



Volunteer Times

Published for the volunteers of the UCI Arboretum
New volunteers edition

Endangered California, South African Species Focus of Arboretum

The UCI Arboretum, from its founding in 1977, has been heavily focused on the preservation of endangered plant species. As human populations grow, more and more land is being cleared for development, particularly in the mild climate areas of the world. Plants and animals like these areas just as much as humans do and have grown and thrived for millennia, making extremely diverse communities in these same zones, communities that are now gravely threatened.

In our own California area, a major focus of the Arboretum's collection, less than 5% of coastal areas remain undeveloped. The situation is equally grave in South Africa, the other major geographic region the Arboretum works in. South Africa is rapidly catching up in a dismal way to California's habitat loss figures. Associates of the Arboretum that have traveled to South Africa report finding huge tracts of formerly wild land converted to agricultural, residential, commercial or mining developments.

Both areas, as I have already stated, are one of the world's most biodiverse regions - meaning that there is a high number of species per square mile. In fact both the Cape region of South Africa and California have been designated two of the

“No Experience Required!”

Anyone who has hunted for a job, especially a new graduate or a person looking to change fields, has probably come across that frustrating phrase, “Experience Required!” You mutter to yourself, ‘how am I supposed to get experience when no one will offer me a job?’

Well, here's some great news about volunteering at the UCI Arboretum, “No Experience Required!”

That's right! You don't need to be a Master Gardener to work at the Arboretum. You don't need to know what end of a trowel to hold, or the difference between perlite and ver-

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world's six Floristic Provinces due to the diversity of their species. In both regions there are a high proportion of species endemic (native) only to that region, making them particularly vulnerable to extinction

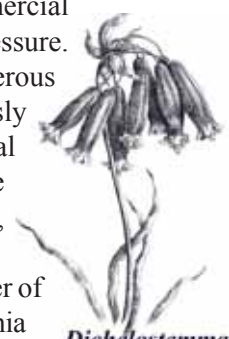
Both regions have a tremendous amount of habitat distraction due to agricultural and commercial development, as well as population pressure. Wild habitat is being destroyed at a dangerous rate in both communities. As previously noted, less than 5% of the land in coastal California is undeveloped, creating a huge threat to communities native to that region, such as coastal sage scrub.

The Arboretum is developing a number of extremely unique communities of California native plants. In the last eighteen months we have installed sections of riparian (streamside) plants, and are currently developing a new Channel Islands section and a section of flora from Otay Mountain, a truly unique habitat on the California - Mexico border. Future areas to be developed include a California conifer and a coastal oak woodland section.

Our South African collection is a well-developed and long established feature here at the Arboretum. South African plants are already extensively represented in California's landscape plant palette - plants like bird of paradise, Cape plumbago, Lion's tail and Breath of Heaven are all native to South Africa. South African plants thrive here because South Africa is the same south latitude as we are north latitude. Due to global weather patterns, this means our climate is remarkably like theirs. South African plants thrive here without hothouses, misting, artificial light, and other special care.

The medicinal potential of many of Southern Africa's flora is another consideration of the Arboretum staff. The Aloe family, in particular, holds great potential. Nearly everyone knows about the skin soothing properties of Aloe vera. Other aloes are used medicinally in Africa; the potential of this family, and the orchid family, is just being explored by drug manufacturers.

The UCI Arboretum continues its effort to preserve these rare, beautiful and potentially life saving plants for future generations. We invite you to be part of that effort as a regular volunteer.



*Dichelostemma
ida-maia*
from The Wildflowers
of California by Mary
Elizabeth Parsons

Upcoming new volunteer orientations

Saturday, March 28 10 a.m.

Saturday, April 25 10 a.m.

Urgent Need for Volunteers to Work Arboretum Events

'Special Events' days are among the most exciting and busy for volunteers and staff alike here at the UCI Arboretum. Catering to a range of interests, these events include art shows, plant sales featuring rare or hard to find material, orchid shows, and seasonal sales. The staff coordinates our events, but all positions at each event are filled by volunteers.

Our events are important on a number of levels. They are important fund-raisers, important for public outreach, and a source of new Friends of the Arboretum - over 70% of our new Friends are recruited at events.

Volunteers cashier, answer telephones, do parking control, vendor check in, refreshments, customer service, stocking, and a variety of other tasks. Volunteers assist with setup and cleanup at most events, including setting up tables, pricing and grooming plants, raising catering tents, posting signs, handing out flyers....the list is endless.

Schedules for each event are announced about three weeks prior to the date(s) in the volunteer newsletter. Volunteers



then can call in to volunteer for specific shifts. If we're short people, my fingers start doing the walking - through our call list, not the Yellow Pages. Walk in volunteers on event day are also welcome; the afternoons, in particular, are sometimes hard to staff.

