

Oak Notes

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA BOTANIC GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

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FROM THE PRESIDENT Kathleen Noll, Volunteer President Photos by Kathleen Noll

I want to share how much I enjoyed volunteering at the welcome table at the recent free admission day, which coincided with the Garden's celebration of Latino Conservation Week. The activities of the day included bilingual Spanish/English behind-the-scenes tours. It was such a joy seeing everyone engage with the bilingual activities.

Partnering with a new volunteer was a natural opportunity to chat about the many ways to get involved with the Garden. Seeing the enormous, enthusiastic crowds for the Production Nursery and Herbarium tours was a great reminder of how vibrant our Garden Community is.

There really is a place for everyone! Volunteers can get hands-on time with plants by supporting horticulturists, caring for the Living Collection, potting-up seedlings for habitat restoration or conservation projects, and for retail sales at the wonderful and soon-to-be open for the season Grow Native Nursery. Others will join a weekly team mounting specimens in the Herbarium, or serve as docent Garden Guides. Some will help at special events or projects whenever they can.

Most of all, I'm grateful for the meaningful friendships with fellow volunteers, Garden leaders, and staff guiding us as we work together to protect, preserve, and educate our community about California's native flora. New volunteer orientation has concluded for the year, and October is the ideal time for both new and established volunteers to explore new routines and make plans for fun and interesting activities with that fresh, fall feeling.

Please mark your calendars for upcoming October events (details will come in a CalBG volunteer email):

- Grapevine Wreath Workshop in the Lenz Classroom, October 1–4
- Things that Go Bump in the Night, October 2 & 3
- Bake Sale Drop Off in the Lenz Classroom, October 9
- GNN Fall Plant Sale, October 10 & 11
- Volunteer Enrichment, October 14
- Volunteer Logo Wear, order by October 31

See you in the Garden,

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



FROM THE DIRECTOR Lucinda McDade, CalBG Executive Director

Greetings volunteers! It is mid-September as I write. We are in a decent patch of weather and it has already rained nicely once—albeit a strange (for us) warm rain associated with a hurricane. We are excitedly looking ahead to a full fall of exciting events at CalBG! But first! Watch for the nest! Coming soon to a Children's Woodland near you, the human-sized nest will be created by artist Jayson Fann who is based up at Big Sur. Be sure to check for the little library book box that is to be built into the nest. I personally am very excited to see the latest feature at the Woodland and to have our plan for making nature-related kids' books available!

On with the fall! It is going to be lively around here after the long hot quiet days of summer. And, of course, you volunteers will be involved in all of the liveliness (as a group) and, as individuals, as much of it as you enjoy and are able to help with.

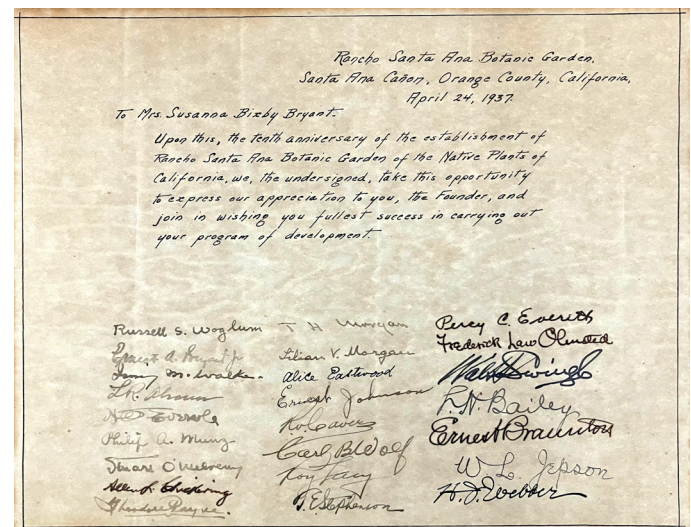
Things that Go BUMP in the Night is one of our flagship events, much loved by kids of all ages and truly an all-hands-on-deck event for staff and volunteers. Watch for new activities developed by our terrific community education team including their graduate student teaching assistants. If you don't already know Marife Auccapoma and Erica Fontanez, you will soon! I hope you have the opportunity to work alongside both of them.

