

Garden Clippings

Orange County Independent Master Gardeners' Newsletter

Volume 18 Number 4

April 2012

April Meeting

Saturday, April 7, 2012

Rancho Santiago Community College, Rm. 107
2323 North Broadway, Santa Ana, CA 92706

Schedule

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Setup Plants 'n Things
9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Business Meeting
9:45 – 10:00 a.m. Plants 'n Things
10:00 – 11:00 p.m. Enrichment Program
11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Clean up

Members with last names starting with **R – Z**, please bring a breakfast snack. Other members are also welcome to bring goodies. Also, please bring along any items you wish to contribute to our Plants 'n Things raffle.

Remember to save your holiday cards for Rita Corpin, who uses them in craft programs. And you're welcome to bring catalogs to share.

Program: Orchids with Edie Gulrich

Edie Gulrich has been an orchid hobbyist for the past 13 years. She currently maintains two greenhouses, one warm and the other cool. Her interest started by accident with an act of kindness from her husband after an argument; the collecting escalated out of control until a wise grower stepped in. She lives in Anaheim and can share the challenges of growing orchids in an area with no humidity and high winds.

Edie has just pruned her collection and thus has no orchids to sell, but will bring a door prize for one lucky member!

Board Meeting: follows general meeting.

Gardening Events

Fullerton Arboretum. Pre-register for all classes by calling 657/278-3407

Sat. – Sun. April 14 - 15: "Green Scene" 10am – 4pm. \$6.00.

Nearly 100 vendors with unique plants and services, including worms for vermiculture.

Sat. – Sun. April 21-22: "Tri-Counties African Violet Society Show and Sale" 10am – 4pm.
Potting Shed

A huge selection of African Violets and Begonias to view and buy. Based on previous years, come to line up well before 10am!

Sat. April 28: "Low Water Gardening: Irrigation" 1:30 – 3:30pm. \$25 member/\$30 non-member/Bleachers Classes free to those who present their Yorba Linda District Water Bill

Landscape Designer Steve Gerischer will teach basic irrigation design and water management.

Fullerton College Horticulture Dept., 321 E. Chapman, Fullerton 92832, 714-992-7135

Sat – Sun, April 30 – May 1: "Spring Sale",
Sat: 9am. - 4pm. Sun: noon – 3pm

Natives, drought tolerants, herbs & vegetables.
More details at: <http://horticulture.fullcoll.edu>

Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens 1500 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711.

<http://www.rsabg.org>. Pre-register for all classes by calling (909) 625-8767 x224.

Now through July 15, 2012: "Big Bugs in the Garden" Garden admission \$8/\$6 for seniors

David Rogers' sculptures of giant bugs (25-foot long ants!) have toured the U.S. and are now in California for the first time since 2001.

Jill O'Neill, President
Orange County Independent Master Gardeners

Leaves from the President



“The first day of spring was once the time for taking the young virgins into the fields, there in dalliance to set an example in fertility for nature to follow. Now we just set the clock ahead and change the oil in the crankcase.” -- E. B. White

The most exciting thing to report is we have candidates for a new board. The nominations are as follows:

President: Anne Porter
1st Vice President: Glenn Vodhanel
Treasurer: Diane Wilkinson
Recording Secretary: Judith Wright
Corresponding Secretary: Melanie Boudreau

If we get enough people for a class in September we will need a 2nd V.P. but let's wait until after the Green Scene and see how it goes. At the June meeting, the above slate of candidates will officially take office after they have been elected.

Diane Wilkinson has offered to help get speakers for the meetings but we need someone else to help her. Remember, you get volunteer hours.

I want to thank all the people who volunteered at the Fullerton Arboretum for their help in planting the tomatoes. They don't call it "hell week" for nothing.

Our April speaker will talk about orchids. This seems like a timely subject seeing how so many people buy and give orchids this time of the year. Hope everyone can attend.

☎ Contacts

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Website: [http:// www.ocmastergardeners.org](http://www.ocmastergardeners.org)

Volunteer Opportunity

Back to Natives is an approved venue. If you're looking for a volunteer opportunity, here's one at our former meeting location in Santa Ana:

Native Plant Propagation at the
Back to Natives Nursery at Santiago Park

Fridays, 8AM to 11AM

Join BTN any Friday from 8AM-11AM at the Back to Natives Nursery at Santiago Park to help maintain their native nursery plants, as well as the nursery and its grounds. Let them know if you will be attending so the BTN staff knows to look for you. For more

information or to RSVP, contact BTN via
email: volunteer@backtonatives.org

Garden Tour Planning Meeting

Hosts for the May garden will meet to plan the event after our April general meeting.

Western Bluebirds, part 2

By Bob Franz

NESTBOX LOCATIONS



Most advantageous nestbox locations for WEBLs are determined by topography and habitat as well as the presence of their food supply. Thus nestboxes are usually placed in or

near large grassy areas such as golf courses, parks, cemeteries, residential greenbelts and schoolyards. Almost all nestboxes in southern California incorporate a look at the top for hanging them in trees to avoid sprinklers and reduce vandalism.

NESTING ACTIVITY

The male shows the female more than one nest site and she chooses one and starts building a nest - it usually takes the female one week to complete the nest. Upon completion, the female starts laying eggs, light blue in color, at a rate of one per day, usually in the morning. Although the number of eggs laid varies, five is the average although there may be as many as seven or even eight.

Incubation doesn't start until the last egg is laid and is done only by the female because only she has a brood patch - an area on her underside that is devoid of feathers thus allowing her body heat to be transferred to the eggs. Eggs hatch from 13 to 14 days after the last egg is laid. Once nestlings appear, both adults feed them every 5 minutes or so for the next 19 to 21 days when they get strong enough to fly from the nest, or fledge.

