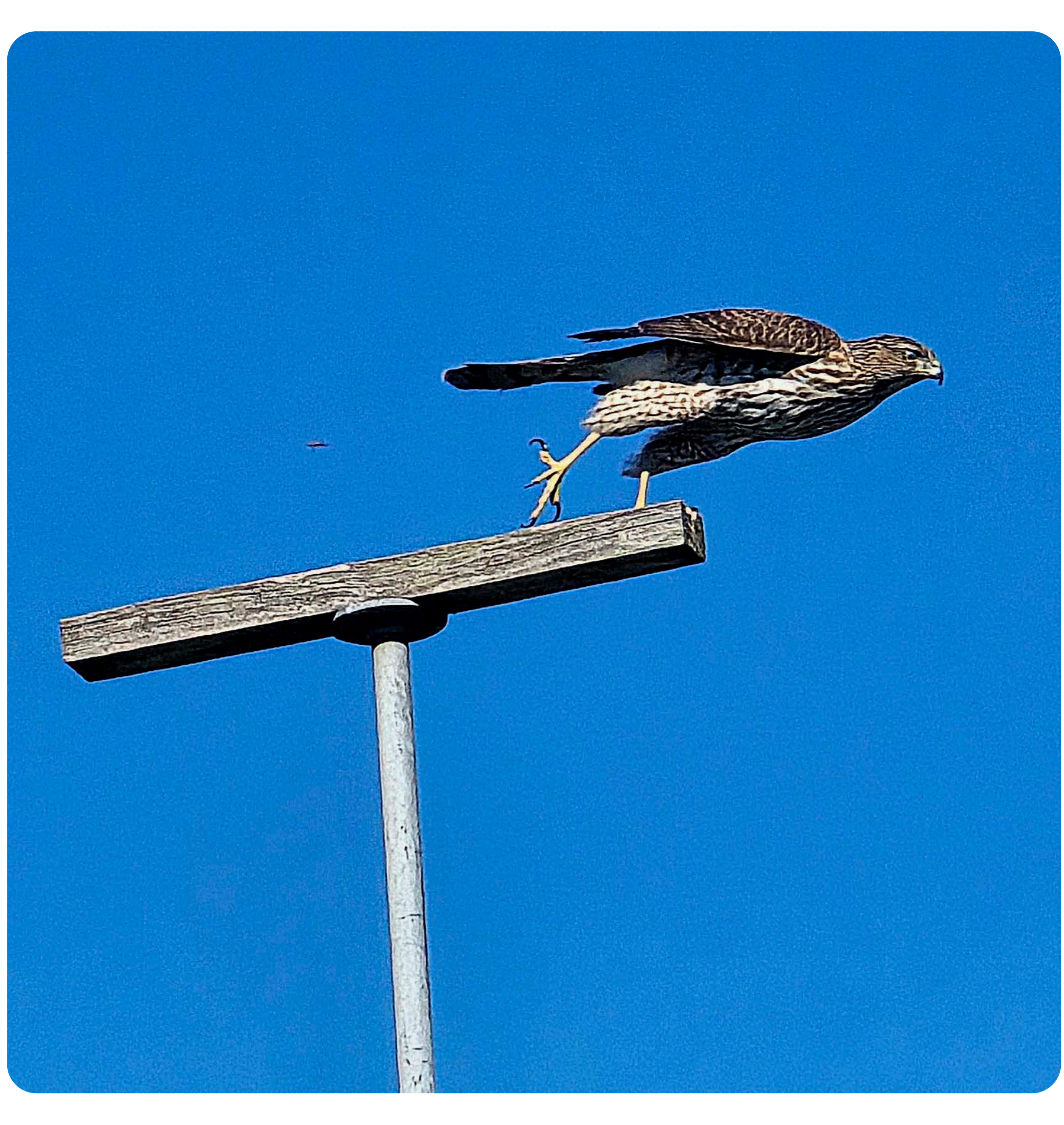
OVF NEWS

Jan/Feb 2026



President's Message

Dear OVF Garden Community,

As we turn the page to a new year, I hope you've had the chance to rest and renew just as our soil has rested through the winter months. There's wisdom in nature's cycles, and sometimes we all need that fallow period to gather strength for the growing season ahead.

