



UCRBG Newsletter

Welcome Week Plant Sale

By Janine Almanzor

We have a lot planned for this year's Welcome Week, including a Pop-up Shop Plant Sale on Sunday, September 21st. Welcome Week is when the new students move into the dorms on campus and get settled in. There are many activities on campus for the students, and the Botanic Gardens holds activities, as well. On Sunday, along with the plant sale, we will also have many activities, including the Master Gardener Docents in the Butterfly Garden from 9 am to 12 pm to instruct visitors on gardening for butterflies. Docents are also available in the North Coast Redwood area to answer questions and direct and help visitors. Other events at the Gardens for UCR students that week include a plant giveaway on Monday at 9 am, free guided tours on Tuesday at 10 am, and a scavenger hunt and free Kona Ice on Wednesday from 12 – 3 pm.

Our Pop-up Shop sale will include plants for both students and the homeowner. Students will have a selection of house plants and small succulents for their dorm room, and the homeowner will have a selection of California native plants, shrubs, herbaceous plants, trees, vines, house plants, and succulents. The propagation team, led by Laura Navarro, has been busy preparing for this sale. Some of the California native plants for sale will be four different *Arctostaphylos* cultivars (manzanita)–'Dr. Hurd', 'Warren Roberts', 'Sunset', and 'John 'Dourley'. We have several different *Ceanothus* species and cultivars (wild lilac)–'Ray Hartman', 'Arroyo de la Cruz', 'Yankee Point', 'Frosty Dawn', 'Concha', 'Dark Star', and 'Wheeler Canyon'. Other California native plants available will be *Artemisia californica* (California sagebrush), *Erigeron glaucus* 'Ron's Pink' (seaside daisy), *Justicia californica* (chuparosa), *Cleomella arborea* (bladderpod), *Salvia spathacea* (hummingbird sage), *Salvia apiana* var. compacta (white sage), and *Salvia mellifera* (black sage). We also have a large variety of *Salvia x jamensis* (autumn sage) in many different colors.



Succulent planters



Erigeron glaucus 'Ron's Pink',
"seaside daisy"



Salvia x jamensis
(flamingo pink), "autumn
sage"



Salvia spathacea,
"hummingbird sage"

As you might know, many of our salvias are hand-crossed hybrids produced by former Director Dr. Giles Wainess in his research program, who named many of his new cultivars for long-time Friends, docents, and donors to the Gardens. Be sure to read the labels to see whose namesake plant you are installing in your yard!

We look forward to seeing you on September 21st. Our next Pop-up Shop after September will take place during Art in the Gardens on November 1st.



Ceanothus 'Skylark',
"mountain lilac"

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Director's Report - Dr. Jodie Holt



As fall and a new academic year approach and temperatures begin to cool, we look forward to the return of students, school tours, and increased numbers of visitors in the Gardens. We have been busy over the summer planning fall activities, catching up on tree and trail maintenance, and advancing our bigger projects—creating a new

Display House in the greenhouse and working with campus on plans for a new Plant Pavilion.

Focusing on new and returning UCR students, we have planned another set of fun activities in the Gardens in conjunction with campus move-in days and student orientation. September 21 will be a busy open Sunday for us with a Pop-up Shop at the entrance along with our popular Butterfly Garden Docents and Origami with Michelle. Be prepared for a lot of activity in Parking Lot 13 where students will be unloading their possessions to move into the nearby dorms.

As you can read in this issue, early fall is a great time to spot migrating birds in this area, so we are planning for a fall guided Bird Walk with our expert guides. Plans are also well underway for Art in the Gardens on November 1 so mark your calendars for what is always our biggest event of the year. We are also discussing new benefits and activities for members, who are some of our biggest supporters, such as special open hours, behind-the-scenes tours, and more.

We continue to receive questions about bringing back Primavera in the Gardens, which met its demise during the pandemic. Once it was safe to do so we tried for two subsequent years to convince restaurants and wineries to participate (local breweries needed no convincing). Sadly, no restaurants, including our past anchors, were able to close their establishments and donate food and time to the Gardens; difficulties in maintaining adequate staffing added to their reluctance. We are committed to hosting a spring fundraising event in the Gardens for our loyal constituents and will be working with our CNAS Development team on a new concept to make this happen.

