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OVF NEWS

September/October 2026

Garden Master's Message

Hi everyone,

I had intended this message to focus on water conservation and community focus, but breaking news intervenes.

The Shredder:

Thirty years ago this month, the OVF Garden Master and compost leads spent a weekend in the rain building the compost bins at the Ocean View Community garden. By 1998-year end, the newly purchased shredder was up and running.

And for the last 28 years, the OVF shredding workgroup has been using that same shredding machine every Tuesday morning to chip up thousands of pounds of tree trimmings, shrubs, and hedges. The OVF compost workgroup has used the shredded green it building the compost piles. About a decade ago the shredder's engine had to be replaced, but otherwise the shredder has been in continuous operation.

Until this week, when the shredder broke. Without the shredder, the compost workgroup cannot build the compost piles, and without shredding, the Saturday composting workgroup has been idled. Effective immediately.

This shutdown will impact members in at least three ways: (1) when we open, community hours will be served by shredding or composting, (2) the Saturday composting workgroup will be idled for the foreseeable future, (3) there is no reason for members to bring kitchen scraps or other green materials to the compost area. Let me repeat that last point – **please stop bringing kitchen scraps to the compost area**. Without the Saturday composting, your kitchen scraps will just rot in the pile and cause a mess.

The fact that the shredding machine has been in active weekly operation for 30 years is a testament to the talent and dedication of the OVF members who operate and maintain the machinery. They're currently looking into the feasibility of repairing the shredder, but replacing the machine is best and the shredding and composting workgroups are back in operation.

Water Conservation Conference:

We all have a composting interest in water conservation and can address saving water at OVF in many levels, from individual conservation and watering practices to overall water infrastructure repairs and upgrades. A conference is scheduled for Saturday, November 21 from 9:00 – 1:00pm (after the meeting) to kept a discussion going and to discuss ways the membership can get involved in conserving water at OVF.

There will be a review of planned water infrastructure projects and improvements, and there will be training provided to members who want to read their water meters. Water use at OVF is tracked by the Ventura County and Fillmore, but more water we save, isn't encouraging us to consider getting involved in plumbing repairs. Community focus are served for plumbing repair work and it's done on our own time and dime.

Annual Community Hours:

As the weather cools and the predicted super El Niño hasn't yet arrived, it's a good time to plan how to spend any remaining community hours needed by the end of year.

There are only four workdays left this year (10/10, 10/25, 11/14, and 12/12) and we need to get the work done. Members who haven't logged in hrs for the year, this Sunday workday in November and/or participation in the October and December workdays are followed by a picture and description of what you did in the garden, and/or a photo of you in the composting area in exchange for carbon for hours. In the year 2025-2026 we have logged in 1,000 hours of community work. Let's make it even more easy to earn hours OVF, some members have no longer to travel to get to this area, so please check with your phase rep or me.

We also have multiple ongoing and planned projects in the garden that need help, including a complete garden wide weed abatement, so if you have a specialty or interest in a project, please let me know, and I'll put you in touch with the project contact me. Finally, there are projects that could use special equipment or tools and skill/expertise, so if you have special talents that OVF could use, please let me know.

Project Updates:

The Eagle Scout project to install two Red Hot Poker trees is completed. Please see the photo below which shows of the Red Hot Poker in the Ocean View Garden.

The new shaded trail area under the pitta pine next to the main reading area has been leveled and a wood chip mulch put down. Work in this area continues.

The new Gate 1 seating area has moved forward with the recent installation of a wooden bench.

The gourmet compost remedial is nearing completion, and manure outgoing should resume soon.

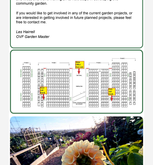
Finally, the Kaptchuk beds for the new pollinator garden have been dug out, and the new pollinator plants can be added to complete the community garden.

If you would like to get involved in any of the current garden projects, or are interested in getting involved in future planned projects, please feel free to contact me.

Lou Harrell
OVF Garden Master

OVF Calendar

Work Days Oct 10, 8am 9:00am - Noon Oct. 25 (Sun.) at 8:00 am Nov. 14 (Sat.) at 9:00am Dec. 12 (Sat.) at 9:00am - Noon	**General Meetings** Sunday, October 11 December 13 - Open General Meeting Tuesday, November 24		**Greenhouse Work Days** October 2 December 3 January 7, 2026
	Board Meeting Nov 21 - 9:30 am		**Native Plant Club Meeting** October 4 November 1 December 6 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Garden Master Office Hours Oct 5, 8am Oct 19, 8pm Oct 21, 10am Oct 21, 4pm	**OVF Open Houses** October 18 November 15 December 20 3:00 - 5:30 pm		



OVF Launches Open House

On Friday, September 18, Ocean View Farms opened its gates to all comers, the fruits of a long-planned effort to reach out to the public with the goal of OVF's being a more well-known community asset. Our president Shirley Ventrella became increasingly excited at the prospect of showing off our beautiful garden to people who had never been to OVF. Board member, Dick Guggenheim, helped fashion the script — organizing our mission statement into a form suitable for the public and well-rehearsed.

