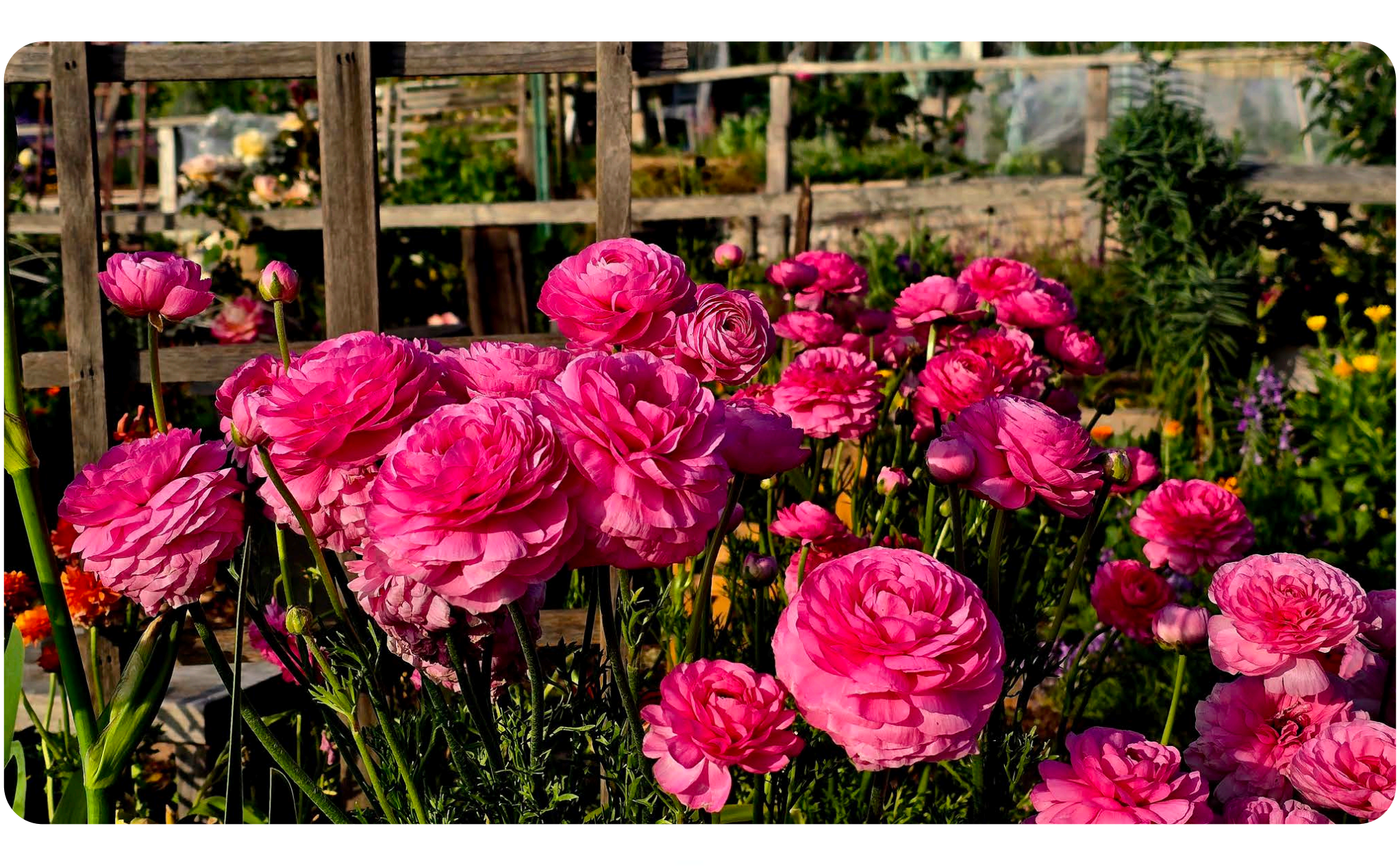
OVF NEWS

March/April 2026



President's Message

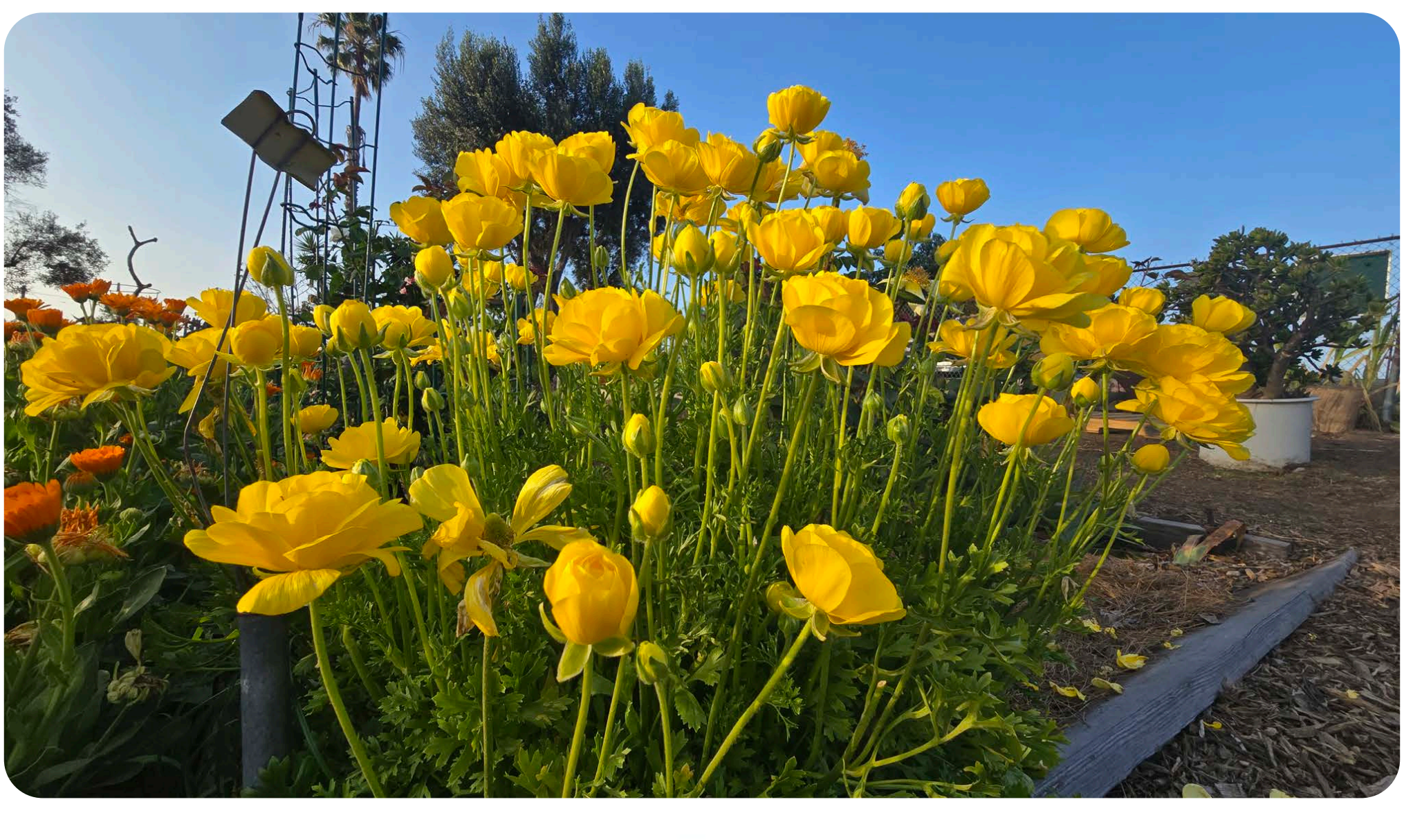
Hello fellow gardeners and members of the amazing community that is Ocean View Farms!

Welcome to springtime and another newsletter from our OVF team of writers. Again, I will start with gratitude for, literally, an Ocean View! It's election season at OVF, so time to review campaign statements and complete your online vote by April 10th (you can find your ballot via your member page). Also, be sure to come to our general meeting on Saturday April 11, for in-person voting (if you did not already vote online).

This April election meeting is mandatory as a membership based non-profit organization; the other is the December budget meeting. Get some community work done, bring a dish to share and vote together. Ask questions of the candidates and find out how you can be a candidate. Of course, you can nominate yourself and get to work and join the board. The outside community is calling us up, looking to participate in many different ways and we are getting plots cleaned and assigned to the next applicants, to become active gardeners as quickly as possible. We are always seeking volunteers to help out -- like you.

Thanks to all the phase reps, the orchard team, greenhouse volunteers, composters and shredders, and garden master for getting new projects in the works. It's a great time to work in your garden, meet some new friends, get your soil ready for tomatoes and pull out your favorite zucchini recipes.

See you digging and hauling around,
Shirley



Garden Master's Message

Hi everyone,

Let's talk workdays. The workdays continue to be incredibly productive, as well as a joyous expression of community in the garden. Members who start the workday as strangers can end the workday as friends. Communally working together fosters good fellowship.