If you are reading this Newsletter, I suspect you have thoughts about how we are doing, what we are planning, and what we might do better or more of in the future. Feedback from our constituents is vital as we move forward to advance our mission, and this means you! So, here is my commitment—if you read this far and send me your thoughts, feedback, or even a wacky idea or two, I will personally reply and send you a special surprise in thanks!

As always, you can learn more about these initiatives and more on our website, this Newsletter, eNews, and social media. Please send your comments and suggestions to me at bgdirector@ucr.edu or leave a message at 951-827-7095. Thanks!

Jodie

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Wildlife of the Gardens - Coyote

By Michele Felix-Derbarmdiker



Photo by Lee Reeder

A trickster, a villain, a troublemaker or unfortunate predator never able to catch a roadrunner. These are some things that come to mind when you think of one of the most persecuted predators in North America, the coyote (*Canis latrans*). Coyotes have been at the center of folklore, indigenous stories, and smear campaigns for generations. The coyote is a common predator species that is incredibly resilient and continues to push back as humans push ever forward into their habitat.

Habitat/Feeding

When colonizers first began to spread across the United States, coyotes were primarily found in grasslands or other habitats where they were not in direct competition with their larger cousin, the wolf. As predator removal campaigns reduced the North American wolf population the coyote was able to spread into new habitat types. Today coyotes can be found throughout the state of California, including the wildland-urban interface (WUI) around the UCR Botanic Gardens. Coyotes are extremely resourceful and able to eat a wide range of foods. This is what makes them successful as humans continue to expand into wildlands. While they are primarily carnivores, consuming rodents, birds, amphibians, turtles, rabbits, snakes, and deer, they will also consume grasses, fruits and insects. Coyotes are essential to controlling rodent and rabbit populations. In the wildland-urban interface coyotes will also consume small pets, pet food, and trash. Coyotes can also be scavengers and serve as a

member of nature's clean-up crew. In packs it is possible for coyotes to take down larger prey such as elk, domestic sheep, and cattle.

Breeding

Like their wolf cousins, coyotes can exist in packs or as solitary individuals. Packs begin with a bonded monogamous male and female. When a female goes into heat several males will follow her until she selects her mate. Pairs often bond several months before mating and establish a territory. For their dens coyotes usually expand on burrows created by other animals or utilize hollow trees or rock ledges. Mating typically occurs from mid-winter to spring and produces an average of six pups, with litter size being based on local prey availability. The pups are helpless at birth and remain in a warm den lined with grass and fur. While only the alpha male and female of the pack mate, raising young is a group effort. Coyotes are very social animals and packs are commonly made up of pups from past seasons or unrelated individuals that have been accepted by the pack. By mid-summer pups are old enough to patrol territory with their parents. Around August, pups will begin to disperse to find their own mate and establish territories or will remain with their parents and help raise siblings.

Identification

There are nineteen known subspecies of Coyote in North America. Fur coloring can vary slightly depending on geographic region and habitat type but overall contains a mix of grays, white, black, and reds. On average adults max out around forty pounds and can be three to four feet in length from snout to tail tip. Females are smaller overall. Coyotes are often confused with gray wolves, which are larger than coyotes. Coyotes have longer ears and a thinner frame and face. Wolves also carry their tails horizontally, while coyotes carry their tails pointing downward.

Threats

Coyote populations are stable throughout their range. They can face predation by wolves and mountain lions but their biggest threat is humans. Human persecution of coyotes over the last several hundred years has created a lot of misinformation and ignorance. Most states still hold annual predator killing contests. While all sorts of animals are targeted in these contests, coyotes suffer the most casualties. Prizes are even offered for killing pups inside dens. These contests not only disrupt the bonds and hierarchy within packs but also unsettle local ecosystems. As humans develop further into wildlands we must find a way to coexist with coyotes. Many organizations, such as Project Coyote, are working to educate the public about healthy coexistence and fighting to end annual killing contests.

State of the Gardens

By Jodie Holt

Our Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens was held on June 27th in our Meeting Room where members heard the State of the Gardens Address then enjoyed a reception catered by UCR Citrus Grove. This article summarizes the address, highlights our activities, and lists goals and plans for the coming year.