Looking back on the past year, I'm reminded of what makes our garden truly flourish—it's not just the plants we tend, but the connections we cultivate with one another. When you are enjoying or working on your plot, participating in our workdays, or gathering up some compost you're getting to know your neighbors. Learning their stories, sharing tools and seeds and laughter. These relationships are the real harvest. I remind you to access the names of your neighbors on your member page, and give thanks to all of our project leaders. Especially our shedding and composting crews and their dedication to the schedules and commitment.

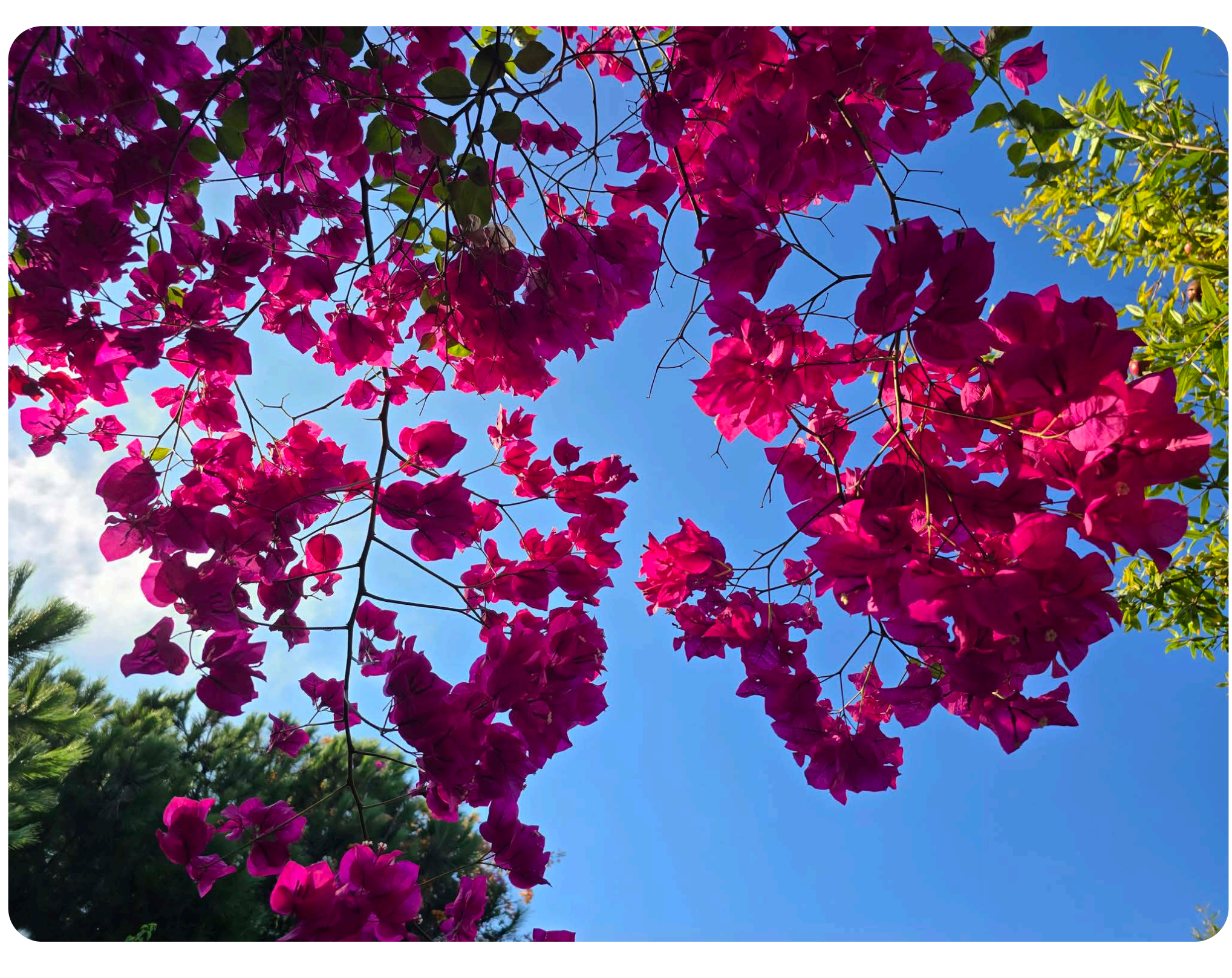
Take a moment and stop and consider this fact, we are only here because of each other and the work we do. You could not be here if it wasn't for the rest of us. Realize this great privilege we have to be in this amazing space. This garden exists because people chose to come together, to create something beautiful and productive as a community rather than as individuals.

