

DIGGERS DIRT

The Dirt being dished this month...

General Meetings:

Unless otherwise noted all meetings will be virtual. General meeting begins at 10:30am. An announcement will be emailed one week prior with specific timing of business and program.

No refreshments will be provided.

Look ahead...

*denotes in person (optional) with protocol of social distancing and masks.

April 7 - *Diggers' Garden Tours

following the virtual meeting - 7 Diggers' gardens open for tours.

May 5 - *Theodore Payne Foundation Tour

June 2 - Annual Meeting



From the President

Dear Diggers!

The means of engagement through GCA hit new heights at the start of the year.

In February, over 1700 virtual attendees focused on the live NAL conference "Climate Change Solutions". I hope you'll take some time to explore the meeting materials and video links. I'm eager to read *All We Can Save*, edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson. Thank you to Mary and Susan for collaborating on the NAL report, included here. A mindful and determined approach to the challenge of climate change gives me hope.

April is the month that GCA embarks a year-long focus on Frederick Law Olmsted's legacy in recognition of his 200th birthday, in 2022. To Olmsted, parks were as much about the mental, physical and social health of societies as they were about aesthetics. His theories about the

Board Meeting

Virtually, April 5th,
10:15am

Old Mill Workday

Bring your gloves, shovel
and clippers...

Thur, Mar. 25th 9-10:30am
Thur, Apr. 8th 9-10:30am
Thur, Apr. 22nd 9-10:30am

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming GCA Dates

www.gcamerica.org

Special GCA Virtual Conferences

April 8, 2021 Floral
Design Conference

May 11-12, 2021
GCA Annual Meeting



restorative benefits of time spent in nature is proven. Isn't this what we gain each and every month tending to the gardens at the Old Mill? Diggers have an opportunity to tie the current needs of our local community to Olmsted's revolutionary work. Read further to learn how to share your experience in the gardens of the Old Mill. Also, in April will be the first Floral Design Conference, a one-day virtual event. Registration was emailed to you on March 9th.

The GCA Executive Committee has taken into account all that has been learned during the past year. Tremendous challenge has paved the way for more inclusive and affordable opportunities for GCA members. Going forward Virtual Study Conferences in Conservation, Photography and Floral Design will be free. The Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference will be virtual every other year. The chance to gather in person at SMHC and experience gardens will continue in the off year. And National Affairs and Legislation Conference will remain in person, to ensure club members a chance to prepare together for meeting with government officials, in person.

I have voted on Diggers' behalf for the GCA Founders Fund finalist, Rhododendron Glen: Healing a Historic Stream, proposed by Seattle Garden Club which was our overwhelming choice. I am delighted with Athena's program, outdoors on April 7th, when Nena, Sally W, Cindy, Dorrie, Mary Anne, Judy and my gardens will be for open for you to tour. Finally, this morning I invited Megan Foker and Kristin Poulsen to membership in the Diggers, a very happy moment for me.

You've helped me through the past month, with exemplary follow through and commitment to the Diggers. Thank you all for the support.

Warmly,

Liz

Old Mill Auction - Donations



Hopefully you have all received the Appeal Letter that went out last month. Thank you to all of those who have already donated! We have collected \$15,600 already and are pretty close to 100% participation. For those who still plan to donate we would like your check before April 20th. Please send your donations to Page, 2156 Courtland Ave, San Marino, CA 91108. Thank you for your support!

Floral Design- GCA National Floral Design Conference



Hope you are enjoying some early spring weather in our amazing Zone!

For our first ever National Floral Design Conference "Springtide".

For registration:

<https://www.gcamerica.org/members/calendar/ereventdetails/id/351>

Photography

The GCA **May** eNews is Zone XII's month to showcase our member's photographs!

Photo submission deadline is April 10th

Photo Specs:

- **Spring** photos
- Taken by Zone XII members
- Search for photos from **May** in previous years
- Taken in Zone XII
- **Landscape** (Horizontal) images are required
- All photos should be **1MB or larger**
-



Email Sally Miller, salgalmiller@gmail.com for exact info on how to send in your photos. Its easy!

