

# OVF NEWS



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Karen Andersen, Editor

## A Sneaky Summer Visitor

One of our Phase Reps, Christy Wilhelmi, was married in Ojai on June 4th. Christy has been a Phase Rep in Phase IV for several

years and I congratulate and wish her the very best as she enjoys this momentous step in her life. Little did she know, however, that upon her return, there was an uninvited guest in her garden plot who was anxious to greet her.

As she was gardening around 5:45 p.m. on June 14th, I unexpectedly heard a loud scream and a shout, "There's a rattlesnake in my garden!" Ray Vaczek and I kept a close watch over the snake to make sure it didn't get away while Christy sprinted up the pathway to call the officers at the Animal Control center. The brown snake had managed to coil itself up on the

ground inside the netting that was spread over Christy's small lemon tree in her independent plot, and was having difficulty releasing itself from that prison. Ray and I didn't want to get too close to the rattlesnake but we soon discovered that it wasn't a rattlesnake after all. The head was very small and its tail did not sport a rattle. I was a bit disappointed that the threat Christy first perceived was nonexistent.

When I lived in Africa as a child, I observed snakes on many occasions near our home whose colorful and expanding bodies posed much more of a potential threat. By the time the Animal Control officer finally

arrived 15 minutes later, the snake

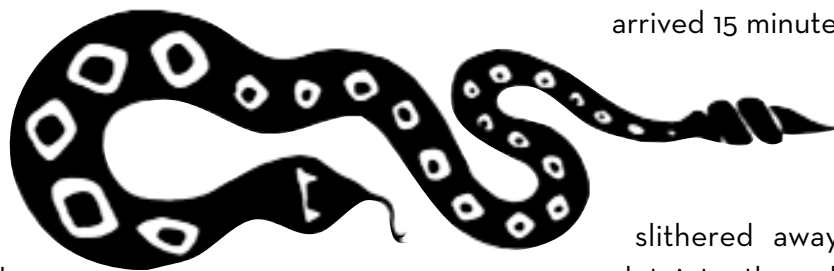
had managed to extricate itself from the netting and had

slithered away from Christy's plot into the adjacent field. We

were advised that the snake was most likely a gopher snake--- just the kind of reptile we want to have living at OVF! Should you observe a snake in your plot, the telephone number for the officers at Animal Control is 888 452-7381. You will then need to listen to the prompts, dial 1, then 4, and then 4 again to get a dispatcher.

I wish you a safe, warm and delightful summer as you grow and harvest your summer bounty!

Karen Andersen, Editor



## Saturday, August 13th

Community Workday 9:00 • Potluck 12:00 • General Meeting 1:00

# Gardenmaster's Report

## THEFTS IN THE GARDEN

It has come to my attention that several thefts have occurred at OVF. This is a serious matter at OVF. We all must respect the honor system under which we operate. Everyone's plot and Projects are to be considered personal property and should be treated as such by other members. We cannot build fences with locked gates on each plot so the honor system is how we must enjoy this garden. There is no excuse to take someone else's property and OVF rules call for termination for anyone who does it with no chance to ever come back as a member. The old rule is: IF YOU DID NOT GROW IT, DON'T PICK IT"

## THANKS FOR THE HELP

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members who come to Workdays throughout the year to help in keeping OVF a beautiful place to garden. It takes a lot of hard work but almost all the members do the jobs they are assigned to with a good attitude and do a good job. It is amazing how much maintenance there is on a 7 acre garden site. When new members come into the garden they are always impressed with the beauty and the view of OVF. This is achieved by the workday members and you should all be proud of your investment of labor to OVF. We could not exist without it.

## EXPANSION

If you only have 1 plot and would like to expand to 2 plots here are the rules. You must be a member in good standing for 1 year. Talk or leave a note for your Phase Rep. indicating you would like another plot, It is best to put it in writing. You can also leave a note with another Phase Rep. in a different phase if you like. Keep your plot looking nice as Phase Reps. use this as a guide to judge whether you can handle 2 plots. Existing members get priority over those on the waiting list.

## APHID COCKTAIL

Try this to keep those pesky aphids off your plants:

- 1 Tablespoon of canola oil
- 3 or 4 drops off dish soap
- Mix in 1 quart of water
- Spray on the plants



## TOMATOES

It looks like another good year for one of our favorite vegetables. I have not seen very much Early Blight so far. I am trying the 80% liquid kelp and 20% fish emulsion in a gallon of water and spraying it directly on the leaves. This was a recom-

mendation from the tomato expert at the seminar held earlier this year at the garden. Remember tomatoes do not like a lot of water, especially at OVF where we have cool nights and mornings.

