



July 2018

# Newsletter

*Fecund facundity from the fertile foothills*

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Vice President – Leo Stallworth  
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Read the newsletter online:

<http://www.altadenacommunitygarden.com/newsletter.html>

[Visit our members discussion group on Facebook](#)

## In this issue

- Upcoming Events
- News
- Deck Landscaping Donor Entreaty Letter
- Predation for Garden Pest Control
- Outreach Report
- Little Free Library Update
- Garden Maintenance
- Notifications
- Housekeeping Reminders
- Call for Newsletter Submissions



## Upcoming Events

- General Membership Meeting Saturday 7/21, 10 - 11:30 Loma Alta Park Gym. Agenda will include Deck Landscaping Project Fundraising Report, Gopher Treatment and Garden Members Picnic.
- Fall Victory Garden Classes September 22, 29, October 6 & 13: 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM ACG deck
- Executive Board Meeting & Garden Members & Family Potluck Picnic Saturday 10/20, 10 AM - 12 PM & 1- 5PM Loma Alta Park Gym & ACG deck
- Workshop - Sharing the bounty of your garden by preserving for gift giving Sunday 11/18, 10 AM - 12 PM ACG deck
- General Membership Meeting Saturday 12/1, 10 -11:30 AM Loma Alta Park Gym 3330 N. Lincoln Ave. Altadena, CA. 91001



## News

**General Membership Meeting Saturday 7/21, 10 - 11:30 Loma Alta Park Gym**

### The 2018 Altadena Community Garden Picnic

This year we skipped the Annual Community Garden Picnic. The deck landscaping project which promises to provide a beautiful setting for garden events has become elaborate and extensive – too much so to be undertaken together with picnic planning and execution. See the complete article on the deck landscaping project in the February 2018 issue.

### Film Shoot Funds Distribution

The Spring film shoot about a new AIDS treatment drug that took place in the Garden provided us with \$3,000.00. We donated \$1,500.00 to the Loma Alta Park Children Programs. The film company also donated their extra plants and soil to the Garden. Thank you everyone for your cooperation. – Silvera Grant

### Altadena 4-H Club Permanent Plot

We are pleased to report that construction for a permanent plot for Altadena Foothills 4-H Club will start soon. We thank the Altadena Community Garden and LA County for helping to make this project happen. This fall, we look forward to beginning our third year leading the young people in the 4-H Farm-to-Table group. – Rebecca Tufenkian

## Garden Membership Update

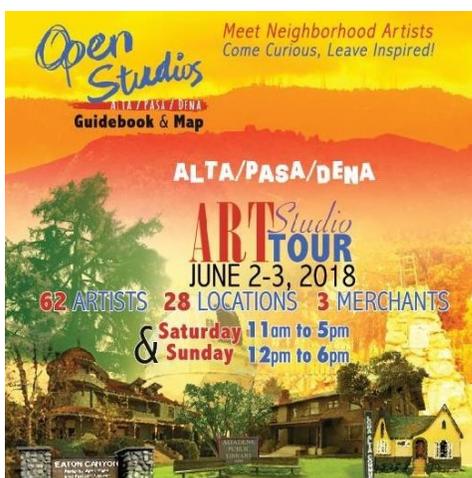
There are 57 currently on the waiting list and the one at the top of the list applied in Jan. 2015 – a three year waiting list now but we are doing just fine. Welcome to new members: Plot #1: Sacha Malin, plot #1a: Vincent Augustine, plot #17: Linda O'Connor, plot #38: Amy Jerominek and plot #H3: Kameelah Wilkerson with her associate, Chuyen Nguyen. Welcome All! – Mary McGilvray

## The grape vines have been trimmed!

The Grapevine Committee will be working through the summer making sure the vines stay within the approved coverage of the fence. All interested members are invited to join this committee. You would be trained in the art of taking care of the grape vines (viticulture). Learn the benefits and new recipes using these wonderful grapes. If you would like to join, don't be shy, Contact us at [Gothardart@gmail.com](mailto:Gothardart@gmail.com) We would love to have more members learning about these beautiful vines. – Mary Gothard

