

Oak Notes

Volume 43
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NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Kathleen Noll, Volunteer President

Welcome to June! It has been an incredible year for the California Botanic Garden. As the fiscal year winds down and the volunteer year concludes, we can be proud of our service to the Garden.

We welcomed an enthusiastic group of new volunteers in September at an orientation led by our extraordinary Volunteer Coordinator, Patty Nueva España. This year, Patty expanded volunteer capacity with “New Volunteer Mixer” events throughout the year. These “morning mixers” have been a long-standing goal for the Garden, providing a great way to welcome new faces and make connections before the annual September training.

Our fundraising efforts remained robust even while the grapevines took a “year off” from annual wreath decorating. We held a fantastic bake sale on the opening day of GNN at the Fall Plant Sale, and Native Designs created “kokedama” balls and wildflower seed bombs as successful alternatives to our lovely grapevine



CalBG Volunteer Board: (L-R) Patricia Brooks, Heidi Arch, Marla White, Judy Moffet, Susan Starr, Kathleen Noll, Amy Baumann, Betsy MacLaren, Patty Nueva España, Tom White, Christine Zukowski, and Kit Leung. Not pictured: Virginia Herd, Lynn Miller, Linda Prendergast, and Rachael Wilkerson. Photo credit: Carolyn Paul.

The deadline for articles to be submitted for the OAK NOTES is the **15th** of the month **prior** to publication. Thank you for your prompt submission!

wreaths. These efforts culminated in December with three Luminaria Nights weekends, supported by generous cookie donations from local bakeries.

Our Garden Guides led wonderful hands-on school tour activities, outstanding public programs, and wildflower walks in April where the blooms seemed to appear quite a bit earlier in the season! Tom White and the Horticulture volunteers assisted staff with numerous projects, including the creation of the Children's Woodland. Nursery volunteers ensured a banner year for Grow Native Nursery sales and restoration projects, while the Volunteer Library grew with an expanded children's book section and a space organization update to our resource center under Amy Baumann's leadership. These are only a few examples of how both Garden and Visitor-Facing volunteers have helped make the Garden a great place to be.

I would like to thank this year's dedicated Volunteer Board of Officers for their behind-the-scenes support: Christine Zukowski (retiring Vice-President), Kit Leung (retiring Secretary and rising Vice-President), Rachael Wilkerson (Treasurer), and Betsy MacLaren (Past President/Chair Goals and Evaluation). Thank you to our chairs: Heidi Arch (Community Outreach), Marla White (Enrichment and Field Trips), Tom White (Horticulture and Research), Susan Starr (Hospitality), Amy Baumann (Library), Linda Prendergast (Native Designs), Judy Moffet (Personnel), Virginia Herd and Lynn Miller (Visitor Experience), Carole Aldrich (*Oak Notes* publisher), and Patricia and Fred Brooks (*Oak Notes* editors).

CalBG Volunteers:

It's that time of year when the *Oak Notes* contributors, editors, and publisher take a two-month vacation. This volunteer newsletter will not be published during July or August, but will return again with a September issue. We appreciate this opportunity to recharge, reevaluate, and then continue our service to you, our readers. The editors especially thank our contributors and wish them, and everyone, a safe, fulfilling summer.

I end this year with deep gratitude for all of you, our Volunteers. As a collective, you have gone above and beyond to promote the betterment of California Botanic Garden.

Reminder: Please mark your calendars for our final quarterly meeting and luncheon on Friday, June 5th, at 11:30 a.m. in the Forest Pavilion. And there is a New Volunteer Mixer on Saturday, June 13th at 9:00 a.m.. Please see flyers for event details in this issue of *Oak Notes*.

See you in the Garden



FROM THE DIRECTOR

**Lucinda McDade,
CalBG Executive Director
Photos by Andy Torres**

Hello volunteers!

I have a number of things to share with you in this column and we'll start with the gala. It was spectacular and also fun! I hope all of you volunteers who were in attendance enjoyed it! We did well! We don't yet know how well because a number of people left that evening without fully settling their bills. We need to be sure that we are on the same page with all of the guests regarding their winnings and other commitments (yes, every now and then someone objects...).