Working as a special events volunteer is perfect for people employed in 9 to 5 jobs or those who cannot work on a regular basis, but want to make a significant contribution to the Arboretum.

We are currently in urgent need of more special events volunteers. For more information about special events volunteering, call Laura Lyons at 824-5833.

Next Arboretum event

April Showers of Flowers

Saturday, April 4

Morning & afternoon shifts available

Bulb Garden Group Seeks Volunteers for Growing Season

By Veronique Swett, UCMG (University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener)

The South African Bulb Garden (Bulb Garden), a prominent feature of the UCI Arboretum, is promising a particularly spectacular display this coming year. The combination of warm weather and early watering gave strong starts to the bulbs now growing in ever-larger numbers. In addition to the usual showing of *Chasmanthe floribunda*, *Chasmanthe aethiopica*, and *Homeria collina*, we expect a profusion of *Moraes bipartita*, *Ferraria crispa*, and *Gladiolus tristis*. One of visitors' favorites, *Androcymbium pulchrum*, has greatly multiplied; as have *Geissorhiza inaequalis* and *Urginea maritima*. Also, *Massonia depressa* continues to amaze visitors. Various species of *Lachenalias* and *Tritonias* are faring well—their long lasting flowering display always draws admiration from visitors.

Since the inception of the Bulb Garden six years ago, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners have been involved with the planting, maintaining, and upgrading of the garden. The garden is now a regular venue for the Master Gardeners program.

Dormant throughout the summer, the Bulb Garden requires considerable upkeep during its growing season. As with many gardens, maintenance is extensive. It involves dead heading, planting new bulbs grown from seeds, attempting to protect bulbs from predators, and watering; as well as weeding, of course.

Even though maintenance requires considerable time and effort, the main objective of Master Gardener involvement is to familiarize each volunteer with the names of the bulbs and their flowering schedule. This enables them to answer many questions from visitors, particularly during the Winter Bulb Festival in early March, and during other sales.

In order to help visitors identify the bulbs when volunteers are not available, Master Gardener Jack Jewell has prepared a beautiful guide to the Bulb Garden. This guide displays a map of the garden with its various habitats. (The habitats are created to duplicate South African regions or soils – clay at both ends of the garden, two mountain areas, rocky and woodland areas, bogs, and extensive areas of sandy soil.) Raynie Hoole's photographs of bulbs indigenous to those habitats will be displayed along with the expected blooming times complete this guide.. This guide should prove to be a useful educational tool that responds to many of the questions visitors often ask.

Working in the Bulb garden and watching the bulbs coming back to life year after year is a real joy. We Master Gardeners value the opportunity to participate in the upkeep of the Arboretum's spectacular collection.

The Bulb Garden Group meets every Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to noon. We welcome all the Arboretum's volunteers to join us and learn about these wonderful and unique flowers.



Special Project Groups at the UCI Arboretum

At the UCI Arboretum, we are increasingly making use of our most experienced volunteers to supervise other volunteers in special, small groups geared to caring for specific areas of the garden. The staff volunteers involved are experienced gardeners with leadership skills and a lot of initiative. We are proud to have these volunteers, and rely on their skills to make the Arboretum grow.

We currently have five special groups, three of which are led by volunteers. All groups receive full training and support from our staff. Two are currently open for new volunteers; the other three are currently full.

Collections Group/Bulb Garden maintenance - This group was formed to assist our Curator of Collections. It is led by a group of trained Master Gardeners. It involves caring for our scientific collection of rare and endangered bulbs. Besides possessing general horticultural skills, volunteers must be able to follow directions closely and be very detail oriented. It requires a very special individual to work with this group, but the Master Gardeners are excellent teachers and no experience is required to join this group. The group mostly works to maintain and improve our marvelous South African Bulb Garden and assists at the March Winter Bulb Festival each year. For more information on this group, please see the article by Master Gardener Veronique Swett. on page 2.



California garden Arboretum volunteers have a truly unique opportunity to work with some of the foremost Orange County experts on native plants on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The group is led by our good friends from the OC Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and will be maintaining and improving the California Garden, including weeding, trimming, planting, and general cleanup. OC-CNPS has worked with the Arboretum for years developing this garden and sponsor a number of Saturday workdays in the wintertime as well as supplying



leaders and volunteers for the Thursday group.

We have a number of new sections in progress in the California garden, including our Clarke Wildflower & Grassland, Coastal Oak Woodland, and Chaparral Garden, and need plenty of volunteers to plant and maintain these new areas.

The Arboretum has three additional special project groups, our Orchid care group, Friday Club and the Nursery group, but all three are currently full and not accepting volunteers.

To apply for any of these groups, contact Laura Lyons at (949)824-5833.