Garden History and Design

April is the official kick-off month for the GCA initiative, *PARKS: Where Nature Meets Community*, part of the celebration over the next year of Frederick Law Olmsted's 200th birthday. Clubs across the country have the opportunity to tie their club projects to Olmsted's revolutionary work in parks and public landscapes. **Good news:** our Zone XII representative, Ann Blackmun, says that our ongoing work at the Old Mill qualifies as one of these projects! If we get a photograph to Ann of the Diggers work day on March 25th, it will be included in the Member Showcase for Parks on the GCA website.s



In addition, GCA has asked all clubs to participate in a "Hats Off to Olmsted" salute at the April club meeting. **Please wear your garden hat to the April meeting** and we will get a screenshot of the Diggers doffing our hats to the father of landscape architecture, to be included on the GCA website.

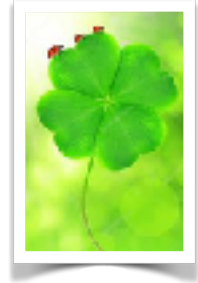


Horticulture

TWO GARDENING TIPS THAT WILL REQUIRE RETRAINING MOST GARDENERS!

1. LEAVE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON THE LAWN:

Most of us have at least a little bit of lawn. It is beneficial to leave grass clippings where they fall while mowing. Rich in nutrients like nitrogen and potassium as well moisture, the clippings are free lawn food and can provide a large part of a lawn's annual nutrient requirements. If you have not used pesticides, grass clippings can be added to compost bins. For more information, please see these articles: <https://www.lawndoctor.com/blog/grass-clippings-for-lawns/> <https://greenactioncentre.ca/reduce-your-waste/myth-busted-you-can-leave-your-grass-clippings-on-your-lawn/>



1. LEAVE THE LEAVES:

I had to retrain my gardeners not to blow under the bushes but to leave most of the leaves dropped by the trees and the bushes to remain as natural mulch.

I can attest to the value of fallen leaf mulch because it helped me succeed in Sara Pelton's "Underwear Challenge" a few years ago. Recently, I moved to a condo which has some old camellias the gardener has apparently very exuberantly blown the base of for quite a while; they were surviving in rock hard dirt. Sally Miller came to my rescue with 2 bags of oak leaves we applied to the base of the camellias; I asked the gardeners to please not blow it away. Ideally, I would have run the leaves through the blower (by turning it to the vacuum function and collecting it in a bag or garbage can) a couple of times to chop them finer but in the interest of time, we just spread and watered them. I hope to see happier camellias over the next year.

Here are some specific tips from Gardener's Supply Company:

"If you have an abundant source of leaves in the fall, [shred them](#). Your garden will benefit in a big way. Here how to use them:

- **Insulate Tender Plants:** A 6-inch blanket of leaves protects tender plants from winter wind and cold. Cover cold-hardy vegetables—such as

carrots, kale, leeks and beets—and you'll be able to harvest them all winter.

- **Boost Your Compost Pile:** Carbon-rich leaves balance high-nitrogen compost ingredients such as [fresh grass clippings](#).
- **Improve Your Soil:** Mix shredded leaves right into your garden. Next spring, your soil will be teeming with earthworms and other beneficial organisms.
- **Make "Leaf Mold":** Simply rake the leaves into a big pile. If you shred them, they will decompose faster, but you can still make leaf mold without shredding. After one to three years, fungus will have broken the leaves down to a special compost that smells like a walk through the woods. Leaf mold is high in calcium and magnesium and retains three to five times its weight in water—rivaling peat moss.

Be careful with some kinds of leaves. Walnut, eucalyptus and camphor laurel leaves contain substances that inhibit plant growth. It's best to compost these leaves before using them in your garden.

- Be sure to chop or shred leaves before using them as mulch. Whole leaves can form a mat that water can't penetrate.
- If you add shredded leaves right to the soil, add some [slow-release nitrogen fertilizers](#) to help the leaves decompose and to ensure that soil microbes don't use all of the available nitrogen."