I want to give thanks to each of you who has contributed your time, knowledge, and care to this shared space. Also for patience, changes and new projects coming into fruition at OVF. Stay involved, and ask your phase rep how you can help. Or better yet, become a phase representative. The opportunity is always available to train or participate in our April elections.

As we begin this new year, I encourage you to meet the garden master, board members and myself and share what you can offer. Keep in mind working and sharing here is not "just about the hours". Welcome new members, share what you've learned and know about gardening at OVF. Whether you have five minutes or five hours to give, your presence makes a difference. Our garden grows strongest when every hand helps tend it. Here's to another year of growth, abundance, and community.

Always with gratitude,

Shirley



Garden Master's Message

Hi everyone,

Happy New Year. In the last nine months as GM, I have been impressed by the enthusiasm and energy among members to move forward and make the garden a better place for everyone. But I have also found that progress is more a slow crawl than a fast march. We're moving forward, one workday after another, but it will take time. This is a marathon, not a sprint. We'll do the work and tend our garden, and the improvement will be seen over time. Patience is the watchword.

Here are some of the projects we're planning for the upcoming year:

1. **New Community Grow Garden**: We have made progress on the new community grow garden located next to the greenhouse. We have an agreement to build a new path into this garden, and have moved the harvested eucalyptus nearby for use as walls and seating. The members, children on school tours, and those in need will all benefit from this garden.

2. **New Pollinator Garden**: We are going to develop a new pollinator garden along the border of the orchard and the shredding area. This project is intended to support and encourage pollinators. We are looking into using the trunks of the recently fallen willow in this project.

3. **New Native Landscapes**: The OVF Native Plant Club continues to do great work developing the driveway native garden. This year, we will work to expand OVF's native habitat space to the Centinela berm and other community spaces in and around the garden.

4. **New Native Bee Nest Sites**: In conjunction with the development of the pollinator garden, we will construct nest sites for native wood-nesting, cavity-nesting, and ground-nesting bees as well as bumble bees.

5. **New Eagle Scout First Aid Kiosk Project**: The Boy Scouts are going to install First Aid boxes in the garden as part of an Eagle Scout project. There will be First Aid boxes installed along the paths with flower IPs, which will provide easily accessible First Aid supplies in the garden for emergency use on site.

6. **New Maintenance Yard**: We're moving forward with developing the space behind the tool shed as a maintenance yard. The yard's purpose is to consolidate the repair, maintenance, and other operations in one space. We're also looking to add additional storage in the maintenance yard.

7. **New Little Pine Seating Area**: We're moving forward with creating a seating area under the little pine (when compared to the nearby Aleppo pine) next to central meeting area. The little pine provides dense shade and so will be a nice place to sit and rest in the heat of the day. We'll use the harvested eucalyptus in this project.

8. **New Gate 1 Rest Area**: When the eucalyptus came down, it provided the opportunity for development of a larger seating and rest area at Gate 1. Members had previously created an informal seating area under the eucalyptus. This year we'll be creating a formal shaded rest spot in this space.

Our community engagement continues to grow and expand:

9. **Wildwood School Spring Semester Interns**: Two high school juniors from the Wildwood School will be doing their Spring internships at OVF. We're going to get them involved with as many OVF workgroups and projects as possible. Please welcome them to the garden when you see them.

Finally, the infrastructure upgrades and maintenance improvements will continue:

10. **Greenhouse Rehab**: We are working to harden the greenhouse in response to the recent loss of seedlings to rodents. The interior walls have been lined with hardware cloth that folds down to continue across the floor. Cement pavers were placed on top of the floor hardware cloth to seal the edges against rodents. The rotting doorframe was removed and will be replaced to create a tight seal at the door. Assuming we can complete the rehab in time, the greenhouse group plans to start seedlings in early February for an April sale. Seedling sale prices will rise modestly this year.