Just days after *BUMP*, we will launch the plant sale season at the Grow Native Nursery (GNN). The old-timers among us remember when the fall plant sale was also an all-hands-on-deck event—in a major way! Now, GNN Manager Laura Christianson, her staff, and colleagues in the nursery and horticulture, have the launch highly organized. As importantly, the GNN will then be open through at least mid-May such that the first weekend is not the *only* weekend by

a long shot. Nonetheless, that weekend is a very busy one for us, starting with the special Acorn event that leads off the weekend, taking place a couple of days in advance. We are calling for quite a few volunteers to help with aspects of this special weekend. It is fun! We all really enjoy seeing all of those native plants heading home with happy shoppers. We expect our amazing GNN volunteers Steve Bryant and Tom White to be helping us get underway!

Nerd Out has moved to November from the heat of the summer and it will be fun to see how the event goes! Cosplay anyone? Weird nerdy science-oriented games? Nerdy things in the late afternoon darkening garden should be a great deal of fun!

I look forward to seeing many of you at one or more of these terrific events and thanks in advance for your help! Really, each of these Garden events takes a village.



Before you know it, 2027 will be upon us and, with it, the Garden's centennial. 100 years and counting! Documents we have in the archives indicate that 1927 was understood to be the founding date by leaders at the time. For example, take a look at the image above, which is a congratulatory message to Mrs. Bryant in 1937, the ten-year anniversary of the founding of her wild garden. How many of the names of signers on this short document do you recognize? By 1927, the Garden was well underway and was informally referred to as Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

Interestingly, it was not until 1934 that our founder, Susanna Bixby Bryant, formally set up the legal structure for her wild garden.

We are excited to plan a whole array of things—small and large—to celebrate our centennial, including of course displays of relevant historical documents and images from our Archives. We welcome your participation in all ways including ideas. A good way to share your ideas would be to any of the Garden’s department leaders, or you could also send ideas through the info@calbg.org email address. A number of us read those emails and we make sure that they get to the right place—in this case, we will compile a record of all of the suggestions that we receive.

Once festivities are underway, there will be lots of opportunities for you volunteers to be involved. In the herbarium, all specimens mounted in 2027 will be marked with a special stamp to indicate that it was accessioned in our centennial year. Watch for special centennial signs in the Garden and special “centennial-flavored” milestones to be celebrated in the Seed Bank, Nursery and other Garden arenas. The Gala, Forever California, will of course have a centennial flavor and I hope to see many of you there. We are all getting excited about the year ahead. Again, your ideas are welcome and we plan for participation.

We will also be setting and recognizing centennial milestones in the Advancement office. We will continue to work hard to set the stage for the next 100 years with a very solid financial footing for our favorite Garden. If you have not already included the Garden in your legacy plans, our centennial year would be an excellent occasion to do so. You will be in excellent company in joining the Susanna Bixby Bryant Legacy Society.

GARDEN GUIDE TRAINING DATES—FALL 2026

by Sally Hy

Our next Garden Guide Training Session begins this October! This training course is designed to help you get familiar with the Garden’s current guided educational programs, develop content knowledge,

and gain confidence in leading and facilitating your own tours and other programming. It will feature key lectures such as: Interpretation 101, Botany 101, Native Plants & Plant Communities 101, and Ecology 101.

Garden guiding can be such a rewarding experience. Take it from the words of one of our very own Garden Guides, Lorraine Aflague, class of 2025, who shared four reasons she loves being a Garden Guide:

1. “The ooohs and aaahs” are music to my ears
2. The Garden family makes me feel appreciated
3. Learning something new every time I volunteer
4. Getting kids to love and protect nature for the future.”

This year, we will be meeting on Fridays from 2 to 5 p.m. The dates are: October 9, 16, and 23, followed by a Break Week, and then November 6, 13, and 20.