One highlight of the gala—especially important for those of you who are part of our wonderful school tours program—is that we'll be able to replace the Education cart. I've been here for 20 years now; the current cart was here when I started and it was not young then. We set it up as helping to give the coyote a smoother "ride." You have all seen it "howling" from the back of the cart as it is transported to wherever it is needed. Watch for the new cart soon!

Another highlight is that our Director of Conservation's trip up the San Jacintos was sold twice! Two lucky patrons and their guests will get to go to Hidden Lake to see the Hidden Lake Blue Curls with Naomi Fraga. The lake is so hidden that it is not on maps (to protect the plant) so this is a



very special trip! Also sold twice was the gorgeous painting of Hummingbird Sage by Eric Davis. That is, he will do a second painting for the lucky winner (it is a truly glorious painting and the second will be as glorious I am sure!). And finally, the Native Designs “Flowers Year-Round” auction item did very well! Thank you to everyone who will be involved in creating those glorious arrangements for the lucky winners in the months to come.

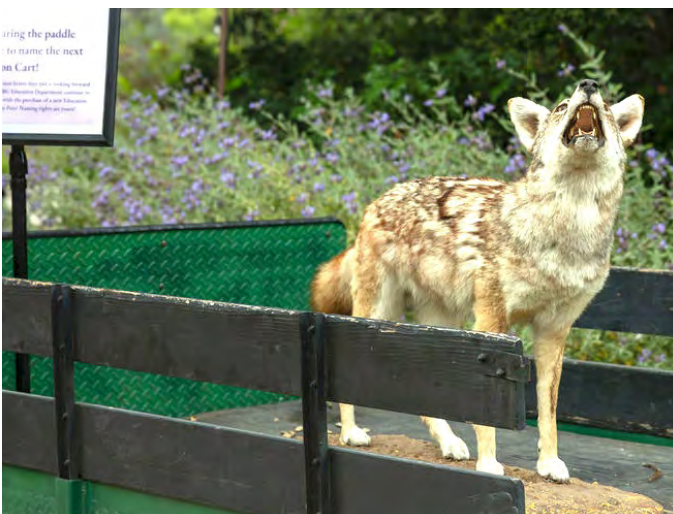
THANKS to all volunteers who were involved in the gala in any way: Wednesday Work Crew on the grounds helped with detailing the venues for a few weeks in advance. Native Designs crafted beautiful arrangements. A group of you came in on Friday to help with the paddles and name tags and programs set up for our guests. Quite a few of you were in attendance.

I also wanted to let you know what is going on at the Seed Program Building (AKA Seed Bank). Program manager, Cheryl Birker, and I (and others) have long been pensive about the danger of fire to the seed bank. As many of you know, the building is due west, right across the fence from the Bernard Field



Station, which is managed as a wild area for use by the Claremont Colleges. We are entirely in favor of wild areas and—absent a source of ignition—it is a perfectly safe neighbor. However, ignition can happen as we have seen with the recent horrendous urban conflagrations to our west, even in the absence of ill-intentioned people.

Thus, we have been attentive for sources of funding that might help us fire-harden the seed bank. Enter “Groundwork Grants,” a State of California source of funds for emergency preparedness for organizations that protect our cultural—not to mention biological!—heritage. We have received a grant to add non-flammable siding to the building, along with metal roll down shutters to cover all of the windows. These are designed to roll down automatically when heat is detected. A few more touches will enhance the work that we’ve already done to protect the seed bank with its absolutely irreplaceable treasure trove of seeds—genetic diversity to secure the future of California native plants. We are very gratified to be able to achieve this important project goal!



Breaking news as I close, is that Mother's Day at CalBG was spectacular! I know that many of you volunteers were here and shared in the work, including the unexpected tasks that resulted from the turnout being quite a bit larger than anticipated. THANKS! As is always the case, we can't do these events without you!

I hope that *Oak Notes* and all of you have a restful next couple of months although it will be a full and busy summer here at CalBG. I hope that all of you active volunteers will not hesitate to be in touch with me even if *Oak Notes* is on summer vacation!

