

The University of California, Riverside Botanic Gardens UCRDBG Newsletter

Volume 37, Number 2 Summer 2017

Around the Gardens

*W*e have had a very busy spring in the Gardens, with many events and activities for everyone to enjoy. In March we had a presentation by Ann Platzer on **Creating a Wildlife Habitat**. Participants of this talk and garden tour were treated to a presentation that was full of good information on creating a wildlife habitat. The presentation included video clips and many 'before and after' photos, showing what progress can be made. Ann gave many tips on planning your garden with wildlife in mind and provided handouts for everyone to take home. Following the presentation we all received a tour of Ann's own amazing garden. Ann's husband Ed was there as well, handing out samples of macadamia nuts, citrus and even seeds to take home. Everyone left with plant cuttings, fruit, mosquito fish and much more! Everyone was so impressed with the garden created by Ann and Ed, and left with many ideas to apply to their own gardens. We expect there will be many new wildlife habitats created as a result of this class.



Spreading rose petals on the pathways for Primavera

Birdwalk and Breakfast

We were pleased to have a great turnout for our birdwalk on March 25. Spring migration was underway and we were able to get good looks at many birds. One of the highlights of the birdwalk was observing a hummingbird nest. As is our custom, a wrap-up session followed as we recorded

the birds we saw and enjoyed a wonderful breakfast.

If you haven't attended a birdwalk and breakfast, do consider joining us in the fall. The birdwalks are a great way to enhance your Botanic Gardens experience; we not only sight birds but we help with tips on identifying birds. We also talk (as we walk!) about the types of plants that attract birds. As always, we hope to see you at the next event!

Spring Garden Market & Plant Sale

Taking on the task of restructuring the Plant Sales was rather daunting for Theresa and Janine but with much planning, preparation, and many sleepless nights,

it turned out better than we expected. We had 10 vendors join us to make up for all the plants we didn't purchase this year. The vendors were Australian Outback Plants, Blossoms of Aloha, CH Plants, High Noon Creations, John & Bob's Smart Soil Solutions, Orchids by Zeny, Paradise Garden Center, Resendiz Brothers, Stumps & Trunks, and Wild Birds Unlimited. The Master

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Around the Gardens, Continued

Gardeners were also there with a wonderful selection of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. We heard very good feedback from the crowd of shoppers and volunteers and overall, its inaugural debut went very smoothly. Taking note of anything we saw that needed changing and of all the suggestions that were given to us, we plan on this fall sale being even better. We will also have more of our own propagated plants this fall since many weren't ready by the spring sale. Mark your calendars for October 21 & 22 for the Fall Garden Market & Plant Sale.



Some of the many plants offered by Paradise Garden Center at our Spring Garden Market and Plant Sale.

The Garden Market and Plant Sale programs were well received. The Monarch Butterfly program, presented by Tiffany Brooks, who began the Monarch Waystation at the Tequesquite Community Gardens in Bonaminio Park, had over 50 attendees. Also very well appreciated was the "Do You Speak Tomato" program, with Master Gardener Thurman Howard. It was timed to go along

with the Master Gardeners Grow Lab sale of vegetable plants, which included many hard-to-find tomato varieties. The program on soil building, by vendor "John and Bob's", attracted the hard-core gardeners who were looking for ways to improve the productivity of their plants. About 28 kids and parents showed up for the Grow a Tomato program for kids.



A Special Thank You
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Doris Rhine

Oak Glen Trip

About 20 Friends attended the Spring Outing to the Oak Glen Wildlands Preserve on April 20th. The day started with a docent-led tour during which we explored many areas of the Preserve and learned about the history, the transition from a "wild" area to a planned botanical garden, as well

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U C Riverside Botanic Gardens

The UCR Botanic Gardens Newsletter is a quarterly journal published by the Friends of the UCR Botanic Gardens, UC Riverside Foundation, 900 University Ave., Riverside, CA 92521, and is one of the benefits of membership. Articles on various aspects of horticulture and its practice, history, or related subjects, especially as they apply to Inland Southern California are welcomed. The selection of copy to print is at the discretion of the editors. Send copy to Janine Almanzor, University of California, Botanic Gardens, Riverside, CA 92521, call 951.784.6962, e-mail ucrbg@ucr.edu or visit our website at www.gardens.ucr.edu for information.

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Editors: Katherine Kendrick, Janine Almanzor

Around the Gardens,
continued

as the many types of plantings that were added. The Friends then had lunch followed by more time to explore other areas of the Preserve before heading back to Riverside mid-afternoon. We couldn't have asked for a better day; the weather was perfect, the location stunning as well as good Friends with which to enjoy the experience!