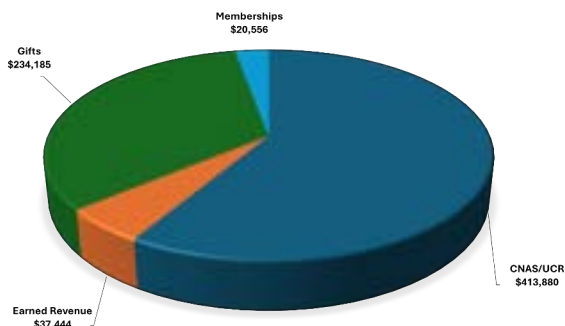
2024-25 Year in Review

The year 2024-25 was a good one for the Gardens, especially compared to the prior year in which we incurred major and unexpected expenses. With increased staff, campus interns, and volunteers, we are catching up on maintenance and able to focus on new projects and goals, including planning new gardens and continuing to design a lath house to replace the dome. Safety is our biggest concern due to hazards posed by aging trees, hilly and uneven terrain, and aging infrastructure. Our major challenge remains financial sustainability due to increased cost of salaries, services, vendors, and materials, as well as a continual need for maintenance of our aging infrastructure.

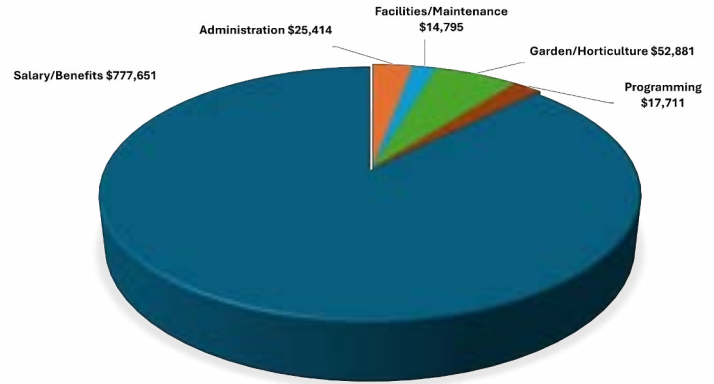
2024-25 Financial Review

Due to large investments in deferred maintenance in 2023-24, we started 2024-25 with a smaller carry-forward than prior years. Our annual income was \$706,064, slightly more than 2023-24, and expenses were \$888,451, significantly lower than 2023-24 despite increased cost of salaries and benefits. For the second year we ended with a negative current year balance that was covered by carry-forward funds, leaving a June 2024 balance of ~\$303,000. Our challenge remains balancing income, with a significant percentage coming from non-recurring gifts, with rising recurring expenses. We greatly appreciate continued financial support from CNAS, and assistance in business administration, development, communications, and HR from CNAS and our BEES Admin team. My goal remains achieving a sustainable budget that covers annual costs and reserves carry-forward funds for one-time expenses and projects.

2024-25 Income



2024-25 Expenses



2024-25 Activities and Goals for the Future

Administration

At academic year end our team numbered 10 staff plus ~12 student workers and campus interns. With the departure of Emily and Catherine we recruited two Student Stewards, a new student Assistant Curator, and a Cal Poly Landscape Architecture student to create designs for two new projects. We are grateful for dozens of volunteers who make our gardens and programs possible.

Collection and Curation

Janine's curation team continues to add/replace plant labels and update the database. They produced a new virtual tour in an Herb Garden Story Map and added more plants and bird's-eye views of gardens to the GIS interactive map. Our virtual tours can be viewed on our website at gardens.ucr.edu/all-virtual-tours. Working with Miguel's team they added plantings to the Garage Office area including hardy cycads from the collection in the Dome. Plans are underway to augment the Australian area with plants Janine acquired from the Huntington Gardens. We are making progress on the design and installation of the new Display House and will soon begin designing a revamp of the Iris Garden, thanks to generous donor support. Our goal is to raise funds to replace our aging rotary engraver used to make plant labels with a new larger one that can be used to make larger signage for the Gardens.

Education and Research

As Education Coordinator, Janine manages a robust program of docent-led school and adult tours, college class tours and field trips, new docent training, propagation classes for RCC students, and faculty and student research projects. Several docents volunteer on open Sundays and other busy times to greet and answer visitor questions at popular spots in the Gardens. We continue to host Camp Highlander throughout the year, a UCR science-based camp for children. With help from

many volunteers, we continue to offer our annual public Rose Pruning Demonstration, Twilight Tours, and Bird Walks, and we have engaged new writers to continually improve our newsletter. In the coming year we plan to implement a fee for school tours to cover our costs and manage ever-increasing demand, as other gardens in the region have done.