And as with any community, there are rules and practices that keep the workdays running smoothly. To ensure the continued workday harmony, I'll identify a few issues that have come up so we can move forward without any confusion or consternation.

First, the workday is not a 'make your own adventure' – the workday task list is carefully prepared ahead of time and special workgroup leads are often brought in to manage the workday projects. Staffing of these projects is important and thus a member cannot sign in and then do whatever they feel like doing. Similarly, members who sign in are expected to actually do the assigned work. OVF Rule IV(2) provides "A member who signs in and does not perform assigned workday duties but then returns to sign out may have their membership terminated immediately." If a member cannot handle working with a group and within a communal system, they should take advantage of the many other opportunities to earn community hours. The workdays are a finely tuned community endeavor.

Second, yes, if there's a line it may take a while to sign everyone in at the very beginning of the workday. And yes, your workday clock will start when you sign in, not when you get in line. And no, you won't be given credit for the time you wait in line. That's the way the system works. If those few minutes of waiting in line without credit cause you pain, simply wait for half an hour to sign in. There's generally a line only in the very beginning of a workday.

Third, please come ready to work at the workday. Dress to work in the sun, bring gardening gloves and a water bottle if you'd like (filtered water is available). We can provide eye and ear protection for workers needing them for a specific project, but we can't provide gloves to everyone who shows up. (For example, there will likely be over fifty people at the next workday.) And if you're working anywhere outside the fence line at a workday, you must wear the fluorescent vest we provide you.

