



# UCRBG Newsletter

60<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
1963-2023!

## A Brief History of the Botanic Gardens

By Jodie Holt

To honor the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gardens we have searched through our archives, which contain correspondence, notes, plans, interviews, Friends meeting minutes, Newsletters and other documents describing the origins of the Gardens. A comprehensive history of the Gardens covering the years 1954 - 1991 was written by Professor Emeritus Walter Reuther in 1991; this history was published in the UCRBG Newsletters in 1992, Vol. 12, Nos. 3 and 4, and 1993, Vol. 13, Nos. 1, 2, and 3. While these issues have not been digitized, they are available in our Schneider House Horticultural Library for those interested in learning more. Below is a brief history excerpted from Dr. Reuther's detailed history and expanded to include the years 1991 to the present.

The official founding date of the UCR Botanic Gardens is 1963, although the idea for a botanic garden at UC Riverside originated in 1954 with Dr. Victor Goodman, a botanist from Missouri, who was unfamiliar with western plants that were used in teaching. Botanist Dr. Frank Vasek was hired in 1954 and appointed to spearhead the establishment of a garden. In 1962, funds were allocated to develop what was then called the "Life Sciences Experimental Area."



Dr. Frank Vasek

In 1957, 37 acres of land were allocated for the garden and in 1962 Dr. Vasek became the first director, overseeing the first plantings in 1963 and continuing as director until 1967. Dennis Kucera was hired as the first manager to begin development and maintenance of the new garden. During that time the first irrigation system was installed, native trees and shrubs were planted and labeled for teaching, the garage office and lath house were built, and the paved road was installed.

From 1967 to 1973, Dr. George Gillett served as director and the "Life Sciences Experimental Area" became the UCR Botanic Gardens, although we have been unable to find any official documents codifying this status. During Dr. Gillette's directorship, another employee was hired, a dam to retain the turtle pond was built, and some pedestrian pathways were paved. Planting of native species for teaching about California and Mediterranean plant communities continued.



Dr. George Gillett

From 1973 to 1981 Dr. Louis Erickson served as director and oversaw the construction of the entrance gatehouse and restrooms, conference room, and greenhouse. He encouraged community involvement in the Gardens and worked with local garden clubs and other groups including the Riverside Rose, Iris, Herb, and Orchid Societies to install specialty plantings. The nearly 3-acre Subtropical Fruit Orchard was added during that period, bringing the total Gardens acreage to 40.



Dr. Louis Erickson

*Continued on page 3*

## In This Issue

- P. 1 History of the Gardens
- P. 2 Director's Report
- P. 4 Fall Plant Sale
- P. 5 In Memoriam
- P. 6-7 State of the Gardens
- P. 8 What to See
- P. 9 Gardens Activities
- P. 10 Butterfly Corner - The Brown Elf
- P. 11 In the Works

## Director's Report - Dr. Jodie Holt



This year marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UCR Botanic Gardens...sort of! It turns out that the idea of a botanic garden emerged as early as 1954, the year the UC Riverside campus opened. At that time faculty in the brand new Division of Biological Sciences, some from as far away as the midwestern US, were tasked with teaching California flora to students at the new university and realized they had no idea what plants grew in their new home state. Thus, the idea of a teaching garden planted with California native plants was launched, and the UCR Botanic Gardens became official in ~1963.

In this issue we highlight the history of the Gardens and the devoted directors and staff who shepherded its development. UCR and CNAS Communications are helping by featuring the Gardens in their publications and newsletters as well. We will celebrate our big year with a special week of activities the last week of September, to coincide with UCR's welcome week for students starting the 2023-24 school year. Be sure to check our calendar for members-only events, special tours, an opportunity to visit our Pop-up Shop, meet the staff, and more.

A hallmark of the UCR Botanic Gardens, and many other university gardens, is the organic, bottom-up way they originate. In contrast, private gardens typically originate from private holdings of land and funds, while municipal gardens often originate from a groundswell of public demand and dedicated public funding. In contrast, the Gardens at UCR developed from teaching needs and discussions among faculty and subsequent petitions to campus leadership, described in detail in numerous (carbon-copy) letters in our Gardens archive.