Primavera in the Gardens

It was a beautiful sunny day in the Gardens with over 300 guests in attendance. Although it was about 96 degrees that day, it was very comfortable under the canopy of trees with a cool breeze. Our sponsors had it especially nice with reserved seating under a canopy. The guests enjoyed music from Marti & the Smooth Catz, Tom Perring, and Caleb Sotelo while

visiting with other guests and sampling food, wine and craft beer. There were 14 local restaurants, 12 wineries, 5 breweries, and 1 coffee house represented. In addition, there was a silent auction to browse with 35 items generously donated bringing in over \$3,000. Thanks to everyone who attended – guests, sponsors, food and beverage vendors, and volunteers – all of you helped make our fundraiser a success!

Children's Story Time

The Children's Story Time continues to be a popular event. On June 3rd we had 20 eager children listening to Nicole Ortega read "Click Clack Moo". After the story they each made a cow face out of a paper plate and had a snack. It was a little too warm to hold it outdoors so it all took place in the conference room. This was the last Story Time for the school year because of the heat and

vacations that come along with summer. We will resume them in September and hope you can join us. Thank you to Nicole Ortega, Leah Sotelo, and Becky Levers who volunteered their time this past year.  Janine Almanzor, Amber Jones & Nancy Johnson



Photos from the Spring Garden Market and Plant Sale, clockwise from above: Brothers

Abraham and Luis enjoying their freshly planted tomatoes; Shoppers get information at CH Plants; Some special plants from High Noon Creations; and lovely planters from Stumps and Trunks.



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Director's Report

Dr. Jodie Holt

teen hours to ensure its success. Both long-time and first-time volunteers engaged in advance activities such as plant propagation, printing plant labels, building cardboard box plant carriers, and setting up tables, canopies, signs, and ropes. During the event volunteers served as information sources, plant carriers, plant-check guards, cashiers, and all around helpers. Because the sale occurred during spring break we were unable to secure our usual undergraduate student volunteers; however, a call on campus for graduate student volunteers brought out many eager first-timers, some of whom intend to become regulars.

In directing the UCR Botanic Gardens I interact on a daily basis with campus departments that provide valuable assistance with a variety of projects and problems. Some of our issues involve facilities staff, such as electricians, plumbers, locksmiths, sign makers, metal shop craftsmen, carpenters, and groundskeepers, to name a few. Visitors, tour groups, and school children have prompted interaction with CNAS facilities staff, campus Risk Management, and Police Department staff to insure safety and security. Major projects involve working with a variety of on- and off-campus vendors and volunteers who are helping us achieve our goals of updating our collections database and labels, creating a new interactive map, developing new brochures and branding, creating and installing new gardens signs, developing new gardens, investigating new

processes for handling green waste and recycling, and expanding internet connectivity in the gardens, just to name a few.

All of these activities bring out the same response in those we work with—a sense of excitement and enthusiasm about working for the betterment of the gardens. Whether the participants in these endeavors are staff or volunteers, paid or not, all of them have gone above and beyond our requests for help to volunteer their time and energy to the UCR Botanic Gardens. We sense a deep pride both on and off campus that UCR continues to support this special nature preserve that is an integral part of UCR and the local community.

All of these examples of personal commitment by individuals to volunteer their time, energy and skills for the advancement of the UCR Botanic Gardens has prompted us to begin development of a new overarching volunteer program that will allow us to coordinate and schedule current volunteer activities more effectively, broaden the scope of activities in which volunteers can engage, and insure that each volunteer is able to enjoy a rewarding and meaningful experience that contributes to the betterment of the beautiful UCR Botanic Gardens. Volunteers have been essential to the success of the gardens over its 54-year history and will continue to play a key role in the future. Please come visit the Botanic Gardens to see if you might contribute your talent and energy to our volunteer workforce. The ability to put aside one's own needs and wants and work for the benefit of a

Like many in academia, I have appreciated the opportunity to build a career at a public university. Many who work in the public sector share a desire to contribute to the common good, the improvement of society, and a larger cause. Living in a complex world facing environmental and human caused problems, the need to contribute to the welfare of earth's inhabitants has never felt greater. This need is beautifully embodied by the UCR student body, which has won awards for its high level of engagement in public service. Likewise, a volunteer offers him/herself for a service or task to benefit another person or group for no financial gain. One beneficiary of extraordinary volunteerism has been the UCR Botanic Gardens, whose operation depends on a constant source of volunteer hours donated annually by UCR staff and students, Friends, and others from the surrounding community.