Don’t miss out on this FREE resource for all CalBG Volunteers, whether you decide to become a Garden Guide or not. If you are interested in attending all or any of the class sessions, please email registrar@calbg.org for more details.

FIELD TRIP TO WALLIS ANNENBERG WILDLIFE CROSSING

by Patricia Hessenflow

Our Field Trip Committee is so excited to invite you on a special tour of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing in Agoura Hills on March 27, 2027! Scheduled to open this December, it will be the world’s largest crossing, featuring a full acre of native habitat over the 101 Freeway. Spots are very limited for this volunteer-only event. To reserve your place, send a quick note to Patty at pespana@calbg.org with your full name and email address in the message; please include “crossing” in the subject line of your email. Our docent needs this information so she can save our date and send out the required waivers. We completely understand that it’s tricky to commit six months early, but sharing your details now helps us secure our reservation. There will be options for both

easy and active walking routes, so everyone can join in the experience.

LOGO SHIRTS ARE AVAILABLE TO ORDER by Betsy MacLaren

Now is the time to order volunteer logo shirts. You will have received an email with photos of each item, its price, and how to order. There are also 2 poster boards with pictures of the shirts in Patty España's office. Choices for men and women include 2 polo shirts of different fabrics, a denim long-sleeved shirt, a quilted vest, and a long-sleeved light-weight hoodie. You have the option of having your name embroidered for an additional \$3. Each shirt is embroidered with our volunteer Matilija logo. You can also order the Matilija logo patch by itself (\$10) to be sewn or ironed on to your own shirt, or you can bring your own shirt to be embroidered with the logo (\$10). Payment is by check (made payable to CALBG Volunteers) or cash (give cash and checks to Patty España), or by Zelle to zmacone@gmail.com. The last day to order is October 31. The shirts will be delivered in time for Luminaria Nights!

FALL INTO VOLUNTEERING by Patty Nueva España, Volunteer Program Coordinator

According to the calendar, it is autumn here at CalBG. Personally, my favorite time of the year! I mean, who doesn't love everything pumpkin-spiced and that wonderful crispness in the air as the leaves start changing color.

Fall also means the start of a very busy season at CalBG. We just held our annual New Volunteer Orientation and first Volunteer Quarterly Luncheon of the year last week. Now we need to completely shift gears and jump right into *Things That Go Bump in the Night* the first weekend of October, and the Grow Native Nursery's Grand Opening Plant Sale the following weekend. How do we manage all of this in such a short period of time? It's not easy, and that

is where you all come in! This kind of activity level is just not possible without our volunteers. *Things That Go Bump in the Night* has so many moving parts that volunteers are necessary to help it run smoothly. We could still fill spots in the Night Garden and the Bug Activity Station. If you haven't signed up already, please consider it, it's a fun time for all!

With Fall comes the planting season! When the Grow Native Nursery opens October 10 & 11, there is an electricity in the air that radiates from the excitement of the shoppers selecting their favorite California native plants. Saturday is a day busy with activity that is only possible with the presence of our volunteers. That same electricity radiates from our best fundraisers, with a Bake Sale and a Wreath Booth full of delicious treats and great treasures. The plant sale continues on Sunday with spots still open to sign up. On top of that, the Claremont Heritage has their Home Tour on Sunday and has requested volunteers to drive guests to one of the featured homes on Abilene Drive.

With so many opportunities to choose from, how can you resist?