Typically, a second nest is built and a second brood will be fledged, and sometimes a third but this is rare.

MONITORING

Monitoring involves becoming responsible for overseeing one or more nestboxes on what is called a trail. Basically this involves opening each nestbox periodically and recording activity seen such as presence of a nest and/or the number of eggs, nestlings and fledglings, including the date

of each observation. Although some WEBLs seem to become quite agitated when their nestbox is taken down, they normally calm down after it is replaced and the monitor leaves.

Each nestbox should be inspected once per week, or no less frequent than every 2 weeks. After the last fledgling has left, all nesting material and residue should be cleaned out and the nestbox reinstalled. This routine should be repeated until mid-August when the nesting season is over. Leave the nestbox in place as WEBLs use it for shelter until the next nesting season.

RECORDKEEPING

There is no standard form to use for recording nesting activity but whatever is used, it should have spaces for recording the dates of inspection as well as the numbers of eggs, nestlings and fledglings.

END-OF-YEAR REPORTING

At the end of the nesting season, we enter totals for each nestbox into the CBRP database from which an Annual Report is generated. It includes totals from all monitors in California who reported their totals.

PREDATORS

Besides the threat of hawks that prey on birds, the two most challenging predators are sparrows and wrens.

House Sparrows - These birds can invade your nestbox and peck holes in eggs and kill nestlings as well as adult WEBLs. Their presence is indicated by seeing the nestbox completely filled up by nesting material. Try discouraging them by removing all nesting material - more than once if necessary.

Wrens - These cute little birds also can invade your nestbox and peck holes in eggs and kill nestlings. Their presence is indicated by finding the nestbox filled up with small sticks. If the nestbox is partially filled, remove all nesting material. If it is full, you must not disturb it further as there may be eggs inside and they are a protected species.

Bonsai: Spring Preparation

By Don Martin



February is the time to stockpile supplies of chemical and organic fertilizers. If you use dry mixes like cottonseed

meal (75%) with bone meal (25%), keep the mix dry and cool. Acid-based fertilizers are good over azaleas, conifers, and junipers. Use slow release fertilizer in early spring. Don't rush your trees into a spurt of new growth too soon.

This is a good time to clean your pots. Also, look for aphids and other insects. Clean pots with a strong soapy solution and bleach. Apply a lime-off cleaner or a strong vinegar solution to spots. Rinse well and allow pots to dry in full sun. This can prevent any fungus infection carry over. As we all know, spring is just around the corner.

Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation

By Andrea Wulf

Published by Alfred A. Knopf, 2011

reviewed by Barbara Eaves

Most students of American history overlook the important part that gardeners played in the development of our country. Many people know of Thomas Jefferson's love for the plant world; but few realize that George Washington, James Madison and John Adams to name a few, were equally as important (and more successful) than the more widely known efforts of Jefferson.

Survival after winning independence from Great Britain depended in large part on our ability to be self-sufficient, and this meant growing our own food and other farm products. Even in the midst of planning battles, George Washington wrote to his estate manager with instructions for the gardens at Mt. Vernon. John Adams was obsessed with the quality of manure and how it affected the success of his crops. James Madison is considered the father of the environmental movement.

Gardening, agriculture and botany were basic to many of our founding fathers' characters, and this book brings to light an aspect of American history that is especially interesting to those of us who share their passion.

Editor's note: My apologies—last month's newsletter repeated the previous month's review with the wrong title. Above is the correct review.

There is plenty of free parking at the Community College office building

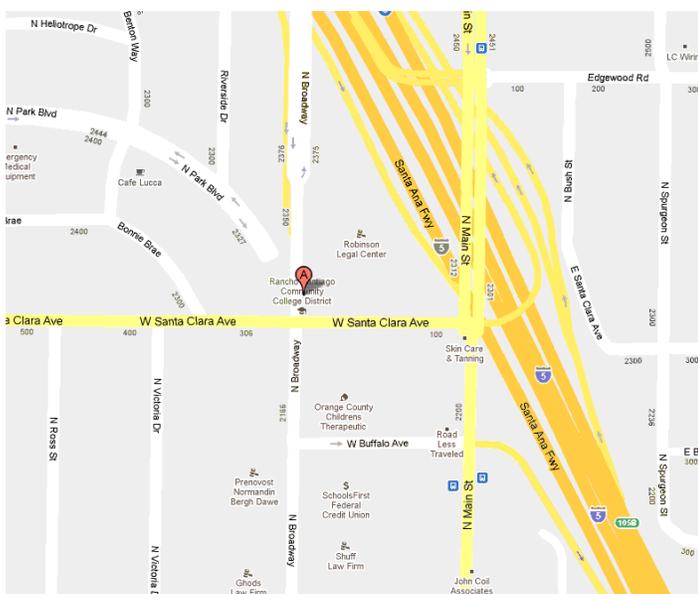
The following routes are suggested:

From the 5 heading north: Take exit 105B for Main St/N Broadway. Keep right at the fork, follow signs for Main St. N, and merge onto N. Main St. Make a U-turn. Turn right at the first street, W. Santa Clara Ave. Take the next right onto N. Broadway. Building will be on the right.

From the 57 Freeway: Take the 5 Freeway south. Keep **right** at the fork, follow signs for **Main St/N Broadway** and merge onto **N Broadway**. Building will be on the left, on the north east corner of Broadway and Santa Clara Ave. Turn left on Santa Clara and then left into the parking lot.

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Map to meeting site



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