

DIGGERS DIRT

The Dirt being dished this month...

General Meetings

10:30 Program
(Unless otherwise noted)
12:00 noon Meeting &
Brown Bag Lunch

Wednesday Oct. 3

The Old Mill

Work in the Gardens and Plant
Propagation



Guests Welcome!

... Look ahead...

Wednesday, Nov, 7th

Yvonne Zaro's home

1815 West Haven Rd
San Marino

**Urban Trees with Rachel
O'Leary**



Guests Welcome!



“Why are there trees I never walk under but large and
melodious thoughts descend upon me?”

—Walt Whitman

From the President

Welcome Back! The beginning of the Diggers year always find us back at the Old Mill, reveling in cooler weather, swapping summer stories along with cuttings from our gardens and having lunch beneath the relaxing shade of the pomegranate trees. (Although this year, threat of rain moved our lunch meeting indoors to Gwen's home!) It is good to be back digging, pruning and planning the year ahead!

Appropriately, after this summer's tremendous heat (117° F!), the health of our trees and the cooling shade canopy of their leaves have become more important than ever. Unfortunately, many of the trees we have inherited, and that we now grow, evolved in temperate climates and can't

Board Meetings

Monday before the
General Meeting
10:30am.

Please let Cathy know if you
would like to attend.

Mark Your Calendar**Upcoming Club Meetings**

Dec 5

Jan 9 (*Note Change)

Feb 6 (Joint Club Meeting!)

Mar 6

Apr 3 (Auction)

May 8 (*Note Change)

June 4

Upcoming GCA Dates**NAL Conservation
Conference**

Washington, DC

Feb 25-28, 2019

**GCA 2019 Annual
Meeting**

Boston, MA

May 16, -19, 2019

Check out the GCA Website
for information regarding
Flower Shows, Garden
History & Design,
Horticulture, NAL and
Conservation.

www.gcamerica.org



tolerate the more recent stresses of drought, water restrictions and new pests that arrive almost daily.

In addition, American Forests - our country's oldest conservation organization - no longer recommends a universal 40 percent tree urban canopy. Their research recognizes that a 40-60 percent urban tree canopy is attainable under ideal conditions in forested states, but that twenty percent is appropriate for grassland cities, with 15 percent being a realistic baseline target in desert cities. (Greater investment and prioritization might make higher percentages possible.)

What to do? Trees are vital - the "lungs of our cities" - absorbing CO₂ and pollutants, releasing oxygen and cooling the "island heat effect" of concreted, congested urban areas. Plus, they reduce stress and make us feel good! Next month, addressing this most topical issue, we are fortunate to have Rachel O'Leary of City Plants speak to us about the greener future of our city.

In the meantime, let's celebrate our beautiful pomegranate trees at the Old Mill!

❁ See you in the garden ❁

Cathy



Floral Design

Floral Design is now a new, freestanding GCA Committee ~ separate from the Flower Show Committee. The goal is to encourage club members to learn about and participate in floral design activities. Eugenie is our Floral Design Chair, and she has come up with a fun challenge for the Diggers!

Each month, any Digger who wishes to participate is challenged to create a floral design in the container of her choice, from seasonal materials found primarily in her garden, but may augment from other sources if needed. (Foliage, flowers, succulents, berries, pods, etc. - in jars, vases, driftwood, cups, palm spathes....etc.) Then simply take a picture of the arrangement and send it to Cathy any time during the month and prior to the next Diggers meeting. We will post your beauties in the 'Dirt' for all to enjoy, and discuss at the following meeting. Be creative - and - most importantly have fun! We are sure to learn a lot from our endeavors.

