

Golden Gardens

Official Publication of California Garden Clubs, Inc.



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a member of
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
and
Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc.

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September-October 2025

Vol. 2-18



CGCI Flower Arranger of the Year
Dyanna Madro

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* = Liaison

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Orange County: [Donna Hood](#)

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2026 PRGC Convention: [Robin Pokorski](#)

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Flower Show Awards: [Emily Troxell](#)

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Contest Sponsors/Finance: [Elisabeth Tufo](#)

Junior Essay Contest: [Lisa Cosand](#)

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster

Contest Chm.: [Michelle Blomberg](#)

Assistant: [Charlotte Tucker](#)

Youth Poetry Contest: [Lisa Cosand](#)

Youth Pollinator Poster Contest:

[Ashley Smith](#)

Youth Sculpture Contest: [Lisa Cosand](#)

Zoom: [Carol Vallens](#)

CGCI PROJECTS

Black Point Historic Garden: [Julie West](#)

Blue Star Markers: [George Unrine](#) (Southern
CA) & [Maria Krenek](#) (Northern CA)

Conejo Valley Botanic Garden: [Melvin Gaines](#)

Golden Legacy Society: [George Perko](#)

Penny Pines: [Terry Sampson](#)

2025-2027 President's Project Chm.:

[Barbara Weiler](#). Ambassadors: [Milly Benson](#),

[Joan Craig](#), [Hank Vanderhorst](#)

Sempervirens Fund: [Judy Unrine](#)

[Flower Show Judges Council Chairmen](#)

See 2025-26 *Yearbook, Manual & Roster*

Golden Gardens

The Official Publication of California Garden Clubs, Inc.

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- Distributed electronically—FREE. To subscribe or view past issues, visit: www.californiagardenclubs.com/cgcinewsletters/
- Submit articles to the [Editor](#) by the 20th of the month: **December** (for January-February issue); **February** (for March-April issue); **April** (for May-June issue); **June** (July-August issue); **August** (September-October); **October** (November-December issue).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Listing of District Directors & Chairmen.....	2
Official Calendar.....	3
President's Message.....	3
Getting to Know the CGCI President.....	4
Chairmen Updates	4-9
Blue Star Memorial Dedications.....	10
Landscape Design: Zone Zero.....	11
Gardening: Planting Spring Bulbs.....	12
Entomology: Tarantula Hawk Wasp.....	13
Floral Design: Exhibition Tables	14
NGC & PRGC News.....	15

OFFICIAL CALENDAR

Check the CGCI [Calendar](#) for links to brochures, flyers, registration forms, etc. For schools in other states, check the [NGC website](#). See CGCI Calendar for club, affiliate, associate plant society, and district "special" events which are open to the public.

2025

Sept. 8-10, [CGCI Fall Board Meeting](#), Harris Ranch, Coalinga. Host: Valley Lode District

Sept. 18, NGC Fall Board Meeting, Virtual

Sept. 24-26, Flower Show School, Course 4, Red Bluff. Sponsor: Red Bluff GC. Contact [Dottie Renstrom](#) for information.

Sept. 24, Flower Show School, Course 1—Design Only. Sponsor: Southwestern Judges Council. [Brochure](#)

Sept. 25-27, Flower Show School, Course 2, Poway. Sponsor: Southwestern Judges Council. [Brochure](#)

Sept. 25-26, Gardening School, Course 3, Encino. Sponsor: Southern CA GC. [Brochure](#)

Oct. 23-24, Gardening School, Course 4. Encino. Sponsor: Southern CA GC. [Brochure](#)

2026

Jan. 26-28, [CGCI Winter Board Meeting](#), Virtual

Feb. 7-8, Gardening School, Course 1, Los Osos

Feb. 21-22, Gardening School, Course 2, Los Osos

Feb. 25-27, Flower Show School, Course 3, Poway. Sponsor: Southwestern Judges Council

March 7-8, Gardening School, Course 3, Los Osos

March 21-22, Gardening School, Course 4, Los Osos

May 4-6, NGC Convention, St. Louis, MO

May 12-14, CGCI Convention, San Diego

Sept. 24-26, Flower Show School, Course 4, Poway. Sponsor: Southwestern Judges Council

Oct. 12-14, PRGC Convention, Thousand Oaks, California

*Autumn carries more gold in its pocket
than all the other seasons.*

— Jim Bishop

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members,

As summer comes to an end, I look forward to cooler weather, and I feel proud and grateful for all the work our members across the state do.

Over the summer, I had the pleasure of attending the San Fernando Valley District meeting and the Southern California Garden Club meeting, where the members warmly welcomed me. The club's meetings offer an excellent opportunity to connect with members and observe the remarkable work happening at the local level.

One of the best parts of my summer was attending the California State Fair in Sacramento and celebrating the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest winners. It was a joy to see the young artists' creativity and passion for fire prevention and conservation. I am so proud of all the students who participated and the garden clubs that sponsored them.

Another deeply moving event was the Blue Star Memorial Marker ceremony in Hermosa Beach. The Hermosa Garden Club, in partnership with the City of Hermosa Beach, dedicated a new Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker at Greenwood Park. This ceremony was a powerful and solemn tribute to all who have served and continue to serve in our nation's armed forces. It served as a beautiful reminder of the vital role CGCI plays in honoring our heroes and beautifying our communities.

This summer also provided wonderful opportunities for personal and professional growth. I had the privilege of attending the OFAD (Organization of Floral Art Designers) seminar in San Francisco. The seminar never fails to offer fresh perspectives and innovative techniques in floral design. I also had the chance to attend two of the NGC Gardening Schools hosted by the Southern California Garden Club. I even learned which insect has been decimating my *Plectranthus neochilus* (Lobster Flower) and how to treat it.