Prior to opening the gates for the first open house, member Molly Lagan organized a photo-taking session with the OVF Board members and OVF volunteers who were on the garden during the scheduled opening. Members Catherine Hess and Debra Kaufman blanketed the community and information about the open house.

On the day of the event, as people arrived, they signed in at the main gate and received a map of the garden and a flyer with a list of the attractions, including the shredding, composting and gourmet composting areas. Visitors could also engage in a nature-related crafts activity of flower pressing and bird feeder construction. Visitors could also purchase Ocean View Community Garden Rock Lapel, and enjoy some refreshments in the meeting area as well as peruse the Chef T-shirts for sale. Docents would also bring visitors to regular garden tours throughout the afternoon and early evening.

The planning resulted in a successful event, the information gained is already being used to improve the upcoming Open House, October 18, November 20 and December 18. The first change is an expansion of hours beginning hours will start at 3:00 and closing hours will continue until 5:30 pm.

Stay tuned if you'd like to get involved in a future open house. The topic will be addressed in upcoming October 11 General Meeting. For more information, email Shirley Ventrella at wsoch47@gmail.com.

Water Conservation Conference

November 14, 1:00pm

All members are invited to the first OVF water conservation conference, which will explore the various water saving and conservation efforts at OVF (all discussion would be improve our water usage).

Topics will include:

- *Portable Leak Tracker*: Members interested in becoming part of the leak tracker group will receive an orientation on the gadget, how repair process and training in how to make repairs. Community hours will be served by this group, so it's important that we have members who are not already part of the plumbing workgroup.
- *Rainwater Projects*: OVF has various rainwater capture and storage devices in need of repair and upgrade. Members interested in getting involved in OVF's efforts to capture rainwater, especially anyone with experience in rainwater installation and/or construction, are encouraged to attend.
- *Upgrades Lead Reporting*: There will be a discussion to explore ways to bring greater efficiency to the lead reporting system. The time delay between the start of a leak, the reporting of a leak and the fixing of a leak represents a loss of water and OVF funds.

Water Usage Review

By: OVF Treasurer Mary Sherman

At OVF, our water bills set up a large part of the annual OVF budget in 2026. A review of the expenditures YTD is in order.

As we've noted before, responsible use of water and gardening with water conservation principles in mind, are the most important and effective ongoing operations. We need to use water accordingly in our gardens, and we need to work on reducing water leaks.

Many of you have noted and reported water leaks at the hose bibs near your phase's gardening area. Unfortunately, these leaks are not the only leaks we have to address in the plumbing infrastructure and that pulses the farm in the plumbing that shaft in the shed. Our plumbing team will respond to these reports ASAP.

Another way we maintain vigilance is that every scheduled Monday morning, the Treasurer reads the water meter and sets up the water bill payment for the plumbing team.

2026 – we used just over 3,000 HCF (Hundred Cubic Feet) at cost of about $22,000

2025 - used just over 3,000 HCF at cost of about $30,000

2024 - used just over 2,900 HCF at cost of about $22,000

The figure for 2026 means that, in two years, our consumption from 2024 HCF to 3000 HCF, and cost has increased from $22K to $30K!

To depict that visually, see HCF usage in the chart below, which means that, so far for 2026, we've already used over 2 million gallons of water in the garden.

Additionally, a non-profit, we are assessed a reduced water usage fee based on our agreement with the Fillmore Water Department. We are assessed, from an average cost per HCF of $8.88 in 2024, $10.13 in 2025, and now $10.65 in 2026.

The OVF Rules on Water

The OVF Rules address water use and conservation as follows:

Section 3110: Water and Watering

Overhead watering is prohibited. Plants should be watered close to the roots and only when necessary. No unattended watering is permitted. Do not water neighbors' plants without express permission or request from that neighbor. Water only your own plot and common areas. Water cannot be underutilized in their plots or independent projects.

The water times are buried on the side of the pathways, normally in a straight line between the hose connections, and can be purchased or broken if hit. In the event a water line is broken, the member is responsible for consequently turning off the valve that feeds that water line.