Fast forward 60 years and I hope you share my genuine awe at how far we have advanced to become a bona fide botanic garden. Since the beginning our intrepid directors, all part-time faculty with full-time responsibilities in research and teaching, have worked hard on a shoestring budget to develop the land, build infrastructure, install gardens, and create our beautiful nature oasis. Hard working staff and volunteers made it possible, along with essential support from the university. While we are not state funded with taxpayer dollars, the abundant support we receive from UCR in administration and financial operations, development, communications, human resources, and more, is truly priceless.

As you will read in the State of the Gardens Report in this issue, we have much to celebrate in our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. We continue to improve the beauty and safety of the Gardens, add to the collection, launch new outreach activities, and welcome new members and volunteers, and our financial status is sound. We hope you will help celebrate this milestone and continue to follow us through our website, eNews, and social media, and send your thoughts and feedback to me at [bgdirector@ucr.edu](mailto:bgdirector@ucr.edu) or 951-827-7095.

Jodie

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Pam Ferre, Program Coordinator  
Nancy Cullen, Visitor Services Coordinator  
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Pam Roose, Nursery Technician  
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College of Natural &  
Agricultural Sciences



*Continued from page 1*

Under Dr. Erickson the Friends of the UCRBG was established in 1980 as an official UCR Support Group, and Friends membership continues today to provide vital support for the development of the Gardens.

Dr. Giles Waines became the director in 1981 and served for 35 years, during which time he greatly expanded the collection and specialty plantings and worked with the Friends Board to build endowments to help fund the Gardens in perpetuity. The first curator of the Gardens was hired in 1982 and Stephen Morgan became curator in 1984. During those years the volunteer Friends Board of Directors provided support for numerous activities including plant sales, Primavera in the Gardens, workshops, and the UCRBG Newsletter. With increasing numbers of visitors to the Gardens the small staff started a volunteer docent training program to provide for guided tours for school groups, which today remains an important educational resource for the Inland Empire. Staff and volunteers also produced a small map and visitor guide, educational pamphlets, and self-guided tour brochures. In 1986 the geodesic dome lath house was donated and installed by the Gunther family and Friends, and in 1989 the upper restrooms were constructed. The Butterfly Garden was designed and planted in 2011.



Dr. Giles Waines



Dr. Jodie Holt

In 2016 Dr. Jodie Holt became the 5<sup>th</sup> director of the Gardens, continuing to the present. Working with the Gardens' campus administrative team, CNAS development staff, and the UCR Foundation, gift funds were invested in deferred maintenance and garden improvement, operations were revamped to function

more sustainably, and staff were increased to six full-time and four part-time individuals plus student workers. Two new gardens were planted, a Native American Garden and a Native Bee Garden, and the collection continues to be expanded. With changes in UC requirements, the Friends Board was no longer viable, and the membership program was revamped along with the volunteer program; many members continue to be active volunteers in the Gardens. A PR and outreach program was implemented for greater connection with the campus and community, and new map/welcome, member, volunteer, and memorial brochures were produced. Education

moved into the digital age with the production of several interactive GIS maps and self-guided tours. New hand crafted redwood signs were added to each garden, and marked way posts now link the paper and digital maps to locations in the Gardens. The pandemic of 2020 caused campus and Gardens closure during which many online activities were launched, including admission donations, plant sales, branded merchandise sales, and volunteer onboarding, as well as virtual workshops. A property adjacent to the Gardens, formerly owned by Oscar Clarke, founder of the UCR Herbarium, was acquired by campus and turned over to the Gardens in 2022; this space is being used to develop a plant nursery for future in-place plant sales.

With strong support from CNAS and campus leadership, Friends of the Botanic Gardens, dozens of volunteers, and a large campus and community of supporters, we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> year of the UCR Botanic Gardens and we eagerly look forward to the decades ahead.