## The SENCH Neighborhood Watch

group has, once again, scheduled their annual summer gathering at the garden. A deck reservation has been approved and we look forward to hosting them in August. Members for the Altadena Sheriff's Station have also been invited to visit. – Mary Gothard



## The Open Studios June 2018 Art Tour

was a wonderful success for the whole community. Sixty artists were featured at twenty-five locations. We are thankful to the ACG and LA County Parks and Recreation for hosting our monthly meeting. – Mary Gothard

## Garden Deck Landscaping Project Update

Great news on the fundraiser for the new deck landscaping project but we still need help! Through generous donations we have made the original goal as presented in the proposal (approximately \$6,000). The proposal did not include the cost of soil and irrigation so we are still accepting donations to raise a total of \$10,000! We also have made a formal request with

County Supervisor Kathryn Barger to aid in reaching our extended goal. Thanks to all who have already contributed and please continue to help by spreading the word. There are envelopes with the informational letter and donation form in the tool shed on the microwave. We can do it!  
– Kelly Fernandez

All donors names will be listed in the official 2019 Annual Community Garden Picnic Program. The picnic will celebrate the new deck and the completion of the Deck Landscaping Project. We would like to see all Garden members names listed in the picnic program. We are not interested in the amount of your contribution, just for you to contribute. – Silvera Grant



## Deck Landscaping Donor Entreaty Letter

Dear Friend,

The Altadena Community Garden is one of the oldest community gardens in Los Angeles County. The two-and-a-half-acre site was constructed in the 1970s and comprises 75 individual garden plots and a beautiful deck with a scenic view of our mountains. It is one of the true treasures of Altadena. Four plots are designated for the support of

educational programs-- the Loma Alta Park after school program, the Victory Garden classes, the Altadena Foothill 4H Children Club program and the Girl Scouts of America Troop #4601.

What started out as a repair project of the deck in 2017, turned into a complete demolition of the original structure, including the surrounding landscape of fauna-fostering flora. The deck has been a meeting place for over forty four years and the structure was showing wear and was becoming hazardous. The new construction by the Department of Parks & Recreation produced an improved deck able to support the needs of field trips and events in the garden but the surrounding landscaping remains to be done. The whole community will be proud. It is a wonderful place to relax, reflect and enjoy the quiet peace of the garden.

Under my direction a team of garden members came together and presented a plan for the new deck landscape design. The plan specifies gardens that are low maintenance, walkable and drought tolerant. The new landscape will include educational components for the school field trips and visitors.

The new landscaping design is ready to implement and **we need your help**. I am writing to ask for your financial support to secure the \$9,000.00 needed to complete the deck landscaping project. Will you help us? No contribution is too small, and all contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law, in accord with our 501(c)3 status. Please consider making a contribution. We are grateful for your help in this historic and important community project. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Silvera Grant, President

Altadena Community Garden

silvergrant@gmail.com or call me 626-398-9840.



## Predation for Garden Pest Control

– Denis Titchenell

Gophers seem to be propagating and infiltrating the gardens this year in record numbers and are causing surprisingly extensive damage. Gardeners have deployed an eclectic variety of deterrents ranging in theme from lethal to whimsical. In the latter category fall the surprising array of horned owls lurking above plots – some in feebly predatory postures, others sagging into into improbably awkward poses no self-respecting owl would voluntarily assume. Significantly, this density of birds is thoroughly inconsistent with the normal behavior of these reputedly territorial fowl. To mind springs Thomas Grey's account of the owl's aversion to company:

*Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tower  
The moping owl doth to the moon complain  
Of such as wandering near her sacred bower  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.*

A quick search for products to discourage gophers through threat of predation reveals a number of oddly dimwitted-looking strigiforms, some of which hoot when triggered by a motion sensor and even glare with suddenly glowing red eyes. The body of one in particular is really more a parody, presumably of what a typically gullible American consumer thinks an owl ought to look like, and which resembles more closely the product of Disney debauchery than E. H. Shepard's sublime pen-and-ink renderings of Owl of the Hundred Acre Wood, and which certainly bears no resemblance at all to anything in John J. Audubon's *Birds of America*. One can only speculate upon the bafflement, and perhaps bemusement, of gophers glared and hooted at by a cartoonish beast resembling nothing ever seen in nature. Reviewers comments imply that rodents quickly find the device unthreatening and ignorable.



