



# Laguna Beach Garden Club Weeder's Digest



Education in the Garden

FEBRUARY 2021  
MEMBER NEWS

*It is utterly forbidden to be half-hearted about gardening. You have to love your garden, whether you like it or not. W.C. Sellar*

COME JOIN IN  
THE FUN

## Events This Month

General Meeting Feb. 12

**Ashley King**

**Growing Delicious Fruit Trees**

(see page 3)

9:30 am-  
make your  
own cup  
of coffee  
in your  
kitchen

10:00 am-  
Zoom in to  
the  
meeting



## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR • DALYNN MALEK

Hopefully by now you have pruned your roses and they are budding out and looking forward to their first feeding of rose food. And so you are now on to other garden tasks at hand. The attached link will take you to *Roger's Gardens* February Gardening List so you will be able to check a few more items off your "To-do-list".

We are so lucky to have had a bit of rain to clean everything off, followed by sunny days that beckon us out to plant the wide variety of flora that our

Southern California weather allows. I know some of you have made numerous trips to garden centers and stocked up already!

<https://www.rogersgardens.com/blogs/current-news-events/february-gardening-checklist>



## President's Message

# A Great Speaker Series Awaits Members

### Happy Valentine's Day Dear Members,

I love Valentine's Day! My husband of 34 years has never missed a year of gifting me with flowers or in more recent years a beautiful plant or two. We go out to dinner and celebrate each other. I love the wonderful tradition our garden club has of members creating beautiful planters and then donating them to be auctioned to all members present at our February meeting to raise funds for our philanthropic activities. One of those February meetings was my first introduction to **Laguna Beach Garden Club**, and that fun and excitement is what enticed me to become a member. February 2020 was our last in-person meeting before the pandemic. Truly, your smiling faces and laughter are sorely missed. I am optimistic and hopeful we'll be making planters to share in February next year.

So much is happening in our club right now. We have wonderful speakers coming up in the final four months of our meeting year. First in February, is a former LBGC member **Ashley King**. Ashley is in school studying to become a horticulturist and employed at Roger's Gardens. In March, a club favorite **Debra Lee Baldwin** will return. In April renowned botanical artist **Deborah Shaw** will present and the final speaker of the year in May is **Topher Delaney**. I mention this to you for a couple reasons. First, so you will be sure to put our meeting dates on your calendar, second to remind you to invite your friends everywhere to sign up for end of year membership. The cost is only \$30 by check and \$35 on our website. Any one of these speakers would cost \$35 individually to see. Roger's Gardens often has online presentations for \$40 or more.

**Susan Denton** is Director of the *Gate and Garden Tour* this year. The date is set for **May 1, 2021**.

While we are optimistic about the tour being in-person on this date, we do have a contingency plan, so buy your tickets with confidence.

We are working with Laguna Presbyterian

Church to set up a date where our members may "Drive-thru" and purchase tour tickets via check or cash to avoid the online handling fee. Usually we sell tickets to members at the February meeting so we want to give you the opportunity to do so this year as well. We will also collect for *Penny Pines*, collect food to donate to the *Laguna Food Pantry*, and **Nancy Englund** will be on hand to sell Laguna Beach Garden Club swag. I hope to have the details to share with at the **Zoom General Meeting on Friday, February 12, 2021**.





## Delicious Fruit Trees That Can Be Grown in Southern California



**J**oin us February 12 when Ashley King will help us over the hurdle that prevents us from planting the home orchard of our dreams. She will teach us which fruit trees will flourish in our own backyards, how to plant them, when to harvest, and everything in between. She is a former LBGC member who is currently working at Roger's Gardens while attending the Sustainable

Horticulture and Landscape Design programs at Saddleback College. Come ready with any questions and leave with the knowledge to successfully grow your very own best-tasting (and many unique-varieties of) homegrown fruit!

She became interested in succulents when she and her husband bought their house in 2011. The yard included a defunct fountain, which was not bringing her joy. She was a follower of Debra Lee Baldwin's newsletters. She found out the Debra was coming to speak at LBGC in October of 2013. Among the things that Debra does regarding succulents is to teach how to use a fountain as a planter for succulents. Ashley has learned so much about how to grow succulents, the different varieties and cultivars, and how to propagate them.