Horticulture and Landscape

Miguel's team continues to make progress maintaining and beautifying the 40-acre Gardens and catching up on deferred maintenance. Less noticeable to visitors but equally critical, they have continued work in Alder Canyon to transition to water-efficient turfgrass and install a turfgrass-appropriate and labor-saving irrigation system. They also continue to install new irrigation in the Subtropical Fruit Orchard and Bee Forage Ground and added automated irrigation to pots in our Frost Court plant nursery. They continue to prioritize safety with trail improvement, stabilization, and water diversion. Sadly, many of our aging trees pose hazards due to falling limbs or mortality, including one of our largest sycamores in Alder Canyon, which was recently removed. Some of this decline is due to natural aging but pest damage and insufficient pruning are also factors. Our goal is to raise funds for a robust arbor management program that will include tree restoration and replacement to improve safety and augment our tree collection.

Programming and Engagement

Program Coordinator Pam manages revenue-generating activities, including Meeting Room rentals by campus groups and photo shoots; maintains the Gardens' website; serves as liaison to BEES and other campus units for business needs; manages Gardens calendaring, mail, email, and phone; creates our eNews; and handles event promotion, publicity, and signage. She works with staff and volunteers to handle logistics for plant sales, demonstrations, and other events to ensure that they run smoothly. Working with UCR Advancement she manages our membership program, sending cards, letters, reminders, and event invitations. This year UCR Advancement transitioned UCR's donor database from a legacy system to Sales Force, bringing improvements in functionality. Pam is our lead in learning this system and how it will benefit member stewardship.

Engagement Coordinator Nancy recruits and orients volunteers to expand our workforce. She schedules gate stewards, coordinates and schedules volunteers for events, represents the Gardens at on-campus events, and oversees sale and delivery of merchandise from the gatehouse. Nancy also organized the popular open Sunday activities and Welcome Week events for new and returning UCR students. This past year we held six Pop-up

Shops, including several in conjunction with other events, where we sold Gardens-grown plants and branded merchandise, and offered a succulent planter workshop. Pam and Nancy worked with volunteer Karen Fleisher to host Art in the Gardens, our largest event of the year. Our engagement goal for the coming year is to plan new family-friendly and student-centered events and continue to recruit volunteers who make all this possible.



Welcome Week plant
give-away

Development

While we receive generous CNAS funding, our operating budget is largely self-funded and our continued success depends on donor generosity. Implementing admission will help offset rising costs and stabilize our budget but donor support is critical for new projects and initiatives. We are grateful to our CNAS Development team who work to increase endowment balances, grow membership, seek sponsorships, and engage in outreach to potential donors. We are developing a new tribute program to replace memorial benches that better aligns with our mission. Our development goals for the coming year include raising funds for a new Plant Pavilion, hosting an event to replace Primavera in the Gardens, and growing membership in Friends of the Botanic Gardens, UCR's oldest support group. We strive to add benefits to attract new members, including members-only open hours, exclusive first-peeks at new projects, and more.

Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future

As 2024-25 ends, our budget is sound and we are fiscally responsible. Nevertheless, it is essential to work towards a budget model with income and expenses balanced annually. We continue to strive for increased numbers of visitors, members, donors, and volunteers as well as improved labor efficiency, all of which will increase income, reduce costs, and enhance our impact as the region's largest comprehensive public botanic gardens.

**To support the
Gardens, please visit
gardens.ucr.edu/giving**

Around the Gardens

Twilight Tours

By Karen Fleisher

Mother Nature provided near-perfect touring weather for the Twilight Tour on July 19th. More than 50 guests were excited to explore the Gardens with our Master Gardener docents who guided them through many areas of the Gardens with the evening light providing an array of visual as well as aromatic wonders.

Docent Kay Force's group saw several things that delighted them including an Oriole nest in the California fan palm in the North American desert area, a hummingbird nest in the ginkgo tree in the Deciduous Forest area, and a raccoon out for an evening stroll in the North Coast area.