A Very Happy October Birthday to:

Sam Atwood	David Lonardi
Deandra Cass	Sophia Michelson
Jessica Chen	Wendy Morical
Valerie Cressy	Jeremiah Sailor
Conner Ellefson	Randall Swift
Steve Finn	Daniel White
Aria Garcia	Emma Wilkins
Alisher Junisbai	Linda Lee Worlow
Tristan Landis	

GROW NATIVE NURSERY FALL PLANT SALE

by Laura Christianson,
photo by Nancy Osgood



It's that time again! Our 48th Annual Fall Sale inches closer, and our team is excited to be open for business once more. We hope you will join us in one fashion or another, either as an opening-weekend volunteer, or guest for this year's sale. Our fantastic production nursery team has been hard at work propagating new and interesting plants we think the public will be excited about, as well as a greater diversity than before. In preparation for a potential strong rain year, we've added an even greater number of wildflower seeds to our inventory including both annual wildflowers and perennial shrub seeds and mixes. Our usual team of experts will be there to answer any questions you may have.

Also new this fall, Grow Native Nursery is excited to be selling a selection of native plant books that range from ethnobotanical uses of plants to month-by-month guides! To further help aid guests, we've created and uploaded recommended plant lists, now available on our website, to guide your shopping. These plant lists have suggestions for everything from strong pollinator plants, to plants that will do well in the High Desert. Lastly, we are restocking with another round of our beautiful Native Garden Yard

Signs designed by Botanic Illustrator Louise Fleurs. It is sure to be an exciting sale and we hope you can join us. As members, you receive early access to GNN on Saturday, as well as 10% off all items!



Grow Native Nursery 48th Annual Fall Sale Wednesday, October

7th: Acorn Member
Pre-Sale 4–7 p.m.

Saturday, October
10th: Member Pre-Sale
8–10 a.m., General Sale
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Sunday, October 11th:
General Sale 9 a.m.–
4 p.m.

CALBG VOLUNTEER BAKE SALE by Kathleen Noll



Calling all bakers, presales, and sale day volunteers!

Please look for Patty's email regarding baking,

packaging, and delivering items for our annual Bake Sale.

Delivery Details: Friday, October 9, from 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at Lenz Classroom, Horticulture Complex.

Sign-up to bake: We are looking for cookies, savory and sweet breads, muffins, scones, gluten-free items, pet treats, and any other assortment of baked goods. We need both individual servings (easy to enjoy during the Fall Plant Sale) and whole cakes or loaves to take home.

Packaging & Preparation Guidelines:

- Package cookies and small items in resealable packaging (e.g., 2 large cookies or 5 small cookies per bag).
- Whole pies, cakes, and loaves are welcome.
- Clearly mark all contents, especially any items containing nuts or other allergens.
- Pretty packaging is encouraged to help boost sales!

Sign-up for presale to price and package baked goods: Friday, October 9, from 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. at Lenz Classroom, Horticulture Complex.

Sign-up to set-up, sell baked goods, and take down the sale: Saturday, October 10 at Grow Native Nursery,- 7:00 a.m.–9:30 a.m. (set-up and sales); 9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (sales and take-down)

Thank you for supporting our volunteer fundraiser!

ENRICHMENT

by Patricia Hessenflow



First Enrichment Presentation of the new season: California Condors—Back from the Brink on Wednesday, October 14, noon to 1 p.m. will take place in the Sycamore Room. Maria Montag, Board President of Friends of California Condors Wild and Free

will discuss natural history details about the critically endangered California Condor, from its emergence during the Pleistocene era, through its decline and eventual status as “extinct in the wild.”



The Condor Recovery Program, which has successfully reintroduced California condors into the wild, will be discussed, including captive breeding efforts, how the wild flock is managed, and ongoing threats.



HERBARIUM TOUR AND CPR TRAINING FOR KIOSK STAFF

by Elaine Brown

On Wednesday, August 19th, kiosk staff gathered to attend an herbarium tour led by our Herbarium Collections Manager, Annica Wu, plus CPR training. Despite some of our kiosk staff having worked here for over two years, they had not yet had a chance to see the inner workings of the herbarium. Peggy Villaseñor said, “I was amazed by the herbarium. I didn’t know how large and comprehensive the collection was.” Although kiosk staff are informed that there are 1.25 million specimens in the collection, it makes a big difference to see the pressed plants in person and to learn about some of our oldest specimens and how researchers use them.

