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OVF NEWS

July/August 2026

Garden Master's Message

Hi everyone,

I've been away from the garden for a time. My wife and I visited the Philippines in June, and I returned with real proof of life in OVF's better now and back in the garden.

I very much appreciate all the kind thoughts I received from members and would like to thank the people who stepped up to cover the workdays and other garden operations in my absence.

In the next month, I've scheduled more Garden Master office hours, so members can stop by and talk with me about the garden. Please see the office hours schedule below for details.

We continue to move forward as a garden and a community. The many projects and improvements will continue. OVF will not stop growing.

See you in the garden.

Leo Harnet
OVF Garden Master

President's Message

Hello friends and gardeners!

I just finished making 30 jars of tomato sauce with my OVF grown tomatoes, garlic, and basil — so yeah, it's all worth it! I hope you've had a bumper crop of your own, and that you're enjoying the last days of summer zucchini and recipes.

Speaking of which, we couldn't do this, or have this place, without each other. Take a moment to feel gratitude for a community of gardeners, neighbors, and friends who show up to share knowledge, tools, and an amazing compost made by dedicated composters, shredders, manure and mulch delivery organizers. We're so lucky, and your participation is what makes this place thrive. If you haven't volunteered, please jump on an important role, such as the tasks below.

Volunteer Opportunity: Community Outreach Liaison
Starting in September, we're excited to begin offering monthly "open garden" days to the public, so neighbors can see what we're growing. We're looking for a volunteer to organize and coordinate these events by reaching out to our list of organizations, getting flyers into the right places, and helping spread the word about the garden's mission.

Contact me if you're the best person for this project. We should all be proud of what we do here, and sharing this beautiful space with the community is genuinely fun.

As the open houses approach, be aware that visitors are coming! Thank you for helping our space shine by keeping the garden looking its best. Pick up trash you see, and be ready to raise someone else's hand when you can about one of our new members, filling, below.

A Note on Water Use
The cost of water in June was over $5,300 — yikes! Please be extra careful with watering this month, and let the garden master know if you have a leak or unattended. This matters not just for our budget, but for the precious resource itself. Report those leaks immediately and get help ASAP if water at the rows it needed.

Questions or Ideas?
If you have questions about OVF, you might find your questions answered on the website. But also feel free to reach out by email at president@ovf.com or asiceo@gardenmasterfarm.net. I'll do my best to answer.

If you'd like to address the membership at a general meeting, check in with the meeting chair before the meeting starts.

Also, all members are welcome at board meetings. If there's something you'd like the board to review, please discuss it with your phone representative or bring it up at a meeting. Board meeting minutes describe whether it goes on the agenda for discussion or a vote, or whether it needs some clear communication.

Here's a great summer and see you at our meeting on August 8 at 1pm.

Sincerely,
Shirley
OVF President

OVF Calendar

Work Days	General Meeting	Native Plant Club Meeting
Aug. 8 (Saturday) at 9:00 - Noon Sept. 12 (Saturday) at 9:00 - Noon	August 8 1:00 pm General Meeting Pollack Sunset Hall	Aug. 2 - 1:00 pm Sept. 6 - 1:00 pm

Garden Master Office Hours
Aug. 4 - 9:00am Aug. 11 - noon Aug.18 - 5pm Aug.21 - 8am Aug.25 - 9am

Xerces Awards Pollinator Kits

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting wildlife, has awarded our Native Plant Club with one of the recipients of two of their Habitat Kits. Each kit, which has a retail value of $1,200, consists of 128 native plants that will be planted within the Pollinator Garden, including 64 plugs, 32 quart-size plants, and 32 gallon-sized trees, and in the same area along Cantinela between the fence line and the public walkway, to establish an urban pollinator corridor.

OVF Garden Master Leo Harnet has been the point person for the award. The Native Plant Club will help with plant layout and general guidance on plant maintenance.

The Xerces Habitat Kit program is intended to provide "climate-smart native plants to project partners who are willing to provide the time, labor, and land to develop pollinator habitats." As of now, the Society has provided almost 1,000 Habitat Kits to organizations across the country. Kits are also available to "working lands, public lands, tribal lands, and conservation-working lands recovering from wildfires, with landowner or land manager participation … [including] farms, ranches, forest land, post-wildfire recovery areas, urban farms or gardens, city parks, school gardens, or other public areas."

According to the Xerces website, OVF will be able to pick up the two Kits in Xerces Society-branded pickup trucks. The Society will also provide OVF with best time to plant California native plants. "If plugs and the plants in kits are chosen" based on monarch restoring observations compiled from iNaturalist, "we will provide a list of pollinator-friendly California native plants are preferred by monarchs." Additional factors, such as availability, climate adaptiveness, regional and site suitability and general pollinator attractiveness, were also taken into consideration. All plant species in the habitat kits are native to California.