As we look ahead to the fall, I encourage you to stay engaged, attend your local meetings, and CGCI board meetings and conventions. All the work we do makes a meaningful difference. I look forward to seeing everyone at our Fall Board Meeting at Harris Ranch Resort in Coalinga, September 8-10, 2025.

Thank you for all that you do,

Adele Kelly

2025-2027 President

REMINDER

All dues were payable on **July 1** and will become delinquent on **October 1**.

See [Bylaws](#), Article IV, Section 3.

Starting with the 2025-2026 club year, which began July 1, all contact information for Presidents and Treasurers and dues payments are to be submitted via forms in the new **MEMBERS ONLY SECTION** of the [website](#). The links to the new section and instructions were sent to all organization presidents and treasurers on April 30, 2025.

GETTING TO KNOW THE 2025-2027 CGCI PRESIDENT ADELE KELLY

Adele Kelly was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As a young girl, she fondly remembers her family's backyard garden and eating fresh, sun-ripened strawberries and tomatoes straight from the plant. Everyone in the neighborhood had a backyard garden; during summer, a large amount of zucchini—often considered the “dreaded delivery”—was left on your porch.

After graduating high school, Adele joined the Army Reserves and was assigned to a transportation company in Bisbee, Arizona. Soon after, she married and spent five years in Stuttgart, Germany, working in the federal civil service system. When she returned to the U.S., she secured a job with a government contractor in Los Angeles. She then built a twenty-year career in industrial security, as well as human resources and facilities management.

Adele moved to San Diego in 1990 and helped establish a spin-off company from the government contractor she worked for in

Los Angeles. She was able to retire early and travel extensively. She also started working in her garden, but she didn't know much about plants, so she attended a local garden club meeting. She joined on her first visit because everyone was so friendly. Three years later, Adele became the President of the Bernardo Gardeners Club. She also joined the Poway Valley Garden Club because she was interested in flower shows. She then served on the Palomar District Executive Committee and became District Director in 2017. Adele joined the California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI) Executive Committee in 2019. She is now the 49th President. Adele is honored to serve as CGCI's President and looks forward to her two-year journey of serving and growing CGCI.

Adele's theme and President's Project are:

Theme: “Cultivating the Roots of Success.”

President's Project: Abraxas High School Garden – Abraxas Orchard



CGCI NEEDS YOU!

Here is your opportunity to serve CGCI. CGCI is looking for qualified garden club members to help CGCI better serve its members.

The following future CGCI chairmen positions are available:

- A member who has marketing experience and strong publication and computer skills.
- A member who is knowledgeable about Instagram to set up and administer a CGCI Instagram Page.
- A member to assist the CGCI Awards Chairman with the administration of the Awards Program.
- A member to serve as CGCI Garden Therapy/Outreach Chairman.

Or, if you have a new idea for a chairmanship, we want to hear from you!

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact President [Adele Kelly](#).

AWARDS PROGRAM UPDATE

YOU CAN'T WIN, IF YOU DON'T ENTER!



Please refer to the updated Awards Manual and forms for the 2025 awards year available on the CGCI website under the [“Awards” section](#). Be aware of the two important deadlines: December 1, 2025, and January 10, 2026. Continue to gather information about your projects and take high-resolution photographs to document them. It is recommended that photographs do not include people.

Please note that the Youth Contests now have a dedicated Youth Contests Manual, which can be found in the [“Youth Activities” section](#) of the website. Look for the tab labeled “Youth Contests.” Only three of the contests require a Youth Contest Cover Sheet (new for 2025) to be submitted with each entry. You can find the Youth Contest Cover Sheet under the same tab as the Youth Contests Manual.

The California Consultants Council Commendations can be found on the [California Consultants Council page](#) on the website.

The Awards Committee looks forward to receiving your entries this fall and winter.

2025-2027 PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

By [Barbara Weiler](#), Chairman

CULTIVATING THE ROOTS OF SUCCESS ABRAXAS HIGH SCHOOL GARDEN — ABRAXAS ORCHARD

As of August 15, the following donated to the President's Project:

Sue Bennett
Michele Blomberg
Elyse Crane
Paula Elias
Maria and Thomas Krenek IV
Dyanna Madro
Ellyn Meilke

Donna Payton
Robin Pokorski
Shelley Sparks
Terri Taylor in Memory of Sarah and
Myron Taylor
Judy and George Unrine
Carol Vallens

Hank Vanderhorst
Barbara Weiler
Lake Oroville Area Garden Club
Riviera Garden Club
San Fernando Valley District
Santa Clara Valley District

Thank you to all who donated! To donate, see the CGCI website, and look for the [2025-2027 President's Project](#) under the "Projects" tab.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

By [Carol Vallens](#), Chairman



The following elected offices to be filled for the 2027-2029 term are: **First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Financial Secretary.**

If you would like to volunteer for consideration or to recommend a candidate, please contact a Nominating Committee member. Members of the Nominating Committee and their email addresses are listed on Page 2 of this newsletter.

GROUP TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM ([GTEP](#))

By [Cynthia Jackson](#), Chairman

Well, it looks like it's that time of year again — how the time flies. This will be after completion of the 2025-2026 filings. And there were some bumps in that road along the way. I am planning that the 2026-2027 filings be easy and seamless for all of us! To that end, I am repeating some critical information in this short article.

First of all, renewals are **due to me no later than January 15, 2026.**

Secondly, you must also **attach proof** to your renewal that forms 990/990N, 199/199N were filed. [These two items alone accounted for 99.9% of unnecessary work performed by this chairman.]

Thirdly, I am looking to modify the renewal form to make it more user-friendly. If you have any suggestions, please share them with me ASAP. I am also considering writing an article that gives an overview of GTEP. Would this be of value to you? Please let me know.