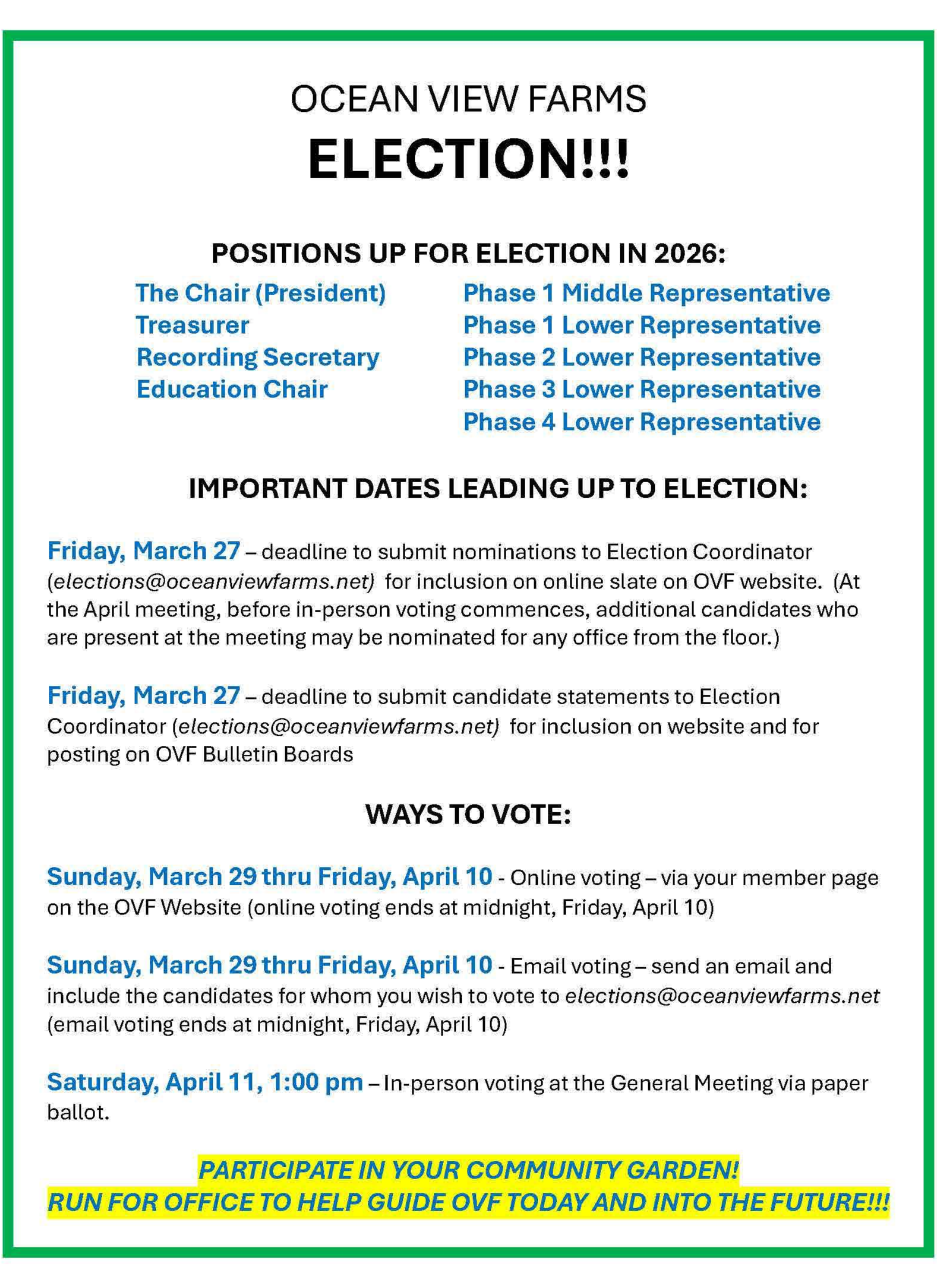
Finally, please remember that there are no paid employees at OVF. Everyone doing anything for the garden is a volunteer. Perhaps one of the dumbest things ever said by a member to a volunteer administrator is "you work for me." Friends, no one works for you. We volunteer to help the garden and the garden community. We volunteer to fill necessary roles in the administration of the garden. The volunteers are doing their part as best they can and often far beyond what should be expected from them. If a member treats them like an employee, and with anything other than the utmost courtesy — that member is fundamentally misunderstanding OVF. As always, I want to thank every member who does more than the minimum required hours, and who by their exceptional efforts make the garden the wonderful place that we all enjoy.

I look forward to seeing you at the workdays.

Les Hairrell
OVF Garden Master

OVF Calendar

Work Days	**General Meeting & In-Person Voting**	**Board Meeting**
April 11 Saturday 9 am - Noon April 26 Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm	April 11 1:00 pm General Meeting Potluck lunch at Noon	May 16, 2026 9:30 am



OCEAN VIEW FARMS
ELECTION!!!

POSITIONS UP FOR ELECTION IN 2026:

The Chair (President)	Phase 1 Middle Representative
Treasurer	Phase 1 Lower Representative
Recording Secretary	Phase 2 Lower Representative
Education Chair	Phase 3 Lower Representative
	Phase 4 Lower Representative

IMPORTANT DATES LEADING UP TO ELECTION:

Friday, March 27 – deadline to submit nominations to Election Coordinator (*elections@oceanviewfarms.net*) for inclusion on online slate on OVF website. (At the April meeting, before in-person voting commences, additional candidates who are present at the meeting may be nominated for any office from the floor.)

Friday, March 27 – deadline to submit candidate statements to Election Coordinator (*elections@oceanviewfarms.net*) for inclusion on website and for posting on OVF Bulletin Boards

WAYS TO VOTE:

Sunday, March 29 thru Friday, April 10 - Online voting – via your member page on the OVF Website (online voting ends at midnight, Friday, April 10)

Sunday, March 29 thru Friday, April 10 - Email voting – send an email and include the candidates for whom you wish to vote to *elections@oceanviewfarms.net* (email voting ends at midnight, Friday, April 10)

Saturday, April 11, 1:00 pm – In-person voting at the General Meeting via paper ballot.

PARTICIPATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN!
RUN FOR OFFICE TO HELP GUIDE OVF TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE!!!

OVF Membership Results

Hello 2026 Members!

The OVF renewal process is complete. Congratulations to the membership and good luck with your garden this year. Welcome to our new Members!.

Unfortunately, we did lose a few members through this process due to lack of completion of the required 12 hours of community service, or lack of payment.

Please plan early in the year to complete your hours. If you are having difficulty, please contact your phase rep as soon as possible to express your difficulty with completing hours. We want the garden to be a welcoming, supportive environment, and in order to do that we must function well. And the best way to do that is through planning and communication.

It is important that you have your correct profile information and that you check your hours periodically. If something is amiss with hours that you believe you have earned, contact the Garden Master, your phase rep and OVF membership so that we are aware and correct any errors.

I will say it again: Plan Early to complete your hours! The work days are posted on the garden dates and on the website. There are many other opportunities to earn hours. Don't wait til the last minute!

Thank you for your support of the Garden.
OVF Membership

Work Group: Dean Cleverdon, Phase Rep & Much More

Composting, the greenhouse, the water catchment cisterns, the bleachers and shade cloth in the big community area and Pine Tree gathering area… What they all have in common is Dean Cleverdon, who played a role in making each of these projects come to life, often as the "wingman" of then-OVF president Frank Harris.

Dean became an associate in the early 1990s and then a full-fledged OVF member in 1996. As an associate, he was already on the composting crew and continued to work there, along with other long-time OVF members Karl Lisovsky and Richard Nortman.

Sometime prior to 2006, Dean helped Frank, Richard, then-Garden Master Ed Mosman, Bob Gallion, and others transform the community meeting area from one shaded by beach umbrellas (where people in the back could not see what was happening in front) to an overhead shade cloth system using pulleys and ropes. Dean manually put up and took down the shade cloth for all OVF events until a new three-cloth system was installed in 2019 (also with the Dean's assistance).

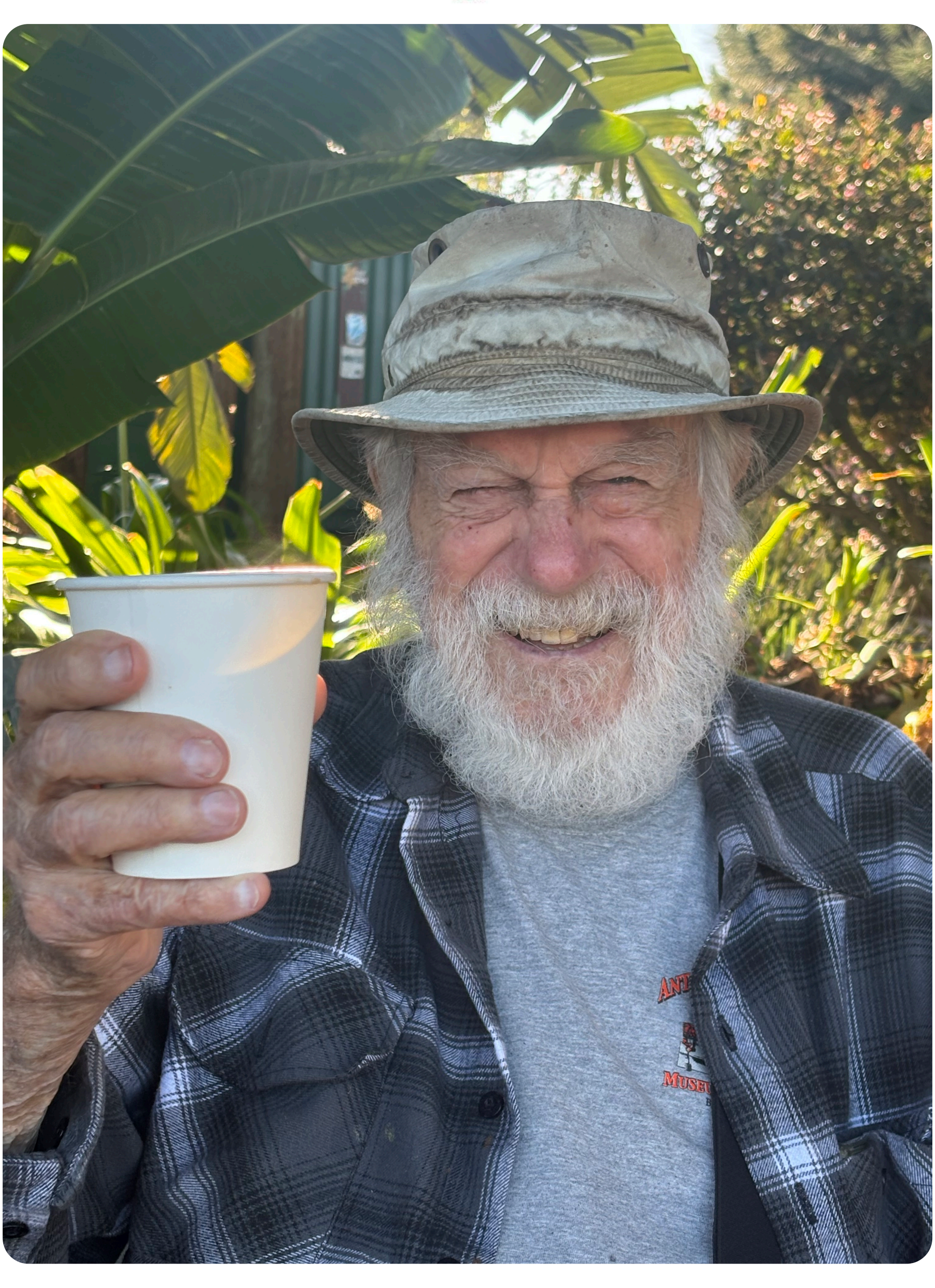
Another of Dean's contributions to OVF was being part of the small team that created today's composting system, arguably the "heart" of the garden. Dean, Karl, and Richard experimented with multiple solutions between 1999 and 2001. "We tried all sorts of designs, configurations and materials," says Dean. Wooden frames for the bins rotted and were replaced with structures made of T-bars with sturdy conduit laced through Presto panels (black plastic boards with circular holes). Richard had the idea to turn the bins from a vertical orientation (with the small side pointing West/East) to a horizontal orientation, which was a better design for moving the compost through its stages to completion. What you see at composting today is what they built 25 years ago. "They're still in great shape," says Dean. "But it was a work in progress to figure out what would be successful."