Solutions for Powdery Mildew

From Dean Clewendon

Powdery mildew, which looks like the plant has been dusted with white powder, is a superficial fungal disease that thrives in poorly ventilated environmental conditions. Humidity: plant an circulation (sometimes their plants being too close to other plants) and dry hot days.

Our typical coastal morning gloom has kept powdery mildew at bay, but I thought I'd share a few ideas for those who have had a bad experience with it. Florida gardener and pro tip user Kim Kim shared suggestions on dealing with it. This suggestion was to mix one teaspoon of Potassium Bicarbonate (not Sodium Bicarbonate or baking soda) with 3 gallon of water and one half teaspoon of Castile soap (such as Dr. Bronner's) with an optional addition to one teaspoon of vegetable oil and stir as a spreader.

After making this mixture I sprayed my plants and it completely killed the powdery mildew on the leaves. Kim Kim also

I encourage you to watch this 1-minute video from gardener Sharone McGarve. A Florida based horticulturist, whose video includes information on how to identify powdery mildew. She has a fun, fast paced and Instagram level of production.

She also mentioned some things that I've seen recommended on other websites but that are harmful. For example, she notes that it is a very bad idea to use a hose to blast the powdery mildew off the plant because the spores will be monitored all right long. That exposes them to an ideal spore from a range of diseases including Late Blight. And our overcast mornings will extend the time the leaves remain wet.

She also recommends pruning off excess foliage to allow for more air circulation, which helps dry off the leaves. We all love seeing lush, beautiful foliage on our plants. But if you're growing food (tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, etc.) the fungal disease can destroy the entire crop and no longer due to poor air circulation, increasing the risk of disease.

Another thing to think about: leaves are the solar panels that collect sunlight which gives the plant the energy to pump water and nutrients out of the soil. If a leaf is shaded by another leaf, then it cannot do its job — in fact, all it is doing is using energy from the plant to keep the leaf alive without actually providing back in return. The solution is to remove shaded leaves for the health and benefit of the plant.

Meet a New OVF Gardener…

If you're in Phase 1 Lower, you may have noticed a plot that has been painstakingly amended to transform OVF's notoriously sandy soil into rich loam.

The gardener behind this transformation is Maria, whose friend Diane, in Phase 2, encouraged her to join the wait list for a plot. At the end of 2025, his name rose to the top of the list and he became an OVF gardener. The wait had been so long that when he got the call that he had a plot, he had almost forgotten he was on the list. Then he got excited. Diane, who is a Master Gardener, helped him and Maria have had a ball their plots and look out of their plots.

Then he stuck a shovel in the dirt and realized, as he puts it, that it was "basically sand." Many new to the garden have had the same thing happen and entirely new to gardening. Growing up in Sri Lanka, he watched his grandmother plant, water and care for fruit trees.

Now he had the challenge of his first garden — with soil he knew was far from ideal. He began his research. "My neighbors kept saying I might as telling me what to do," he says. I started taking wheelbarrows of compost and mulch from the pile at the OVF Greenhouse and, with the help of friends, returning a few weeks later and and then to plant trees and vegetables. (This inspired him to join the composting crew.)

Five years of compost later, one of the neighbors suggested that he put much on top of the compost layers, which he did. Then came the coconut husks to hold water, recommended by his compost crew member. Maria added the coir to a layer of gourmet compost and watered and planted.

Mixing says the process is still ongoing. He had thought about installing a drip system, but he's been so busy with work and family that he's waited them. And now he has some premium soil to boot!

After months of prepping the soil, he divided it into three growing areas via planting stones, and planted marigolds to attract pollinators and repel pests. He also planted tomatoes, cucumbers, and a variety of herbs. He has bought as seedlings from the OVF Greenhouse sale, and later planted the second area with carrots and beets. After losing some plants to rabbits, he added a fence. He has also, in the third area, experimented with a few fall planting area, using it as ground cover against weeds.

He also bought a soil test kit to see what nutrients and minerals might be missing and found it's low on nitrogen, so the soil amendment process continues.

His favorite thing about the garden? "Breaking out of a bunch into tiers a bunch of people who are all working on the same thing. It's an enjoyable part is getting outdoors and running into people and chatting."

Note: If you would like to nominate yourself or another OVF gardener for a profile, contact the editor Deidre Kaufman at ovfeds@gmail.com

Tips on Saving Water

By Rachel J.

Summer is here, and that means heat. And heat means more gardeners wanting to water their plots more frequently. Water, however, can get pricey — it's one of OVF's biggest expenses. Here are some tips to keep your plants healthy and hydrated while watering responsibly.

Watch Where Your Water
Spraying water directly onto plant leaves rarely helps, usually the water just evaporates. In the worst case, your plant's leaves will scorch in the hot sun. Instead, aim the water at the base of the plant, using a watering can, watering technique, and the hose at your plants' roots. And remember that OVF prohibits unattended running hoses or timers on hoses.