The spirit of volunteerism was in full force during our recent plant sale, restructured as our Garden Market and Plant Sale. The BG staff spend months each year preparing for this event, but it simply could not happen without dozens of people from on campus and off donating hundreds of volun-

larger purpose has an energizing and motivating effect. We invite you to help us achieve our vision of serving as UCR's living museum, curated to inspire and facilitate education, research, and interpretation of the natural world.

Activities and projects underway:

Our signage project is well underway, with 10 new redwood garden and facility signs, more visible restroom signs, and refreshed signs in the outdoor message board.

Termite-damaged wood in the rose garden gazebo has been replaced and repaired, and other memorial structures are being repaired as needed.

The Schneider House (SH) yard is being redesigned to create a staff and volunteer parking area outside the gardens proper. Metal benches and stored material around SH are being relocated, which will free up the area below the SH fence for new garden development and reduce the risk of visitors encountering cars inside the gardens.

A new Suggestion Box has been installed next to the gatehouse window, and several positive comments have already been received along with several lovely children's drawings of gardens wildlife (and a few insects!).

Janine, Theresa and I have all presented talks to various civic groups and gardens in Riverside

and beyond about the UCR Botanic Gardens and our vision for the future.

I recently attended the first-ever meeting of the current directors of all UC botanic gardens and arboreta, held at UC Berkeley. We had a robust and rewarding conversation about our gardens, their similarities and differences, and how we can work together to advance our collective mission.



In addition to all of the above, several new garden projects have been sited and are in various stages of development, including a Native American Plants Garden, the Children's Garden, and a Faculty Research Demonstration Garden. Be sure to come visit while the weather is still comfortable and see what's new! *JH*

Spotlight On... Signage

By Janine Almanzor

If you have visited the Botanic Gardens lately then you have probably noticed a few pleasant changes. As you enter the green gates of the Botanic Gardens you can't help but noticing a brand new bulletin board! The style of it blends in perfectly with the rustic feel of the Gardens and it is a big improvement from sticking everything on the gatehouse window. It houses the map, upcoming event posters, and policies and rules. It even has a section to place our brochures. We are in the process of updating our map to make it more user friendly and accurate but in the meantime we have placed numbers on wooden stakes at intersecting paths and placed the corresponding numbers on our current map. This way you can find your way on the 4

miles of trails without getting lost. You can find printed maps for your use at the bulletin board. Once we have the new map completed then we will proceed to make a new user friendly brochure.

As you make your way past the Conference Room by the first concrete bench you'll notice a stone with a green plaque on it.

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Primavera photos this page: 1. Caleb Sotelo; 2. Janine Almanzor, Theresa McLemore & Jorge Fregoso; 3. Lisa Lemoine and Pam Ferre; 4. Irene Pokrass, Carole Borgen and Gail Watson (front row), Dianne Miller, Laurette Kyle and Elinor Pond; 5. Citrus Grill Catering; Sharsaa Ahmad, Darelle Amores, Carmina Guiang, Chef John Kircher and Korinne Ortega; 6. Nancy Noller, Donna Blevins, Betty Dilthey and Peggy Kehr. Photos by Jana Shaker.



Primavera Photos, this page: 7. Helga Stafford; 8. Diane Del Buono, Amber Jones, Jodie Holt, Kathryn and Jeff Uhrich and Kim Wilcox; 9. Ray and Bev McNeil; 10. Marti and the Smooth Catz; 11. Tom Perring; 12. Greg Hooker and Cyndy Dupree. Thank you to our event photographer Jana Shaker.



A Special Thank You to our Primavera Sponsors

Frank & Lucy Heyming

Spotlight On Signage, Continued from page 5

The plaque acknowledges us as a wildlife refuge. We all knew that we were but now it's official.

To make the Botanic Gardens even more user friendly, we have begun to place signage in the Garden. They are made of wood and just like the bulletin board, they also accent the rustic feel of the Gardens very nicely. The signs that are already installed are: Alder Canyon, South Africa, Butterfly Garden, Rose Garden, Lilac Lane, Administrative Offices, Library, North American Deserts and an Information sign above the gatehouse and there are many more in the making. We are thankful to Doug Holt who has generously donated his time and skills to make and install these much needed signs. 🌿JA

Note from the President



Hello Friends!