On the path up to the Australia area Docent Teresa Wassman's group saw hawks flying from tree to tree, probably scouting for dinner, providing a great photo op.

In the Rose Garden Docent April Wilson answered questions from the tour groups about caring for roses, deadheading roses, and the appropriate time to prune roses, all while taking in the beauty and fragrance of nearly 300 old and new selections of roses in the Gardens.

The Herb Garden was especially aromatic after a recent watering and the guests enjoyed learning about herb uses as they "pinched and sniffed" their way through the well-manicured herbal beds. Fragrant English lavender cascaded onto the walkway and several guests reminisced about its flavoring in lemonade and shortbread cookies. Docent Jean Weiss introduced them to lemon verbena, which was appreciated by all for its cool and refreshing aromatherapy effect.

The Native American Garden showed off plants that the Cahuilla, one of the original peoples of southern California, relied on for food, construction, clothing, and medicine. The desert willow tree was blooming and the

white sage gave off its familiar soothing fragrance. Of course, an evening in the Gardens would not be complete without bats that were seen flying over the Native American Garden just as the sun went down.



Lee Bayer (right) leading her group through Alder Canyon

Docent Lee Bayer's group particularly enjoyed the Butterfly Garden where Docent George Spiliotis shared information about the plants that encourage butterflies to visit our gardens and identified Gulf Fritillary eggs and several hungry caterpillars on the beautiful passionflower vine (*Passiflora* 'Incense').

After a leisurely walk through Alder Canyon the tours concluded with refreshments served on the patio, giving visitors the opportunity to sit and enjoy the beauty of Alder Canyon as well as share their experiences touring the Gardens at twilight. Many visitors commented that the experience was totally enjoyable, much more than they expected, that they appreciated gaining new information about the Gardens, and that they were looking forward to their next visit!



George Spiliotis (left) pointing out something of interest

Our August Twilight Tour, on Saturday, the 16th, provided another perfect evening for exploring the Botanic Gardens for the more than 70 guests who enjoyed the beauty and serenity of the Gardens at twilight. What could have been better than spending an evening in the UCR Botanic Gardens meeting new friends and catching up with old friends. We hope to see you soon in the Gardens!

Contributors: Barbara Dawson, Karen Fleisher, Kay Force, April Wilson, Teresa Wassman, and Jean Weiss



April Wilson (center) with her group in the Native American Garden

Sundays in the Gardens

by Janine Almanzor

From April through October our dedicated Master Gardener Docents are in the Butterfly Garden from 9 am to 12 pm on open Sundays to help visitors with gardening for butterflies. Sundays are our busiest days, with visitor counts over 1,000, and the docents have talked with many of them, pointing out up to nine species of butterflies including the Gray Hairstreak, Giant Swallowtail, Monarch, Cloudless Sulphur, Funereal Duskywing, Skippers, Gulf Fritillary, Checkered White, and Marine Blue. They point out Gulf Fritillary eggs on the passion vine, Monarch caterpillars on the desert milkweed, and Cloudless Sulphur caterpillars on the popcorn cassia. They even showed that the Cloudless Sulphur caterpillars are green when eating green leaves and turn yellow when eating yellow flowers, to the delight of visitors. We also have Docents that are in the vicinity of the Redwoods to share their knowledge about the Gardens and answer any questions visitors may have.



Teresa Wassman leading the storytime

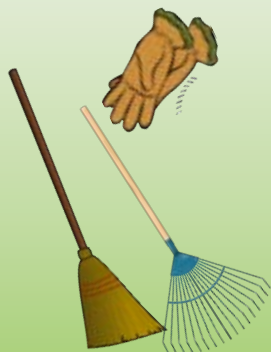
The Storytime activity has been well received by the children and their parents. Teresa Wassman enthusiastically reads stories about nature to young children and ends with a poem by Mary Cecily Baker about a lavender flower fairy. Teresa lets the children touch and smell lavender, then they go on a hunt to find a hidden fairy house covered in moss. They all love it and are eager to return. Who knows what they'll find next time?

On the first Sunday of each month Michelle Lofquist teaches visitors of all ages how to do origami. Michelle is very patient and a great teacher, so it's an enjoyable experience for everyone. She stays very busy on these Sundays because many people want to make an origami creation to take home.

