

# THE DIRT

*Long Beach Community Garden Association*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**I**t's hard to believe that we are already two months into the throes of Spring planting. As I see my tomatoes, zucchini, peppers and cucumbers taking root and growing, I am reminded that Summer will be here before we know it!

In April, I had an opportunity to meet with a researcher funded by a grant from UCLA to: 1) inventory community gardens in Los Angeles County, and 2) create recommendations and resources for new community gardens. She was truly amazed at the Long Beach Community Garden especially in terms of size, both over all and of each plot. I was so proud to give her a tour of our gardens and orchard, describe how we operate, and let her know what a wonderful garden community we have here in Long Beach.

Annual Renewals will be mailed in mid-May along with the nominations and ballot for the 2014-2015 Board of Directors. You will also receive in this mailing the new, updated version of the **Rules & Agreements**. Please note the change of title: we believe that the rules are also an agreement with each gardener to do their

part to keep not only their assigned plot but the garden as a whole neat, tidy, and clean. This major revision process resulted in reorganizing the document to make it easier to use, revising existing rules to add flexibility (for example: changing the maximum percentage of a single crop such as tomatoes from 25 to 50), and more. Watch for your packet in May.

You may have noticed that we had a number of empty plots over the Winter. Members decide for various reasons to leave the garden throughout the year. Some just don't like Winter crops as much as Summer ones; others have no idea how much work a 20' x 30' garden can be, and realize it's not for them. So our new 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Kathy Jarvis, has been extremely busy conducting orientations for new members. If you have a friend or neighbor who is yearning for an active, satisfying gardening experience, tell them to get on the waiting list now – it shouldn't take more than a couple of months until they are assigned their own plot.

Another reason I look forward to Summer is our Annual LBCGA Picnic, which is set for Saturday, July 26. We are looking for 8-10 hard-working members who are interested in helping with this event. If so, please email me at [gardencarolm@verizon.net](mailto:gardencarolm@verizon.net). I will be filling slots on the committee on a first come, first appointed basis. It will be fun!

On behalf of the LBCGA Board, I want to wish you and your family a happy and healthy Summer season.

## In this issue

### Gazebo and Food Bank

#### Putting the "Community" in LBCGA

### Beneficial flowers

#### They're the bee's knees

Suggestions for what will attract pollinators year-round.

### Critter Control

#### Gophers and squirrels, oh my!

Frank Dayak offers help dealing with burrowing gophers.

### Orchard

#### Bushels of work to do

Alan Coles provides an update on what's happening in the orchard.

### Raised Beds

#### Take it easy

Raised beds can make garden work easier.

### Composting

#### Garbage in, garbage out

Joanne Rice's insights into composting at LBCG.

### Meet your Board

#### Kathy Jarvis

1st Vice President

*... and more!*

# Gazebo improvements add color

contributed by Sher Meyers

**B**y now, I hope most of you have seen the two new palms that have been planted at the gazebo. They are beautiful!

Thank you to all the members that have stopped and mentioned to me how great the Lantana at the gazebo looks. It was a little iffy at first but it worked out great and now they are thriving and really add color to a place where many of us come to relax, take a break and talk with fellow gardeners.

Thank you also to all those on the Gazebo Committee who sweep,



Improvements around the Gazebo add to the attractiveness of a popular LBCG gathering spot.

clean benches, water, clean the drinking fountain, and help with overall upkeep of the

gazebo: it is much appreciated by me and all our members.



## Show some love to the Food Bank Table



LBCGA's Food Bank Project provides much-needed and appreciated nutritional support to many of the most needy citizens in Long Beach. The hard work of packing and delivering the produce grown and contributed here is headed up by Lonnie Brundage.

Please help out by following these guidelines when you place donated vegetables on the Food Bank table:

1. Only donate fresh, wholesome food that you would be proud to take home to feed your family, not what you're about to put in the dumpster.
2. Make sure that what you add to the table is clean and ready to use, the way you'd find it in the grocery store.

As always, thank you for your donations!

<http://www.free-picture.net/albums/food/vegetables/vegetables-basket-hd.jpg>

## VEGETABLES & HERBS THAT ATTRACT POLLINATORS



### Cole crops and brassicas

If you leave one of your broccoli, kale or cabbage plants to develop a flower stalk after you've harvested your crop, bees will benefit from the pollen.