### JOIN US DURING OUR 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WEEK SEPTEMBER 24-29, 2023

- **Sunday, September 24-** Visit during our special Open Sunday, 8:00 am - 3:30 pm (last entry at 3:00 pm). Free house plant for the first 90 UCR students
- **Monday, September 25-** Enjoy a Docent-led tour of the Gardens on the hour from 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
- **Tuesday, September 26-** Join the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and receive a free plant (while supplies last, must be present to claim), 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- **Wednesday, September 27-** Visit our Pop-Up-Shop for plants and branded merchandise, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
- **Thursday, September 28-** Meet the staff who keep the UCR Gardens beautiful, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- **Friday, September 29-** Enjoy a special treat when you visit 12:30 - 3:00 pm

# Members Appreciation Fall Plant Sale

By Janine Almanzor

Mark your calendars for October 14<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm for our first in-person Plant Sale in four years! It will be very similar to the Spring Member Appreciation Plant Sale we held in 2019 when it was “in place” in our upper nursery area. The event will be open only to our members, including those who join at the gate on that day. To become a member please visit our website at [gardens.ucr.edu/friends](http://gardens.ucr.edu/friends). There will be California native plants, trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, vines, house/patio plants, and plants for shade available as well as our BG branded merchandise for sale. We will also offer complimentary refreshments in the upper Rose Garden provided by our CNAS Development team.

At this point, the plan is to have the majority of plants in our new nursery which is east of the dome. There will also be some plants in and around the lath house. Maps of the layout will be available and we will have plenty of signage and people to ask. Holding areas will be provided for your shopping convenience. We will also shuttle your plants down to the lower area for check-out if you need assistance. For those who need assistance walking to and from the upper area, a shuttle will be available to go up and down the hill. Please remember to bring your own cart if you have one since our wheel barrows are limited.

Some new plants we will be offering include:

**Ian Bush manzanita (*Arctostaphylos 'Ian Bush'*)** This is an adaptable, fast growing California native derived shrub that grows to 4-5 feet tall and 3-6 feet wide with small, green leaves, red bark, and clusters of tiny, light pink, urn-shaped flowers in winter. We will also have 'Warren Roberts' and 'Dr. Hurd' manzanitas.



**String of dolphins (*xBacurio delphinatifolius*)** This is an unusual succulent trailing perennial with pointed leaves that resemble dolphins with tufted white flowers in late spring. It does

best in a hanging container in filtered light.

**Basket rush (*Juncus textilis*)** This is a southern California native, grass like plant forming a dense, 2 to 3-foot-tall fountain of slender, pointed, gray-green leaves. It does best with regular garden watering.



We will also have two very interesting plants available:

**Brazilian Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia gigantea*)** This is the plant



we had growing on the dome for many years. It is an incredible flowering vine with twining stems and heart shaped leaves. The huge pleasantly scented, flared flowers are deep red to purple marbled with creamy white, and open

from large, inflated buds. Please note that this species is toxic to the larvae of Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies.

**White veined hardy Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia fimbriata*)** This is a curious, low perennial with pretty, kidney shaped, green leaves with silver veining and 1-inch unusual, u-shaped, tubular flowers with the opening heart-shaped and surrounded by hairs. It can be used as a ground cover or in a hanging basket.



## Merchandise for Sale

Tote, hat, water bottle, mug, coaster, t-shirts, kneeling pad, cleaning cloth, mouse pad, & journal





## In Memoriam ~ Dennis Kucera

By Botanic Gardens Staff



We are saddened to report the passing of Dennis Kucera, who was the first employee of the fledgling "Life Science Experimental Area" that eventually became the UCR Botanic Gardens. Dennis was hired by Dr. Frank Vasek, the first director of the Gardens, in 1962 as a Senior Nursery Technician. His job was to begin developing, as Dennis called it, "the wild, weedy pastureland...with three termite ridden Mexican elderberry trees being the only plants here" besides native coastal sage scrub and weeds (Kucera interview, 1990). Dennis continued as the primary force in developing the Gardens, working under four faculty directors who each brought his own vision to the 40-acre space. In addition to going on plant collecting excursions around the state and in Mexico, during his 29-year career here Dennis propagated plant material in a botany greenhouse on campus, established a propagation area in the Gardens where the current lath house stands, kept detailed records of all the plant material, installed irrigation, oversaw construction of the first buildings, conducted tours for school groups and garden clubs, and even handled weddings and memorials. Dennis also spent considerable time ridding the area of rabbits, in his words "chasing them out of the entrance...as they ran through his legs to escape." Dennis retired in 1991 at 62 years of age and passed away in December of 2022 at the age of 93. A memorial plaque will be installed in the Gardens to honor the memory of this special man who made so many contributions to the success of the Botanic Gardens.