These volunteer-led events have made the Botanic Gardens a family destination for the open Sundays this summer. What a wonderful oasis right here in Riverside! Please check our calendar for more upcoming events at gardens.ucr.edu/information.



The hidden fairy house



VOLUNTEERS WELCOMED!

Visit gardens.ucr.edu/volunteer
for more information

We
always
need new
docents!

Project Updates

Article and photos by Miguel Estrada



Bee Forage Ground

After many months of gradually piecing together the necessary activities to create a planting area for the bee forage ground, we are finally on the final stretch of the project. The idea for the bee forage ground took shape after we installed the donor-funded California Native Bee Garden. At first, we assumed a dedicated area wouldn't be necessary given the abundance of plants already on site. But as we considered further we realized the importance of providing native pollinators with a space to reliably gather pollen and nectar. We needed a place that was close to the Bee Garden but without many trees or shrubs, which led us to the hillside east of the Bee Garden. Although transporting tools and materials up there has been a challenge, the location is ideal. It is close to the Bee Garden and is visible from many vantage points in the Gardens. Currently, the planting area is covered in plastic to solarize the soil. We plan to keep the cover on until late September or early October and then sow wildflowers before the end of October.

Plant Nursery

As an ongoing effort to modernize the Gardens' irrigation system, we decided to automate the watering of the

potted plants from our propagation program located on our Frost Court property. We have over a thousand one-gallon pots that require routine hand watering and in the summer months this is needed daily, which adds between 6 and 10 hours of labor time each week. That may not seem like a lot but for a small garden team like ours, every hour saved is an hour we can reinvest into essential tasks. Over the course of two months we extended the mainline, added 14 valves, and added 1,400 spot spitters to deliver water directly to each pot. I am happy to report that system is now controlled by timers and our staff only needs to check it occasionally to ensure that it is in working order.

Alder Canyon

In June we had a tree company remove a large sycamore in Alder Canyon. The tree had been infested with invasive shothole borers, which introduced the fusarium dieback pathogen. The infected wood lost its structural integrity and started dropping large limbs, creating serious safety issues. At that point we knew that removal was necessary. While it is unfortunate to lose such a beautiful and large tree, we are actively working to replace this tree and others as part of a broader tree planting program. This initiative aims not only to replace dead trees but also to increase our collection by hundreds of specimens. Please contact us if you want to know more and learn how you can support our new arbor program.



To see some of the plants in bloom please visit gardens.ucr.edu/information/bloom.

The Rose Gardens and Butterfly Garden have many plants blooming this time of year.



Lagerstroemia indica
"Crape myrtle"



Bauhinia x blakeana
"Hong Kong orchid tree"



Eriogonum giganteum
"St. Catherine's lace"



Rose Gardens

Why the Black Phoebe is Riverside's Perfect Signature Bird

By Norm Ellstrand

The following is revised from an article originally published on July 9, 2025 in *The Raincross Gazette* (see raincrossgazette.com to subscribe)

The doldrums of birding in Riverside run from July through mid September. While the first fall migrants begin appearing along the coast, at the wetlands of the San Jacinto Wildlife Refuge, or on the shores of Lake Elsinore, things tend to be sleepy within city limits during those hot months. Local birds are molting, tucked away in the shade during the heat of the day. Inland terrestrial migrants don't show up until the fall, and even then they arrive slowly and quietly. It's not until late September that we begin to see the first of our winter birds, and that's when fall birding walks at the UCR Botanic Gardens become worthwhile.

The species that persist and show themselves in the three-digit heat are largely brown and gray—Mourning Dove, Northern Mockingbird, House Sparrow, California Towhee, and Eurasian Collared Dove. Even the more obvious birds—crows and ravens—come cloaked in somber black, matching the mood of the season. But one bird shatters the stillness and stands out.

The Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*, “Say’s blackish bird”) is handsome, dapper, and anything but subdued. Although it lives here year-round, it becomes especially noticeable in summer when its quieter peers retreat from view. With striking black and white plumage—black head, breast, and upperparts contrasted by a clean white belly and undertail—it looks perpetually dressed for a formal event. A sharply defined inverted V across the breast forms the look of a tuxedo vest, and its black legs and feet complete the ensemble. There’s nothing subtle about this bird.