### Leek, onion, and garlic

Leeks send up tall, dramatic, showy flowers that bees love. On a smaller scale onions, chives, scallions, and garlic offer pretty white or lavender flower clusters.



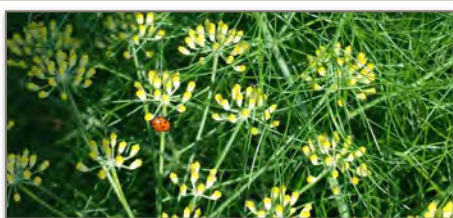
### Borage, blue and white

This profusely-blooming annual flowers in Spring & Summer. Self-seeds freely.



### Thyme, oregano, sage

Allowing your perennial herbs to flower will attract pollinators.



### Fennel

Both annual and perennial varieties are grown for bulb-like stems, feathery leaves, and tasty seeds. Flowers attract bees. Birds like the seeds.



### Tomato

One of the most popular garden annuals for the warm season, tomato flowers really draw in the bees with many clusters of bright blossoms.

Do a little research before planting woody perennial herbs, especially ones like lavender and rosemary.

They can easily become too big and you'll have to keep them trimmed regularly or replace them every couple of years.



## POPULAR

## Garden Flowers

Here are some Spring through Fall bee & butterfly favorites you can use toward the allowed 10% of ornamental flowers in your garden plot. (Source: [Sunset magazine](#))

### Alyssum

#### Annual, full sun.

With blossoms that smell like honey, it's a natural for bees. Low-growing.

### Aster

#### Perennial, full sun.

Daisy-like flowers, often in blue shades.

### Blanket Flower

#### Annual, full sun.

Easy to grow from seed.

### Salvia

#### Perennial, full sun.

Different from culinary sage (*Salvia officinalis*), this ornamental produces vibrant flower spikes in red or deep blue.

### Sunflower

#### Annual, full sun.

Tall and dramatic or more petite cutting varieties. Make sure you plant one that is pollen-producing; not all of them are.

### Yarrow

#### Perennial, full sun.

Many colors available including variations of white, yellow, orange, pink, and red.



### More info online

Native plants for coastal California:

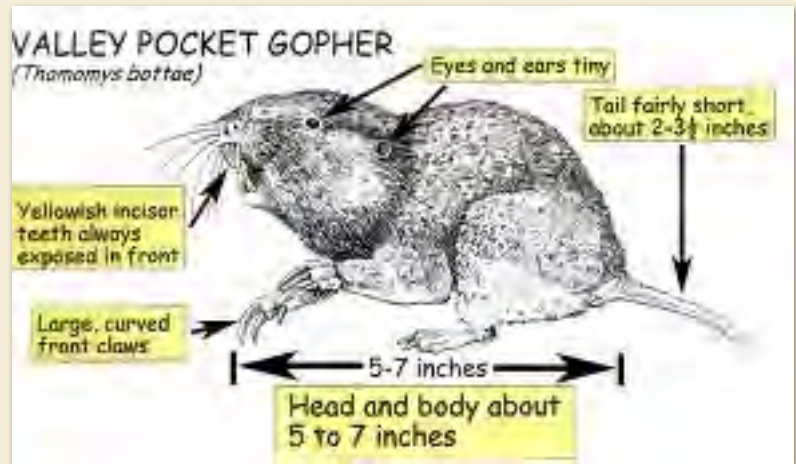
<http://pollinator.org/PDFs/Guides/>

# Critter Control

contributed by Frank Dayak

**S**hould you observe an open hole or a mound of dirt in your garden, this could indicate there is rabbit, squirrel or, most likely, gopher activity going on. **Don't** try to drown out the critter by stuffing the hose down the hole and pouring in water. This will not solve your problem and will make it harder for me to work at getting rid of the pests.

First, get an orange flag from the bucket at the end of the center road at Row Q and place it in the hole or the area where you think critters are burrowing. Then call me at (562) 596-1975 to let me know you have a critter problem. Make sure you tell me your



<http://acwm.lacounty.gov/scripts/gophers.htm>

plot number in your message: with 300+ gardens, it is almost impossible for me to know where to look unless you tell me.