It has been a busy time in and around the Gardens and I've enjoyed seeing so many of you at the plant sale, walks/talks, Spring field trip and Primavera. I hope to see you at the next event too -the Annual Meeting. We've got a great program and there will be time for socializing afterwards on the patio - so come out and spend this evening with Friends!

~ Amber Jones

What to See in the Gardens

by Theresa McLemore

We all see the world around us differently. It is not uncommon for someone to ask "Where are the pretty flowers", or "What is the most colorful area". It's then that we have the opportunity to reveal what is beautiful but not blooming, or how an area without splashy color can be inspiring. This is a transitional time in the garden and there is plenty to see.

The *Agave salmiana* in the Desert garden is starting to bloom, and the shoot or peduncle is well over 25 feet tall. The peduncle supports the inflorescence that towers over the leaves. And the plant will eventually die after the flowering process is complete.

The Rose Garden is full of color and fragrance. This past winter's rain, a drip system and regular feeding have given the Roses what they need to create a kaleidoscope of color.

The Butterfly Garden plants were trimmed, cut back, and the irrigation system has been tuned up. As a result, the colors and plants are attracting both butterflies and visitors.

About a month ago the *Aristolochia gigantea* was trimmed back to cover less of the geodesic

dome. Its response was to send out another flush of blooms. Don't miss seeing this unusual and bizarre bloom that has become our most popular bloom attraction.

If you walk along the paths through North Coast you will see pendulous clusters of flowers hanging from the *Aesculus californica* or California Buckeye. Look closer and you will see hundreds of bees feasting on the flower nectar. While in that area look closely at the *Arctostaphylos* along the slopes. You may see the plant's fruits that are shaped like tiny apples.

Birds are especially busy in the Botanic Garden these days. Filling the air with their songs and hiding their nests in various places. Let's not forget the occasional spotting of our reptile friends. These are the spiny granite lizards, the king snakes, and the feared and respected western diamondback rattlesnakes.

Each visitors' experience here is different, as their individual perspectives are unique. So the next time you visit us at UCRBG, look past the beautiful blooms to the features that make us truly remarkable. 🌿TM



Twilight Tour

Two Twilight Tours!
Friday, July 14th &
Friday, August 18th

The tour begins at 6:30 PM and will last until around 8:30 p.m., followed by dessert/refreshments on the patio.

The cost is \$7 for Friends of UCRBG Members, and \$10 for non-members. Reservations are required. Please call 951-784-6962 or email ucrbg@ucr.edu

Butterfly Corner

Western Pygmy Blue

Article and Photo by Ann Platzer

You have all seen the Giant Swallowtail, the largest butterfly in North America. *But*, have you seen the smallest butterfly? It is a gossamer-winged butterfly from the Family *Lycaenidae*. It is called Western Pygmy Blue.

For many years Ed and I have taken morning walks around a field off Big Springs Road at the foot of the Box Springs Mountains. Early in December last year, we observed two tiny butterflies flying about, close to the ground and landing on Russian thistle (tumbleweed). Happily, I happened to have my iPhone with me! Using my photo we were able to identify these little insects as Western Pygmy Blue butterflies, *Brephidium exile*, currently recognized as the smallest butterfly in North America – and possibly in the world. The aptly named Pygmy Blue has a wingspan of only ½ inch (12 mm). Can you imagine?

Although the Western Pygmy Blue is fairly common, most people walk right by these delicate insects. Why? Not only are they very small, they fly close to the ground, below our normal visibility. Their favorite habitats are alkaline areas such as salt marshes where saltbush grows. If you go out early for a walk in these habitats, you may find them snoozing among



Photo 1: Adult ventral view on tumbleweed

the sharp spines of dead Russian thistle.

Above (dorsally), the Western Pygmy Blue is copper colored. Below (ventrally), it has four bold hind-wing marginal eyespots with iridescent highlights and three small black spots near the base (Photo 1: Adult ventral view on tumbleweed). The ventral forewing is strongly two-toned, pale gray basally and copper-colored distally. The margins are fringed with white. The butterflies are most abundant from late summer through early winter. This is the peak of their breeding activity. The butterflies produce two to four broods and are present all year in Southern California. Marco, our

son-in-law, remembers that they were abundant in San Diego when he was a teenager (and a budding entomologist).

The following afternoon, I returned to the field with our grandson Lucas to look for them.

He found and caught six that we put into an aquarium with nectar and host plants. We were hoping they would be encouraged to mate, but no luck.