As for the CPR training, Peggy commented, “It was a very informative class and I learned a great deal.” The CPR training that the Garden offers is a great resource for our kiosk staff, who often are the first points of contact in emergency situations. The Garden continues to improve its safety training, believing that the more we educate our staff about these topics and give people a chance to practice, the better prepared they will be if an emergency arises. Sophie Diaz said, “The CPR training felt very informative and really prepared me. They kept reinforcing the procedures, and they made sure everyone understood what to do, as well as the risks and possible dangers of performing CPR.”

As always, it was great to have the kiosk staff together as a group. The kiosk staff enrichment program established in 2024 continues to be a wonderful way for our team to interact more regularly as a group and learn more about the Garden. Through interactive tours and activities, they develop stronger connections with the Garden itself as well as staff members from other departments.

CLEOMELLA

by Steve Bryant



Cleomella arborea, bladderpod, is one of the best pollinator shrubs for SoCal. In Armstrong (1915) and Jepson (1925), the plant was called *Isomeris arborea* and was in the Capparidaceae; in Munz (1974) and in Clarke (2007) it was still *Isomeris a.* and in the Capparaceae (updated spelling of the family name). The plant then had a brief fling with the name *Peritoma a.* in the Cleomaceae before recently becoming *Cleomella a.* (still in the Cleomaceae). Although I think of it as a desert plant, it is native to most of SoCal from the Channel Islands to Needles, including the high and low deserts at less than 4000'. There are even records from Claremont, but any herbarium vouchers would need to be from when Claremont was mostly a wilderness. I am suspicious of such records given the number of gardeners and botanists in the area. *C. arborea* may grow to over 7' tall, though in my garden usually it is less than neck high. My plants are in bloom much of the year,

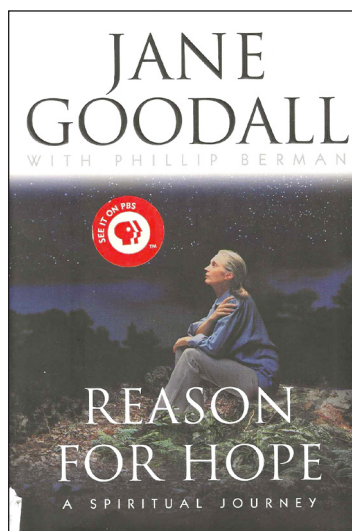
with neon-yellow flowers followed by small pods with pea-like seeds that volunteer easily. Bees (see pic) and hummingbirds are especially attracted to the flowers, and for the past three winters I've had a hummingbird nest near my row of *C. arborea*.



The plant is relatively fast growing and may bloom when less than 3' tall. It grows about as wide as tall, and the foliage is rather a grey shade of green. The foliage also has a scent, usually only noticeable when crushed, that some may find unpleasant; this may be an herbivore deterrent. *C. arborea* in my garden seems to be somewhat short-lived—my plants have usually lasted 10–12 years, but there are always volunteers to replace them. My older plants tend to look scraggly without pruning, especially in summer (see pic) when the plants are full of pods. *C. arborea* is easy to establish, tolerates poor soil, and requires little or no summer water (though grows faster with some). If I brush by plants with many ripe pods, the sound rather reminds me of a rattlesnake.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Barbara Quarton,
Volunteer Library Committee



Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey by Jane Goodall. Warner Books, New York, 1999. 280 pp.

Like many of my peers, I was familiar with Jane Goodall as a famous primatologist, but it wasn't until she passed away last year that I was stirred to pick up one of her many books. Jane Goodall (1934–2025) wrote *Reason for Hope* nearly thirty years ago, and I found its focus on her early life and the evolution of her personal beliefs to be an excellent foundation for understanding her life's work. She recounts her early years in England and her steadfast belief in her Christian faith, while also describing the ways in which Hitler and the Holocaust tested her. This candor about her faith suffuses her story, and we come to see Goodall's spiritual journey as fluid and lifelong rather than stagnant and intractable. She thinks and writes about the world in evolutionary terms: Goodall explicitly discusses chimp and human physical, cultural, and moral evolution and uses her musings to address the problem of human suffering. Thus, we start to grasp how she "began to think about our seemingly hopeless situation in a new way" (page 187). It would be interesting to trace how her hope in humanity blossomed further in her later years.