She joined LBGC after Debra's

presentation. She also became part of the Board by heading up the Newsletter. Her daughter, Taylor – aged 12 at the time, even helped out as an assistant docent at the Gate & Garden Tour. Taylor, now 18, working at Starbucks and taking advantage of Starbucks' offer of a college education through ASU. Her adorable son, Lewie,



was an honorary member of the LBGC. Lewie is now 11 years old and in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Many of us remember him helping at Green Day at the Sawdust, telling jokes, and always wearing his Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle backpack and accompanied by the sword. He kept us smiling and laughing.

Two years ago, when she took her daughter, Taylor, to Saddleback College to register for classes while still in high

## February Speaker Ashley King (continued)

### Ashley's Journey Into The World of Horticulture

school, Taylor encouraged her mom to take classes at Saddleback. **At first, Ashley thought she was too old or that she just couldn't do it. But she returned & registered that summer to take "Horticulture 20: Introduction"**. She became known as "Mom" to the other students because she provided water for everyone while they worked in the mid-summer heat in the green house.

Since her niece Ruby's birth, Ashley has been caring for her off and on to help her sister. By the time the first day of classes approached, little infant Ruby was still in Ashley's care, but Ashley was determined not to let caring for an infant stop her from attending. She purchased a baby carrier, strapped Ruby to her chest, and walked into class. Robert Farnsworth, co-

chair of the Horticulture Department, and the rest of the students welcomed her and Ruby with open arms, and in ensuing classes Mr. Farnsworth took role by calling out Ruby's name in addition to Ashley's. The entire classes adopted Ruby.

**Ashley has found her passion; something we all want to find in life.** She wants to share her enthusiasm with us and show how it has made such a positive impact in her life. Currently, she is enrolled in classes this semester at Saddleback and then needs one more class each to complete her Certificates in "Sustainable Horticulture" and "Sustainable Landscape Design".

**Roger's Gardens live streams classes** on different topics every

Friday afternoon and Saturday morning; audiences can participate by asking questions live. All classes are saved on Roger's Gardens Instagram, *Facebook*, and *YouTube* accounts for anyone to watch at a later time. Many customers requested that Ashley be filmed for some classes because of her bubbly personality and her knowledge. So far, she has starred in 4 episodes: 1) Top 5 Fall Perennials to Plant, 2) Succulent Arrangements, 3) Propagate & Transplant Succulents, and 4) Colorful Seasonal Containers. Roger's tentatively has her scheduled to be filmed on February 5; however, the topic is yet to be decided. (Information about this class was unavailable at the time of publication.)

Don't forget your favorite Valentine. Who wouldn't love a beautiful garden arrangement made with creativity and care by a friend? These lovely arrangements were just a few of the amazing plant creations made by our members for the 2020 Container Auction. (It seems so long ago!)

So get busy, grab a container, and fill it with gardening joy for someone special!





## Winter in California

**I** love winter in California - January and February are probably my favorite months. While much of the country is struggling with snow shovels, ice scrapers, or just relentless gloom, those of us living in our Mediterranean climate are enjoying cool temperatures, numerous sunny days, and also the rainy season, which brings us green hills, invigorated gardens, and lush landscapes. The rain washes away the dust, flushes the hard water salts from the soil, and eases the task of having to water the plants. Although I enjoy the abundance of flowers that will bloom in the coming months, I find that my garden always seems to be the happiest during the winter.



As someone who enjoys growing vegetables, I find that the cool season choices are fairly reliable and easy to grow. I especially love the snow peas that are just starting to appear. Winter greens such as lettuce, chard and kale grow quickly and easily and tend not to be

plagued with the diseases that eventually attack many of the warm season vegetables.



I am currently trying to get a head start on preparing my vegetable area for some of these summer vegetables such as tomatoes and zucchini that I hope will appear in the nurseries later this month. I also recently planted some Shirley poppies that I noticed at the nursery. I have never grown these before but I liked the picture of them on the little plant tag that also stated that they would grow to 24 - 36 inches tall!



I have some wilder sections of my yard that are basically left to their own devices. The recent rains have reinvigorated these areas that include mature succulents, and the nasturtiums and Geranium Maderense plants with the spectacular lavender-pink flowers always pop up through the ivy after the rains. My challenge in these areas is to try to pull the weeds before they go to seed. The weeds generally win since it's always tricky to pull them when they are intermingled and hiding among the plants.

Like most of you I have tried to stay safe by spending the better part of last year staying close to home, and I've found that working in the garden has been a great way to occupy my time. Even the simplest tasks can provide a sense of accomplishment and there's something very satisfying about being able to see progress. If you plant some seeds or seedlings and give them some time and tending, chances are good that you will be rewarded with flowers or a bountiful harvest. So enjoy your gardens during our beautiful wintertime.