## In Memoriam ~ William Kleese

By Botanic Gardens Staff



We are also saddened to report the passing of long-time supporter of the Botanic Gardens, William Kleese, also known as Bill or Will. Bill died at his home in Riverside on June 25, 2023 at the age of 90. Bill was a member of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens since 1998 and a dedicated sponsor each year for Primavera in the Gardens. Over the years he volunteered at numerous events, especially Plant Sales. He always had a smile on his face and was a pleasure to talk to. He had a wide range of interests and was involved with many groups in Riverside and the surrounding areas. The Old Riverside Foundation, the Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation for Arts and Crafts, the Historical Glass Museum of Redlands, Victoria Avenue Forever and The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens have all benefited from his support. Bill's wit and uplifting attitude will be missed by all who knew him.

## Become a Friend!

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 Admissions Program, which gives you free or discounted admission and other discounts at 350+ gardens and arboreta throughout

North America. The AHS RAP Directory can be viewed and downloaded at their website:



[ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap](https://ahsgardening.org/gardening-programs/rap).

YOU CAN  
GET IN FREE  
TO OVER 350  
GARDENS!



Nancy Cullen at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden

## State of the Gardens

By Jodie Holt

On June 29, 2023, we held our Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens, where members heard the annual State of the Gardens Address by the Director followed by a lively Q & A session. A reception followed, catered by UCR Citrus Grove, which members enjoyed outside on the patio and lawn. This article summarizes that address and includes our accomplishments for 2022-23 and goals for 2023-24. More detail on all these items can be found in the previous four issues of this newsletter.

The Friends of the Botanic Gardens were founded in 1980 and are UCR's oldest support group. From the beginning the Friends were vital to the success of the Gardens as they volunteered alongside staff in many capacities, organized events, and raised funds for operations. Today, 43 years later, Friends continue to support the Gardens while enjoying an array of benefits.

### Vision and Mission

The UCR Botanic Gardens is UCR's living museum, public garden, and nature oasis in a busy urban environment. Our activities advance our mission of serving as a focal point for campus and community engagement in nature, gardens, and conservation. We strive to create a sense of place where our visitors experience nature and are inspired to protect our natural world.

### 2022-23 Accomplishments

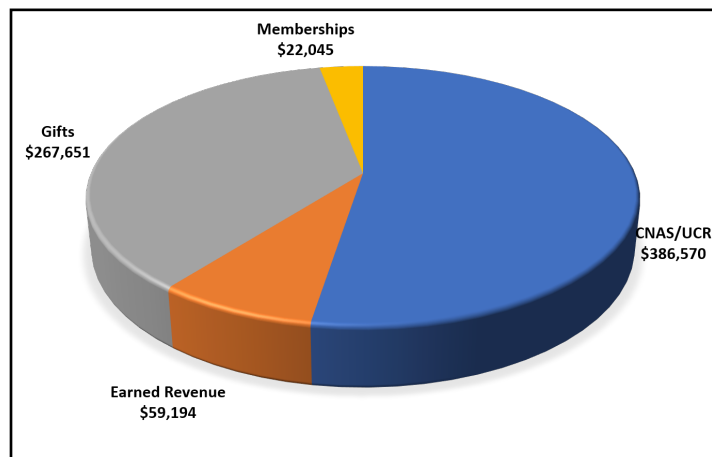
#### Administration and Management

Our sound financial management plus generous gifts over the past few years have allowed us to expand our staff. We were delighted to recruit a third full-time career Nursery Technician, and our new part-time Engagement Coordinator is now a career employee as well. Additionally, we hired a part-time Visitor Services Steward to ensure the entrance gate is always staffed. Our team now includes a part-time Director, six full-time staff, three additional part-time staff, and several student workers recruited from plant and related sciences. We receive generous support from the BEES Administrative team and CNAS Dean's Office, listed on the inside front cover of each Newsletter. We are also grateful for the dedicated work of dozens of volunteers who give thousands of hours each year, making our gardens and programs possible.