Reason for Hope is available for check-out now in the Volunteer Library. Enjoy!

CALBG VOLUNTEER EVENTS

OCTOBER–DECEMBER

October 2: Things That Go Bump in the Night, 5:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m., (sign-up in VicNet)

October 3: Things That Go Bump in the Night, 5:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m., (sign-up in VicNet)

October 4: First Sunday Family Friendly Bird Walk hosted by Pomona Valley Bird Alliance, 8:00 a.m., (registration required)

October 9: Yoga in the Garden, noon-time flow, noon, (registration required)

October 9: Volunteer Bake Sale Delivery, 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m., (sign-up in VicNet)

October 10: GNN Fall Plant Sale 8:00 a.m., (sign-up in VicNet)

October 11: GNN Fall Plant Sale 8:00 a.m., (sign-up in VicNet)

October 11: Silent Reading Club Meetup 10:00 a.m., (please RSVP)

October 14: Yoga in the Garden, morning flow, 9:30 a.m., (registration required)

October 14: Volunteer Enrichment Program with Maria Montag, President of Friends of California Condors presentation, “California Condors: Back from the Brink” at noon

October 17: Expressive Painting Class, Van Gogh-Esque Sunflowers, 10:00 a.m., (registration required)

October 18: Yoga in the Garden, morning flow, 9:30 a.m., (registration required)

October 20: Family Story Time, 9:00 a.m., (please RSVP)

October 24: Introduction to California Orchids Class, 1:00 p.m., (registration required)

October 27: Yoga in the Garden, evening flow, 6:00 p.m., (registration required)

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

November 1: First Sunday Family Friendly Bird Walk hosted by Pomona Valley Bird Alliance, 8:00 a.m., (registration required)

November 1: Yoga Workshop, Create Space in the Neck and Shoulders, 10:00 a.m., (registration required)

November 7: Art Class, Mixed Media Mushrooms and Moss, 10:00 a.m., (registration required)

November 8: Silent Reading Club Meetup, 10:00 a.m., (please RSVP)

November 12: Volunteer Organization Fundraiser, Dining Out at El Ranchero Restaurant, 11:30 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

November 14: Nerd Out in the Garden, 5:00 p.m., (sign-up VicNet)

November 17: Family Story Time, 9:00 a.m., (please RSVP)

November 26: Garden Closed

November 27: Green Friday

November 27: Yarn in the Yuccas: Fiber Arts Monthly Meetup, 1:30 p.m., (please RSVP)

December 4: Luminaria Nights Weekend I + Night Market at GNN, (sign-up in VicNet)

December 5: Luminaria Nights Weekend I, (sign-up in VicNet)

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

December 9: Volunteer Enrichment Program with Joy England, Conservation Botanist at CalBG, program on floristic tracking, field surveys and rare plant conservation, at noon

December 10: Volunteer Luncheon & Business Meeting, 11:30 a.m.

December 11: Luminaria Nights Weekend II, (sign-up in VicNet)

December 12: Luminaria Nights Weekend II, (sign-up in VicNet)

December 13: Silent Reading Club Meetup, 10:00 a.m., (please RSVP)

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

December 18: Luminaria Nights Weekend III, (sign-up in VicNet)

December 19: Luminaria Nights Weekend III, (sign-up in VicNet)

December 25: Garden Closed

January 1: Garden Closed



WE'LL SEE YOU AT

EL RANCHERO

RESTAURANT FOR OUR
CALBG VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION
FUNDRAISER DINING OUT

THURSDAY, NOV 12, 2026

984 WEST FOOTHILL BLVD
CLAREMONT, CA 91711
11:30AM - 9:00PM