END OF TOURING SEASON REVIEW

by Sally Hy

We are nearing the end of the touring season here at CalBG! Each year the "touring season" unofficially begins around October, as guided tours and school visits begin to pick up, and ends around June, right before the summer heat rolls in and schools are dismissed for summer vacation. This past touring season from October 2025 to June 2026 has been an incredible team effort by our Garden Guides and Ploppers, who have put in over 226 hours in preparing and leading tours. (This is just a reminder to log your hours on Volgistics, as I suspect the number is actually much larger than that!)

When you are in the thick of it, leading a tour, it may be difficult to visualize just how much of an impact you are making. Now that things are slowing down, I am happy to report that Garden Guides welcomed over 2,300 visitors for guided programs. Of the tours led this season, 17% were tram tours and 37% were for school programs held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We also saw another successful turnout for our spring Wildflower Tours, despite the early blooms, with a total of 109 visitors and all tram tours selling out.

To all our Garden Guides and Ploppers, thank you for all that you do to forward the Garden's mission in advancing the knowledge and appreciation of our California native plants to a broader audience. Your patience for scheduling mishaps, flexibility in accommodating group requests, responsiveness to

new activities, and enthusiasm for our native plants does not go unnoticed. You are truly a vital part to the Community Education that happens at the Garden.

What's next? We are bringing back Pollinator Tours this June, so if you are interested in leading one of these, please sign up on Volgistics. Also, be sure to save the date of our Garden Guide Breakfast to kick off the next touring season—Thursday, September 17, 2026. We will see you there!

VOLUNTEER GATHERINGS IN JUNE

by Patty España

Just when it feels as if things are slowing down around the Garden, we are ending the volunteer year with a couple of fun events for all to attend and enjoy.

First up will be a New Volunteer Mixer, this is the second one we have planned for CalBG, and it will take place on Saturday, June 13, at 9 a.m.. All volunteers are invited, and those who are new to volunteering with CalBG will especially want to come. This event is a very light and casual gathering in Johnson's Oval, that will give us a chance to meet our fellow volunteers and learn about this special community we are all a part of. We will also take a walk around the Mesa to learn a little bit about the Garden, some of its gathering spots and communities of special plants.

Finally, capping off the volunteer year, the staff at CalBG will host a Volunteer Appreciation Reception on Wednesday, June 24, at 6 p.m. in the Forest Pavilion. This event is a chance for the Garden staff to acknowledge our volunteers and let them know how appreciated they are. The CalBG trustee members will be invited as well, providing an opportunity to meet with them. On this evening, we will take a moment and honor one of our long-dedicated volunteers, Herb Boss, by granting him Associate Volunteer status. Additionally, service pins will be handed out.

The following volunteers will be awarded for their years of service: 5-Year Volunteers: Paul Clarke, Lisa Donnell, Donna Nicholson, Paul Standerfer,

Ray Wilson. 10-Year Volunteers: Stephen Bryant, Richard Davis, Ann Morgan, Linda Troyer. 15-Year Volunteers: Amy Baumann, Brenda Bolinger, Cindy Walkenbach. 20-Year Volunteer: Kathleen Mulligan. 30-Year Volunteer: Susan Winderman.

RSVP's will be coming out any day through VicNet. Please respond by the requested date to let me know if you plan to attend the reception or not, and if you will be bringing along a friend. Looking forward to seeing you at both of our June gatherings!

SUMMER IN THE GARDEN 2026

by Lauren Weintraub Stoebel, Photo by
Lauren Weintraub Stoebel



CalBG's summer programming brings the community into the Garden during the cooler evenings for music, movies, fun, and more. These events are great, low-key opportunities for volunteers to help keep our Garden community active and our members and visitors engaged during the hotter, slower summer months. Volunteer shifts for summer events include check-in, bar assistance, popcorn serving, helping with crafts, and more. Read on to learn more about what's in store this summer and head over to Volgistics to sign up today!

June 11, 2026

7 p.m. (Movie starts at 8 p.m.)