Although I haven't had the opportunity to observe the developmental stages, the female Pygmy Blue lays blue-green eggs singly that turn white and hatch into light green caterpillars. Host plants are numerous and include native species from the Goosefoot Family, Chenopodiaceae, such as pickleweed (*Salicornia* spp.), California saltbush (*Atriplex californica*), and lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*). The pupae, which are light yellow-brown, hibernate over winter.

Since these dainty Pygmy Blues abound in winter, they are drawn to the nectar of the native rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*). They have a short proboscis so prefer small nectar flowers. Since they are weak fliers they are not found far from their host and nectar plants. They are only found in North America but range down to Mexico and Venezuela. With global warming, these tiny butterflies now extent as far as north as Oregon.

The larvae have honeydew glands. The honeydew attracts

ants. Because this is a favorite food source for the ants, they swarm over anything that might harm the Pygmy Blue caterpillars (i.e. larvae), thus protecting the butterflies. This phenomenon is called myrmecophily and is fairly common in the insect world. Many butterflies and true bugs are able to corral ants into protecting them by providing the yummy honeydew.

However, the Western Pygmy Blue butterfly goes a step further. When the larva senses danger, it produces an analog of ant pheromone (a chemical used by ants to communicate). This substance puts the ants on high alert. They become agitated, attacking whatever they sense might be hostile to them or to the Pygmy Blue larva, which they relate to as their own offspring.

Due to the Western Pygmy Blue's diminutive size and its ground cruising habit, it may be tough to spot. Be diligent and your efforts may be rewarded. Good luck!

Many thanks to Siri Dharma Khalsa and Edward Platzer for editing this article.

Happy Butterfly Gardening!

 AP

The Unexpected Joy of a Plant Sale Volunteer

By Pamela Clarke, UCCE Master Gardener Volunteer Trainee

As a trainee with the UCCE Master Gardener Program of Riverside County it was my great pleasure to be a part of the team of volunteers during the 2017 UCR Botanic Gardens Spring Plant Sale. The enthusiasm of the Botanic Garden members as they arrived early Saturday morning was reminiscent of General Custer upon his mount shouting to his troops "Charge!!!" The members anxiously trotted through the open gateway with their plant list in hand and their carts in tow exploring the many offerings up and down Alder Canyon. Once the sale opened to the public, I witnessed equal enthusiasm as visitors perused the many offerings for sale.

The sale is very organized in assigning specific duties for volunteers. I especially enjoyed working as a "floater volunteer". Volunteering in this capacity allowed me to experience many aspects of the beauty of the Botanic Gardens. I worked up and down Alder Canyon assisting customers with purchases, particularly helping the elderly carry boxes and push wheelbar-

rows. I organized plants, keeping them straightened in their correct order. I worked in relieving other volunteers from their work stations for breaks and lunch. Since I had worked past plant sales I also assisted new volunteers in multiple aspects of learning their assigned duties.

In the process of working with student volunteers, I had the distinct pleasure of volunteering at the seed table with a young man who is a UCR student having recently moved to California from China. His name is Jianhai, and he studying in a Doctorate program at UCR working on a degree in Genetics. Upon first introduction it became apparent we had a slight language barrier between us, but we soon developed a special bond through our love of the Botanic Gardens. He was filled with vast knowledge of his specialty in the medical sciences but also had a love and interest in the beauty of the gardens. As Jianhai and I were walking through Alder Canyon together, he noticed a "Tree of Heaven" indigenous to northeast and central China

and referred to as "chouchun" in Standard Chinese language. Jianhai took great delight seeing a species native to his home country in the UCR Botanic Gardens.

As the day went on, Jianhai and I found that through our love of nature, the beauty of the gardens, and sharing stories under a bright blue sunny Southern California sky; we were more alike than we were different. I think that Jianhai and I will remember fondly our time volunteering together during the 2017 UCR Botanic Garden Spring Plant Sale.



Jianhai & Pamela

PRIMAVERA IN THE 2017 GARDENS

Thank you so much to those who generously gave of their time and resources to make this event possible.

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Upcoming Events ~ Save the Dates!

Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 29, 6:00 p.m. Botanic Gardens Conference Room
Dr. Jodie Holt, Interim Director, will present: The UCR Botanic Gardens:
Past, Present and Future

Twilight Tours

Friday, July 14 & Friday, August 18, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Fall Garden Market and Plant Sale

Saturday, October 21 and Sunday, October 22

Please contact us for more information about these events: 951-784-6962, or
ucrbg@ucr.edu, or check our website at gardens.ucr.edu.