

DIGGERS DIRT

The Dirt being dished this month...

General Meetings:

General meeting begins at 10:30am (Unless otherwise noted). 12:00 noon Meeting. Bring sack lunch. Invite guests when appropriate.

Look ahead...

- Feb 21 - Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden Field Trip**
- Mar 6 - California Botanic Garden Tour In Claremont**
- Apr 3 - Old Mill Clean Up**
- Apr 21 - Plant Drop off @ Old Mill**
- Apr 22 - Auction Set-Up**
- Apr 23 - Auction Set-Up**
- Apr 24 - AUCTION @ Old Mill**
- May 1 - No Diggers Meeting (PGC Doorways & Dining)**
- May 8 - Founder's Day Event**
- Jun 5 - Diggers Annual Mtg @ Connie Harding's**



From the President

Dear Diggers,

We may still be drying out from the atmospheric river that came through SoCal last week, but the sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the blossoms on my magnolia tree are about to burst open. Spring will be here soon enough! This is when Diggers kick it into high gear, scouring local nurseries and thrifts stores for potential Diggers pots. Some of you may be looking in your own reserves to see which treasures you can part with. One way or another, come April 24th, there will be at least 300 perfect pots for sale at our annual plant sale and auction!



Carlin's conservation workshop was bee-yond informative and so much fun! Thanks to Dave, who painstakingly cut, measured



Board Meeting

10:30 a.m. Monday's preceding the General Meetings at Athena's home. Please let Athena know if you would like to attend.

Old Mill Workday

Bring your gloves, shovel and clippers...Wed 2/28 from 9:00-10:30 am

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming GCA Dates

www.gcamerica.org

Mar 17-20, 2024

NAL - Washington

Apr 16-17, 2024

Zone XII Meeting -

Hancock Park

Apr 27-28, 2024

GCA Annual Mtg -

Connecticut

and pre-drilled the wood pieces so we could assemble the bee houses. Diggers will hang their bee houses in early spring in anticipation of native bees nesting in the tiny reeds and pollinating our native gardens. Thank you, Carlin and Dave and to Sally whose new and totally awesome native garden served as the perfect venue for this meeting!

We are looking forward to visiting California Botanic Garden in March for a tour of this garden, completely dedicated to California native plants. Diggers will be able to get ideas for what to plant not only in their own gardens but also for their contribution to the "potted native plant" section of our upcoming sale in April. This new addition to our plant sale will highlight legislation recently passed in California designating April as Native Plant Month. This legislation is part of GCA's nationwide initiative to establish a Native Plant Month in all 50 states. Bravo California for being an early adopter!

Diggers, your enthusiasm to learn and camaraderie I witness at our meetings continue to leave me feeling grateful to be a part of our special garden club.

Cheers to 100 years!

Athena

The Old Mill



Guided Nature Meditation at the Mill

Join us for a special series of four guided Mindful Outdoor Experiences to welcome the four seasons of Spring, Summer, Fall, & Winter!

*Gain a deeper sense of connection with the season through mindful breathing, centering, gratitude, engaging the senses, nature meditation (sit spot) and tea ceremony.

*Set an intention for the season.

*Enjoy the beautiful gardens before open hours.

Our first gathering will be "Hello Spring" on

Saturday, March 16th at 8:00am at the Old Mill.

This series will be lead by San Marino resident and Certified Mindful Outdoor Guide, Kelly Brandt. This special series is offered to our current members of the Old Mill.

Members can bring one friend. There is no cost for this series.

Space is limited, please email Kate Sinclair at oldmill1816@gmail.com to reserve your spot. Please RSVP by March 10th.

Old Mill art related Events

New Exhibit, *Moonlight Serenade* - now through May 19, 2024

Plein Air Day: Saturday, February 24, 10am-2pm

Artists will be painting throughout the garden. There will be tables set up with art supplies and paintings for sale on our driveway, and easels will be set up for kids and adults to draw and paint. Several artists from the current exhibit will be onsite to talk about their paintings.

Garden Club Of America

We will be voting on the Founder's Fund Finalists in March. Please go to the link below to refresh yourself with the different finalists.



https://www.gcamerica.org/_uploads/filemanager/contentpageresource/2024%20FF%20Winter%20Bulletin%20FT.pdf

Our friend, Ari Novy, is on the list of the 2024 GCA Honorary Members. Proposed by Diggers GC (Mary Blodgett) and seconded by Orinda GC! Well done, Mary!

<https://www.gcamerica.org/members/news/get?id=4515>

February Meeting





Steve Smith and Dave McCarthy

Behind the scenes carpenters



Sally's Native Garden



Final Product - Bee Hotel

Centennial News - Cindy

Mark your calendars for Founder's Day on May 8th! Our Centennial Celebration of "Diggers 100 Years in Bloom 1924-2024" officially kicks off with a garden tour and a GCA Certificate of recognition!
You won't want to miss it!