Cinema Botanica: Beautiful Biodiversity Documentary Double Feature

CalBG celebrates healthy ecosystems and the pollinators that sustain them with a documentary double feature! Join us for the live premiere of *California in Bloom*, a 30-minute documentary



A Very Happy Birthday to:

June:

Aiden Alcalá
Wanda Ewing
Charlyn Fijan
Terry Givens
Lisa Hahn
Karye Hood
Angel Lee
Kit Leung
Sophia Magcale
Stephanie Marin-Rothman
Lesla Maugh
Judy Moffet
Barbara Nakaoka
Isaac Nicolosi
Emilie Reagan
Jack Rosenbrock
Zoe Vinton
Anna Walther
Bonny White
Laura Wilkerson

July:

Jennifer Aparicio
Emilie Ballard
Eugene Baumann
Andrea Bennett
John Biddle
Barbara Gentry
Paya Hatam
Willow Lehigh
Karen Levin
Anne Moreau
Kathleen Noll
Naomi Nwishi

Mary Perera
Kyra Saegusa
Kristen Shepherd
Shanthi Srinivas
Marla White

August:

Christopher Botts
Stephen Bryant
Mary Chamberlain
Miranda Ferguson
Ariana Fernandez
Priscilla Gilbert
Shaunna Gygli
Dorita Hamer
Leo Inocencio
Elene Kallimanis
Tony Koo
Diana Lake
Angie Liu
Lyla May
Linda Munsey
Ray Owens
Carol Petty
Muriel Poston
Linda Robb
Mylo Schneider
Susan Starr
Cade Stewart
Kelly Swift
Linda Troyer
Rudi Volti
Cindy Walkenbach
Rachael Wilkerson
Susan Winderman
Christine Zukowski

tracing efforts to support our state's incredible biodiversity, filmed in part at California Botanic Garden. The premiere will be followed by *The Extraordinary Caterpillar*, which introduces viewers to the adorable and amazing tiny creatures that help hold together the ecosystems that power all life on earth. Pre-movie activities include flower and caterpillar crafts and pollinator trivia.

June 25, 2026

6 p.m. (Concert starts at 7 p.m.)

Garden Groove: Las Colibrí

Take flight with the stirring vocals and stunning musicianship of the all-female mariachi ensemble Las Colibrí (The Hummingbirds). The evening's performance will be paired with custom Taste Wild native plant-infused drinks and more for sale by Marigold Coffee Collective.

July 9, 2026

7 p.m. (Movie starts at 8 p.m.)

Cinema Botanica: *Little Shop of Horrors*

Movie musical and carnivorous plant fans: head to the Garden for this classic featuring campy horror and catchy songs in equal measure. Pre-

movie activities include plant puppet making and carnivorous plant trivia.

July 23, 2026

6 p.m. (Concert starts at 7 p.m.)

Garden Groove: Starlight & Standards Dance Party with The Secret Jazz Band

The Forest Pavilion transforms into a glamorous summer dance party as The Secret Jazz Band charms with high-energy standards and romantic ballads. Relax under the stars for a moonlit concert, hit the dance floor to the rhythms of Golden Age swing, and enjoy Taste Wild native plant-infused drinks for sale.

August 6, 2026

7 p.m. (Movie starts at 8 p.m.)

Cinema Botanica: *FernGully: The Last Rainforest*

Join fairy Christa and the magical and animal inhabitants of FernGully as they fight the humans who are trying to destroy their rainforest home and the evil spirit of Hexxus who feeds off of pollution. This animated classic takes you back to the good old days of hand-drawn animation, complete with musical numbers! Pre-movie activities include crafts and trivia.

August 20, 2026

6 p.m. (Concert starts at 7 p.m.)

Living Earth with Solarc Brewing

Garden friends Living Earth and their partners at Solarc Brewing return with a program of eclectic and inspiring performances curated to connect with Garden sounds, smells, and feelings. Solarc will be on hand to sell specialty Taste Wild beer and tea offerings brewed with plants harvested from the Garden.

SPHAERALCEA AMBIGUA

by Steve Bryant

Of the eight *Sphaeralcea* spp. listed in Jepson, Apricot Mallow, *Sphaeralcea ambigua*, is generally the most common; it is a small shrub in both the low and high deserts in SoCal and surrounding states. (Some intergrades are known among the six SoCal spp. and it wouldn't surprise me if most interspecific crosses were fertile.) There are three named varieties: *S. a.* var. *ambigua*, *S. a.* var. *rugosa* and *S. a.* var. *rosacea*. The first has wrinkled leaves, orange flowers, and

**PLEASE
JOIN OUR
BOARD!**

OPEN POSITIONS FALL 2026

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION

- CHAIR/CO-CHAIR ENRICHMENT + FIELD TRIPS
- CHAIR/CO-CHAIR LIBRARY

EMAIL: VOLUNTEERS@CALBG.ORG

yellow or purple stamens; it is the most common. The second is named for the extremely wrinkled top surface of the leaves. It also has orange petals and to me, the main difference is that if the plant has purple anthers, it is supposedly *S. a.* var. *ambigua*, but if the anthers are yellow, it can be either.



