

DIGGERS DIRT

The Dirt being dished this month...

General Meetings

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

Wednesday, March 6th

Tomato Talk with Sue
Anderson



Gretl Mulder's Home
1150 Laurel St. Pasadena

...Look ahead...

Diggers Auction



3/1 Deliver Pots 2-4pm
4/1 Set up 9-2pm
4/2 Set up 9-2pm
4/3 Auction 11am



From The President

Spring is in the air – literally around the corner! March 20th is the official end of winter and the days are growing longer and warmer. And, with all the rain we have had, the hills are covered in green – a lucky color!

So, "may the road rise to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face" – and may the gentle God of Diggers Auctions guide you to success as you work diligently on your Diggers pots.

Looking for that rainbow and pot of gold at our Annual fundraiser on April 3rd ...!

❁ See you in the garden ❁

Cathy

March Meeting

Board Meetings

Monday before the
General Meeting
10:30am.

Please let Cathy know if you
would like to attend.

Old Mill Workdays

Fri., Mar. 8, 9-10:30am
Tues., Mar.12, 9-10:30am
Fri., Mar. 22, 9-10:30am
Mon., Mar. 22, 9-10:30am

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Club Meetings

May 8 (*Second Wed.)
June 5 - Annual Mtg.

Upcoming GCA Dates

www.gcamerica.org

GCA 2019 Annual Meeting

Boston, MA
May 16, -19, 2019

Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference

Denver Botanic Gardens
Denver, CO
Sept. 10-12, 2019

Sue Andersen-Berger, master gardener and member of the Orinda Garden Club not only delivered a beautiful PowerPoint presentation to the Diggers at our March 6th meeting - she delivered tomatoes!



Earlier in the year, Sue worked with Diggers Horticulture chair Athena to determine which tomatoes would appeal most and grow best in our southern California climate. She then proceeded to grow them on from seed just for us! All were heirloom selections - of every color, size, taste and yield.

Sue's talk encompassed seed prep to soil prep and best cultivation practices to companion planting. She also gave us some great horticultural tips. For example, aspirin water has been shown to be of benefit to tomato plants (see link: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/aspirin-for-plant-growth.htm>). Sue takes a shortcut and sticks one uncoated aspirin six inches on either side of a newly planted tomato. The active ingredient in aspirin, Acetylsalicylic acid, is derived from salicylic acid, which encourages an enhanced immune response in plants of the nightshade family. As a Foliar spray, mix 3 aspirin in 4 gallons of water and spray

early in the morning to allow plants to dry off.

Tomatoes are best planted when soil temperatures rise above 55 degrees ...
Transplant each tomato seedling so only the top leaves appear above the soil.



Floral Design

Diggers “challenge” floral arrangement submissions for March.
(Member creations using seasonal materials primarily found in their gardens.)



An Ikebana style
inspired by last
month's speaker



Camellias in perfect
bloom (Almond tree
branches provide
support)



Two beautiful Spring arrangements

National Affairs and Legislation Update – NAL



In an overwhelming show of bipartisan support for America's most important conservation and recreation program, the House of Representatives voted on February 26th to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) by a vote of 363 to 62. After passage through the Senate earlier in the month, the Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47) will now be sent to the President's desk. This is the culmination of a years-long effort by Congressional Representatives on both sides of the aisle to permanently preserve the unique character of this program created as a "Conservation Offset" for energy development.

Authority to fund LWCF from offshore oil and gas federal leases had lapsed on September 30, 2018. The passage of S. 47 now permanently authorizes LWCF, but does not automatically appropriate the full \$900 million annually for the program. Congress will have to vote each year as a part of its budget process to provide funding for the program. Historically Congress has only appropriated about half of the \$900 million each year authorized for the program.

The LWCF was originally enacted in 1965 to safeguard natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage. It has been instrumental in protecting and conserving our public lands, from local parks to national parks, and the plant and animal species that rely on these natural spaces. It has also helped expand access and equity for outdoor recreation opportunities.

Since 1965, the LWCF has redirected \$3.9 billion in oil and gas leasing royalties to fund more than 40,000 projects across the country, according to the Department of the Interior.

The GCA has a long history of supporting LWCF, and it was therefore an exciting moment that passage of this bill occurred during the recent GCA National Affairs and Legislation Conference in Washington, DC.

For more information on this and other important legislative updates, please visit the NAL landing page on the GCA website. <https://www.gcamerica.org/members/nal>

Conservation

The "Soil Your Undies" Challenge Result



Before

"One hundred percent cotton undies simulate a plant food source—they are chemically similar to the plant compounds. The cellulose content of cotton undies is 90% as compared to 80% cellulose in corn stalks. After two months in the soil, the portion of underwear consumed provides a measure of the size of your biological population. Large populations eat more food..."

Congratulations Yvonne & Sally for ending up with only a waistband - you have very healthy soil!



After 3 months

Conservation



“I pledge to take care of my yard without synthetic pesticides, weed killers and fertilizers except on rare occasions to resolve an infestation or to improve habitat for native plants and wildlife. I also pledge not to throw pharmaceuticals or chemicals down my drains or toilets.”

To take the pledge visit this link on the GCA website:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9fdGo2ZS9Zhhx1gQ7R5oq8WK2-E656T6F7OZ0EV8UKg543Q/viewform>

To view the current Pledge Count by Zone, visit:

<https://www.gcamerica.org/members/committees-conservation#resourceid=42099>

Horticulture



Thanksgiving counts this past November showed a critically low Monarch population in California with an 86% drop in numbers from the previous year. No one knows exactly what caused the decline, but scientific studies have found that monarch numbers were low from the very beginning of the breeding season (March, April) - and they never recovered. It is thought that loss and degradation of monarch breeding sites due to wildfires, weather extremes, pesticide abuse and poor land management continue to be factors in the decline of western populations. Also, as individuals leave overwintering sites on the California coast, they are nearing the end of their life span and may be more vulnerable to extremes in weather. (Interestingly, the eastern monarch population had a favorable year in their breeding grounds, and overwintering numbers in Mexico are up 144% over the year before.)

In order to better understand threats facing both monarch and milkweed habitat, it is helpful to know where they exist today. The Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper is a website launched by the Xerces Society to gather data from citizen scientists and provide an interactive, publicly accessible place for everyone to share and view each others' records. This is a fascinating website with loads of resources. Please visit <http://www.monarchmilkweedmapper.org> to learn about the migration and overwintering behavior of the monarch butterfly, monarch conservation and the best milkweed plants for your area. You can even search for western milkweed species by state.



Narrow-leaved
Milkweed

Auction Reminders



***Grooming:** Remove all damaged leaves, dust, debris and spent flowers. Clean pots well & top dress neatly with material compatible with plant and pot.

***Labels:** Fill out tag completely in pencil with full botanical name (Genus, species, 'Variety' if applicable, and Common Name. Give description of pot. Note Sun shade requirements and cost of container and plants.

***Tools:** Bring wagons, clippers, watering cans, tweezers, small brushes, etc.

Please arrive promptly on Set-up Days.