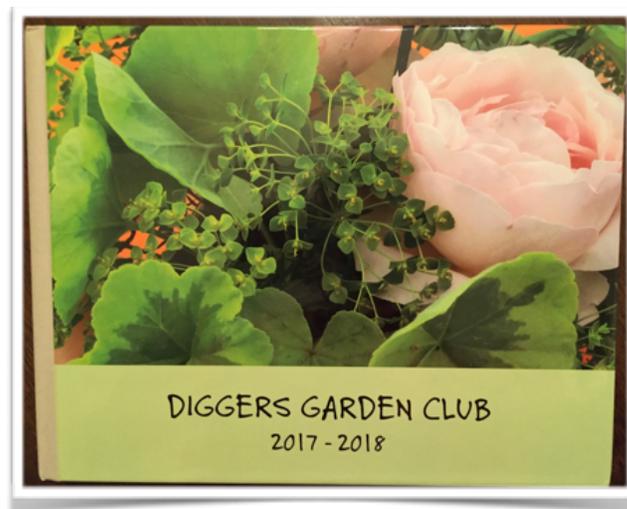
For inspiration, check out the [Photo Library of Designs](#) on the GCA website on the new Floral Design Committee Page. And don't forget, we can now all get *By Design*, the quarterly magazine produced by the Floral Design Committee, delivered free to our email inboxes... Just go to your member profile page and click on "Edit Publications Notifications", then check the "Notify Me" box and click on submit at the bottom of the page.



On the left ~ From September in Eugenie's garden: *Physostegia virginiana* (Obedient Plant), *Aster frikartii* and another smaller Aster, *Leucanthemum x superbum* (Shasta Daisy), & Bulbine. (Two of these flowers were planted by the birds!) On the right ~ an all white arrangement from Debby Smith in Seattle.

The Diggers Annual Book is Here!

Our 2017-2018 Diggers Yearbook is now available for purchase, and at 90 plus pages, it is the best ever! Sally Miller works very hard throughout the year - and over the summer - to create a beautiful and timeless scrapbook of Diggers meetings and memories. Please let Sally know if you would like to order one. The cost is approximately \$90.



Visiting Gardens

(Bette Cooper's summer visit to 'The Blue Garden' of Newport, RI)

The Spring 2018 Bulletin had an article about "The Blue Garden" in Newport, RI.

When in Little Compton, RI, it takes a lot for us to even contemplate the 45-minute drive to Newport and its usual hordes of tourists. However, The Blue Garden looked as though it might be the exception.

I have a Dublin Garden Club friend near us who was also interested. After several emails back and forth with the Director, Sarah Vance, we were given an 11 a.m. slot. I think it might be that she found out that I was a member of the (small but mighty) Diggers Garden Club. The Garden is open only on Thursdays and has two times, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

It was worth the visit. Sarah Vance gives an introductory video presentation, answers questions, then proceeds to the Blue Garden for a self-guided tour. She is there to answer any questions.

Sarah worked with the owner Dorrance (Dodo) Hill Hamilton, of the Campbell Soup fortune, who died on April 18, 2017, on the restoration of the garden in 2012. Together they recreated this incredible garden as the original owners would have wanted.

The original garden was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his firm for Arthur Curtiss and Harriet Parsons James. It was Mrs. James who requested a monochromatic concentration of purples and blues.

The majority of the colors are different shades of blues and purples. Very effective. Many, if not most of the plants we can grow here, although maybe not the dwarf morning glory, which is charming. Some others are Aster laevis (Smooth Aster), Perovskia atriplicifolia 'Peak-a-Blue' (Russian Sage), Salvia farinacea 'Blue Frost' (Blue Sage), and the old reliable, Plumbago auriculata 'Imperial Blue'. Ageratum and Lantana too. There are whites here and there for contrast. Altogether, most pleasing.

I have a brochure if anyone would like to see it.

Bette Cooper

***The Blue Garden, created for Commodore Arthur Curtiss and Harriet Parsons James
by the Olmsted Brothers in 1913
Recreated by the Reed Hildebrand Landscape group for Mrs. Dorrance Hamilton
in 2012.***



Shirley Meneice Conference

(Longwood Gardens, Pennsylvania)

Our delegates, Clare and (Hort Chair) Athena, returned from this year's Shirley Meneice Conference Sept. 13-15 with lots of new horticultural knowledge and...

~ Seeds galore to share!



Everybody loves Shirley!



Seeds we sent...



Seeds we got!

Longwood Gardens



Fountains



Victoria amazonica & *Nymphaea 'David'*



Topiaries

Winterthur's Naturalistic Gardens



Longwood Gardens Mushroom Soup

(Athena says this is delicious!)