In 2012, partially funded by a grant from DeLoach Vineyards, the greenhouse was built and installed by a crew of members, including Dean. In 2016, he participated in the installation of the rain catchment barrels that sit behind the office shed (another idea of Frank's). The barrels catch the rainwater via a gutter on the roof; another team dug a trench to lay pipe that carried the water all the way to the two cisterns in the lower composting area.

In 2017, Dean worked on helping replace the bleachers and repair the long table/cabinets in the community meeting area, and in 2018, he was part of a crew installing the current set-up in the Pine Tree community area, including benches and electrical outlets as well as the Asian Bridge.

Dean is currently Phase Rep for Upper 1 and still lends a hand in numerous projects at OVF. He also contributes by doing community hour data entry (limited to workdays, general meetings, gourmet composting, shredding, composting, site maintenance) into the OVF Administrative computer system.

Oh, yeah… and Dean grows tomatoes.



Happy 99th Birthday to OVF's Richard Nortman

Richard Nortman

Richard Nortman — who has been at OVF for 26+ years —just celebrated his 99th birthday. He has a strong idea of what this garden is all about. “The real value of the garden isn’t in the dirt,” he says. “The real value is in the hearts of the members. This is a community and we’re going through a couple of tough patches of maintaining community. The solution? More community.”

That idea of community has fueled Richard’s greatest contributions to the garden. First, he noticed composting, which, at the time, involved piling garden waste into 6-foot haystacks. He watched OVF member Karl [Lisovsky] periodically manually move the enormous pile by himself, perched on scaffolding. “It was extraordinarily intensive labor,” Richard recalls. “I thought, that looks like it might be fun to throw that stuff around -- so I signed up to do it with him, and Karl became one of my teachers.”

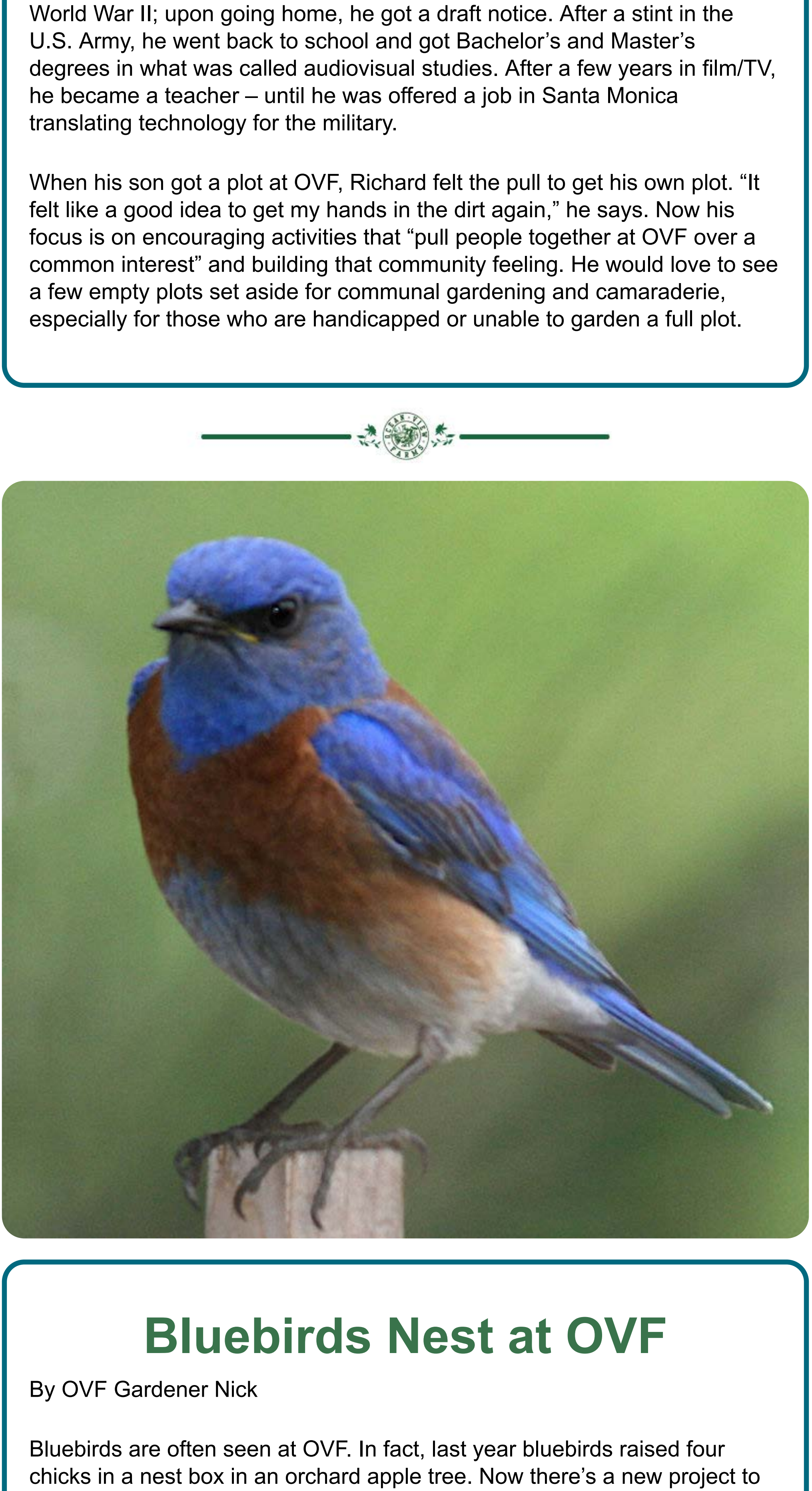
His only prior exposure to composting was from the dairy farms near his childhood home. “But I knew that the current system was difficult and dangerous.” In the evolution of composting to the current system, “we had differences of opinion,” adds Richard, but the new acquisition of the tractor “made it possible for us to do what we ended up doing.” The existing system went through three or four different iterations to get to its current configuration, which maximizes composting.