11. **Downed Willow Tree Harvest**: The corkscrew willow tree near the porta-potty at Gate 4 broke apart and fell over in the recent storm, revealing substantial internal rot. Workday crews have been cutting up the fallen trunks, and we intend to harvest this fallen tree too. The IP where the tree fell will become part of the new maintenance yard.

12. **New project building supplies**: We will use the recovered eucalyptus and willow wood in the above projects. We've also diverted from landfill a lowboy of several tons of recycled brick, which will be cleaned and used in these projects.

There's a lot going on in the new year. Want to get involved? Simply email me at ovfgmles@gmail.com. 2026 is going to be a great year in the garden.

Les Hairrell
OVF Garden Master

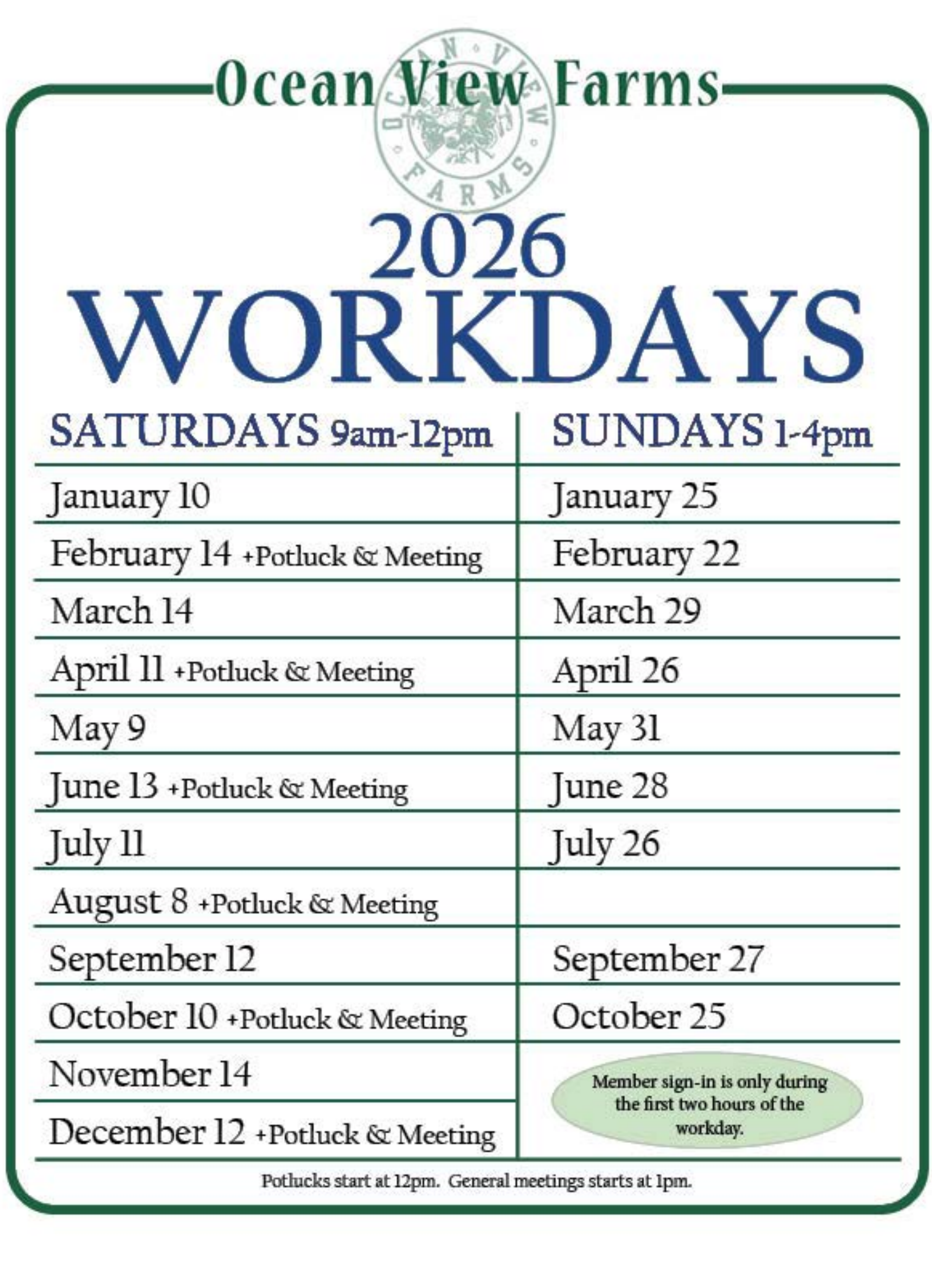
OVF Calendar

Work Days	General Meeting	Board Meeting
February 14 Saturday 9 am - Noon February 22 Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm	February 14 1:00 pm Potluck lunch at Noon	March 21, 2026 9:30 am

Renew Your Membership!!

You should have received your annual OVF bill by now. You can access it by logging into your online account and clicking on the "Bill Pay" link to pay prior to the deadline. Please consider adding the optional $3 to pay for the cost of processing your credit card.

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.



Ocean View Farms

2026 WORKDAYS

SATURDAYS 9am-12pm	SUNDAYS 1-4pm
January 10	January 25
February 14 +Potluck & Meeting	February 22
March 14	March 29
April 11 +Potluck & Meeting	April 26
May 9	May 31
June 13 +Potluck & Meeting	June 28
July 11	July 26
August 8 +Potluck & Meeting	
September 12	September 27
October 10 +Potluck & Meeting	October 25
November 14	Member sign-in is only during the first two hours of the workday.
December 12 +Potluck & Meeting	

Potlucks start at 12pm. General meetings starts at 1pm.