*Barn Owls – John J. Audubon*

Another suggested solution has been the introduction into the garden of coyote urine, a perfectly logical concept to consider, given that coyotes proliferate in our area and are highly effective nocturnal predators (and have presumably inspired a healthy genetically inherited fear in the rabbits and rodents which have survived thousands of years of natural selection). The question is how to acquire it. Coyotes are not common pets, but the practice of keeping them as pets is not unheard of. The radio host and surpassingly brilliant, if highly idiosyncratic, orator, Caroline Casey, shared digs with her beloved evolutionary companion, Stella Coyote, for years until Stella's demise about a year ago. She enthusiastically endorses the (outdoor) use of coyote urine for such purposes.

Little do other animal lovers who keep coyotes realize the wealth, the treasure that these unruly family members micturate upon the carpet in moments of bladder distress or simply feral canine contumacy, and what a little of that largess might mean to a beleaguered gardener engaged in losing yet another tactical skirmish with wily pocket gophers.

Well, it turns out that in this case, demand has inspired supply. [Coyote Urine is indeed available on Amazon](#). Starting at about a dollar an ounce, this highly redolent and repulsive liquid is indeed being harvested and is reputedly highly effective in repelling herbivorous marauders but must be periodically reapplied. Selling as it does for about 15 times the price-per-ounce of milk, one must wonder if this will continue to be a lucrative form of animal agriculture. Are there nearby ranches boasting hundreds of head of coyotes?

In response to a posted draft of this article in our Altadena Community Garden Facebook discussion group, garden member, Jared Burton, posted a link to an article entitled *Raptors to the Rescue/Using birds to help get rid of pests is proving to be more effective than poisons — and less expensive* (<http://therevelator.org/raptors-rescue>), in which efforts to encourage hawks and owls with appropriately placed perches were shown to be highly effective. Indeed some of us had wondered why native raptor populations hadn't increased in proportion to the rodent population. That was our answer; they need higher perches. Fence posts apparently won't do, and many are already occupied by unthreatening and often ludicrous effigies.



*Barn owl in owl box*

More generally, the gardens are suffering from an exiguity of predator-friendly habitat. We need an "ivy

mantled tower", or indeed any kind of tower – or post – or pole that would serve diurnal, nocturnal or even crepuscular avian nimrods seeking a vantage point from which to practice their predatory art.

Further research, and a paper entitled [\*Prey Consumption by a Large Aggregation of Barn Owls in an Agricultural Setting\*](#) by Prof. Matthew Johnson of Humboldt State University, et al which specifically measured the effect of the deployment of 24 barn owl boxes on pocket gopher populations in a California vineyard, answered most of the remaining questions: how to attract and encourage desirable predators, how many is too many and the compatibility of different types of pest control. The results were quite revealing.

Firstly, and most importantly, rodenticidal toxins are completely incompatible with pest control through natural predation. Hawk and owl populations suffer dramatically from the presence of poisons in their prey and in the absence of significant predator populations, rodents tend to propagate to fill the habitat to capacity. As pocket gophers are highly territorial, their population density within the garden never exceeds that which is consistent with established territories. It does seem clear that our gardens have attained that density. As a result, practicing rodenticide with poisons, traps or even nocturnal murderous vigilance is unlikely to have any significant long-term effect. Any abandoned gopher habitat in a maximally inhabited environment is rapidly filled by an opportunistic interloper.

It behooves us to find a remedy to our paucity of predators. A single family of barn owls can consume thousands of gophers in one nesting season, far more rapidly than they can re-infest the area. The application of coyote urine may well repel rodents from a specific area but would require consistent reapplication.