YEARBOOK, MANUAL & ROSTER

The new 2025-2026 *Yearbook, Manual & Roster* (YMR) was mailed to club presidents of record in the CGCI Members database. If you have not updated your contact information, **do so now.** This is how CGCI contacts your club with important information. If you have not received your YMR, ask your former president to send it to you.

Please contact [Launa Gould](#), YMR Chairman, if you have any questions.

CYBERCRIME IS ALIVE AND WELL

By [Jane McKee](#), Website Advisor

THEY'RE BACK!



This is a reminder that the hackers, phishers and spoofers are still out there and hard at work to try to steal your personal information and/or entice you to send them money.

Are there technical means available to thwart the bad guys? Probably, but beware because the "solution" may turn out to be a scam. **The most effective deterrent is to be VIGILANT** and learn to recognize those false and misleading messages that flood our electronic inboxes. These fraudulent attempts are not limited to email. They also arrive as text messages or phone calls.

Please share the following information with your members.

- **Hacker:** one who is skilled at literally breaking into email, websites or systems and taking the information, many times without the owner being aware that anything is wrong.
- **Phisher/phishing:** a type of cybercrime where attackers attempt to steal sensitive information, such as login credentials, credit card details, or personal information, by disguising themselves as a trustworthy entity. They often use deceptive emails, messages, or websites that mimic legitimate sources to trick individuals into revealing this information.

- **Spoofers/Spoofing** is the **forgery of an e-mail header** so that the message appears to have originated from someone or somewhere other than the actual source. Distributors of spam often use spoofing in an attempt to get recipients to open, and possibly even respond, to their solicitations; again, usually asking for money and/or financial information.

If you receive an email that appears to be from CGCI or a CGCI officer and it looks suspicious, call the individual to find out if it is legitimate. **DO NOT** respond directly to the email.

- Please note that **CGCI WILL NEVER REQUEST THAT YOU SPEND MONEY** on its behalf. All CGCI expenditures are done through official channels via the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.
- Emails asking you to purchase items or donate to a specific cause "on behalf" of CGCI are fraudulent and you should never take action.
- Emails asking you to "pay a vendor x dollars" are fraudulent. Note: If these appear to come from someone within your local organization, be sure to check with the purported sender.
- Pay attention to the "sending" email address. In many cases the email address displayed is not even close to an "official" address and can easily be identified as fraudulent.
- NEVER click on any link in a suspicious email.
- Report the email as spam or phishing to your email provider (most have a link somewhere in the email account).

Keep Software Updated: Regularly update your operating system, browser, and security software to patch vulnerabilities.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP TIDBITS

By [Robin Pokorski](#), Board of Trustees Chairman

Does your club have a flyer? It should list a contact name and email, meeting location and dates, Facebook or Instagram

tag, and a website address. It could also include the topic of the speaker for each month; club projects; or organizations supported (Penny Pines, Theodore Payne Foundation, etc.).

Do your club members have club business cards? Cards should include a contact name and email, meeting location and dates, and a website address.

Does your club have a website? THE MOST IMPORTANT thing is that the website is current. Ensure there isn't a bus tour from 1907 listed as the next event!

Does your club have education at most meetings? Include at least one tidbit of education at every/most meetings. Make club meetings so interesting your members don't want to miss a single one!

Does your club have yard sales, plant sales, flower shows? Ensure that nothing leaves your club without having some identifying information included.



PENNY PINES PROGRAM

By Terry Sampson, Penny Pines Chairman**PENNY PINES DONATIONS — AUGUST 2025 REPORT**

Donations to Date: \$19,042.00

H = In Honor

M = In Memory

ARBORETUM DISTRICT**Chevy Chase Estates Garden Club** \$136**Its Garden Thyme Garden Club**

H: Sandra Flud \$68

H: Larry Jones \$68

H: Stan Nakamura \$68

H: Phyllis Prado \$68

H: Marty Sinclair \$68

M: Joe Corral \$68

M: Kenny Kaiser \$68

M: Gloria Witham \$136

Year Around Garden Club

H: Jodee Collier \$68

H: Marcella Ramos \$68

H: Christine Ontiveros \$68

H: Mike Williams \$68

H: Pam Ehlers \$68

H: Nancy Bird \$68

M: Santiago Leon \$136

M: Harold H. Ehlers Jr. \$68

M: Mary Torrez \$68

M: Pat Dickerman \$68

M: Shirley Stewart \$68

M: Roberta Hallin \$68

BAY BRIDGES DISTRICT**El Cerrito Garden Club**

H: Marianne Aubert \$68

H: Gabriele Simpson \$68

BUTTES DISTRICT**Lake Oroville Area Garden Club**

H: Marilyn Fuller \$68

COSTA VERDE DISTRICT**Hermosa Garden Club**

H: Judy Parnin \$68

M: Beverly Bodkin \$68

M: June Pulcini \$68

GOLDEN FOOTHILLS DISTRICT**Colfax Garden Club**

H: Gail Adams \$68

LUTHER BURBANK DISTRICT**Petaluma Garden Club**

\$68

MENDO-LAKE DISTRICT**Fort Bragg Garden Club**

H: Federal Workers of Mendocino

National Forest \$68

PALOMAR DISTRICT**Dos Valles Garden Club****Fallbrook Garden Club**

H: Sharon Tooley \$68

M: Harry Carpenter \$68

Mission Hills Garden Club

M: Hilary Hagar \$68

Paradise Gardeners \$68**Village Garden Club of La Jolla** \$1,088**ROADRUNNER DISTRICT****Hesperia Garden Club**

H: SPAH – Sharing Plants, Arts

and Hearts \$68

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY DISTRICT**Southern California Garden Club**