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 third hour of the workday. In other words, on Saturday 9am-12pm workdays, members must sign in before 11am, and on Sunday 12pm-4pm workdays, members must sign in before 3pm.

Independent Project Rules Change

At the January OVF Board meeting, the Board revised the Rules for Independent Projects to provide that members will no longer receive three community hours for the privilege of being assigned an IP. The duties and responsibilities of maintaining an IP remain the same.

WorkGroup Profile: Beautification

If you have a tough time making Ocean View Farms' official workdays and have a yen for weeding, the Beautification Workgroup is made for you. Beautification sounds like a broad category, but in fact is limited to weeding and mulching OVF's principal pathways, which run East and West (the narrower North-South paths are the responsibility of the gardeners on either side).

As independent work, the member can pick the hours as well as which of the paths listed on the OVF website that require attention. But it's not a free-for-all, notes Beautification head Katie Taylor, who has been on the team since she joined OVF in 2011 and lead of the workgroup since 2013. "Beautification is technically all independent work," says Katie. "The rules for the work are simple and easy to follow, but members who want to do this kind of work have to review the rules online."
https://www.oceanviewfarms.net/beautification.html

She spells out some of the most important rules: "You have to perform at LEAST one hour of work, and beyond one hour, you have to do it in 30-minute increments," she explains. "I can't credit you for 15-minutes' worth of work." The OVF member performing the work must report the work done within three days of performing it. "You can't report work you did two weeks ago," she notes. "I have to go and look at the work you did -- and I check all the work that is done."