As most of our major pests are clearly nocturnal, nocturnal predators are the answer. Dense barn owl populations fostered by the deployment of barn owl boxes have been proven highly effective in reducing pocket gophers. Barn owls prefer open spaces to sylvan density, are attracted by properly designed owl houses, and, unlike other predators, are not territorial, thus possibly dwelling and reproducing in close proximity to each other – as many as are merited by the rodent population – but only as long as rodent overpopulation lasts, after which barn owls remain and continue to feed on gophers but reproduce only at dramatically reduced levels.

There are a number of good online resources on building barn owl nesting boxes. [www.hungryowl.org](http://www.hungryowl.org) sells pdfs of their Barn Owl Box plans for \$10. The Barn Owl Box Company (<https://www.barnowlbox.com/>) sells high quality and well designed boxes (the ones used in Prof. Johnson's study) but, with a little resourcefulness, we can probably make them for less than the \$189 they are charging for them. Interestingly, one of the coauthors of that *Barn Owl Box* academic study was affiliated with the Barn Owl Box company.



In all probability, Barn Owl boxes should start appearing in the garden soon. Please join in. Discussion is taking place in the [\*Altadena Community Gardens Facebook Forum\*](#). Also, please do not use toxic rodenticides; their immediate effect on rodent populations is ephemeral and probably negligible, and the long term effect upon predators is disastrous.



# Outreach Report

– Mary Gothard

**Outreach** We hosted the children from Franklin Elementary School. The morning air was filled with drizzle, but it did not stop the children. They had a wonderful time and learned from our membership volunteers. The children were delighted! A big THANK YOU to the volunteers that came out in the rain for the children.

**The Girl Scouts** love to be busy doing garden chores. They continue to work in the garden, once a month, helping, learning and doing. They are looking forward to the new herb garden location.



## Little Free Library Update

– Denis Titchenell

A Little Free Library (LFL) was included in the Garden Deck Landscaping proposal. Some substantial book donations have been made and the LFL committee has been working with enthusiasm, reviewing designs and weighing options. A friend and master woodworker has volunteered to help take the project from the planning stage into reality. Artists of the gardens are invited to submit artwork for decorating the LFL and ACG LFL bookplates for book donors to place in the books they donate.



– Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema

A box of donated books now resides in the toolshed. Members are asked not remove books from the box at this time but are invited to add books to the collection that they feel would be of benefit to members of and visitors to the Garden. A very inspiring aggregation of volumes is rapidly accreting.

One brief enthusiasm setback occurred when it was declared that the chimney of the proposed little library design would not be allowed to double as an incense burner for liability reasons. While this ponderous admonition of pragmatic sobriety might by some be considered a grave impediment to the maintenance of exuberant spirit, it could also be construed as assurance of support, a license for the painters and poets of the project to allow their art to run puckishly amok, ignoring with reckless abandon all sense of pedestrian propriety and even common sense – as those bases are clearly being adequately covered. We need now have no fear of overstepping the



Proposed LFL design

confines of responsibility in our efforts to give local and practical artistic expression to that fine frenzy of firmamental fire. Are you up to the task? Please submit suggestions for LFL decoration.

The suggestion was made that we devise artwork and text for a bookplate to adorn books that originate in or pass through our LFL. The artwork would uniquely identify the Altadena Community Gardens and the text would endorse the Little Free Library concept and express reverence for the books themselves. Book donors may then choose which, if any, will adorn their donated books. Please submit artwork suggestions.

Here are two drafts of possible original bookplate texts for ACG LFL books, one a supplication and the other a tongue-in-cheek imprecation.