I am in the garden almost every day and will do my best to prevent your crops from being eaten by the gophers if

you only will let me know. Then good luck to both of us!

By the way, I strongly encourage trapping as suggested by President Meyer in a recent email if you want to keep your crops, especially the beans and tomatoes.

## Fox Squirrel

## Did you know?



**The ubiquitous Fox Squirrel is not native to California.**

Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans brought these squirrels with them from areas in the southeastern U.S., probably the Mississippi Valley area of Tennessee. By 1949, they were considered an agricultural pest.

It has displaced the native Western Gray Squirrel from its habitat in many areas.

For more information, click on the link to the Southern California Fox Squirrel Research Project under the photo.

<http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/amuchli/squirreiform.htm>

# Orchard Committee brings a lot to the table

contributed by Alan Coles

**M**any of you may have noticed the changes that have taken place in the orchard over the past year. Our evening work parties have been a great success not only by the quantity and quality of the tasks that have been accomplished but they have also allowed us to build a core group of orchard committee members. Committee members have been empowered to make decisions on operating and maintaining the orchard through a consensus building process. Information from the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resource publications and other reliable sources relevant to our region have been our primary guide to managing diseases, insect problems and proper fertilization.

To coordinate activities among committee members we have set up a log book where all actions are written with sections on watering, fertilizer applications, mowing, pruning and disease control. A group web site has been set up to allow discussion on various topics related to improving the health of the trees.

We have fixed many costly leaks in the drip irrigation system and are in the process of updating the system for more efficient water delivery. We have worked on controlling insects using an integrated management system approach that relies more on encouraging natural predators and less on insecticides. We had our soil tested and saved a lot of money by not buying unneeded nutrients. We regularly check citrus for insects such as the Asian Psyllid, which can spread the deadly [Huanglongbing](#) or greening disease. We have also begun the conversion of the grass to mulch that will benefit the trees, save water, save money and allow orchard workers to spend more time on tree care.

One highlight was a visit last summer by Tom Spellman of Dave Wilson Nursery. He was met by 5 committee members, who asked many good questions and took copious notes. Tom identified many of the problems in the orchard and made suggestions on how to correct them. He was impressed by our commitment and later donated 12 new trees.

The changes that are being implemented will take time. Some sick and dying trees will have to be removed and replaced by more disease-resistant ones. We are hopeful that we can increase both quantity and quality of our fruit but we know that there is much work ahead.

We welcome your questions and input. Please feel free to ask any committee member in the orchard (hopefully we will be wearing one of the orchard vests) or attend one of our work parties. The orchard serves as a resource to our members, helping to educate ourselves on the proper care of fruit trees. Please remember that we do ask people to stay out of the orchard unless a committee member is present. Forward your questions to the editor and I will try to answer them in this column.

Lastly, we would like to thank Ernie Trait for his years of service to the orchard and his encouragement of our efforts to bring about the necessary changes that our maturing orchard needs as it continues to grow.



# Raise the standards on your garden with raised beds

**R**aised-bed gardening combines the benefits of extended growing seasons, easily managed soil, and reduced maintenance requirements with the convenience of back- & knee-friendly working.

Raised-bed gardeners have a leg up on the season since the soil in their planting beds warms more quickly than the surrounding ground (depending on the depth of the beds), allowing earlier transplanting and encouraging seeds to germinate faster. With no foot traffic to compact the soil in raised beds, little tilling is needed to maintain a loose, even soil structure.

The native soil here in our garden has a high clay content. While it is fertile and retains water well, it compacts easily and benefits from being amended with plenty of organic matter from manure, compost or bagged commercial soil amendments to improve structure and drainage. Looser soil enables plants to develop more extensive root systems and allows nutrients to

penetrate more easily. Depending on the texture and depth of your amended soil, you may need to water more often since it won't hold moisture as long as soil with more clay.

Raised beds also maximize your space since they're ideal for dense planting. Planting, weeding, harvesting and other gardening tasks become much less strenuous when the crops are elevated even a few inches.

All this adds up to healthy, productive plants with less effort!