For more information, please see these articles:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/Tuolumne_County_Master_Gardeners/files/155439.pdf

<https://homeguides.sfgate.com/soon-remove-leaves-flowerbeds-96723.html>

<https://www.gardeners.com/how-to/put-fall-leaves-to-work/5402.html>

An added bonus of leaving grass clippings and more leaf drop is it reduces yard waste going into the landfill. Organic waste accounts for more than a third of the material in California's waste stream. Greenhouse gas emissions caused by the decomposition of organic material in landfills creates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas 23 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Solid waste landfills are the single largest man-made source of methane in the United States.

NAL Conference



The GCA hosted a fabulous National Affairs and Legislation conference last month titled Climate Change Solutions. Over 1700 club members were able to join the live conference, and it was really wonderful. They provided entertaining speakers and clear explanations for several different components of the climate crisis, as well as 4 categories of solutions.

1. Natural Climate Solutions are any actions to conserve, restore, and sustainably manage ecosystems to reduce emissions and/or sequester more carbon. These include improved agricultural practices, reforestation and avoided conversion, grassland and wetland restoration. Agriculture can be part of the solution. In other words, how can we encourage farmers or anyone with land to act in a way that allows their property to capture and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby stopping and hopefully reversing global warming?

Currently, there are a few roadblocks to farmers, ranchers and foresters acting in an ideal way. Farmers don't know how to access carbon markets, nor who to trust when they want to learn. They also need capital to implement climate-smart agriculture practices. The industry professionals who work with carbon credits don't have any agricultural expertise, so the two sides can't communicate very well. The bipartisan Growing Climate Solutions Act of 2020 addresses these problems by helping farmers and foresters navigate carbon markets, incentivizing carbon sequestration and bringing dollars to producers.

2. Climate Equity/Innovation and Energy Efficiency

Katharine Hayhoe was incredibly entertaining as she explained how climate change is affecting our health. It was sobering, to say the least. Some were obvious: more frequent and/or severe weather disasters, increased risk of heat-related illness and death, and increased water contamination and disease. Climate change also exacerbates air pollution and allergens, enhances the spread of vector-borne diseases, decreases food nutrition, and affects our mental health.



You can also watch Nat Keohane talk about current innovation efforts in energy solutions. It was quite inspiring! <https://www.gcamerica.org/members/nal-conference#tues-afternoon-session>

Several countries have targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This simply means that all unavoidable man-made emissions (aviation, manufacturing, etc.) must be offset by absorbing an equivalent amount of carbon from the atmosphere. An intermediate goal to eventually reach net zero is the "30 by 30" initiative (an effort to conserve 30% of US land and ocean by 2030). Remember that term, 30 by 30, you will hear it a lot in the future.

3. Oceans

Dan Myers gave a great presentation on this critical decade (2020-2030) for our oceans. His main point is summarized by:

"We are taking too much out. We are putting too much in."

Most fish populations have been overfished and the ocean won't recover at current rates. The good news is that oceans can regenerate themselves *if they are protected*. However, only 2.5%

of the ocean is fully protected right now. In order to save our oceans, we need to protect 30% by 2030. On the other side of the equation, we have been dumping into the oceans for decades. In addition, oceans have absorbed 90% of the excess heat and 40% of the excess carbon dioxide on the planet. Even though 30 by 30 is a very ambitious goal, experts still think it is possible.s



4. Transportation and Infrastructure

John Podesta was the main speaker and covered all the usual solutions in this category: efforts for clean air and water, the use of buffers to reduce runoff and water pollution, living shorelines to minimize storm damage, and growing native plants to reduce erosion and improve pollinator habitats. There are many transportation projects in the works that encourage energy efficiency, reduced emissions and congestion, and alternatives to auto transportation.



Thank you to all the Diggers for letting me be a delegate this year. If you want to see any of the speaker videos, click on the below link and you will be prompted to sign in. I encourage everyone to check it out. You won't be disappointed.

<https://www.gcamerica.org/members/nal-conference>