### Bookplate I:

*To be read on a train or aloud by a brook  
'Tis my hope to remain a Free Library Book  
'Till my spine splits asunder and pages all fray  
Please don't toss me nor sell me nor stow me away  
Ensnounce me where books often help folks the most  
May my home again be a bookcase on a post*

### Bookplate II, The Little Free Library Book Malediction:

*Books are kept or returned and for some that's okay  
But to an LFL, this one would come back one day.  
It's been proven that those who stow this kind of books  
Make embarrassing burps that evoke dirty looks.  
Some are subject to irksome calamities too  
And suffer from spillage of ink and of glue  
And of syndromes and ailments contract a range:  
Impetigo, athlete's foot, pink eye and mange  
Blackened big toenails and incisor stains  
Hangnails and baldness and varicose veins  
So it's best to put back on an LFL shelf  
Books like this one which can fend for itself.*



# Garden Maintenance Update

Maintenance, Repair & Upgrade Projects by Los Angeles County department of Parks and Recreation 2018

1. Deck: Continue to work on the deck to install lights, hand rails, garden hose placement holder, handicapped parking space, install mail box and painting. Hand rails, Clear wood stain sealer and handicapped parking space will be completed this month.
2. 4H Children Plot #60: Thank you Matthew Tufenkian for the design. Construction to begin this month.
3. Replacement of rotten perimeter plot boards will begin this month. Please let Leo know if your plot is in need of new perimeter boards.
4. Provide the expertise and labor to complete the recommendations of the Garden Deck Landscaping Committee. Install the recommended irrigation system. Provide the labor and materials/supplies to do so. The Garden will undertake a fund raising campaign to secure the funds for completing all of the other recommendations in the deck landscaping report. Complete by December 2018.
5. Construct a 6 foot border from the eastern Garden fence in the Lower Park and add mulch to the area. The Garden will remove plants growing on the fence and plant more fruit trees in that area. The Garden will be responsible for providing the ongoing maintenance for this newly created area. Complete by end of July.



## Notifications and reminders

From the President

### Hay Bales

Hay bales in the compost stall are available for you to take and use in your plot. You may take more than one for your plot.

### Appreciation

Appreciation to Margaret Jones - plot 7, for volunteering to assist vice president, Leo Stallworth - plot 41 with the Loma Alta Park Children's Plot.

Appreciation to all of the donors so far to the Deck Landscaping Project. Formal thank you letter from the Garden will be forthcoming. We will also extend an invitation to attend our 2019 Annual Community Garden Picnic and donors will be listed in the picnic program. The picnic will be in celebration of the completion of the project and the complete construction of the new deck.

### Sympathy:

Our deepest sympathy to Marie Yeseta in plot #4 who lost her devoted father and Maria Shufeldt in plot # 43 who lost her loving mother.



## Housekeeping reminders:

From the President

### See Something Say Something

Refer to the following emergency phone number list that is posted in the Garden.

- MEDICAL EMERGENCY IN GARDEN DIAL 911
- LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PARK BUREAU (213) 974 – 8000 24-HOUR DISPATCH (800) 834-0064
- SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT – ALTADENA STATION (626) 798-1131
- PASADENA POLICE DEPARTMENT (626) 744-4620
- COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT/ALTADENA FIRE STATION #12 (626) 797-1911
- PASADENA HUMANE SOCIETY & SPCA (626) 792-7151
- PENNY DANIELS, RECREATION SERVICES SUPERVISORS LOMA ALTA PARK (626) 398-5451 or 5452
- NICOLAS BERNAL, OUR GARDENER Cell: (626) 379-0593
- SILVERA GRANT, PRESIDENT, ALTADENA COMMUNITY GARDEN (626) 398-9840
- LEO STALLWORTH, VICE PRESIDENT (626) 398-8846

### Tiller Usage:

Please check to see if gasoline or the oil and gasoline mixture are in the tiller before you try to start it. Make sure you put the correct fluid in the correct tiller before using it. Please remember to clean the tiller after using it.

### Dumpster Area:

Gardeners, please be responsible for cleaning up after dumping your trash and other items from your plot into the dumpster. The area should be kept clean as much as possible.

### Inspection Concerns:

Please correct any violations you may receive from an inspection report. Plot number must be visible at all times.