#### Budget overview

Income for 2022-23 was stable, totaling \$735,459, similar to the past two years minus two large gifts received in 2021-22. CNAS funding has remained steady with slight

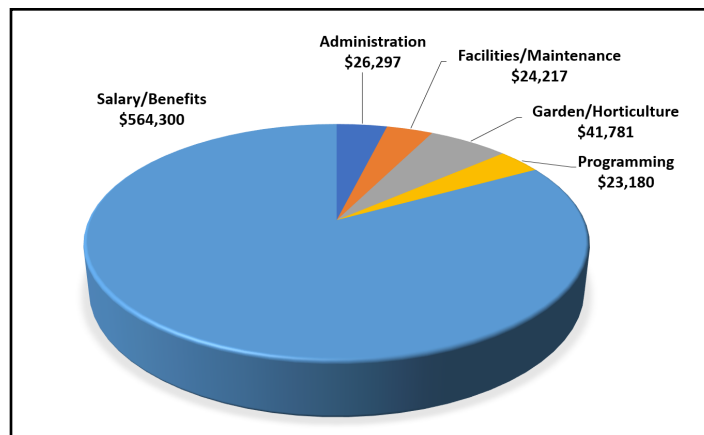
### UCRBG Income 2022-23



increases over the years and covers some staff salaries and benefits. Annual expenses include salaries and benefits, gardens & horticulture, facilities & maintenance, administration, and programming. Expenses for 2022-23 totaled \$679,775, higher than in 2021-22 due to new staff costs and greater investment in programming, horticulture, and facilities. Nevertheless, the resulting current year balance is a positive \$55,684, demonstrating our achievement of financial sustainability for the third straight year.

We continue to carry forward a corpus of non-recurring, non-interest-earning gift funds received over past decades that currently totals \$706,262. These funds will be used to offset the cost of new staffing, major infrastructure repairs, and several new initiatives.

### UCRBG Expenses 2022-23



#### Development and fundraising

We are pleased to have strong support from the CNAS Development team, including Robyn Martinelli, CNAS Assistant Dean for Development, DuBron Rabb, CNAS Sr. Director of Development, Jeremy McWells, Associate Director of Development, and Miranda Moore, Development Coordinator. While we geared up to hold *Primavera in the Gardens* this year, economic constraints precluded vendors from participating and it was cancelled once



again. We are working with Robyn's team to revamp our fundraising model to hold smaller, more focused events, grow our membership through expanded benefits, add more member-only events, launch targeted campaigns such as for the Dome replacement, and collaborate on donor stewardship.

### **Collection and conservation**

Curator Janine has an eager curation team that includes a student worker and several volunteers. They have continued to update the online and paper collections database, plant new specimens including agaves and roses, and install new and replacement labels throughout the Gardens, including the Fruit Orchard. New GIS interactive Story Maps of the Butterfly and Herb Gardens are nearly ready to launch. The new Native Bee Garden, designed with help from UCR's Entomology Department, was completed this past year. Janine and her team continue to inventory and identify unknown plants in our greenhouse that accumulated over many years, some of which will be used for display in the new Conservatory when it is ready.

### **Horticulture and facilities**

Manager Miguel with his expanded staff and volunteers continue to beautify the gardens and grounds through weed abatement, pruning and slash removal, mulching, new drainage installation, and irrigation renovation. The team installed the new Native Bee Garden and are developing a bee forage ground across the arroyo from it. The Subtropical Fruit Orchard, with decades of over- growth, is nearly restored and new irrigation will be installed. The cleanup of the newly acquired Frost Court property is ongoing and a new plant nursery is being installed in time for our first in-place Fall Plant Sale for members. A major focus continues to be trail stabilization and restoration of unofficial trails that have been worn over the years, as well as water conservation through irrigation improvement. With increased staff Miguel is working towards a preventive, defensive approach to management of the Gardens. Finally, as part of our maintenance program, the entrance arbor was repaired and refurbished, presenting a beautiful welcome to our visitors, the Celebration of Life Memorial arbor was repaired following damage by a fallen tree branch, and termite abatement and roof repair on several buildings is pending.

### **Education and research**

Curator Janine, also our Education Coordinator, works with volunteer tour coordinator Elinor Pond to orient and

schedule docents to lead guided tours for school groups and adults. The very popular Sunday Docents in the Butterfly Garden returned on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays to answer questions and provide resources on gardening for butterflies. The Rose Pruning Demonstration was offered again in January with help from Master Gardeners and rosarians who showed visitors the basics of pruning while helping prune our over 600 roses. UCR classes and labs, field trips, and research projects continue to use the Gardens as well as Camp Highlander, a UCR Recreation-run year-round camp program for children aged 5-15. Finally, the unexpected blooming of our first corpse plant, "Little Miss Stinky" resulted in a week of intense PR and a day with over 1,700 visitors to experience and learn about this remarkable plant.