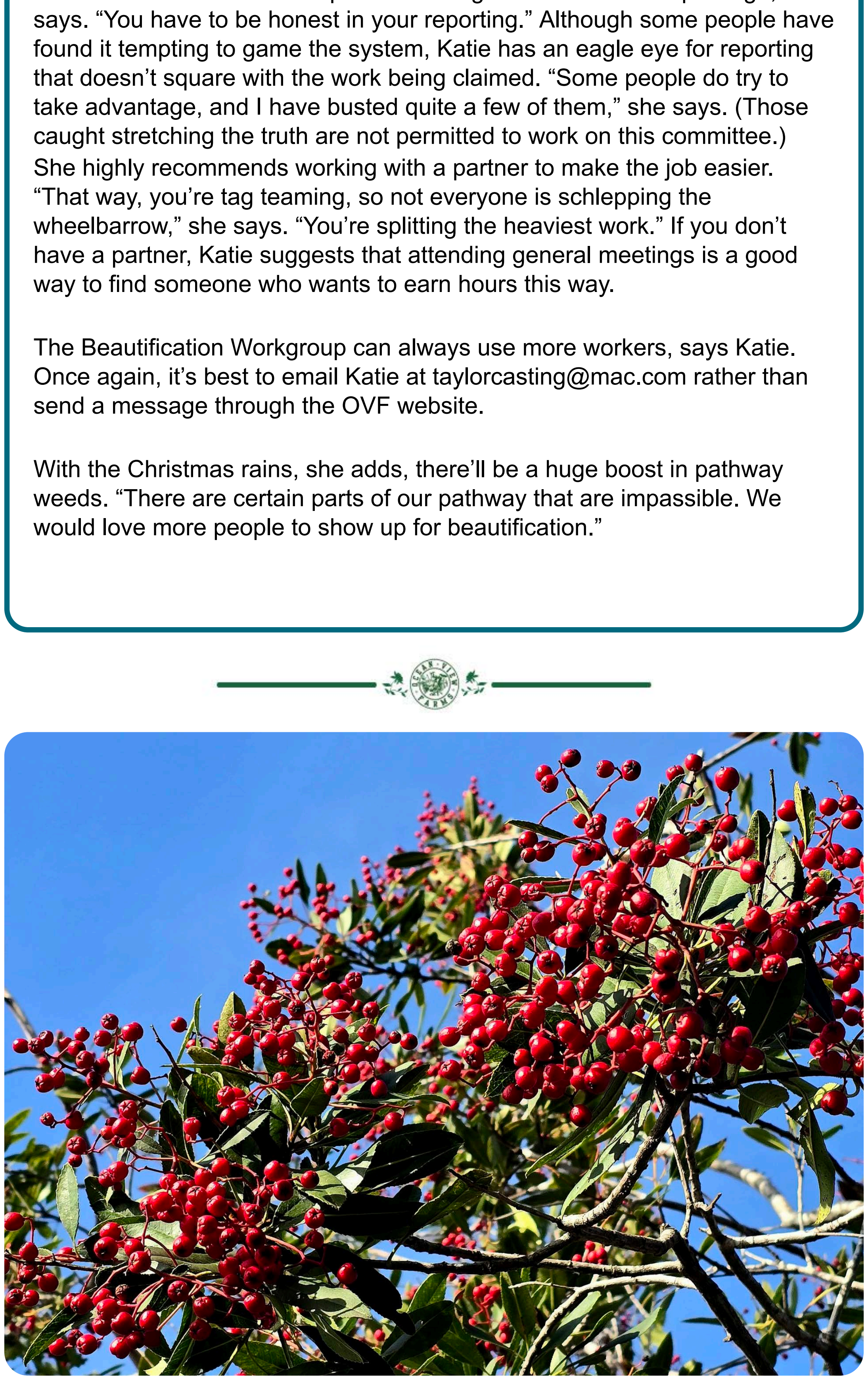
To work in beautification, sign up by emailing Katie at taylorcasting@mac.com and identifying which path you plan to weed and mulch. To weed the path, make sure you use a shovel (not a hand trowel) to turn over weed-infested earth, then shake out the weeds by hand and put them in a wheelbarrow (remembering of course to hold out false garlic, bindweed and nutgrass for disposal in the dumpster outside the garden). When the pathway is weeded, dump the wheelbarrow at the compost pile, fill it with mulch and mulch the newly weeded path. The worker must complete the mulching to be credited for the work.

Important: don't forget to take before-and-after photos, which will be submitted to Katie for perusal. One member, she reports, even sends in time-lapsed video of the work being done, with Apple watch time stamps of her beginning and ending time. Katie warns not to send photos that are larger than 10MB per email, or they'll end up in her spam. She stresses that she will always respond via email within 48 hours. "If I don't respond, email me again," she says.