### Farmers' Market and Garden Access:

The Garden is closed to the public during the Farmer's Market. All gates to the Garden must remain closed during the Farmer's Market. Garden members, Loma Alta Park staff and Farmer's Market staff are the only persons allowed in the Garden during the Farmer's Market.

### Avocados:

Please be aware that removal of avocados from the tree is now a violation of the Garden's by-laws. Refer to Article - 3, Section - P. We will harvest the avocados in December or January and distribute them to the Garden members in a general membership meeting. This will allow for everyone to get an equal share of the avocados.

### Tools & Equipment:

Please clean the tools and equipment before returning them to the tool shed. This is also your responsibility. Notify Leo if a tool or equipment is broken or needs attention. Let him know if you would like to have a tool that is not in our inventory.

Please remember to close the door of the small refrigerator in the tool shed tightly.

### Thievery:

Reminder: The Garden By-Laws call for the termination of membership of any member taking something from another member's plot without their permission. Several gardeners have reported items missing/taken from their plot without their permission -- items such as, vegetables, stepping stones, boards, chairs and personal hand tools.

## Open Gates:

If you are the last to leave the Garden, please make sure the gates and tool shed are closed. You can also close the gate if you are alone in the Garden. When entering or leaving the Garden, please remember to lock the Palm Street entrance gate.

## The Deck Fountain

Please use the bottom electrical light switch on the pagoda next to the deck to turn on and off the water fountain. You can also use the hose on the side of the deck to fill the fountain with water when it is low. If you are the last person to leave the Garden and the water fountain is on, please turn it off.

## Gate Locking and Parking Policies

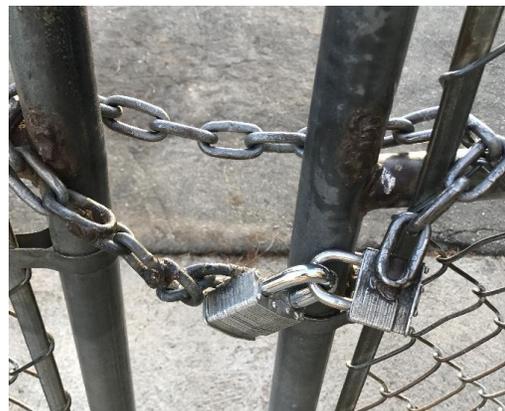
The Garden is a public facility and we encourage the gardeners to keep the main entrance gate open when they are in the Garden gardening. This will give passersby the opportunity to see the Garden when a gardener or gardeners are present. However, safety is the top priority for all Garden members when they are in the Garden. It is therefore the responsibility of all Garden members to do whatever is necessary to ensure that they feel safe while in the Garden and the Lower Park. When alone in the garden it may be appropriate to lock the gate. Upon entering the Garden and finding the gate locked with someone inside, it is probably best to defer to that person's preference and lock the gate back up after entering. When leaving the garden with another garden member in the Garden, it is polite to determine whether that gardener would like the gate locked or not. It is never appropriate to leave the gates open when leaving if the garden is empty.

The Garden parking lots are for gardeners only. As the gates may be locked at any point, it is unwise for non-members to park there.

Only service dogs are allowed in the Garden. Visitors with or without service dogs are welcome to walk into the Garden when the gates are open, walk around in the walkways and visit with gardeners. They are not allowed to go into a plot or to take anything out of a plot. No alcohol, drugs or inappropriate behavior are allowed. Members may refer to Article 3 section A, G, J, M, P, Q, & U in the Garden By - Laws for justification.

## Gate Locking:

When locking the gate, please be sure always link the padlocks to each other so that opening either one will undo the chain. Padlocking to a chain link locks out legitimate users whose keys fit the other padlock.



## Call for Newsletter Submissions

Have you done anything interesting lately that you would like to share with garden members in the next newsletter? Please let ideas propagate in your imagination and share the harvest with us. Artwork is most welcome. As the ACG Newsletter will be in digital form, multiple media may be included as links. Please submit creative thoughts or material to [altadenacgnewsletter@abacus-es.com](mailto:altadenacgnewsletter@abacus-es.com)