H: Otto & Sons Nursery \$68

SEQUOIA FOOTHILLS DISTRICT**Valley Oak Garden Club**

M: Elizabeth Boghosian \$68

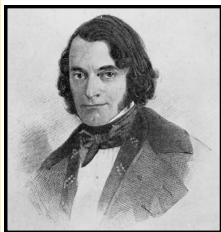
VALLEY LODGE DISTRICT**Ceres Garden Club**

H: Jose's Mexican Restaurant,

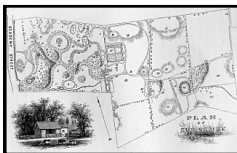
Alfonso's Mexican Grill,

American Italian Bistro \$68

Restaurant

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING

Andrew Jackson Downing (October 31, 1815 – July 28, 1852) was an American landscape designer, horticulturist, writer, prominent advocate of the Gothic Revival in the United States, and editor of The Horticulturist magazine (1846–1852).



Downing's Original
Site Plan for
"Springside"

Downing is considered to be a founder of American landscape architecture. According to *Stewards of the Land*, "Downing's writing and his designs for cottage and estate residences, such as the Matthew Vassar estate "Springside," provided an American application of the English romantic or natural style . . . to create uniquely American landscapes."

For more information about landscape design, attend an NGC Landscape Design School. Contact the CGCI Landscape Design School Chairman, [Alexis Slafer](#), for more information.



LOV Garden Club is sponsoring a NGC
GARDENING SCHOOL

Course 1 - February 7 & 8 Course 2 - February 21 & 22
Course 3 - March 7 & 8 Course 4 - March 21 & 22

NGC Gardening Schools were established in May 1977. Four courses were designed to learn the correct way to plant, to prune and marvel at what we have accomplished. We are stewards of the land; we have a responsibility to serve and protect for future generations. This is in keeping with NGC Bylaws Article II, Number 5: "to study and to advance the fine arts of gardening, landscaping, floral design and horticulture."

\$85 per course or \$300 for all 4 courses

LOVGC Member rate:

\$75 per course or \$250 for all 4 courses

Coffee, Tea & Lunch is included

YOUTH CONTESTS

By [Lisa Cosand](#), Youth Activities Chairman

CGCI has youth contests for your youngsters. They can build sculptures out of recycled material, write essays and poems, or be artists and submit a poster of a pollinator. Children can also enter the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contest. There are over \$1,200 in prizes for the children to win, but they cannot win unless they enter!

Please note that there are rules for these contests. Simply go to Youth Contests Manual on the CGCI website under the "[Youth Activities](#)" tab and look for the "Youth Contests" tab. The Youth Contests Manual contains all of the details and deadlines. CGCI looks forward to receiving your club's entries. If there are questions, please text me at 818-929-2841.

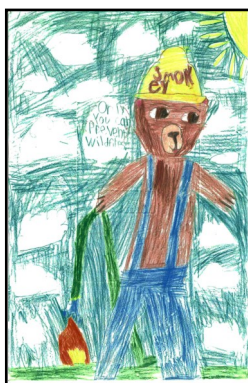
SMOKEY BEAR/WOODSY OWL POSTER CONTEST

Congratulations to everyone who entered in the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest! And congratulations to all who won first places at CGCI, PRGC, and NGC! All poster contest winners and their families were invited by CGCI's Poster Contest Chairman Charlotte Tucker to attend the Camp Smokey special ceremony on July 16, 2025 (that took place inside the California State Fairgrounds in Sacramento) to further acknowledge and celebrate their winning status. The award-winning posters from all grade levels were proudly displayed throughout the duration of the California State Fair at Camp Smokey.



SECOND GRADE

CGCI 1st Place, PRGC 1st Place, and
NGC GRAND PRIZE WINNER,
Adaleen Sooa Cho of Folsom
Garden Club



FIRST GRADE

CGCI 1st Place and
PRGC 3rd Place,
Adelyn Adsitt of
Pioneer Garden
Club



THIRD GRADE

CGCI 1st Place, **Angeline Wang** of
Poway Valley Garden Club



FOURTH GRADE

CGCI 1st Place, PRGC
1st Place, and NGC 1st
Place, **Tayden Cho** of
Folsom Garden Club



FIFTH GRADE

CGCI 1st Place, PRGC 1st Place,
and NGC 1st Place,
Vinaya Ganesh of Folsom
Garden Club

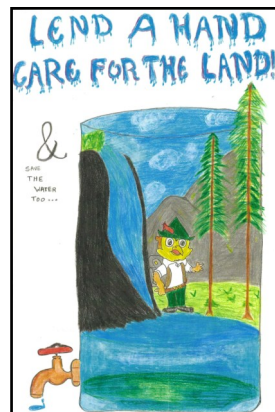


Photo above (from right to left): 2024-2025 CGCI Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest Chairman Charlotte Tucker, CGCI 1st Vice President Marlene Kinney, Folsom Garden Club Member Diane Dillard, CGCI President Adele Kelly, NGC Poster Contest Chairman Terry Critchlow (from Washington), NGC's Grand Price Winner Adaleen Sooa, CGCI Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl 2025-2026 Chairman Michele Blomberg, and USDA Forest Service Personnel

GARDENING SCHOOL

NO SUMMER VACATION FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUB

By **Greg Pokorski**, Gardening Schools Chairman

**Students and Instructor Discussing
Plant Evolution**

As is the case with most garden clubs, Southern California Garden Club conducts general club meetings with program speakers and varied activities from September through June. For some members, there are numerous summer duties such as planning programs for the next garden club year, membership renewals, and creating a new yearbook. In addition, our club held summer outings this year to The Huntington and the Japanese Garden in Van Nuys.