Also, keep an eye out for leaky hoses or damaged pipes. These should be reported to your Phase Rep as soon as possible.

Daytime Watering
We all have busy schedules and can't always make it to the garden during ideal watering times. But when you can, try to water your plants in the morning or while the temperatures are still cool. Watering during the hottest part of the day also contributes to the evaporation problem mentioned above.

Mulch
A thin layer of mulch helps prevent water from evaporating off the soil. The mulch keeps the water in the soil and also prevents the soil from heating up too much. You can reduce your plants' watering needs by up to two-thirds by laying down mulch! Mulch is freely provided at the far end of the parking lot. Have Cute Fun!

Drought Resistant and Native Plants
Some of our plots are naturally drought-hardy and wet, meaning our native plants do well with just a little water. And many of our gardeners have developed their own varieties of drought-resistant fruits, vegetables, flowers, and herbs. When planning your next planting, keep in mind the water requirements of what you're thinking of growing, and look for drought resistant varieties.

Cities
Cities is was getting my orientation after joining OVF, I wondered why so many plots seemed to be growing… some bottles. They seemed to be a little out of place in a community garden. Well, I found out that they are actually a tool for water conservation. Cities are filled with water and then placed upside down in the soil. For a while, you can fill an empty wine bottle and then use that water to water the plant. Cities are a great way to water your plants, and you can only make it to your plot occasionally.

You can purchase cities online, and many garden stores sell them, sometimes calling them "irrigation spikes" instead. They are fragile, so handle with care.

Garlic Dill Pickles

By Rachel J.

Last month, there was an article on best practices of growing cucumbers. As your cucumbers ripen, here's a recipe to turn them into delicious pickles.

I used to make these pickles before going camping with a group of friends, and they were always gone by the end of the trip. After a long day of hiking and outdoor activity, these pickles are better than Gatorade.

Do note that these pickles are not shelf-stable; they belong in the fridge. They will last about two weeks, if they don't disappear. That's just some perfect normal variation, your pickles will get eaten!

Ingredients

4-6 Persian cucumbers
1 whole bulb of garlic
1 bunch dill sprigs
1 Tbsp kosher salt
1 tsp granulated sugar
1 tsp black pepper
1 cup water

Also needed: 2 pint Mason or Ball glass jars with lids.

Process
Heat the vinegar, water, salt, and sugar gently on the stove, until the sugar and salt has dissolved. Let cool.

While the brine cools, slice the cucumbers as you prefer, in spears, hamburger rounds, or sandwich slices. Peel the cloves of garlic.

Pack your jars with cucumber slices, along with about 3-4 cloves of garlic and a few sprigs of dill per cucumber. Gently pour the brine into the jars and then seal.

Store in the fridge, they'll be ready to eat in about three days. They stay good for about two months.

Alternate Recipe
One thing I've been able to grow consistently in my plot are bumpy and bland. And bland these vegetables pickles very well, either separately or together. Like the dill pickles above, keep these in the fridge.

Ingredients
1 lb (~1.2 lb) beets and/or turnips
1 Tbsp kosher salt
2 tsp sugar
2 tsp whole peppercorns
1 bay leaf (optional)
1 cup water

Process
Heat the vinegar, water, salt, sugar, and pickling spices gently on the stove, until the sugar and salt has dissolved. Let cool.

Trim the turnips and beets. If using beets, peel them. Slice the roots, whole, hot cool, and peel. Cut turnips and beets into bite-size pieces, about 1 inch cubes.

Pack the vegetables into a glass canning jar, then fill with cooled brine. Store in the fridge for 3 days before eating.

Tip: If you prefer beets this way, you can let boiled, peeled eggs marinate in the brine for a day or two. The egg will take on a pleasant pink color and add that sweet and salt-tasty dimension. Cut eggs in half.

Tim the turnips and beets, if using them, and pickle them into the jars. Add whole, lot cool, and peel. Cut turnips and beets into bite-size pieces, about 1 inch cubes.

Pack the vegetables into a glass canning jar, then fill with cooled brine. Store in the fridge for 3 days before eating.

Tip: If you prefer beets this way, you can let boiled, peeled eggs marinate in the brine for a day or two. The egg will take on a pleasant pink color and add that sweet and salt-tasty dimension. Cut eggs in half.

sweetness.

Ocean View Farms

2026 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.

Educational Opportunities

What kinds of programming and classes would you like to see at OVF? Topics under consideration include native plant gardening, food preservation, organic pest control, and specific plant cultivation. Classes on worm composting and new member plot gardening are already scheduled for the future.

If you have a special request for a class, please email Debra at ovfdeb@gmail.com. If you have a special area of expertise and would like to teach a class, also let Debra know.

Independent Project Rules Change

In case you missed the news, at the January 2026 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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