Next, Richard turned his attention to shredding. “When I joined the crew and was part of it for about a year, I believed it could be improved,” he says, adding that he “ended up organizing and modifying practices with shredding to make it more efficient and effective.”

The shredding system evolved “organically” to move the piles of weeds from where gardeners put them, through shredding and into the composting bins. The shredding crew is known as a very tight workgroup that always ends with a delicious breakfast (Richard brings the homemade bread). Later, Richard also helped to rebuild the manure pits. As he’s aged, he’s relied on a “a lot of really good associates and garden neighbors” to keep going.

Richard started gardening as a child, when his family left Milwaukee for a rural area where the family garden was an important source of nutrition. As a young man, he left school to join the Merchant Marine, where he spent World War II; upon going home, he got a draft notice. After a stint in the U.S. Army, he went back to school and got Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in what was called audiovisual studies. After a few years in film/TV, he became a teacher – until he was offered a job in Santa Monica translating technology for the military.

When his son got a plot at OVF, Richard felt the pull to get his own plot. “It felt like a good idea to get my hands in the dirt again,” he says. Now his focus is on encouraging activities that “pull people together at OVF over a common interest” and building that community feeling. He would love to see a few empty plots set aside for communal gardening and camaraderie, especially for those who are handicapped or unable to garden a full plot.



Bluebirds Nest at OVF

By OVF Gardener Nick

Bluebirds are often seen at OVF. In fact, last year bluebirds raised four chicks in a nest box in an orchard apple tree. Now there’s a new project to help their numbers grow. This year we placed three nest boxes around the garden: one each in Phases 1, 3, and 4.

The nesting season is beginning and runs through July; birds are already entering one of the boxes. In this citizen science project,we will monitor the boxes to follow nesting progress and to be alert for problems that might imperil the chicks.

Would you like to help? Monitors will visit the boxes as their schedule allows and report what they see to me. At the end of the season, I will report the results to state and national bird registries. If you are interested, leave a note in my mailbox, Plot G-1, in Upper Phase 1 near Gate #1. Or you can email me at BIRDS@LORDURE.COM. This is just for fun - no work credit will be given.

Opinions from the Garden

This is a new column, premiering today with ***Natural Farming by OVF gardener Peggy Caton*** *describing her style of gardening. We at the newsletter are happy that members are interested in contributing articles. If you have a snappy name for the new column, let us know. Likewise email ovfdeb@gmail.com if there is something you’d like to write. (All entries are subject to editing with author sign-off).*

Natural farming, rewilding, and chop-and-drop are some of the names for a type of farming and gardening that returns us to the way that nature fertilizes the soil and grows her plants, though with some modern twists adapted to the crops and conditions of our world.

I first learned about this process from garden members, one particularly advocated by Masanobu Fukuoka in his book, *The One-Straw Revolution*, while I was trying to find a way to continue gardening when I was becoming less and less mobile and couldn’t carry what I then considered garden waste to the compost pile nor could I lift or carry compost to my garden.

By necessity, I started digging up or chopping weeds and decayed plants and clippings and spreading them on my garden soil and letting them stay there or making little piles to prop up other plants. I learned gradually to spread a thin layer of compost over them and water that. The more I read about Mr. Fukuoka’s experimental process of discovering what works and how to keep the ecosystem of the soil intact by avoiding plowing and digging and how to spread seeds instead of transplants, I found out that it not only works for those with mobility and strength issues but also is better for the garden and actually cuts down the growth of weeds.