## SHADING

Please be considerate when planting tall plants such as corn and beans on a trellis. Keep at least a 2 foot clearance from your neighbor's plot so as not to shade their garden. We will all enjoy our gardens here at OVF if we are good neighbors to one another.

---- Ed Mosman, Gardenmaster

## MYSTERIES OF TOMATO PRUNING SOLVED?

*Q. Please resolve a family dispute; must you prune suckers from tomato plants, or does it make any real difference?*

*A. It makes a big difference. And if you want the largest, tastiest crops, you'll give those suckers a break. Suckers are the late-flowering branches formed in the leaf axils of larger stems. Removing them makes plants narrow and open, and you will get larger, earlier, more shapely tomatoes.*

*BUT...you don't get as many of them and they may not be maximally delicious, because sucker branches make lots of leaves. The good thing about leaves is the energy they provide for making fruit and flavor (the more leaves in proportion to fruit, the better the fruit tastes), and they offer protection from sun-scald which affects radically pruned plants.*

Perhaps the best resolution is a compromise. Keep several of the earliest suckers, but remove those that form later in the season. Japanese tomato experts traditionally keep the first sucker on each plant, letting it grow long enough to be tied up with the main trunk. It is believed that this gives the plant extra strength.

*Note: This is a hotly debated issue among tomato growers. In the October News we'll include some of your solutions and opinions on what worked best for you as summer nears its end.*

## Quickest, Easiest Tomato Sauce Recipe Ever

Rinse, stem, and core tomatoes, then freeze them in one gallon zipper bags. When ready for sauce, simply hold each frozen tomato under a hot running tap to remove the skins. Then put them in a colander over a bowl and watch as they defrost and transform into a pile of rich sauce you can toss with pasta for a summery meal all year long.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPOSTING AT OVF

By Karl Lisovsky, Ph. II, F32, 34

Warren Miyashiro has always been the spiritual center of composting at OVF, and was its prime mover early on. Once shredding began, however, he took on the composting task, leaving the actual building of the piles to another crew.

## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS (LATE 80'S, EARLY 90'S)

RANDY ZIGLAR

OVF garden members dumped their garden waste somewhere at the side of the orchard. After lengthy discussions concerning the location of the new pile, the compost crew hauled it over to the compost area. The orchard had many more trees than we have now and we located the piles among the fruit trees. This created some controversy, but composting eventually took over a significant portion of the orchard area. The compost was chopped with machetes and shovels. Sometimes we received food waste from a restaurant or a food co-op, but this proved smelly and cumbersome and was eventually eliminated. We received horse manure and occasionally elephant manure was delivered to us by the owner of two elephants who catered to the movies. In those days, this was hard, dirty work. We rarely turned a compost pile and personified the piles by giving each one a name, something silly like "Nancy's cat" or "Rick's New Job".

## THE EARLY YEARS (1991 – 1994)

KARL LISOVSKY, DON ANDERLE

We tried to organize the operation by separating the piles into color-coded rows and then turned them at somewhat regular intervals. This was the first time we had access to our first shredder so the material was much easier to handle. Without Randy's leadership, the crews dwindled and composting ceased to be fun. We even quit naming the piles and struggled hard just to keep the program alive. Manure, which was stored at the top of the hill, had to be hauled down as we built the compost piles. The piles were small so it was more difficult to generate heat to process the compost. Each gardener was only allowed to take one wheelbarrow of compost per day.

## THE MIDDLE YEARS (1995 - 1997)

JUAN GONZÁLEZ

Several crucial changes occurred as Juan single handedly industrialized our composting effort. He achieved tremendous space economy by (a) turning piles frequently, which promoted faster rotting and volume reduction; and (b) combining piles as he turned them over and as the piles became larger more heat was generated and more rotting occurred. The shredding process kept improving which resulted in a better compost. At this point we were finally able to allow gardeners to take all the compost they wanted.