### **Engagement Programming**

Our Engagement Coordinator Nancy Cullen, aided by Administrative Assistant and Program Coordinator Pam Ferre organized and hosted numerous events during the past year including a bird walk and breakfast and new hands-on workshops. We held online plant sales, hosted Art in the Gardens, and expanded our portfolio of Gardens-branded merchandise for online sale with in-person pickup. Pam also manages revenue-generating Meeting Room rentals and photoshoots, maintains our beautiful website, produces the monthly eNews to supplement our quarterly Newsletter, keeps our brochures updated and stocked, manages our membership program, and works with campus to promote the Gardens and events. We continue to be active on social media through Instagram and Facebook, receiving many likes (especially when wild-life is featured!). Nancy manages our volunteer steward calendar and supports, recruits, orients, and places new volunteers, assembles and delivers merchandise orders, and promotes the Gardens at campus events. Once again, we held an appreciation luncheon and handed out branded gifts to our wonderful volunteers, who also receive a monthly Volunteer eNews to keep them informed about the Gardens and campus.

### **Opportunities, Challenges, and the Future**

As we end the 2022-23 year, I am happy to report that we are meeting our goals of achieving financial sustainability, creating an urban oasis, and expanding our visitor engagement. Challenges noted in 2021-22, including the need for additional staff and solutions to parking issues, have largely been met. Our goals for the coming year include growing our membership, fundraising to replace the Dome, and developing a plan to build an engagement space in the turnaround. We gratefully celebrate 60 years of operation as the Inland Empire's only public botanic garden and look forward to continued progress in the year ahead.



## What to See in the Gardens

By Miguel Estrada

As summer wraps up, we are working hard to complete some big projects. My recommendations below are good options to add to your future must-see list.

**The Fruit Orchard** - You may not know that the UCRBG includes a 2.5-acre Subtropical Fruit Orchard, designed by Robert G. Platt, UCR Subtropical Cooperative Extension Specialist, in the late 1970s. The orchard cleanup started with a simple request from one of the full-time staff



members to replace the old drip lines. After years of sun exposure and constant attack from coyotes and ground squirrels, our orchard irrigation was ready for an overhaul. Even though the poor condition of the irrigation system was the impetus for the project, I soon realized that we couldn't just start working on the replacement. There was one major obstacle standing in our way. If we were going to move forward with this enterprise, we had to do it right, and that meant clearing years of growth. It might be hard to appreciate what "years of growth" amounted to but allow me put things into perspective. We've removed approximately eight medium to large trees, pruned approximately one hundred and fifty trees, and along with weeds and fallen fruit, we have removed approximately six hundred cubic yards of green waste in the past year from an area about 2.5 acres. That is roughly the same amount of material we removed from the entire 40-acre garden during the same period. Now, after a year of cleanup, the orchard is nearing the point where we can open it up to tour groups. It was not my initial goal to restore the orchard to open it up for tours, but it turned out to be wonderful outcome of the much larger goal of fixing the old water system.

**New Plant Nursery** - Another historical property that recently became part of the UCRBG is the former home of Oscar and Marcia Clarke on Frost Court, adjacent to the Gardens. Oscar was the founder of the UCR Herbarium and active in the early development of the Gardens too. If the excitement of opening a new area of the Gardens to

the public isn't enough, we have been busy trying to bring our plant sales out of the digital world and back to the Gardens by developing a new plant nursery on the Frost Court property. In the past year we took over main-



Getting ready to place the benches

tenance of the property after several years of total neglect. This plot can only be described as "potential" because there is so much we intend to do with it, but our first course of action is to return to the old tradition of in-person plant sales. This, like most of our projects, has been easier said than done. We will not have a beautifully landscaped area for our first sale there, but you will have a well-situated area with all the plants available for your shopping desires. This change to in-place plant sales saves tremendously in time, labor, and negative impact on the Alder Canyon lawn from our former sales.