But as its major summer activity, the club has been conducting its sixth National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) Educational School. Course 1 of California Gardening School Series 27 was held July 10 & 11 with 45 attendees, including 30 who took the exams towards becoming NGC Gardening Consultants and five Consultants who refreshed in order to maintain their Gardening Consultant status. Course 2 was held August 14 & 15 with 40 attendees, including 27 who took the exams and seven Consultants who refreshed. We have 27 new Provisional Gardening Consultants (who have completed two courses and passed exams for each) and hope they will complete the two remaining courses to become fully accredited Gardening Consultants. Students were from all over the state, representing Districts from Golden Foothills to Montana de Oro to Palomar, and included CGCI President Adele Kelly (and former Presidents Robin Pokorski, who serves as Local Chairman, Sue Bennett and Carol Vallens).

One dynamic instructor, Jorge Ochoa from Long Beach City College, illustrated many points of basic botany with the many

plants he brought. He also provided a large assortment of plants for students to use in the hands-on plant propagation activity. He illustrated the whole timeline of the evolution of plants with a display of plants across the entire front of the classroom. We learned about plant diseases and pests from looking at growing plants outside at our meeting place, the Sepulveda Garden Center in Encino, as well as from overhead projection of living pests.

Students who have various degrees of gardening expertise have the opportunity to learn more by asking questions and by engaging with the instructors during breaks and lunchtime. In this new era where some of these schools are conducted by Zoom, one student remarked that doing this in person "is everything." Students value the networking and socializing with each other and the personal engagement with the instructors (four different instructors for these first two courses).

In addition to learning, students enjoyed eating and visiting. Lunches have been varied and fun: a pizza day, a grilled hot dog day, and a salad bar day. One thing I learned in Gardening School had nothing to do with gardening. During an ice cream/dessert break one afternoon, one student advised that by inserting a miniature marshmallow in the bottom of a pointed waffle ice cream cone, you prevent ice cream drips.

This school has two remaining courses: Course 3 is September 25 & 26, and Course 4 is October 23 & 24. You can still register for these courses even if you have not taken the first two courses. Come for the valuable gardening information or come to start obtaining credits to become a Gardening Consultant. You can make up the other two courses in future schools, such as one to be presented by the Los Osos Valley Garden Club next February and March. Courses 3 and 4 will include such topics as Houseplants, Container Gardening, New Plant Development and Evaluation, Native Trees & Shrubs, Pruning Techniques, Outdoor Identification of Plants, Specialized Styles of Gardening, and more.

**"Develop a passion
for learning.
If you do, you will
never cease to grow."**

— Anthony J. D'Angelo

Ask members of Southern California Garden Club why you should attend Gardening School and other NGC Schools and how and why your club or district can host future schools. This club has found conducting NGC schools to be a valuable experience and one that inevitably leads to an increase in club membership.

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL NEWS

CASCADE DISTRICT'S BLUE STAR MEMORIAL MARKER DEDICATED AT THE VA OUTPATIENT HEALTH SERVICES IN REDDING

By [Judy Paul](#), Cascade District Director



On July 30, the Cascade District held a dedication ceremony for its newly installed Blue Star Memorial Marker at the VA Outpatient Health Services located at 3455 Knighton Road in Redding.

As you may know, the Blue Star Memorial, a project of National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC), features a bronze plaque that honors all men and women who have served in the armed forces of the United States, both past and present. There are

over 3,000 Blue Star Memorials located throughout the nation. Blue Star Highway Markers are located along dedicated highways, while Blue Star Memorial Markers and By-Way Markers are found in NGC-approved sites such as veterans halls, homes, healthcare facilities, cemeteries, parks, and other civic locations.

VA Site Manager Aaron Wolff and Cascade District Director Judy Paul welcomed the guests to the dedication ceremony. The Red Bluff Honor Guard presented the colors, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and played Taps at the end of the event. A musical group from Redding performed a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem and a patriotic medley.

Maria Krenek, Co-Chairman (North) of the CGCI Blue Star Memorial Project, spoke at the dedication ceremony, expressing her support for the event. She shared meaningful messages from CGCI President Adele Kelly and the Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc. Blue Star Chairman Robin Pokorski. David Stockton, the Director of Northern California Veterans Affairs, accepted the marker on behalf of the VA.

A patriotic wreath, created by Cascade District Director Judy Paul, was placed by the marker as a tribute to all veterans. Debbie Bazan and Diane Gifford-Tuggle from the Redding Wonderland Garden Club graciously placed the wreath.

The Cascade District is proud to have been able to purchase and install the Blue Star Memorial Marker at the VA Health Services facility. It is a visible tribute to all veterans and their families and will be an inspiration for all in years to come.

HERMOSA GARDEN CLUB'S BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY MARKER DEDICATION



**Hermosa Garden Club Members
with the Mayor of Hermosa Beach**

The unveiling ceremony for Hermosa Garden Club's Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker was held on July 28 at Greenwood Park (aka "Windmill Park") in Hermosa Beach. The event included city and police officials, community leaders, Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, Hermosa Beach Mayor Rob Saemann, as well as representatives from the Hermosa Garden Club and California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI). There was also a presentation of colors by the Hermosa Beach Police Honor Guard.

Alexis Slafer, long-time garden club member, had campaigned for over ten years to get approval and funding for this special marker.

CGCI, Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Hermosa Beach Kiwanis Club also partnered with the City of Hermosa Beach for the installation.

This memorial plaque is the club members' way of extending their deepest appreciation to our veterans — past, present, and future — all across the country, who have defended our freedom.