The main water valves are located at the south end of the main walkway, between the Greenhouse and the Tool Shed. Water flows from the Tool Shed to the greenhouse and produces separating Phase II and Phase III. A valve for Phase III is located outside Gate #2 adjacent to the parking area in Phase I. Phase I is located in the Tool Shed. Phase I is the only Phase that has a little ground level, and either will completely shut off the water to Phase I.

In a water emergency members should shut off the water and contact the Garden Master and/or their Phase Representative.

Section 3100: Water: Do not waste water!

Report from the Greenhouse

By Rose Rosenberg, Greenhouse Coordinator

It's been an unusually hot and humid summer in Los Angeles this year, and the Greenhouse seedlings have really suffered. Many seeds didn't germinate and those that did struggled to grow. I worked with their emission lawyer, which resulted in some seedlings being saved.

When the temperatures at the garden are 95 degrees and higher, it's nearly impossible to keep the greenhouse cool. The greenhouse is not insulated. They leads to a phenomenon known as "heat stress".

Different varieties of seeds, such as broccoli or kale, have an optimal range of temps for germination. When temps are above that range, seeds fail to sprout or grow. For example, broccoli germinates best between 60 and 77 degrees, for kale, it is 50 to 85 degrees.

Due to this three weeks of high heat and humidity in August – just when the greenhouse should be at its most productive – we lost many of our seedlings. Two seedlings came up were stockpiled, and were ready to be transplanted into the garden. The rest perished. The rare perils of snow and sugar snap peas, which were ready to be sown, will be delayed until mid-September when the weather cooled down – and doing cooler weather.

The long range forecast for fall by NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration) predicts more warm than normal weather. I've got my fingers crossed for the success of seeds that the volunteers will start in two weeks for the December sale.

Report on Recycling

By Nancy Hauser, Recycle Chair

Gratitude and thanks to all of the dedicated gardeners who bring their aluminum cans and CRV plastic containers to the garden.

We appreciate this extra step which adds to the treasury (although no community hours are given). Also thank you to the team that bags these cans and containers and pulls them into the shed.

And a final note of thanks to those who take these bags to the recycle center. All of these people should be commended for adding approximately $700+ each month to the Ocean View treasury.

Ratatouille

By Rachel J.

Ratatouille is a wonderful dish to make when the heat dies down. It uses zucchini, summer squash, eggplant, tomatoes, and sweet potatoes - perfect for a late summer or early fall dish.

There are many ways to make this dish, but this version is the personal favorite of the rat steering me around the kitchen. This recipe calls for mozzarella, but you can swap in Parmesan, goat cheese, or your favorite plant-based cheese to make it fully vegan. It also freezes well, if you want to portion into smaller pans and save some for later.

Ingredients

1 yellow or sweet onion
1 red bell pepper
2-3 garlic cloves
2 Tbsp Herbs de Provence
28 oz crushed tomatoes
2 Tbsp balsamic or red wine vinegar
Red pepper flakes (optional)
2 tsp sugar
1 tsp salt
1 small eggplant (thin and long is best)
1-2 sweet potatoes
1-2 zucchini
1-2 summer squash
3-4 Roma tomatoes
16 oz mozzarella cheese, shredded or sliced
Olive oil

If you can't find Herbs de Provence, make your own by blending salt and pepper with marjoram, rosemary, thyme, basil, and dried lavender buds together with a crumbled bay leaf.

Process

1. Preheat oven to 375*F
2. Small dice the onion and bell pepper. Mince the garlic. Peel the eggplant and sweet potatoes. Slice the eggplant, sweet potatoes, zucchini, summer squash, and tomatoes into uniform rounds, about 1/4-inch thick. Set aside (or prep while the sauce is simmering).
3. Add olive oil to a high-sided pan and sautée the onion until soft and translucent. Add in the red bell pepper, and sautée until soft and just starting to char. Add the garlic and Herbs de Provence (reserving about 1/2 tsp), and stir for just 30-60 seconds.
4. Add the crushed tomatoes. Simmer for 20-30 minutes. Add in the sugar, salt, and red pepper flakes. Run through a food processor or immersion blender.
5. Stir through the vinegar, and remove from heat.
6. Spoon about one-third a cup of sauce into the bottom of a 9 x 13 baking dish. You can also use a deep circular pie pan.
7. Arrange the vegetable slices in alternating order in the pan. Add the remaining sauce and Herbs de Provence. Top with the mozzarella cheese.
8. Bake for 30-45 minutes. The cheese should be getting bubbly and the vegetables just starting to brown.

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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