Once you know what to look for, the Black Phoebe becomes unmistakable. You’ll spot it perched confidently on low branch tips, eaves, fence posts, statuary, or even lawn furniture, rarely more than a dozen feet above the ground, scanning for flying insects. It swoops out, snatches its prey mid-air, and returns to the same perch or one nearby. The action is repeated throughout the day. This hunting method, called “flycatching,” is characteristic of the Tyrant Flycatcher family, the most diverse bird family in the world with more than 400 species.

Beyond its style and method, the Black Phoebe has a few more endearing habits. It often wags or fans its tail after landing, and its song carries a bright and quirky rhythm—typically “pee-URR, pee-EE,” with the second syllable descending and the fourth ascending. Sometimes, it



Photo by Lee Reeder

switches it up: “pee-EE, pee-URR.” It’s not just visually distinctive, but audibly so as well.

Importantly, the Black Phoebe isn’t so abundant that it fades into the background, nor is it so rare that it requires a chase. Depending on which field guide you consult, it’s considered “common” to “uncommon.” Think of them as scattered across Riverside like dark chocolate chips in a cookie—more concentrated in some areas, a pleasant surprise in others. Water is the key to finding them. You’ll see them near the ponds at Fairmount Park, along the Santa Ana River wetlands, and anywhere with canals, bird baths, lawn sprinklers, fountains, or swimming pools. These features attract insects and provide the mud Black Phoebes use to line their nests.

Their range stretches from the Oregon–Washington border south through Central America and all the way to Argentina, but in the United States they’re mostly found in the Southwest and parts of central Texas. From my own New World birding experience, the places where I have encountered them most reliably are Riverside and the western half of Riverside County. While multiple Black Phoebes live in the UCRBG, one (or more!) are frequently found within 100 meters of the entrance.

When birders wrap up a day in the field, there’s always talk of the “Bird of the Day,” usually the rarest or most surprising sighting. But another kind of bird always emerges in those conversations, the “Signature Bird.” It’s not necessarily the most unusual bird, but the one that seemed to define the experience of the day. I remember birding with a guide in Surrey (UK) who declared the

Continued on page 11

In the Works

By Botanic Gardens Staff

Things in the Gardens slow down in the summer heat, but this is also a great time to catch up on work and activities. Our intrepid staff and loyal volunteers have accomplished much this summer, some of which is listed below.

Gardens and Grounds:

- ▶ We installed 14 valves, 6 battery-operated controllers, and approximately 1,400 emitters in Frost Court to automate watering the potted plant sale and collection plants.
- ▶ Our new metal storage unit has arrived, and we are currently working on reducing the visual impact.
- ▶ A new automatic irrigation system has been designed to water the memorial trees along the east perimeter road. We will install the system in September.
- ▶ We are working on an irrigation design for a large area in the Australia section. This would be our most complicated and largest irrigation project since we started focusing on our outdated watering system. The goal is to complete the installation by October.
- ▶ In preparation for the new Display House, a channel drain on the north side of the greenhouse is being constructed to eliminate the flooding we get during heavy rains. Plans for the interior layout are underway.
- ▶ Steady progress is being made by UCR's PD&C (Planning, Design, and Construction) on plans for a new Plant Pavilion and the surrounding grounds that will replace the Dome. We plan to launch a fundraising campaign once we have details on cost and timeline.
- ▶ New speed limit and pedestrian signs have been installed by UCR TAPS (Transportation and Parking Services) along Botanic Gardens Drive to increase motorist awareness and pedestrian safety. We also hope to have speed bumps installed when the roadway is repaved, hopefully soon. Thanks to Steward Barbara Gable for her gentle and persistent reminders and great ideas; we're thrilled that these latest ideas were possible!

Activities and Events:

- ▶ Volunteer Orientations are held three times a month with new volunteers signing on for stewardship, events, and garden work in rose gardens and propagation.
- ▶ The First Sunday's activities are gaining popularity with visitors, thanks to our generous volunteers—George Spiliotis and Karen Fleisher (Butterfly Garden), Teresa Wassman (Storytime), Michelle & Scott Lofquist (Origami). These outstanding volunteers have donated their time and materials to elevate the BG experience.
- ▶ We hired two new student workers, Yasuko Hirata, former Climate Corps Intern, and Adrian Zamudio, active Gardens volunteer, to replace our graduating students. Welcome Yasuko and Adrian! We look forward to the return of our Student Stewards, Auggie and Julia, once school starts so we can cover more hours at the entrance when volunteers are unavailable.
- ▶ We are in the process of ordering new Botanic Gardens branded merchandise; stay tuned and watch our display window in the entrance gatehouse for the new items.
- ▶ We recently reached the one-year mark for our new people counter and are delighted to report that validated visitor counts from August 2024 to August 2025 totaled 72,000!