# Tomatomania is Coming to Roger's Gardens

**A**re you ready to plant tomatoes? We are lucky because Tomatomania's first stop is Roger's Gardens in Corona del Mar, beginning February 26 through March 7. Roger's Gardens is one of the premier garden retailers in the country and has been home to the kick-off event for Tomatomania for nine years.

**Scott Diagre**, producer of the crazy circus that tomato freaks flock to every year, says, "My team of experienced 'Tomatomanics' and I are determined to make you wildly successful in the tomato garden. We are all geared to help you become a better tomato grower." Go to [www.tomatomania.com](http://www.tomatomania.com) for more information.



Because of the ongoing pandemic, Daigre expects some of the venues to offer mini-workshops online, and Roger's Gardens will offer live streaming classes. Go to [www.rogersgarden.com](http://www.rogersgarden.com) and click on "Learning Center" and Tomatomania will pop-up; This is the world's largest (and most fun) tomato plant sale. Scott and his staff will offer an astonishing selection of over 200 varieties for 2021 and a large selection of peppers. They will introduce the '*Tomato of the Year*'. Live streams will leave you wanting to learn more about these plants. **Happy Tomato Hunting!**

Scott says the offerings will be regularly replenished so shoppers don't feel the need to crowd into the event the first day to get their favorite varieties. His pick of the year is the orangey-red Hawaiian hybrid, named **Lava Flow**. And recognizing the huge interest in container gardens, there will be more than 20 or so of the dwarf tomatoes, which are heirloom hybrids bred to grow easily and profusely in small spaces and pots.

The beauty of the dwarf series, Scott says, "They produce heirloom tomatoes on plants that are stocky and compact, requiring little if any staking. In fact, a large pot can be successfully planted with two or three dwarf series on the back porch. You could feel like a real farmer, and you don't need major scaffolding to make it happen."



# Master Gardener Takes on the Food Desert in South LA

While reading the *LA Times* “Saturday” section recently, I was reminded of a repeated theme that our speakers this year have presented that basically everything is interconnected in this world: a healthy environment means a healthy world. Our speakers, from Dr. Ritter who talks how trees impact our world, to Corey Welles who reminds us that use of pesticides causes more harm, to Anna Maria Desipris who advocates for bees, all espouse the idea that there is a natural connection “...between plants, insects, birds, humans, the soil, mulches.” (Florence Nishida)

**Florence Nishida**, an 82-year old former high school English teacher in Lincoln Heights and librarian for *People* magazine, became a master gardener in 2008 and has an encyclopedic knowledge of plants and their history. In 2010 she cofounded the grassroots nonprofit *LA Green Ground* with her former student, Ron Finley, the self-proclaimed “Gangsta Gardener”.



Florence has opened teaching gardens in the food desert that South Los Angeles has become, taking areas that were once barren dirt that neighborhood

cars drove across and are open, unused and uncultivated. She keeps the areas unfenced by design to that anyone can “use it as a peaceful sanctuary to watch birds or butterflies, to taste the fruit, or to watch things grow.”

Besides teaching, she volunteers at Green Grounds which are the driving force behind more than 35 “Dig-Ins,” community driven workdays where volunteers, neighbors and family friends

transform front yards and parkways into edible gardens. Garden applicants must live in South LA, and the garden is required to be visible to the public as a way to provide inspiration and encouragement to others. In its early days the city of LA cited the “Gangsta Gardens” for being on city-owned parkways. It took two years to persuade LA City Council to allow residents to plant edibles in the parkways without a permit. Currently the “Dig-Ins” have been sidelined due to the pandemic, but she continues to work with volunteers at the teaching gardens on Tuesdays and Saturday and hybrid classes for the master gardener program. Her teaching garden is located on land owned by LADWP with power lines towering over a field of edible plants, speckled lettuce, kohlrabi, okra, and red mizuna lettuce, alongside purple amaranth and next to tall stalks of fennel. She surrounds the teaching garden with succulents that she brings from home to create a barrier from street traffic. She is a strong supporter of plants that have a long harvest season.

She knows what it’s like to grow up in a densely populated “food desert” where grocery stores are scarce and the neighborhood is diverse. Her family moved to South Central after being released from the Poston Internment Camp in Arizona. Living within walking distance of the Natural History Museum, she was a frequent visitor as a girl, later worked there as a research associate, began teaching gardening classes there, and began the Grow LA Victory Garden Initiative.