1 T. vegetable oil
 1 T. butter
 1 leek, washed and diced
 2 shallots, diced
 3 stalks celery, diced
 ¼ cup chopped thyme
 1 cup shitake mushroom caps, julienned
 1 cup crimini mushroom caps, quartered
 1 cup button mushrooms, julienned
 ½ cup sherry
 2 quarts hot mushroom stock (see below)
 ½ cup heavy cream
 ¼ cup chopped tarragon
 Salt & Pepper to taste



Sauté the leek, shallot and celery in the oil and butter until the leeks are translucent. Add thyme, salt and pepper. Add chopped mushrooms. Cook until mushrooms wilt and release their liquid. Add sherry wine and reduce by half. Add hot mushroom stock and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Add cream and tarragon. Let simmer for five minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Mushroom Stock

16 ounces white button mushrooms, 1 leek chopped, 1 onion chopped, 1 stalk celery chopped, 1 sprig tarragon diced, w sprig thyme, 1 ½ gallons water. Place all ingredients in a tall saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer for one hour. Strain. Refrigerate leftovers.

The Old Mill

(Seed propagation and Digging in the Dirt at the Old Mill)



Diggers spent a busy morning planting, pruning, dividing, and weeding in the Old Mill gardens. We shared plants and cuttings from our own gardens and chose seeds to plant from the Shirley Meneice Seed Share bounty brought back by our delegates.



Did you know...?

The Old Mill grapevine that shades the north arbor is very special! It is a cutting propagated in 1970 from the "Vina Madre" grapevine (known as Ramona) at the San Gabriel Mission. This original grapevine, planted by the Franciscan Padres in 1774, is still going strong. It has been genetically confirmed to be a cross between the European wine grape (*Vitis vinifera*) and a native Southern California grape (*Vitis girdiana*). Gerry Dangl (manager of the Plant Identification Lab at UC Davis) has suggested that we label our grapevine *Vitis girdiana* x *Vitis vinifera* cv. 'Mission' to show that it is from the same vine as at the San Gabriel Mission.

It is a bit confusing because to those in the wine industry, the "Mission vines" refer to the pure variety of European wine grape that the Padres brought with them from Spain. This wine grape, *Vitis vinifera* 'Listán Prieto', is simply known as Misión in Mexico and Mission in the United States.



The old grape vine growing at the San Gabriel Mission is a child of this "Mission" European grape vine and the local native vine - brand new cultivar, genetically unique and very different from the parents. This hybrid may be also found growing in other locations in Southern California (Olvera Street), obviously planted as cuttings. It's very vigorous and is used for shade. At the Mission, it can be seen scrambling over yards of arbor, all growing from one old vine!



The San Gabriel Mission Ramona Grape Vine



Old Mill North Arbor and Grape Vine

Pots – Too hot or not?

Given recent extreme summer temperatures, Diggers may want to think twice about choosing dark-colored glazed or other dark pots for their Auction plants.

It is more important than ever to remember that the color of the container influences the heat factor. White or other bright colors will reflect heat while earth tones and dark colors absorb the heat.



Containers are extreme environments for plants. Daytime temperatures are hotter, and nighttime temperatures are colder for plants grown in pots than for plants grown in the ground, because in the ground the surrounding soil moderates temperatures.

Most roots grow best at 65-75°. When root temps reach 80°, function and metabolism is affected, and so is growth. By 90°, most root function/metabolism begins to be seriously affected. Root function in most plants can be critically affected at 95°, with root/plant death occurring around 115-120°. On really hot days such as those we experienced this the summer, root temperatures at the perimeter of the sunward side in black or other dark containers can easily reach 140-150° from passive solar gain if the container is unshaded.

Just remember ~ Dark pots can get hot!

Ways & Means



It's never too early
To start planning
For the Diggers Holiday Boutique!

In the past three years, our Holiday Boutique has successfully raised that "little bit of extra" to help towards sending our delegates to GCA sponsored conferences. Plus, its fun! If you would like to participate, some ideas that have been popular in the past are:

Cookies, jams and jellies, spiced nut mix, cakes, quick breads, persimmon pudding, candied fruit peel, Bourbon Salted-Caramel Sauce (still dreaming of it...), ornaments, tabletop topiaries, and dog biscuits. Diggers are creative and there are always a few surprises. We welcome your participations as either as a donor or shopper ~ and don't forget...

These treats make wonderful holiday hostess gifts!