Though I am recovering from the situation that inspired me by necessity to turn to this method, I basically am keeping it as I continue to work to discover its mysteries in adaptation to our soil and climate. The only real problem I have had is with well-meaning folks that want my garden to look like horticulture exhibits at the county fair and think that I am just a messy, lazy gardener whose garden is an eyesore to would-be inspectors from outside. I would say to those who walk by and make comments, what about diversity? What about innovation? What about trying new methods? And, what about those who are differently abled, for whom this method could save their ability to garden?

I can say finally, I enjoy returning the harmless and beneficial plants that grow in my garden back to the very soil they grew out of. There is some sort of exquisite beauty in this cycle of nature.

(Not) For the Birds

By Rachel J.

Last issue, we talked about how to protect your plot and valuable gardening efforts from ground vermin like rats and gophers. This issue, we’re going to talk about threats from the air: how to protect your plants from birds.

Decoys

If you’re growing strawberries, consider buying some decoy rocks. These small rocks are painted to look like strawberries. When you first plant the rootstock, distribute the rocks among the plants. Birds will fly down to eat what they think are strawberries, but then get upset when they peck at them and find rock. When your real berries come in, the birds will continue (hopefully) to assume they’re just more rocks and leave your plants alone.

More generally, you can purchase decoy owls from garden stores to keep birds away from your other crops. Make sure to move your decoy around the plot, maybe even sharing with your neighbors, to give the illusion of the bird moving around.

Scarecrows

A traditional way to deter birds is to build an effigy in your plot to look like a person. Birds have an instinctual avoidance of humans, making scarecrows fairly effective. For best results, use clothes you’ve worn but not washed (so they smell like people), and arrange in a roughly human pose, with arms out. Don’t forget to give it a hat, and to tack the hat down so the ocean breeze doesn’t blow it away overnight.

If you don’t want to build a full scarecrow, look into garden spinners. These are brightly painted garden decorations meant to move in the breeze, like a pinwheel. When the wind blows, the sudden movement scares the birds away. Wind chimes can achieve the same effect, with sudden noise.

Bird Netting

Useful for all crops, you can find bird netting at hardware or garden stores, or available online. This is a fine mesh that lets sunlight and water through, but stymies birds. It can also thwart some ground vermin (though not all, gophers will tunnel under). Like your scarecrow’s hat, the bird netting will need to be tacked down so it does not blow away.

Buy the best quality bird netting you can. Cheap plastic netting will degrade quickly, contaminating the soil. Good quality netting, though it costs more, will last for many, many growing seasons.

Birds of Prey

Sometimes the best way to get rid of vermin is to invite a bigger predator inside. Ocean View Farms is currently trying to attract hawks, falcons, and other birds of prey to move into the area by installing hawk perches. You can see one of these in Phase 1.

These birds have little interest in fruits and vegetables; they’re more interested in hunting sparrows and crows. And they help control the rat and ground vermin population, too! If you’re interested in bringing more hawk perches to the garden, contact your Phase Rep.

Companion Planting: Three Sisters

By Rachel J.

“Companion planting” is a technique wherein plants which help each other are grown together. A popular and traditional type of companion planting is called Three Sisters: corn, beans, and squash grown in the same patch.

The corn provides the beans with a climbing trellis, while the beans fix nitrogen into the soil. The broad squash leaves provide ground cover to keep water in and weeds out.

Here’s how to successfully plant Three Sisters in your plot.

Corn

When buying corn seeds, keep height in mind. Some corn can grow quite tall and block your neighbor’s access to sun. To avoid running afoul of OVF’s rules on maximum plant height, look for short varieties (Sweet Casino, sold by Renee’s Garden, usually won’t grow taller than five feet). Don’t mix varieties, either. Cross-pollinating multiple varieties of corn may prevent your corn from thriving.

Soak your corn seeds in water for a day, or at least overnight, before you plant. The soaking helps the corn germinate. For best results, plant your corn by mid to late April. Otherwise, the late summer heat may prevent adequate pollination. Plant again in mid-July, so the temperatures will have come down by the time the corn is mature.

Beans

Let your corn grow a few inches tall before planting beans; this ensures the sprouting beans have something to grab onto as they grow.

You have a wide variety of beans to choose from, many varieties will do well in this kind of companion planting. Look specifically for pole or runner beans, which are the type of climbers you’re looking for.

Squash

Plant your squash about a week or two after the beans; you don’t want the squash leaves to accidentally shade out your vegetables. Squash grows broadly, so you only have to plant a few. If you plan to use much of your plot on Three Sisters, consider planting large squash like pumpkins. But if you only want to use a small area, gourds or zucchini do quite well.

Water

Water your crop regularly, especially when they are young or temperatures are exceptionally high.

Fourth Sister

Sunflowers are sometimes called the ‘Fourth Sister,’ and planted in a boundary around a Three Sisters patch. These plants give more climbing room for the beans and attract pollinators. If you have the room, consider adding a few sunflowers to the edges of your Three Sisters.

Recipes from the Garden: Easy Quiche

Last newsletter featured a recipe for a French galette - this recipe is similar in that it combines vegetables and cheese in a savory tart. It’s perfect for a Sunday brunch but can also be a main dish. Feel free to add any leafy green, leeks, or other gifts from the garden.

Ingredients

Savory pie crust (homemade or store bought)
2 beaten eggs
1 Tablespoon flour
1/2 cup of milk
8 ounces of Swiss cheese, grated
1/3 cup chopped green onions
1/2 cup mayonnaise (or substitute yoghurt)
Seasonal vegetable(s) of choice - Spinach, Swiss chard, broccoli, mushrooms are some favorites

Process

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees Fahrenheit.