**Native Bee Garden Forage Ground** - We are finally moving forward with the Bee Garden forage ground adjacent to the new Native Bee Garden. As of this writing, we are preparing the five thousand square foot area for solarization. I encourage you take a look at the hillside east of Bobcat Rocks to see how we are progressing. If all goes as planned, we should have a miniature super bloom next spring.

Forage ground across the arroyo from the Native Bee Garden



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## Gardens Activities

By Nancy Cullen

### Volunteer Luncheon



One of our most special events of the year is the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. We had a large turnout for this event, and it was wonderful seeing so many familiar faces together relaxing and catching up on travel, family, and gardening! Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch catered by UCR's Citrus Grove, after which Gardens staff – Jodie, Janine, Pam, Nancy, Lois, and Miguel – all offered their thanks and humorous anecdotes about volunteers we love spending time with week after week to decade after decade. Many fun stories were shared along with concerns following an update on the July 8<sup>th</sup> burglary. As a special gift, our volunteers went home with a beautiful garden flag that has a vibrant desert garden scene. Afterwards, our dedicated volunteers stayed to help put away chairs and tables, making cleanup easy!

### Twilight Tours



A tour group at sunset. Photo by George Spiliotis

our guests on such a very warm evening. We offered water bottles to those who needed one before they returned for refreshments. Thank you to Janice, Linda, and Barbara for

Despite the heat, our summer evening Twilight Tour in July had a good turnout of around 40 guests ready for an evening walk with our knowledgeable docents. Thank you to Jean, George, April, Kay, Peter, Laura, and Dennis for guiding

assisting with the setup of lemonade, vegetable platters, fruit, and cookies for our guests. Nancy thanked the group and spoke on membership and volunteer information. The evening was enjoyed by all, and fresh faces were welcomed.

We had a sold-out group of over 100 guests expected for the August Twilight Tour. Unlike the toasty July tour, however, this tour was rescheduled due to unprecedented "Hurricane Hilary" forecasts of high winds, rain downpours, and flash flooding. We were particularly concerned about the potential risk of falling branches, a common occurrence in the Gardens during high winds. Since it is better to err on the side of caution, the tour was rescheduled for August 26<sup>th</sup>, and 75 guests eagerly accepted this new date. Refunds were offered to those who could not attend on the alternate date. We are grateful to those who could not attend but donated their ticket payment to support the Gardens. Both tours were blessed with sightings of interesting wildlife, including bats, raccoons, bobcats, and even a tarantula.



A tour group led by April Wilson ( 2<sup>nd</sup> from left)



A tour group led by Peter Kallinger ( far right)



## Butterfly Corner - The Brown Elfin

Article & photos by Ann Platzer



Photo 1: Rich brown color

being either richly brown (photo 1) or a pale fawn (photo 2). In photo 1 the hind ventral wing has a brighter reddish-brown wide marginal border that tapers to a point at the hind wing apex. Note that it looks as if a predator has taken a nip out of both hind wings, but that is a distinguishing characteristic (photos 1 and 2: arrows).



Photo 2: Pale fawn color

The larvae feed on many host plants such as Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), soap plant (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), and wild lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.). Although wild lilac is considered the favorite food plant at higher elevations, the most widely used larval food plant in

southern California at lower elevations is dodder (*Cuscuta* spp.). Dodder is a bright yellow-brown string-like plant, which is parasitic on many local chaparral plants. Since we saw a female laying eggs on dodder we took home some dodder with eggs to watch larval development. (The female lays eggs singly on host plants). The early instar (Photo 3) has white and light fawn stripes and numerous long spines. The mature larva that is feeding on dodder (Photo 4) is green with white sub dorsal triangles and a reddish-brown spot at the top inside of each triangle. There is also a lateral margin of white dashes, each with a reddish-brown edge above it. The mature larva has many fine short brown spines.



Photo 3: Early instar larva



Photo 4: Mature larva

The main nectar plant for the adult Brown Elfin is California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). This is often the first non-hibernating butterfly to appear in spring, flying in the lowlands or in the mountains just after snowmelt. Although not seen in large numbers, the Brown Elfin has an unusually widespread and diverse choice of undisturbed habitats ranging from coastal plains and mountains to the desert edge, but it especially frequents chaparral. Flight time with one brood in southern California and southeastern Arizona is seen as early as February through May. In the mountains and north into Canada it is mainly seen in May through July. It is found from Newfoundland north and west through the northern United States and the Prairie Provinces of Canada to Alaska.