**Alexis Slafer, Hermosa Garden
Club's Blue Star Memorial
Chairman**

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

DEFENSIBLE SPACE ZONE ZERO: BALANCING FIRE SAFETY WITH SHADE AND CLIMATE CONCERNS

By Stephanie Landregan, PLA, FASLA



Photo Credit: Fire Safe Marin

In the wildfire-urban interface (WUI) areas of California, fire preparation is of immense importance. But if you live in any foothill community in California, drastic fuel modification changes are being proposed with the

intent of creating defensible space. Zone Zero is a proposed regulation aimed at reducing the likelihood of a home igniting from embers. ZERO vegetation is being proposed for Zone Zero. While the intent is clear, protect life and property, is total removal the right move? Fire scientists are concerned that this is not the best course of action. Especially removing trees adjacent to homes, what are the unintended consequences, particularly for habitat, shade, and the urban heat island effect?

What is Zone Zero?

Zone Zero is the first five feet immediately surrounding a structure. It is the first of three defensible space zones. The proposed regulation requires that ALL vegetation and combustible materials be removed: eliminating mulch, wood fencing, plants, and trees in this 5-foot zone. Any tree or part of the tree's canopy in this 5 ft zone is proposed to be removed.

Recent fire science supports well-maintained, moisture-retaining trees and vegetation, which can slow or stop embers. In the fires that destroyed the Palisades and Altadena, mature trees and hedges functioned as ember catchers and saved homes. The Eaton Fire found that trees protected complete streets, and that structures burned trees, not vice versa. These were structure-to-structure fires.

Zone Zero in a nutshell

- No plants or trees in Zone Zero
- No combustible mulch, wood chips, rubber mulch, etc.
- No sheds, trellises, wood piles, or storage of materials

Applies to ALL residential, industrial, multifamily, and institutional structures in certain high fire hazard severity zones.

Why Trees Are at Risk?

The regulation does not explicitly require removing all trees near structures, but when combined with fire agency and insurance interpretations, it will lead to the removal of canopy trees if trunks or branches overhang within the five-foot zone. This is particularly concerning for trees that are next to multistory buildings.

Shade, Cooling, and the Urban Heat Island Effect

In our communities, large shade trees near homes provide cooling and aesthetic value. Mature trees provide critical ecosystem services: filtering air, supporting wildlife, stabilizing soil, and—most crucially—reducing heat through shade.

Urban heat island effect refers to buildings, roads, and other human-built structures that absorb the sun's heat more than natural surfaces such as grass, soil, and trees and raise the surrounding air temperature sometimes by 15 degrees. Shade trees mitigate this effect by cooling the air and reducing surface heat. Trees help cool neighborhoods, cutting energy use for air conditioning and supporting public health.

With Zone Zero proposing widespread canopy loss near homes, neighborhoods will see a measurable increase in heat retention, especially during summer months. Vulnerable communities, which face higher heat-related health risks and deaths, make canopy loss even more consequential.

Finding a Balance

Integrating current fire science with urban forestry best practices, defensible space can exist along with our mature, maintained trees. Trees and plants should be permitted for their cooling and shading benefits. Zone Zero must holistically balance the need for ignition-resistant zones and the equally urgent need for shaded, healthy, climate-resilient urban landscapes.

To read the most current draft regulation: [July Zone 0 Rule Plead](#).

Stephanie Landregan, PLA, FASLA, is a registered landscape architect and Senior Southern California Director, California Council of ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects). Stephanie is the former Director of the Landscape Architecture and Horticulture Programs at UCLA Extension.

Please note: Alexis Slafer, CGCI Landscape Design Schools Chairman, submitted this article for inclusion in *Golden Gardens*. Alexis said that “this proposed regulation for California will have a direct impact on our environments. If this becomes law, it will definitely need to be addressed in our Landscape Design, Environmental, and Gardening Schools, and many CGCI members will need to address this in their personal lives. I think it is important for our members to be aware of this proposed regulation and the impact that it will create.

GARDENING

PLANTING SPRING BLOOMING BULBS

By Charlotte Rodriquez of Red Bluff Garden Club

"The garden sleeps, but the gardener plans."
 —Quote from the Facebook Page *Addicted to Gardening*
 ([Addicted To Gardening | Facebook](#))



You might be asking yourself, "What's so difficult about planting bulbs?" The truth is, it's not very complicated—just dig a hole and place the bulb inside. While that's essentially accurate, there's more to bulbs than meets the eye. They can be fascinating yet complex, and here are some

useful tips you can follow to ensure successful planting:

There are five types of bulbs to consider:

1. True Bulbs: These have nutrients stored around the stem and leaves.
2. Corms: These are swollen stem bases that grow partly or entirely underground.
3. Rhizomes: Like corms, these are horizontal underground stems that store nutrients.
4. Tubers: These are also swollen stem bases that develop underground and serve as food storage.
5. Tuberous Roots: Unlike the others, these are roots that store nutrients.

Each type has a unique structure and function in plant growth.

Fall is the best time to plan the integration of spring bloomers to fill in those bare patches among the perennials. Timing is crucial. A general rule of thumb is to plant spring-blooming bulbs in September or October*.

Things to Consider When Planting Spring Bloomers: First, if you have tear-shaped or tightly enclosed bulbs, soak them before planting. Some instructions recommend a 12-hour soak, while others suggest a 30-minute soak. Another factor to consider is whether to chill the bulbs or not. Many bulbs are now labeled as "prechilled," meaning there is no need to refrigerate them. Be sure to follow the instructions on the bulb packaging.

Remember, size is important when selecting bulbs. If you're choosing from loose bulbs, opt for the larger, tighter ones.

Next, consider the correct planting depth to encourage optimal growth. A good rule of thumb is to plant the bulb at a depth three times its height. For example, a two-inch bulb should be planted in a six-inch hole.