New controllers for potted plants



Channel drain outside the greenhouse



New pedestrian signs



First Sunday's activities

In Memoriam

By Janine Almanzor

This year we have lost two wonderful docents of the Botanic Gardens – Sally Beaty who died on January 27, 2025, and Erin Snyder who died on July 12, 2025.



Sally Beaty had a very fulfilling career in educational television and had a master's degree in television and film. Upon retirement in 2009 she became more involved in the community. She became a docent for the Mission Inn and later was the president of the Mission Inn Foundation. In 2009 Sally began volunteering at the Botanic Gardens, in 2010 she became a UCCE Master Gardener, and soon after that she was trained to be a docent of the Botanic Gardens. Sally thrived in this environment since she loved the Gardens, education, and people. She especially enjoyed leading school tours. Sally always gave people her full attention and made them feel valuable and loved. She eventually moved away from Riverside and wasn't available to lead tours, so she continued to volunteer by writing the notes for the plants in our GIS app. Always learning, growing, giving, and caring describe Sally and she is missed very much by the docents and all who knew her. For more information about Sally's life visit dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/riverside-ca/sally-beaty-12234113.



Erin Snyder was a docent at the Botanic Gardens since 2019. She worked full-time as the Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator for over 24 years at the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) and managed to find the time to lead tours at the Botanic Gardens. Erin was also a certified UC California Naturalist and instructor and was involved with many organizations in Riverside. At RCRCD she held children's activities, led tours at the demonstration garden, and even trained other docents to lead tours. From her many years of working at RCRCD she brought a wealth of knowledge to the Botanic Gardens as a docent and was very humble about it. She viewed leading tours as a great opportunity to educate people and share her knowledge and love for the Gardens and nature. She was a wonderful docent and will be greatly missed. For more information about Erin's life visit raincrossgazette.com/neighbor-of-the-week-erin-snyder/.

Erin leading a Twilight Tour

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elusive Stonechat our Bird of the Day. I agreed but I told him the Green Woodpecker had been the Signature Bird for me since it showed up again and again in delightful ways.

By that same logic, I propose the Black Phoebe as Riverside's Signature Bird. It's everything we aspire to be—good-looking, hard-working, distinctive, optimistic, and always present. You'll find it on the hottest summer days and in the quiet chill of winter. It never vanishes and it never fades.

When it comes to the bird that best represents Riverside, the answer is black and white.

*Sayornis was named in honor of American naturalist Thomas Say.

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GARDENS!



AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
**RECIPROCAL
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The UCRBG is an institutional member of the American Horticultural Society. A Friends membership entitles you to the benefits of participating in the AHS Reciprocal Garden Network, which gives you free or discounted admission and other discounts at nearly 400 gardens and arboreta throughout North America. The AHS member gardens can be viewed at their web site: ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap.



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UCRBG Calendar of Events

Bimonthly	Volunteer Orientation , Entrance, 9:30 am (1 st Sunday & Tuesday)
Bimonthly	Roaming Docents , 10:00 am - 12:00 pm (1 st & 3 rd Sundays)
Bimonthly	Butterfly Garden Information Table , 9:00 am - 12:00 pm (1 st & 3 rd Sundays)
Monthly	Walk & Learn at the Rose Garden , 8:00 - 10:00 am (1 st Tuesdays)
Monthly	Children's Story Time , 10:00 am (1 st Sundays)
Monthly	Origami with Michelle , 11:00 am - 1:00 pm (1 st Sundays)
Sept. 21	Pop-up Shop Plant Sale , 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Nov. 1	Art in the Gardens , 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Please note: The UCRBG hours are Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 3:30 pm
and 1st and 3rd Sundays 8:00 am - 2:00 pm until further notice.
(Please check our website for closure dates)