**Plans for raised beds in new or existing plots, including materials and design, must be submitted to the 1st Vice President for approval in advance of installation. Approval will be provided within 5-7 days, or earlier if possible.**



## Mark your calendar

### Important dates and deadlines for LBCGA members:

**Saturday, June 7:** Deadline to submit your voted ballot for Board election. Must be received by postal mail, via garden mailbox or by hand no later than 7:30 a.m.

**Also June 7:** Final general work party for the membership year at 7:30 a.m. Annual membership meeting follows at 10 a.m.

**Monday, June 30:** Annual dues and renewal contract must be received.

**Saturday, July 26:** Annual LBCGA Picnic. Volunteers needed: contact any Board member to offer your help.

## Ongoing events

### Orchard work parties

Every Tuesday, 4 to 6 p.m. (subject to seasonal change). Meet in Orchard.

### Monthly general work party and Board meeting

1st Saturday of each month, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. (subject to change); Board meeting convenes at 10 a.m. following work party.

### Garden reviews

2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month, 7:30 a.m. Meet at the gazebo to join in.



# Composting

contributed by Joanne Rice

I was asked to write this article because of a situation we encountered a few years ago here at LBCG. At that time (June 2009), we looked around our community garden and noticed we had a problem that had escalated to affect almost every squash plant that was being grown.

We knew we had a virus infecting our garden squash, but what could we do about it? Those of you who were members at that time will probably remember that we immediately called for help from plant pathologist Dr. Michael Coffey, and he in turn got us in touch with plant virus specialist Dr. Deborah Matthews.

Dr. Matthews to the rescue! She came and spent the better part of a day with us. Not only did she find virus on squash but also on peppers, beans, Swiss chard, and cucumbers. She was in the middle of VIRUS HEAVEN, for her! She took a lot of samples to culture so we would know which viruses we were dealing with and she spoke at length about how to handle the problem and gave some suggestions. We have an audiotape of everything she said that day. Here are some of her suggestions:

- Remove, bag and discard every virus-infected vegetable plant.
- Do not replant the same type of vegetable (squash, pepper, etc) in that infected spot.

- Do not compost any diseased plants, especially if they have a virus.
- You cannot cure a virus. If it gets into your soil, you have it.
- Composters in California do not get hot enough to kill most diseases.
- Never compost any part of a tomato plant, including the roots.

One of the final statements that Dr. Matthews made was this:

“Most of the diseases you get in your gardens come from composting.”

Don't get me wrong: I loved composting but it is not just a matter of throwing old veggies, kitchen scraps, manure and shredded newspaper into the compost bin and letting it rot. In our wonderful Southern California climate, compost breaks down into nice crumbly “black gold;” unfortunately, we are unaware when we toss plant trimmings from our gardens into our bins what diseases are going in along with them.

In short, we get back what we give to compost. The next time you toss something into your bin, ask yourself if you are also adding a disease – do you want to keep feeding a virus to your garden?

## Meet your LBCGA Board: Kathy Jarvis

It is our pleasure to introduce you to our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Kathy Jarvis (F-01). Kathy started serving on the board last summer as a Director as an appointee by the President and was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President to fill the mid-year vacancy.

She worked with a committee of Board members and volunteer gardeners to revise the Rules & Agreements and has assisted in the monthly garden surveys, which she says is a very enlightening experience. She has recently taken on the responsibility of Membership Chair and enjoys orienting new gardeners and working closely with them on their gardening journey.

When asked what her inspiration to have a garden was, she said, "My dad who passed away a few years ago. He was an amazing gardener and he built me a raised bed in my back yard. It gave us so much to talk about and I would call him for advice all the time. It was a great bonding experience for us." Her best advice to new gardeners is to "Have fun!" She remembers when she planted her first garden and really had no idea what she was doing, but she still ended up with an abundance of food and had so much fun doing it.



She is a huge fan of kale. She feels it is so easy to grow and is considered a healthy super food. Her family eats it every day. "We juice it, put in soups, salads and I sauté it as a side dish. We even add it to our breakfast potatoes."

When asked what is her favorite tool and why, she laughed, "I'm not sure if this is a tool but I have colored clothes pins I use to pin nets over my plants. My 2 grandsons love to take the pins and clip them all over the place. It keeps them busy and I can get some work done!"