More Old Mill / Digger Archives News



- Diggers storage gets a makeover! Thank you to Annette for making a contribution to Diggers to solve our storage issues. Our indoor storage was getting crowded, so a new shed was purchased to store auction supplies at the Old Mill. New shelving was installed in the indoor storage unit which will be used primarily for historical archives. Now we have room for another 100 years of archives!



Founder's Corner - Gwen



Diggers member Katherine Adams Hall (1898 – 1965)

Katherine Adams Hall (Mrs. Edward Stewart Hall) (1898 -1965), formerly Mrs. Melville Haskell, was the mother of Coburn, Schuyler and Melville Haskell. Schuyler's daughter, Sarah found this picture for me.

Coburn's son, Eric Haskell, Professor Emeritus at Scripps College has spoken to the Diggers at several meetings over the years, with wonderful slide shows of French gardens.

Eric remembers the beautiful rose garden at his grandmother's house at 1861 Lombardy Road.



Conservation - Carlin McCarthy

Wild Bee Hotel Instructions - Long Term

- In early Spring, as blooms are appearing, mount the House **4-6 feet high** without any vegetation blocking the entrance.
- Mount against a relatively flat, sturdy surface (like a post, house, mature tree, or fence) protected from the wind. Bees don't like swinging in the breeze! Hang from wide head screw or long nail (included) at an angle so the House doesn't slip off; or hang from strong twine or leather tong.
- Place facing **south or southeast** to receive direct sunlight in the morning. Bees are cold-blooded and need the morning sun to start moving. If possible, put the House on the eastern side of a tall obstacle such as trees or a building since most native bees prefer some afternoon shade.
- Water sources are not needed for native bees which get all their hydration from plants. Shallow water sources only attract honeybees.
- Place the House **near flowers and a mud-rich clay source**. Many wild bees only fly about 300 ft searching for nectar and pollen. Make sure there are flowers available throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Ideally, there should be several species blooming at any given time.
- **Pesticide free** location!
- Ensure you have enough **leaves** for leafcutter bees within about 30 sq. ft. of your bee house. A few leafy plants with soft, flexible leaves will support hundreds of nesting females. You will note neat, circular, or oval cuts (caterpillars leave irregular-shaped cuts) Native species include Asters, Gaillardia, Sunflowers, Common Chokecherry, Peas, Beans, Oregon Grape, Strawberry (smooth leafed, not hairy), Field Pansies, Buckwheat, False indigo, Redbud trees, and Lamb's quarters. Common and naturalized: rose, lilac, Hosta, bougainvillea.
- After the bees learn the area, you cannot move the House; you risk disorienting the bee and causing her to abandon the nest. After the active nesting season, the House can be

moved to a shed or unheated garage for winter protection. Bees must remain cold over the winter to trigger dormancy. In early spring, when the first flowers start blooming, take the bees out of storage (if you did) and wait for them to emerge. This might happen almost immediately (with mason bees) or take a few months (with leafcutter bees).

- Bees use visual cues to orientate themselves to their nests. Bee Houses with large numbers of nesting holes that all look alike make it difficult for the females to relocate their nests. To help the females relocate their nests after foraging, we've included colored "signposts" which add visual hints to help females locate their nesting cavities quickly.
- **(Year 2)** After emerging from their cocoons, females take an orientation flight. They search for a suitable nesting site during this flight and learn the surrounding area to help them relocate their nests. After selecting a nesting hole, the female bee will fly in a zigzag pattern in front of the nest entrance, memorizing its exact location.
- You can **paint or stain** the bee house with low VOC (not oil based) paint and let dry for a month before installing it. Our cedar ones should weather to a nice grey.

Mason Bees are spring pollinators and typically become active once the weather reaches a consistent temperature of 55+ degrees. They emerge, mate, pollinate and lay eggs for 6-8 weeks. Over summer, the eggs develop into larvae and then new adults which become dormant in their tubes at the onset of cold weather. **Leafcutter Bees** overwinter as larva and develop into adults using the late spring or early summer heat. They build their nests in the summer.

MAINTAINING YOUR BEE HOUSE: Nest tubes should be cleaned or replaced at least every two years. Longer than that, pathogens and parasites can build up enough to make the nest a bee death trap. Having so many tunnels close together makes it easy for pathogens to spread through the whole nest if left unchecked. Nests can be sterilized with a 50% or higher bleach/water solution. Wait for the bees to emerge naturally. Ideally, you would have fresh nests set up outside the emergence chamber for the new bees to find. In this way, you can cycle two different nests in and out of use while keeping them clean.

Alternatively, you could put a fresh set of tubes in the top part while waiting for all the bees to emerge.