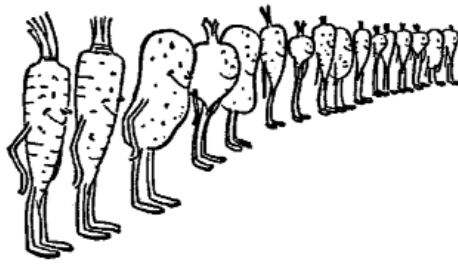
## THE LATER YEARS (1998 – PRESENT)

DEAN CLEAVERTON, RICHARD NORTMAN

The current composting method enjoys the best to date shredded/chipped product to work with. The long bays built with fence posts and plastic Presto bins have replaced the round haystack-like piles of yesteryear in an effectively systemized and highly planned routine which affords us the best space economy yet. We now have a manure pit in the orchard, kept full with the tractor's help, so we do not have to haul manure as we work. Perhaps the most important change in this latest phase is that we now maximize the use of our workday crews. Believe it or not, up until just a few years ago, composting was all done by just a handful of dedicated people. Now we have more material than ever, bigger and more powerful shredders, and best of all, many gardeners have a hand in making the compost.

As I look around today and think back 15 years ago to when we were hacking away at broccoli stalks with machetes, I wonder why we couldn't have seen into the future then, and why we couldn't have made all of these improvements more swiftly. I guess that's just the rate of change: slow and steady, but in our case, right on target. We were wonderfully naïve back then, eager and enthusiastic (good thing, too, what with how much more work was involved). Those early days with Randy were our defining years, when we established our commitment to making composting a part of OVF. I wouldn't want to return to those times now, but I'm sure glad I was there when it all began.

# THROW SOME PEPPERS ON THE BARBIE THIS SUMMER



One of the delights of summer is sharing an outdoor weekend BBQ with family and friends. Bell peppers are so versatile that they can be added to salads, stir-fries, sautés, soups and sauces. And who can resist a grilled sandwich with roasted peppers and eggplant hidden inside. After you've harvested some of your summer bell peppers, why not toss them on the grill and watch them sizzle along with your other veggies. You'll want to keep a close eye on the peppers so the flesh inside doesn't cook too much. With a pair of tongs, turn over the peppers frequently. Once each side has been charred, place them in a paper bag so they steam for about five minutes. Place the peppers on a cutting board and with a paring knife, remove the skin which should release easily. Then remove the stem and seeds, and slice each pepper to serve to your guests with your other grilled veggies.

To preserve the flavor, place the excess roasted peppers into a jar with olive oil, fresh basil and balsamic vinegar. When you want to put them in sandwiches later on for lunch, you're all set to go! Bell peppers are a great source of Vitamins A and C and potassium. They also contain phytochemicals which help fight cancer. Bon Appetit.

## BASIL QUICK FACTS

- Plant aromatic basil near tomatoes and peppers to repel insects
- Basil is the perfect herb to grow in containers
- Once growing, remove flowers buds and tops to keep plants growing full and lush
- Do not put fresh picked basil in the refrigerator, instead place stems in a vase with water and they will last for weeks. This works for tarragon, too.
- To chop basil, stack layered leaves and starting at the wide side roll into a cylinder (like a cigar!). Thinly slice with a sharp knife crosswise into slivered ribbons.
- Serve cut basil immediately so the cut surfaces do not oxidize, darkening the original color.

## Squeaky-Clean Pruners

Spray the edge of the blades with Lysol. When pruning a plant with disease problems, spray after each cut to avoid spreading the disease to the rest of the plant. A spray of nonstick cooking spray like Pam will also keep the rust and dirt off your tools.

## APRIL-JUNE WORKDAY SCHEDULE

### JULY

9 Sat 9-12 Work  
16 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.  
31 Sun 1-4 Work

### AUGUST

13 Sat 9-12 Work  
12 Potluck  
1 Gen. Mtg.  
28 Sun 1-4 Work

### SEPTEMBER

10 Sat 9-12 Work  
17 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.  
25 Sun 1-4 Work

### TRADESMAN

350

OVF is always in need of experienced tradesmen, in particular plumbers and carpenters. If you would like to earn your community hours doing what you like, please leave a note the Chair mailbox.

### GATE CLOSERS

370

Ensure that all the OVF gates are locked at sundown. Several weeks of gate closing shifts are available. Shifts start on Sunday and end the following Saturday. See the sign-up sheets in the large shed for weeks available or contact Elizabeth by leaving a note in the Gate Monitor slot in the small shed.

## Know Your Rules & Regs

Permanent plants must be five (5) feet tall or less at all times, with the exception of vines and climbing roses supported by a trellis that must not shade neighboring plot. *All Rules & Regs are posted on the bulletin board in the wheelbarrow shed, or consult your Phase Rep for a printed copy.*

*Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it*