The trowel designed for bulb planting is typically narrow at the tip, allowing you to create a hole that is also narrow at the base. When you place the bulb in the hole, gently push and twist it to eliminate any gaps at the base. This is important because any space left can collect water, which may damage the bulb.

The common saying "pointy end up, roots down" is accurate; however, some bulbs aren't so obvious. If you aren't sure of the bulb's orientation, usually the roots are flat-based, and the swollen part is the top. One source suggested placing the bulb "sideways and let nature take its course."

To prepare your planting bed, start by loosening the soil. Bulbs require well-draining soil that doesn't have any standing water. The ideal soil should be loose, loamy, fertile, and well-draining. Loamy soil is a mixture of clay, sand, silt, and a small amount of organic matter. Since you know your soil, you can enhance it by adding fertilizer. According to the *Sunset Western Garden Book*, it's recommended to either add fertilizer to the entire bed or include a tablespoon of fertilizer in each planting hole.

Now, you can space out your bulbs individually or group them together, depending on the size of your prepared bed and the type of arrangement you want. Grouping the bulbs makes a nice visual impact in the garden when the bulbs bloom in the spring, and grouping saves some planting time. Yes, bulbs need watering, especially in dry conditions. Finally, cover your plantings with mulch, such as dried leaves, straw, or compost.

Trivia tips for gardeners: If you are concerned about critters digging up your bulbs, you can try shaving soap in and on top of the hole or placing wire mesh on top of plantings. If you have bulbs and you are uncertain about planting them, go ahead and take the risk; just plant them anyway. There is so much more to learn about planting bulbs – embrace the opportunity!

*Editor's Note: Check your local planting guides for the best time to plant spring blooming bulbs in year specific area.



CHECK OUT NGC'S INSTAGRAM PAGE:

www.instagram.com/nationalgarden



ENTOMOLOGY

BEAUTIFUL & BRUTAL: THE TARANTULA HAWK WASP

--Reprinted with Permission from the [DesertStrawHouse](#) August 2025 Newsletter

By Lisha Astorga of DesertStrawHouse Native Plant Nursery



The Tarantula Hawk is one of my favorite insects. It's stunning—iridescent blue body, rust-colored wings, long spindly legs—and absolutely horrifying once you learn its life story. Despite the name, it's neither tarantula nor hawk, but rather a spider wasp that

hunts tarantulas to feed its young. Tarantula hawks, also known as Pepsis wasps, are a genus of large parasitic wasps with over 300 known species—and probably many more still undiscovered. They are solitary, among the largest parasitoid wasps in the world, and their life cycle is a masterclass in both adaptation and biological drama.

Here in the Coachella Valley, our native species is "Pepsis grossa." The females are easy to spot with their metallic blue-black bodies and vivid rust-colored wings. Males are smaller and lack the females' curled antennae and powerful stinger. In fact, only females can sting, as the stinger is a modified egg-laying organ called an ovipositor.

Pepsis wasps range from about half an inch to over two inches long, with stingers reaching up to half an inch. While they rarely sting humans, if provoked, the sting is ranked among the most painful of any insect. Luckily, they prefer to avoid confrontation and rely instead on their dramatic coloration - a defense strategy called aposematic coloration - to warn predators away.

A Gruesome Nursery: The common name "tarantula hawk" points directly to the wasp's fascinating and gruesome reproductive behavior. In this parasitic relationship, the wasp is the parasite and the tarantula is both host and food source. During summer, once the female tarantula hawk mates, she begins hunting tarantulas - she must capture one tarantula for each egg. This is no easy task, since she is active during the day and tarantulas are nocturnal. She searches the ground wildly, using sight and smell, sometimes locating burrows closed with silk. Incredibly, she can "knock" at the burrow entrance by vibrating the silk strands to lure the spider out, tricking it into thinking prey has arrived. Once the tarantula appears, she prods it with her antennae to provoke it. When the spider rears up in defense, she uses her long abdomen to whip under the tarantula and sting it into complete paralysis. She may drag the helpless spider to her nest or trap it in its own burrow, lay a single egg on its abdomen, and then seal the chamber. If no egg is laid, the spider may eventually recover, sometimes months later.

Life Inside a Tarantula: After 3–4 days, the egg hatches, and the larva attaches to the spider's body with sharp mandibles. It feeds first on the spider's internal fluids, then, in its final larval stage, begins eating the tarantula from the inside out - carefully avoiding vital organs to keep its meal fresh for as long as possible. After about three weeks, the larva spins a cocoon, pupates, and emerges as an adult wasp. The adult lifespan depends on sex: males live only 1–2 months, while females can live up to 5. Females can determine the sex of their offspring: unfertilized eggs become males, and fertilized eggs become females. They even lay female eggs on large female tarantulas and male eggs on smaller males, ensuring the emerging female wasps have enough food to grow into strong hunters themselves.

Flower-Loving Adults: Despite their nightmarish beginnings, adult tarantula hawks are nectar feeders. They visit flowers like milkweeds and mesquites, playing an important role as pollinators. They are one of the primary pollinators of milkweed! Only the larvae are carnivorous. Their warning coloration is incredibly effective. Most animals know better than to mess with them, having learned from painful experience. Humans are rarely stung, and typically only if they harass the wasp. Birds, reptiles, and other predators steer clear - except for the roadrunner, which has learned to kill and eat them by smashing them against rocks to disable the stinger first.

Because of their success as unpalatable, intimidating insects, other harmless species have evolved to look like them -- a phenomenon known as Batesian mimicry. Even some flies and beetles mimic Pepsis wasps, piggybacking off their reputation for protection.

If you're lucky enough to see one up close, take a moment to appreciate this magnificent creature. Nature isn't always gentle, but it is always amazing.