LADYBUG/LACEWING PORTION OF HOUSE: Ladybugs and Lacewings are an important part of the garden ecosystem, as their larvae (often known as aphid lions) are voracious predators of aphids. The top portion of the HOUSE can serve as a retreat for overwintering adults, so they will be on hand to tackle early infestations come spring when they emerge from winter hibernation. Fill the

compartment with dried plant material such as seed heads, open pinecones, pine needles and sticks.

Sources: Crown Bees; arboretum.ucdavis.edu; https://xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/13-054_02_XercesSoc_Tunnel-Nests-for-Native-Bees_web.pdf;
<https://apps.extension.umn.edu/environment/citizen-science/bee-atlas/docs/native-bees-Joel-Gardner.pdf>

More Conservation - Carlin

NEXTREX RECYCLING CHALLENGE

Athena will have the collection bin out by her front door before our next meeting. If you can't wait for our meetings, there should be recycling collection bins at Albertson's, Food4Less, Kohls, Ralphs, Sprouts Farmers Market, Vons, Winco and Savemart.

These are bins at Vons. Remember, if you ask at the store, they probably don't know where the plastic is going.



Click on the link to see what you CAN recycle: https://nextrex.com/jsfapp/cdocs/w493_q2_sp21_0_trex-recycling-posterpdf.pdf

This link to see what you CANNOT Recycle under the Trex program: https://nextrex.com/jsfapp/cdocs/20220811141301_9_jsfwd_493_q2_1.pdf

Endowment - Debbe Booth

If you have any ideas for Endowment Fund projects, please contact Debbe. We have money to spend!



Membership - Liz

We are thrilled to report that Diggers have three candidates who have accepted our invitation to join and just in time for our 100th year celebrations! Bios of the new members will be in the September DIRT. In the meantime, when you see one at the Auction workdays, welcome her with characteristic Diggers good humor and genuine mentorship. The Membership committee extends a warm thank you to the proposers and seconders for making this process so smooth.

Scholarship - Liz Gilfillan

GCA Scholarship selection committees are evaluating applications in February. The committee meets on March 4th at HQ to finalize the 2024 Grant recipients. I look forward to attending, in person.

Horticulture - Alfrida King



Our March meeting will take place at the California Botanic Garden in Claremont. Please be sure to RSVP to Alfrida so that she may have an accurate head count.

Zone XII News

Frank Lloyd Wright Garden Symposium: His Southern California Work and Legacy

As you know, Hancock Park GC is hosting the upcoming Zone XII meeting which will take place April 16-17 and is limited to invited guests only. They have generously made registration for some of the pre-meeting opportunities available to Diggers and PGC as well. **If you would like to attend the April 13th symposium at the special member rate, click on the link below.** This sounds like a wonderful and unique opportunity. I will forward the link to the Sunday Garden tours when they are available later this month. **If you would like to tour the Ennis House on Sunday (limit 20), contact the Zone-meeting chairs, Gina and Flo, directly as soon as possible.**

<https://www.gardenconservancy.org/store/flw-symposium-partner>

Field Trip - Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden

Storrier-Stearns Japanese Garden - 270 Arlington Drive
Wednesday, February 21
Tour - 10:30 a.m. (approximately 1 hour)
Cost - \$15.00 (bring cash or check made out to Ruth or Venmo Ruth)
Please carpool
RSVP to Ruth by Feb. 12



The Japanese Garden is delighted we would like to visit and learn more about this special oasis in the heart of Pasadena. We will be in the garden when it is closed to the public so

you may enjoy it the way Ellamae and Charles Storrier Stearns did after its creation on their private estate during the late 1930s.

A staff member or volunteer will introduce you to the interesting history behind the garden and point out some of the design elements typical of a Japanese "hill and pond stroll garden". The exquisite Niko-an Teahouse will be open for you to enter and experience its unique atmosphere of tranquility.

Off the Grid with a Digger's offspring

Selati Lillie Cycad Reserve



Michaela Wood is currently enrolled in a two month Eco Training course in South Africa. She is learning all about flora and fauna indigenous to this terrain. When she has adequate Wi-Fi, she shares photos of various native trees and plants. This one I thought Diggers would enjoy learning about. As you know, Cycads are one of the oldest living plants on earth with many of them threatened to near extinction. The Encephalartos Dyerianus, or Lillie cycad occurs naturally on only one hill in the entire world. Michaela had an opportunity to visit the Selati Lillie Cycad Reserve. The reserve is patrolled by an armed anti-poaching unit, whose sole mandate is to protect these ancient beauties. Even though the Eco Training camp is within Selati reserve, the group needed to be granted

special permission to explore this cycad world. These cycads thrive here under perfect conditions, effective water drainage as they are perched on granite and ample sunlight. The Lillie cycad is listed under the highest level of protection due to its threat of extinction. Enjoy these photos of the Lillie Cycad.