Friends of the UCI Arboretum

The UCI Arboretum is fortunate to enjoy the support of the community through the Friends of the UCI Arboretum. Formed by local gardeners in the 1980's, the Friends have grown steadily to over 300 members.

Friends of the Arboretum enjoy a number of benefits. The *Arboretum Quarterly* keeps Friends informed of ongoing conservation work at the UCI Arboretum, upcoming events, lectures, and classes. Friends receive free admission to all events and enjoy 'Member's Previews' for many of our events.



For more information regarding the Friends, pick up a membership brochure at the Arboretum office or call (949) 824-5833.

"I'm Just a Volunteer"

Many times as I have been working with our volunteers during the week or at special events, one or more of the volunteers have been approached by a visitor with a question. It usually goes something like this "There's a tree down the hill with funny green leaves next to the shrub with white flowers and the tall funny looking cactus. What is it? On most of these occasions, the volunteer wisely responds, "Gee, I'm just a volunteer; why don't you ask Laura?"



Now, it certainly doesn't bother me when a volunteer refers a question to me, especially THAT kind of question. Plant ID and visitor relations are among my many duties here at the Arboretum.

What bothers me is the 'just.'

Just a volunteer? Used in this context, 'just' seems to imply something, well, inferior. Used in connection with the word 'volunteer,' a person who comes, often every week, giving their time and their talents for no material reward other than a couple one gallon pots off the volunteer table, it becomes particularly inappropriate.

All of us share a love of, and commitment to, the UCI

Please see "I'm Just a Volunteer," pg 5

Arboretum staff

Director:	Dr. Peter Bowler
Volunteer coordinator:	Laura Lyons
Nursery tech/irrigation	Richard Basile

Supervising Volunteers

Orchid Care	Rita Chemers
California Garden	Celia Kutcher
SA Bulb Garden	UC Master Gardeners

Growing Herbarium Group Expands Responsibilities

One of our most unique groups here at the UCI Arboretum is our Herbarium Group, volunteers who collect, mount, label, and index new specimens for the UCI Herbarium.

An herbarium is a collection of dried, preserved plant specimens with associated relevant data, used for a variety of research projects. UCI Arboretum is pleased to boast a fine herbarium of mainly California native plants. Over 25,000 plant specimens and 5,000 lichen specimens are held by our herbarium.

The principal duty of our herbarium volunteers is to mount the specimens that have been collected, pressed, dried and labeled.

Specimens are collected in the field, primarily by our curator, but we have also participated in collecting trips with chapters California Native Plant Society where the collecting is done by volunteers. The specimens are brought back to the Arboretum to be pressed, dried, and have their label prepared. The final step is gluing the dried, pressed specimen and its label onto a sheet of herbarium paper, a sheet of 11x17 cardstock that is acid-free archival paper. Mark is an active collector and there are always plenty of new specimens to mount.

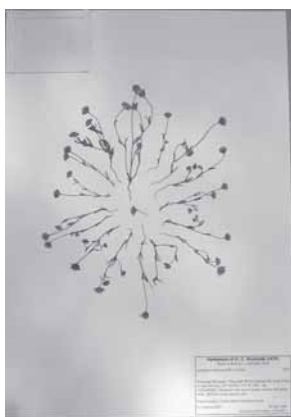
Herbarium volunteers also occasionally have the opportunity to go out in the field with the curator and do their own

collecting.

Herbarium volunteers also help in other ways, such as sorting mounted sheets so they can be easily place them in their herbarium cabinets for permanent storage

The Herbarium group meets on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Your first session needs to be prearranged with the staff, but thereafter you can come to either session – or both, or neither – as you like. Collecting trips and other special opportunities are announced in the Volunteer Times.

For more information on the herbarium group, or to arrange your first session, please call Laura Lyons at (949) 824-5833 or e-mail her at ldlyons@uci.edu



Volunteers, Sign in, Please!

We ask all Arboretum volunteers to sign in and out each day you come in to volunteer. This includes volunteers working at special events.

The Arboretum receives key funding through Federal and private grants. While some grants are fixed dollar amounts, others are based on total operating budget. Several foundations and grant agencies allow us to count volunteer hours as 'donations in kind' that count toward that operating budget.

With such grants, we are allowed to take the total volunteer an hourly rate, and count that as part of our operating budget. In some cases we can justify higher rates for volunteers with special skills, like a volunteer that is a programmer who helps us with a computer. With volunteers contributing 1500-2500 hours annually, that is a considerable boost to our operating budget.

Besides those considerations, the volunteer sign-in list would be used in case of an emergency to help the staff 'count noses' to make sure all our volunteers are accounted for.

The volunteer sign in is kept on a clipboard by the door of the volunteer room. You should be shown its location when you come for your first volunteer session; if not, check with your group leader, volunteer coordinator Laura Lyons or one of your fellow volunteers.