Growing a garden, especially something edible, gives a person a sense of accomplishment. Florence says, “Seeing and harvesting something that you started is a huge rewarding experience. Gardening your own food can do that.”

*Taken from LA Times, January 16, 2021, “A Healthy Growth Plan”, by Lisa Boone*

Submitted by: Lynn Jax



# THE GATE & GARDEN TOUR

**H**ave you attended the **Gate & Garden Tour** in the past? If so, what are some of your favorite experiences? We asked some of our members to reminisce about their past tours and share their favorite experiences. Follow along over the next 3 months @lagunabeachgardenclub or on the Laguna Beach Garden Club Facebook page to hear what your fellow Club members enjoy about the Gate & Garden Tour. Then test your knowledge with this Quiz:

## MATCH EACH MEMBER WITH THEIR FAVORITE EXPERIENCE

### Answer List

- a- That it is a walking tour, and the history of Laguna
- b- Bus Docents
- c- Rocks identifying the various plants in the gardens
- d- Using your senses
- e- Ideas on how to use your garden space
- f- Cookies
- g- The post tour party



Lynn Jax



Janet Chance



Nancy England



Tom Hensel



Dee Perry



Cookie Lee



Patricia Weier

**THE GATE & GARDEN TOUR IS  
SATURDAY, MAY 1ST**



## CLUB NEWS

### Input for 2021-22 Speakers Sought

As the current Co-Vice Presidents, Jorja Puma and I, are responsible for the Speaker Program for the Garden Club. We usually start early because oftentimes speaker's calendars fill up.

We want to know what you are interested in, what topic you would like to learn more about. As you know our meetings are held September through May, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month. Although this year the pandemic provided challenges with our meeting format, we pivoted to online Zoom Webinars. Fortunately, the speakers we had contracts with were able to provide that service. Believe it or not, September is not that far away, relatively speaking.

So far, Jorja was able to book for the October 8 meeting, Heidi and Charles Douglas, from Browns Ferry Gardens in Myrtle Beach, who will present information on Daylilies.



If you have an idea for a topic or even better, if you have contact information for a particular person, we would love to hear from you.

Send emails to: Lynn Jax at [jax@cox.net](mailto:jax@cox.net) or Jorja Puma at [paja143@me.com](mailto:paja143@me.com). The sooner the better. We look forward to hearing from you.

Submitted by Lynn Jax

## In The Community

In mid-January, **Walter von Grep** passed away at the age of 92. Not only did he establish the **Pocket Park on Forest Ave.** with a vision of a European sitting garden with a sculpture of a woman holding an infant as a tribute to his wife, Ann, and motherhood, but he and his wife were extremely active in Laguna Beach.



He is known by residents of Laguna as a founder of **Sally's Fund**, in 1982. The von Gremps provided significant financial support to hire part-time employees, and the new-nonprofit was named Sally's Fund in honor of Walter's mother who had recently died. It became a non-profit in 1986. Sally's Fund is an outreach program that helps frail seniors with a variety of life's challenges, by providing transportation to events at Susi Q Senior and Community Center, located behind Laguna Presbyterian Church parking lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and providing services including: senior lunches, groceries and errands, medical appointments, delivery of shopping goods, afternoon outings, and bridging home and hospital visits. Sally's Fund became exactly what Walter had envisioned, "The bridge between isolation and community."



Walter was born in Georgia and moved to Los Angeles at age 11 in 1940 with his parents. He attended UCLA and eventually created the "von Grep Workshop in Economic History" graduate degree program in 1988. He started an insurance company, which eventually grew to 125 employees. He moved to Laguna in 1982. His original office was above Reef Liquor (now Caduceus Medical Group) then moved to the building across the street from what is now Mozambique. He built another building in Laguna Hills. At the time his business was the largest privately owned company in Laguna. He sold the business in 1996 and retired the next year.

Walter and Ann have five children and nine grandchildren. They were married in Kansas City in 1956.

Walter & Ann's community involvement include: Ann served as treasurer for Sally's Fund until this year, Walter named Patriots Day Parade Citizen of the Year in 1992, served a president of Little League for 2 years, and contributed to multiple causes and organizations including the VFW.



Please see page 43 of your Membership Book for more details about the Pocket Park.

# Wall of Fame 2020 – 2021

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