Though the work is independent, Katie carefully examines the work done as well as the before-and-after photos. "Doing beautification is a privilege," she says. "You have to be honest in your reporting." Although some people have found it tempting to game the system, Katie has an eagle eye for reporting that doesn't square with the work being claimed. "Some people do try to take advantage, and I have busted quite a few of them," she says. (Those caught stretching the truth are not permitted to work on this committee.) She highly recommends working with a partner to make the job easier. "That way, you're tag teaming, so not everyone is schlepping the wheelbarrow," she says. "You're splitting the heaviest work." If you don't have a partner, Katie suggests that attending general meetings is a good way to find someone who wants to earn hours this way.

The Beautification Workgroup can always use more workers, says Katie. Once again, it's best to email Katie at taylorcasting@mac.com rather than send a message through the OVF website.

With the Christmas rains, she adds, there'll be a huge boost in pathway weeds. "There are certain parts of our pathway that are impassible. We would love more people to show up for beautification."



Thoughts on Rat Control

From Rachel J.:

In the October issue of the OVF Newsletter, we published the tragic story of how rats had finally gotten into the greenhouse and eaten or destroyed all the seedlings intended for a fundraising sale. Most members likely found the story relatable. I have had my squash and corn wrecked by these varmints. After doing some research, here are some of the best tips I've found to defend your plot. If you have any ideas not included here please write OVFdeb@gmail.com

Harvest Quickly
Half the time when I found my squash and corn eaten, it was after a visit when just a few days previous I'd thought, "It's almost ripe, I'll pick it next time." But it's better to harvest a full, slightly underripe crop than let the rats have it.

Strong Smelling Plants
One article I found said that rats hunt by smell. So planting strong-smelling plants around or near plants you want to protect might disorient a hungry rat. Herbs like basil, lavender, marigold, oregano, peppermint, rosemary, or sage do have that requisite strong smell. But some of these plants can grow quite large and rival other plants, so know what you're planting and make sure to trim and prune regularly!

Beds & Fences
A covered, raised bed can also deter rats. A high chicken-wire or mesh wall with a 'roof', even of soft cover fabric, can discourage rats (and birds!). Some articles on rat-proofing a raised bed will tell you to sink your fencing at least six inches into the dirt, but this isn't allowed at OVF. Raised beds and crop cover, though, are permitted.

Predator Pee
I had no idea before I started gardening that cougar and coyote urine were commercially available products! The strongly-scented predator urine deters rats and other rodents. When shopping for these products, including delivery vehicles like cotton balls and the cups to put them in, remember to check that you're buying certified organic.

Traps
OVF permits members to use traps, including lethal traps. If you choose to use traps, whether humane or lethal, check them often and dispose of any trapped rodents quickly. Also, set them carefully to prevent birds from getting caught (more on birds in another newsletter). If you're using humane traps, release the rats at least 2-3 miles away; otherwise they may find their way back to the garden. Dead rats should be disposed of in sealed plastic bags and put in the parking lot dumpsters, not inside the garden. Also, rats can carry a whole host of nasty diseases. So make sure to clean and sanitize anything that's come into contact with a rat or rat trap, including hands, gloves, clothes, and the trap itself.

HOW TO GROW … Sonoran Wheat

In December's issue we discussed how to grow spinach as a winter crop. This issue will focus on a unique and interesting crop which also does well when planted in winter: Sonoran white wheat.

Sonoran wheat has a storied history. The ancestor seeds were brought to the American Southwest, including Southern California, by Spanish missionaries in the 16th century. From there, it was carefully cultivated to do well with California's weather patterns, and spread to Arizona and Mexico. It's the first type of wheat cultivated in this area, and possibly in the Americas.

One quality which makes Sonoran wheat suited especially for gardening at OVF is its height. While most varieties of wheat grow far too tall to be cultivated at OVF, Sonoran wheat stalks usually reach four to five feet tall at their ripest.

The seeds do best when planted during the monsoon season, so keep an eye on the weather forecast between now and the end of February and plant right before another heavy rain. Water frequently until the seeds germinate, after which it can get by with weekly watering. Seeds can be planted in rows, about 1/2-inch apart.

One must is protection from pests. Birds will try to get at your seeds after planting, and then again when the wheat matures. A thin covering of mulch or compost will protect your seedlings, and then switch to bird netting or other deterrents as your wheat grows.