Aposematic Coloration: Bright, contrasting colors used to warn predators of toxicity or danger. It benefits both prey and predator by reducing harmful interactions. Example: The orange-and-black of monarchs, or the yellow-and-black of bees and wasps.

Batesian Mimicry: A harmless species (the mimic) evolves to resemble a harmful one (the model). Predators that have learned to avoid the dangerous species will also avoid the mimic. Example: Flies or beetles that resemble tarantula hawks.

Müllerian Mimicry: Two or more harmful species evolve to resemble each other, reinforcing their warning coloration and improving survival for all. Example: Monarch and queen butterflies share similar coloration because they are both toxic to predators.

FLORAL DESIGN

EXHIBITION TABLES



Members of the **Bidwell Designers Guild** of Buttes District know how to create Exhibition Tables as is evidenced by the designs they displayed last fall at their guild meeting.

What is an Exhibition Table? According to the *NGC Handbook for Flower Shows*, an Exhibition Table is a Table Design “not meant to be functional. Created artistically to suggest the service of food without requirements as to the type or number of table appointments. Plant material must be used as needed for overall design.” See page 76 of [NGC's Handbook for Flower Shows](#) for more information.

I BELONG TO A GARDEN CLUB BECAUSE . . .

- In the beginning, I belonged because I dreamed of flowers
- Growing in the garden where I'd while away the hours
- And I belonged because a friend invited me along
- And to the melody of life it added one more song
- Then I belonged because the friends I met there were so fine
- The wealth of love they had to give could only add to mine
- And I belonged because I felt too, that I had much to give
- And this exchange of thoughts and plans could help us all to live
- Now I belong because the world needs beauty, love and peace
- And Garden Club helps fill this need our tensions to release
- Each meeting of our local group each gathering afar
- Expands our wide horizon's view as we reach for our star
- Each one belongs to Garden Club for reasons of her own
- But each one knows within her heart she does not stand alone
- Since every flower that's ever shared adds beauty to our soul
- And every friendship ever made makes love a sweeter goal

By Mary R. Duling
Published in *Golden Gardens*,
1981

PREPARE YOUR GARDEN FOR ITS AUTUMN REST

As the summer heat wanes and a crispness enters the air, it's time to help our gardens transition toward dormancy. Taking care of some essential tasks now will set the stage for a healthy, vibrant spring.

- **Clean Up:** Remove and dispose of spent annuals and any plant material showing signs of disease or pests. This will prevent overwintering diseases from taking hold.
- **Leave the leaves:** Don't be too quick to get out the leaf blower. A layer of fallen leaves in your garden beds acts as a natural, insulating mulch that protects the soil and provides a habitat for beneficial insects.
- **Replenish the soil:** As you clear out finished summer vegetables, add a fresh layer of compost to the empty beds. This enriches the soil, and beneficial microorganisms will have all fall and winter to break down the organic matter.
- **Divide perennials:** This is a great time to divide and transplant crowded perennials like daylilies, irises, and phlox. Sharing your divisions with fellow club members is a perfect way to expand your garden and your network!
- **Check your tools:** Before storing them for the winter, take time to clean and sharpen your tools. Properly maintained equipment will last longer and be ready for spring.

—From the September 2025 Newsletter of **Discovery Bay Garden Club**



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2025-2027 NGC PRESIDENT DONNA DONNELLY

Welcome to the 2025-2027 administration! It is with great joy and excitement that together we embark on this exciting journey promoting PLANT AMERICA and all that NGC has to offer during the next two years!

Your membership and participation in NGC projects, programs, and meetings will keep you connected to the NGC mission: providing education, resources, and networking opportunities, and promoting the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility which will ultimately give rise to a deeper relationship and involvement with our environment and the planet.

The next two years' vision for National Garden Clubs is to continue to grow and thrive, embracing progress while honoring traditions. Together we will explore new ways to engage our communities, educate our future generations and promote the importance of PLANT AMERICA to connect with nature and each other across the entire nation!

The 94th NGC Convention in Charleston, South Carolina was a fabulous event hosted by the Garden Club of South Carolina and facilitated by NGC. Many thanks to the 2025 convention

committee, ten real-life gnomes who worked tirelessly to orchestrate a successful convention. A highlight of the convention was the attendance of NGC Honorary President Deen Day Sanders (1997-1999), a special treat for all of us.



I would like to extend my thanks to Brenda Moore and her administration for their hard work and commitment to NGC. An inspiration for us all.

Thank you to my wonderful family for your love and support during these challenging months, you know I could never have gotten here without you!

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2026 Convention at NGC Headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. The NGC website is currently under a redesign, but still available to use. Thank you for your patience!



PACIFIC REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

A MESSAGE FROM THE 2025-2027 PACIFIC REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC. DIRECTOR TANJA SWANSON

I am excited to work with the eight states in our Pacific Region. I was born in Holland, where it rains a lot and is famous for flowers and gardens. And so, when I was about nine years old, my friends and I started our own "Garden Club." Every week we got together and did some nature-related activities. We raised tadpoles, dried flowers and pledged to be good to nature, and we still are friends! I hope to encourage the same wonder, fun, and friendships in all your Garden Clubs no matter what the climate.



My theme is Plant America: **Wild, Wise and Wonderful!**

My project is "Firewise Communities" — a national organization that is all about being prepared for fires. <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa>. This is important in all our 8 States. I hope you'll invite representatives to come and speak to your members and write articles for the WACONIAH to share what you learned!



My motto is "Be Flexible!" I learned that when I was Oregon State Federation Garden Club President during Covid. Nothing was normal, and we had to change everything.

Thank you for allowing me to be your Regional Director. Let's have fun and build a stronger relationship between our Pacific Region states.