Please plant California native and butterfly friendly plants in your garden to help restore habitat for butterflies.

HAPPY BUTTERFLY GARDENING!

AP

Thanks to Ed Platzer for proofing this article.

## Volunteers welcomed!

Please consider joining our volunteer team

Visit [gardens.ucr.edu/volunteer](https://gardens.ucr.edu/volunteer) for more information

Volunteer Orientations are held 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 9 am

Please  
contact us if you  
are interested in being  
a docent  
951-827-7093



## In the Works

### By Botanic Gardens Staff

Despite hot summer weather and a tropical storm, we have been busy with gardens and grounds maintenance and cleanup, a few evening events, and planning for the year ahead. As we approach the new school year, here are some of the things underway in the Gardens:

#### Gardens and Grounds:

- ▶ In June we welcomed Angela Barron, a new career Nursery Technician to Miguel's team.
- ▶ Two new student workers joined Miguel's team, Kaden and Carter, while Jai bade us farewell following graduation. We wish Bethany all the best as she moves on to a research position after several years of dedication to the Gardens. We look forward to Dahlia and London returning after summer break.
- ▶ We are nearing completion of the orchard cleanup thanks to hard work by staff and our dedicated volunteer Nectarine Task Force. Once this is completed, we will begin work on the irrigation design and installation.
- ▶ Work is ongoing on the new plant nursery area to be ready for our first in-place Fall Plant Sale for members.
- ▶ We have been making a big push to prepare the five thousand square feet of hillside as part of the Native Bee Garden. This plot will be seeded with wildflowers to create a native bee forage ground.
- ▶ We have cleared all the grass under the coast redwoods. The next step is to introduce new specimens that grow well in the redwood understory.
- ▶ Miguel and Jodie are working with our insurance Claims Examiner to replace tools and vehicles stolen during the July 7<sup>th</sup> break-in. An outpouring of generosity from our supporters will be used to replace items too old for a verifiable insurance claim.
- ▶ Miguel and his team have been working hard to clear all the broken branches and debris from tropical storm Hilary.

#### Activities and Events:

- ▶ With the addition of Emily, Visitor Service Steward, to our staff as well as a new scheduling program, Nancy has been able to staff the gate during nearly all open hours. The donation of a portable outdoor AC unit keeps our Stewards happy!
- ▶ Janine and the experienced Docents are planning to offer refresher training as well as individual training for new Docent recruits.
- ▶ We now have a bi-monthly Volunteer Orientation offered to Gardens walk-ins, which has yielded new volunteers who are joining our Orchard cleanup and assisting with events.
- ▶ We are gearing up for UCR's "Welcome Week" where we will celebrate the Gardens' 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with outreach activities to draw in new students and families. Docents, Master Gardeners, and volunteers will be roaming the Gardens to enhance the visitors' experience at the Gardens.



Angela Barron



Preparing the native bee forage site



Coast redwood area



Emily at the entrance

**60<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
Celebration  
Week!**  
**Sept. 24 - 29**

## UCRBG Calendar of Events



|          |                                                                                               |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Biweekly | <b>Volunteer Orientation</b> , Entrance, 9:00 am (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays) |
| Sept. 24 | <b>Special Open Sunday</b> , 8:00 am - 3:30 pm (free plant to first 90 UCR students!)         |
| Sept. 25 | <b>Free Docent-led tours</b> , On the hour from 8 am - 12:00 pm                               |
| Sept. 26 | <b>Free plant to new members</b> , 10:00 am - 2:00 pm (must be present, while supplies last)  |
| Sept. 27 | <b>Pop-Up-Shop</b> , 11:00 am - 2:00 pm                                                       |
| Sept. 28 | <b>Meet the staff</b> , 10:00 am - 2:00 pm                                                    |
| Sept. 29 | <b>Enjoy a special treat</b> , 12:30 pm - 3:00 pm                                             |
| Oct. 14  | <b>In-Person Member Appreciation Fall Plant Sale</b> , 9:00 am - 1:00 pm                      |
| Nov. 4   | <b>Art in the Gardens</b> , 10:00 am - 3:00 pm                                                |

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