The third variety has lavender (left) or whitish petals, and less-wrinkled leaves. All three varieties are found throughout the sp. range. These shrubs grow from 1–2 m tall (*S. a.* var. *rosacea* to 1 m

tall) and wide and usually go dormant during the hottest weather. The most profuse flowering time depends on the elevation, with low desert plants often blooming in February–March, while high desert plants bloom a month or two later. In some areas, and with a good winter rainfall, blooming may last until July, and even sporadically thereafter with good summer monsoonal rains. I have been letting the varieties cross in my yard for the past several decades, with each resulting plant having a different flower color: from nearly white to yellow to deep maroon; some of these are being propagated for the GNN.



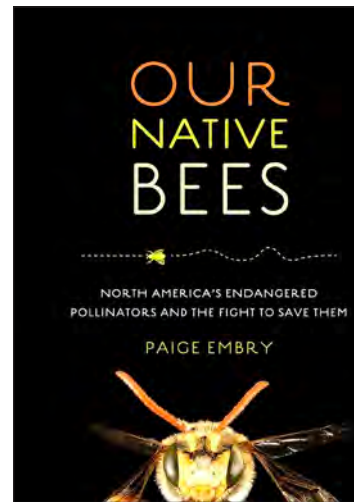
I have also made selections for anther color, both the yellow (cv. 'xanthandros' [above]) and the purple (cv. 'porphyrandros' [left]).



Cultivation is fairly easy as long as the plants are not overwatered in hot weather. They do not seem to be particular about soil type, but only last about 10–15+ years in my garden. Highly recommended with caution for the xeric garden, as these plants are covered with small hairs that have been reported to cause dermatitis.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Barbara Quarton, Volunteer
Library Committee



Our Native Bees: North America's Endangered Pollinators and the Fight to Save Them by Paige Embry. Hachette, New York, NY. 2024. 224 pp.

Our Native Bees is a wonderful book for those new to the world of bees. In this charming account of her love affair with wild bees, author Paige Embry takes us into fields and out to farms to learn about native bees from scientists and farmers. Embry points out that unlike honey bees, which are descendants of bees imported from Europe in the late 1800s, North American native bees are incredibly diverse; different types of bees fly at different times of day, during different types of weather, and they forage, carry pollen, and nest differently. This diversity in the native bee population results in more pollination of diverse flora than that of the honey bee. But while native bees are incredibly diverse and resilient, the importation of honey bees, changes in farming practices, habitat loss, effects of climate change, parasites, and diseases have all contributed to their decline. The fight to save our wild bees lies in convincing farmers and gardeners alike to replace the native bees' habitats within and around crops, provide nesting sites and floral resources, let wild flora grow in our lawns, renounce pesticides, and be "a little slovenly in the garden" so that wild bees can nest.

Our Native Bees: North America's Endangered Pollinators and the Fight to Save Them is available for check-out now in the Volunteer Library. Enjoy!

CALBG VOLUNTEER EVENTS JUNE–SEPTEMBER

June 2: Run for Fun Monthly Meetup 6:00 p.m.
(please RSVP)

June 5: Volunteer Quarterly Luncheon & Meeting,
11:30 a.m. Forest Pavilion

June 6 & 13: Hummingbird Tapestry Weaving Class,
9:00 a.m. (registration required).