Mix the eggs, flour, milk and mayo/yoghurt until well blended. Add the garden ingredients desired. If you want a protein boost, you can add bacon, tuna, or crab for example.

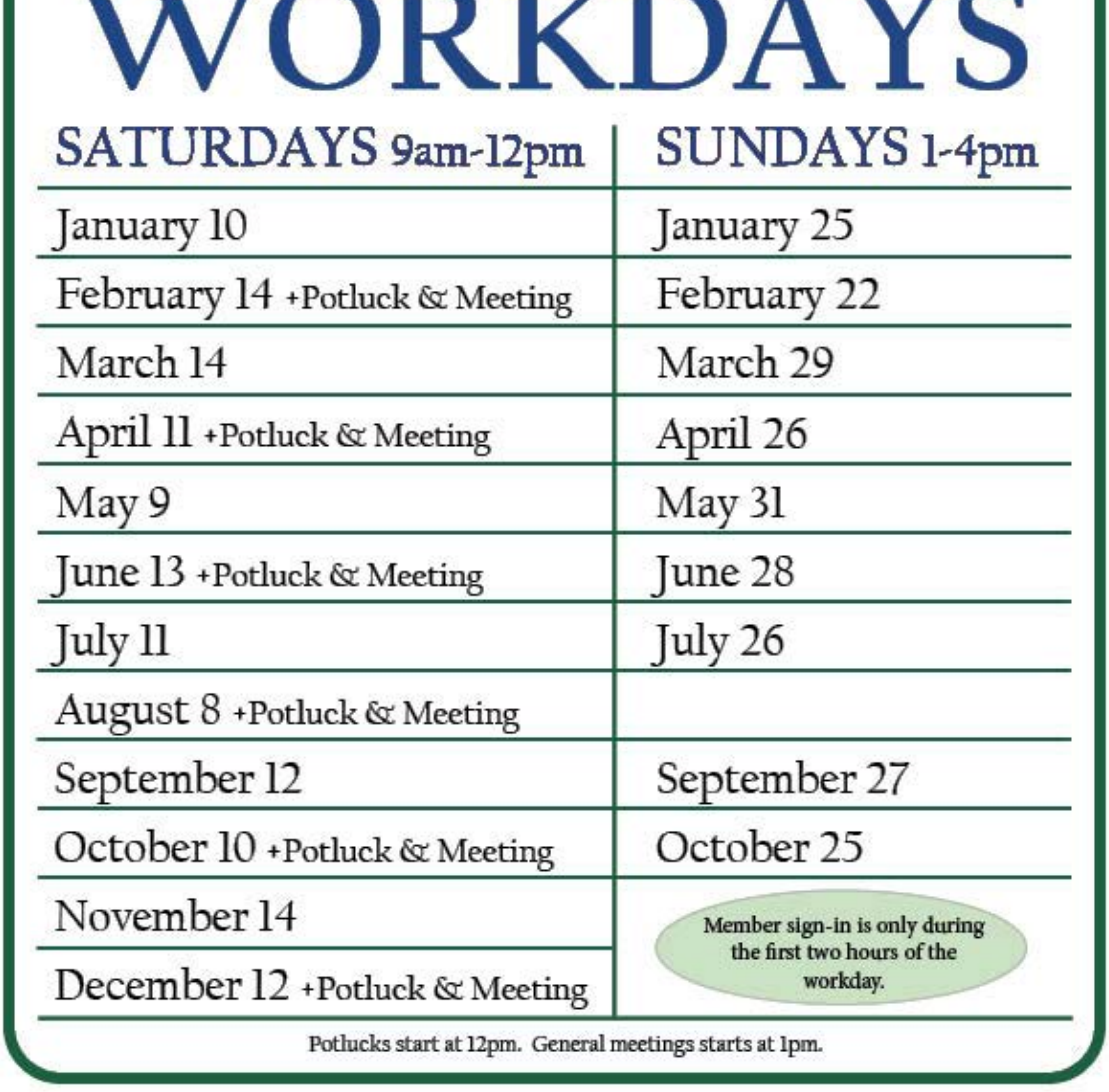
Add the grated Swiss cheese and green onions. Mix well and pour all the ingredients in the pastry shell.

Bake at 350 for 40 to 45 minutes.
That’s it!

Ocean View Farms

2026

WORKDAYS



WORKDAYS

SATURDAYS 9am-12pm	SUNDAYS 1-4pm
January 10	January 25
February 14 +Potluck & Meeting	February 22
March 14	March 29
April 11 +Potluck & Meeting	April 26
May 9	May 31
June 13 +Potluck & Meeting	June 28
July 11	July 26
August 8 +Potluck & Meeting	
September 12	September 27
October 10 +Potluck & Meeting	October 25
November 14	Member sign-in is only during the first two hours of the workday.
December 12 +Potluck & Meeting	

Potlucks start at 12pm. General meetings starts at 1pm.

Independent Project Rules Change

At the January OVF Board meeting, the Board revised the Rules for Independent Projects to provide that members will no longer receive three community hours for the privilege of being assigned an IP. The duties and responsibilities of maintaining an IP remain the same.

Member Feedback / Submissions

If you have any feedback or comments on the newsletter, please contact OVF Education Chair Debra Kaufman at ovfdeb@gmail.com. Back issues of this and all other newsletters can be found on the OVF website.

Land Acknowledgement

Ocean View Farms recognizes that we garden on land originally and currently inhabited by the Chumash, Kizh, Tongva, and Serrano peoples. We respect them as the first caretakers of this land, with gratitude for their wisdom and skills.

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