Kathy loves country music and goes to as many country concerts that she can. She enjoys country dancing which she says she is not very good at, but has fun doing it anyway. Kathy and her husband have 4 grown kids and 2 grandbabies. Her daughter who often helps her in the garden was on Wheel of Fortune and was the big winner. Kathy said, "I got to run on stage and jump up and down when she won a Mercedes Benz on the final puzzle." Her daughter also took her to Hawaii with the trip she won. It was an exciting day!

We know Kathy will bring new ideas and great enthusiasm to the LBCGA Board. Welcome, Kathy!



# General information

Contacts, procedures, reminders, announcements

## Board Of Directors

Your 2013-14 Long Beach Community Garden Association Board, their assignments and contact information:

Carol Meyer - President  
562-343-3326

Kathy Jarvis - First V.P.  
Membership/Disease Control  
714-716-7002

Sher Meyers - Second V.P.  
Gazebo  
562-428-8604

Darlene Gidley - Secretary  
562-716-9076

Mary Rasmussen - Treasurer  
562-498-7428

Chuck Davis  
Plot Border Boards  
562-438-2073

Frank Dayak  
Critter Control  
562-596-1975

Kevin Holman  
Flowers & Landscape  
562-439-2326

Michael Roide  
Printing & Mailing  
562-755-6781

Gary Sarka  
Water Systems  
562-430-0695

Ernie Trait  
Orchard  
562-431-7074

Nancy Bernstein  
Maintenance  
562-597-4552

Vicki Storberg  
Commodities Manager  
562-427-6084

Lonnie Brundage  
Food Bank  
562-597-0926

Each month we will feature one or two Board Officers or Directors in the newsletter. If you have a question for any of them, please feel free to contact them directly.



### Community Service

Now is the time to do your community service hours. The deadline is June 7, the last work party of the year.

### Garden Reviews

Garden review walks are conducted on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month at 7:30 a.m. Actual dates are posted on the bulletin board at the garden entrance. Any member is welcome to come along.

### Vacations

You do not need to inform the Board if you are going on vacation for a short time (a week or two), particularly if you have someone managing your garden for you. If you plan to be gone for an extended time (more than 2 weeks), it is best to notify the President or Vice President of your extended absence. You should always arrange for another gardener, family member or friend to water and weed your garden in your absence. These individuals should be well-informed of the R&As.

### Leaving The Garden In Good Standing

If you find it necessary to give up your garden plot (life happens sometimes), it is critical that you do the following:

- Notify the President or 1st VP by email or phone
- Remove all personal items
- Clean up the plot: failure to leave the garden in good condition will result in inability to return at a later date
- Return your gate opener(s) and vehicle tag(s)

### Wheelbarrows

Maintaining the wheelbarrows so they are in good repair for all of us is a real job! Don't remove the wheels from the wheel barrows, and never store them behind a dumpster. **If a wheelbarrow is broken, take it to the green shed (southeast corner) or place it upside down away from the road.** Call Nancy at 562-477-1598 or tell another board member so it can be fixed.

### Recipes

Once in a while, we wish we could think of something new to fix with our wonderful produce. If you have a great recipe for garden veggies that you would like to share with others, please email to [nancybernstein@aim.com](mailto:nancybernstein@aim.com) It would be great to begin sharing these!



### Your newsletter committee:

Editor: Merilee Atkinson

Editorial Board: Carol Meyer and  
Kathy Jarvis

Got kale? Add some oranges to it. ‘Supremes’ of citrus are sections that are sliced from the fruit without any rind or membrane attached. Let your inner chef loose with a new technique!

Recipe and photo from [Saveur magazine](#)

## Kale & Citrus Salad

4 large oranges, peeled and supremed, trimmings reserved  
4 tbsp. honey  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
2 tbsp. olive oil  
8-10 cups baby kale (or mature kale, stemmed and torn into bite-sized pieces)  
3 tbsp. hulled pumpkin seeds, toasted  
2-3 medium shallots, peeled, thinly sliced, and soaked in cold water for 10 minutes  
1½ cup ricotta cheese

Squeeze juice from orange trimmings into a large mixing bowl to make ¼ cup juice. Add honey, salt and pepper, and whisk in oil. Add kale, pumpkin seeds, shallots, and supremed orange



segments, and toss to coat with the dressing. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add small dollops of ricotta cheese and very gently toss to combine before serving. Serves 6-8.

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