June 7: First Sunday Family Friendly Bird Walk
hosted Pomona Valley Bird Alliance, 8:00 a.m.
(registration required)

June 7: Run for Fun Monthly Meetup 8:15 a.m.
(please RSVP)

June 10: Volunteer Enrichment: Scott White
program on the Flora of the San Jacinto & Santa
Rosa Mountains, at noon, Sycamore Room

June 12: Pollinator Walking Tour 1-hr, 9:30 a.m.
(registration required)

June 12: Pollinator Tram Tour 1-hr, 11:00 a.m.
(registration required)

June 13: Pollinator Walking Tour 1-hr, 9:30 a.m.
(registration required)

June 13: Pollinator Tram Tour 1-hr, 11:00 a.m.
(registration required)

June 13: New Volunteer Mixer 9:00 a.m. Johnson
Oval

June 14: Silent Reading Club Meetup 1:00 p.m.
(please RSVP)

June 16: Family Story Time 9:00 a.m. (please RSVP)

June 20: Volunteer Field Trip: Friends of the LA
River (see email for details)

June 20: Nature Art Southern California Butterflies
and Caterpillars 10:00 a.m. (registration required)

June 24: Volunteer Recognition Celebration
6:00 p.m., Tram service 5:30 p.m. (please RSVP)

June 26: Yarn in the Yuccas: Fiber Arts Monthly
Meetup 1:30 p.m. (please RSVP)

June 28: Run for Fun Monthly Meetup 8:15 a.m.
(please RSVP)

July 4: Garden closed

July 7: Run for Fun Monthly Meetup 6:00 p.m.
(please RSVP)

July 12: Silent Reading Club Meetup 1:00 p.m.
(please RSVP)

July 21: Family Story Time 9:00 a.m. (please RSVP)

July 31: Yarn in the Yuccas: Fiber Arts Monthly
Meetup 1:30 p.m. (please RSVP)

August 9: Silent Reading Club Meetup 1:00 p.m.
(please RSVP)

August 18: Family Story Time 9:00 a.m.
(please RSVP)

August 28: Yarn in the Yuccas: Fiber Arts Monthly
Meetup 1:30 p.m. (please RSVP)

September 6: First Sunday Family Friendly Bird
Walk, hosted Pomona Valley Bird Alliance, 8:00 a.m.
(registration required)

September 13: Silent Reading Club Meetup
1:00 p.m. (please RSVP)

September 15: Family Story Time 9:00 a.m.
(please RSVP)

September 19: New Volunteer Orientation Part I,
9:00 a.m.

September 23: Volunteer Quarterly Luncheon &
Meeting, 11:30 a.m. Forest Pavilion

September 25: Yarn in the Yuccas: Fiber Arts
Monthly Meetup 1:30 p.m. (please RSVP)

September 26: New Volunteer Orientation Part II,
9:00 a.m.

September 27: Native Designs Brunch & Grapevine
Wreath Workshop, Set-up 9:30 a.m.

September 28–September 30: Grapevine Wreath
Workshop, 9:30 a.m.–noon, 12:30 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

SANTA ROSA PLATEAU FIELD TRIP

by **Patty España**, photos by **Marla White**

The first field trip was in collaboration with the April enrichment talk by Travis Columbus, PhD. In his presentation, he discussed vernal pools in California and the diverse flora that inhabit them. The field trip that took place on Saturday, April 25th, was to

Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve, a place with examples of the occasional presence of vernal pools. It was a bit of a drive to the plateau, which sits in the Santa Ana Mountains just south of Murrieta. Docents were on hand to guide close to 20 volunteers around the trails and explain the unique habitats that make up the plateau.



YOU ARE INVITED

New Volunteer Mixer

MEET YOUR FELLOW VOLUNTEERS
LEARN ABOUT FUN AND INTERESTING
OPPORTUNITIES IN THE GARDEN

LIGHT BREAKFAST PROVIDED

SAY HELLO TO SOME
NATIVE PLANT FRIENDS
ON A CASUAL WALK

CALBG
JOHNSON'S OVAL

START TIME
9AM

13 JUNE

**YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
END OF THE YEAR
VOLUNTEER LUNCHEON
AND BUSINESS MEETING**

Friday, June 5, 11:30 a.m.

Forest Pavilion

Tram starts at 11:00 a.m.



**Bring your favorite main dish,
dessert, or hors d'oeuvres to share**

Staff Invited! Raffle Prizes!

Fun for All!

See you there!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION RECEPTION

JUNE 24, 2026

6:00 PM

TACOS, DRINKS, & CHURROS!

**CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN
FOREST PAVILION
1500 NORTH COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CA 91711**

Please RSVP by June 17