The wheat matures within about 90 days, and should be harvested before another rain to avoid mold issues. The stalks can be used for straw (indigenous people incorporated wheat stalks with yucca for traditional basket-weaving) or compost.

After harvest, gently rub the seed heads to remove the wheat berry from the rest of the stalk (the chaff). Then run the berries through a mill (KitchenAid makes an extension for grinding grain) for fresh flour! Due to the nature of its gluten content, the flour made from Sonoran wheat is ideal for pie crusts, cakes, and pastries and less ideal for making bread (unless you mix it with a higher-protein flour). You can also use it in place of corn in traditional Southwest dishes, like tortillas, poshol (a grain and bean soup) or pinole (a grain-based drink akin to herbal tea).

Obtain Sonoran wheat seeds from nativeseeds.org.

Recipes from the Garden: Rustic Galette

A galette is a savory style of French tart made with roasted and sauteed vegetables and cheese. It's hearty enough to be a one-dish meal, and flexible enough that I can often use up extra produce. While this recipe calls for onion, carrot, fennel, and kale, I've been able to sneak in leftover leek, bell pepper, chard, mushrooms, and tomato.

Ingredients

- 1-2 medium carrots
- 1 bulb fennel
- 1 bunch kale or other leafy green
- 1 red onion
- 2-3 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp parsley
- 1 tsp ground sage
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp white pepper
- 4 oz brie
- 4 oz feta cheese
- 1 Tbsp pecorino or Parmesan
- 1 pie crust

Process

1. Preheat the oven to 450*F. Prepare pie crust according to any package directions or your own recipe.
2. Peel and slice the carrots. Cut the leafy tips off the fennel, then cut in half, remove the thick core, and slice the whites. Peel and slice the onion. Tear the kale into bite-size pieces. Mince the garlic.
3. Toss the carrots and fennel in olive oil with a little salt and pepper, spread on a baking sheet, and roast for 10-12 minutes. Reduce oven heat to 400*F when done.
4. While the vegetables roast, sautee the onion until soft and translucent. Add the garlic and sautée for another thirty seconds. Add the kale and about 2 Tbsp of water, and stir until the kale is soft and wilted.
5. Arrange the onion and kale in the bottom of the pie crust. Layer in half the cheese. Top with the roasted vegetables, the rest of the cheese, and the parsley, rosemary, sage, pepper, and thyme.
6. Bake for 10-12 minutes and serve while still warm.

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

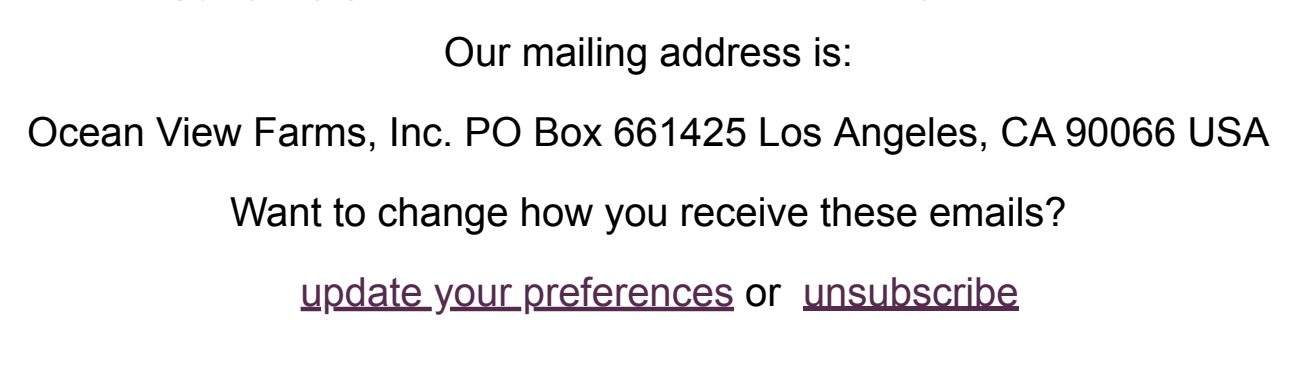
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Kale
- Onion
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard

Member Feedback / Submissions

If you have any feedback or comments on the newsletter, please contact 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.



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