Current volunteer schedule

Project

Day(s)

Open groups - accepting volunteers

CA natives group	Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Bulb Garden group	Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon
Herbarium group	Thursday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Special Events	various

Closed groups - not currently accepting volunteers

Nursery propagation	Wed., 9 a.m. to noon
"Friday Club"	Friday, 9 a.m. to noon
Orchid Care	Wednesday, 9 a.m. to noon

For information on any of these projects, or for general information on volunteering call Laura Lyons at (949) 824-5833 (office), (949) 293-7706 (cell) or email ldlyons@uci.edu

"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden."

-Thomas Jefferson

Data Entry Assistance Needed by Arboretum Staff

Besides opportunities for horticulture work in our garden and collection, UCI Arboretum also has a need for people to train for data entry positions.

The Arboretum has a number of different databases to maintain; the collections database, listing all the accessioned plants in the garden and data regarding their collection and propagation; our Friends database; the Herbarium database, listing the 30,000+ (and counting!) specimens of the IRVC herbarium, and the mailing lists for our various plant sales.

Mark Elvin, our curator, is in urgent need of a data entry

Directions to the UCI Arboretum

From I-405 or 5: take the freeway to the Jamboree rd. exit: turn west, and travel down to Campus Dr. Turn left at Campus: take 1st right, about 100 yards after turn, onto an unnamed blacktop service road.

About 100 ft. down road on left is a gate in chainlink fence Turn into gate and park either in one of the three marked spaces off driveway to your left or proceed to end of short blacktop driveway and park on graveled drive to your right. Offices are next to both driveways.

From Newport Beach: Take PCH to Jamboree; turn inland. Take Jamboree to Campus, turn right, then take the 1st right, some 100 yards after turning onto Campus onto an unnamed blacktop service road. From there, please follow directions as described in second paragraph of directions from I-405.

"I'm Just a Volunteer" continued

Arboretum that leads us to put in long hours, sometimes under tough conditions - just ask anyone who's worked a major event! Every time I really stop and think about what it would be like to run the Arboretum without volunteers, I want to go into the corner and hide. Because we couldn't do it.

Volunteers took our old, outdated databases and wrote all new, custom software that has turned keeping Friends and Volunteer records into a breeze.

Volunteers run the California Garden, Orchid Care and South African Bulb garden groups. Volunteers staff our events, propagate the plants for our sales, maintain our gardens, water, weed, feed, answer telephones, stuff mailings, clean pathways, repot bulbs, label, assist with public relations....the list is endless. We currently have over fifteen volunteers who come in EVERY WEEK to work in our various programs, and another half dozen who are in at least twice a month. We have a core of over fifty more who come in to staff events and work on special projects days.

So, keep on passing me those technical questions; that IS my job. You are the volunteers of the UCI Arboretum - and you are 'just' the best.



assistant to do work on the plant accession database and the herbarium database, and other needs related to our collections. Our custom-written databases have a variety of cool features you'll appreciate, including some serious spelling help for all those long botanical names!

Laura Lyons, the Nursery manager, needs assistance in maintaining our Friends and event mailing lists, both of which are easy to master.



Potential data entry people should, at the minimum, have some general knowledge of computers and typing skills.

For more information, or to volunteer for this important project, please call Laura Lyons at (949) 824-5833.

'No Experience Required' Continued

miculite, or the difference between a weed and a plant, or which of the three numbers on a fertilizer bag stand for what (heck, I still get confused between potash and potassium, after over fifteen years in the horticulture field). Because we'll teach you!

And not hours of boring classroom instruction, oh no! Here at the Arboretum we learn hands-on, learning the tasks by doing. Everything is hands on experience, learning the techniques you'll use as volunteers and, hopefully, be able to apply in your own gardens.

There are a lot of different opportunities available to prospective volunteers, as you have seen in these pages. Volunteers aren't limited to one group, either. Quite a number of our people participate in multiple groups, either shifting groups by season or, in the case of a few hardy souls, coming more than one day a week. At times when another group needs particular help, the Nursery group might help the perennial group volunteers for a day, or the perennial group volunteers help the Nursery people propagate. Flexibility is our motto.

The opportunities to learn never end! After you've worked in one of the basic groups for a time, perhaps you'll be interested in one of the special groups on page 3. Opportunity for growth is out there for all our volunteers as well as our plants

Also, a word out there for you experienced gardeners; Of course, we need you too! In the basic groups you might quickly find yourself paired with a newcomer to help them along. Or most of the special groups are immediately open to those who have special skills.

NEVER feel you can't jump into something you want to do at the Arboretum because you 'don't know how.' We are a University botanic garden, and teaching is part of our mission - and not just teaching UCI students. Teaching everyone.

