



Volunteer Times

Published for the volunteers of the UCI Arboretum

October 2009

Fall Art and Flower Festival October 17

By Laura Lyons, Nursery Manager, UCI Arboretum

Where did summer go? It's officially fall, Santa Ana winds or no, and the time for our "Art of Flowers" Fall Art and Flower Festival is nearly here! The UCI Arboretum and our friends at Orange County Fine Arts, Inc. (OCFA), a local art guild, team up each year to present this event.

OCFA's talented artists put on a wonderful art show and sale themed around California's landscapes and wildlands. You can buy everything from prints to notecards to beautiful originals in many different media—digital art, fine art, jewelry, photography, and more. We are lucky to have such a diversity of talented artists join us for this event.

Simultaneously, the Arboretum offers its Fall Bulb and Perennial Sale. We have a great one-two punch for this event—our stunning fall blooming perennials, including our star, creeping Cape lilac, PLUS dormant corms from our unique South African bulb collection—*Allium*, *Gladiolus*, *Ixia*, *Tritonia*, *Watsonia*—a rainbow of unique plants for your garden.

There's always plenty to do to prepare the Arboretum for a major event like the Fall Art and Flower Festival, so let me share some of the opportunities available to you.



Perennial Garden Group and Nursery Group

Obviously we want the Perennial Garden looking its best. The Perennial Garden Group has been valiant as they worked around the summer heat waves that plagued us to keep the garden beautiful. With cool weather here, hopefully, the Perennial Garden Group is ready for the final big push to get the garden ready for the Festival.

The Perennial Garden Group meets on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon. October 8 and 15 will be particularly key dates with plenty for both novice and experienced gardeners to do around the garden. Remember, you can learn a lot about care of perennials from the Master Gardeners that lead the group, making this an especially good opportunity for novices and experienced gardeners to help out and learn, too.

The Nursery Group is wrapping up the summer bulb season AND trying to prepare for the Festival, so all of you who want to learn about plant care and propagation are invited to join us on September 30, October 7, and October 14 from 9 a.m. to noon.

The latter two dates are critical, because then we select plants for the sale, give them a final grooming, label them, and move the selected plants to the sale area.



Final Setup, Friday, October 16

As you can imagine, the day before the event is a busy one! There are many last minute details to attend to and you are welcome to help out. There will be two sessions that day: The usual 9 a.m. to noon session—focusing mainly on the plant sale—and a special session from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for work in the garden—sweeping and washing paths, putting up signs, tidying up around the offices—all the final details.

Saturday, October 17

Five shifts are planned for the actual event, setup, three for the sale, and cleanup; and multiple volunteers are needed for each.

Setup requires two volunteers, one attending to the
See Festival Volunteers, on Page 2

Volunteer Schedule for Fall Art and Flower Festival

Setup	7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
1 st run	8:15 a.m. to 12:15
2 nd run	9:15 to 1 p.m.
3 rd run	noon to 4 p.m.
Cleanup	3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

To volunteer for any of the opportunities listed above—Perennial Garden, Nursery, final (Friday) setup, or the sale itself—please call Laura Lyons at (949) 824-5833 or e-mail ldlyons@uci.edu.

Nursery News October 2009

By Laura Lyons, Nursery Manager, UCI Arboretum

Who says money doesn't grow on plants, or trees? The Arboretum's nursery staff begs to differ!



In these tough times for the University of California and the state as a whole, we are very lucky to have independent sources of income—grants, donations through the Friends, and of course, our plant sales. We continue to fill a niche market for people looking for something out of the ordinary for their gardens. Monthly plant sales, selection, and good customer service have built us a loyal clientele and kept our sales solid, despite the poor economy.

Succulents continue to be a backbone of our sales. To meet that demand, I've grown increasingly creative. This summer, I've been buying small plants, what the nursery industry calls 'plugs,' and 'starters.' The difference in the terms is of importance to professionals; for us either term will do. Think of the size of a plant in a color pack or the virtually vanished pony pack and you get the idea.

Mostly I bought succulents, but I lucked out occasionally and found some nice selections of Ceanothus, a popular native plant, as well as a perennial or two. Whatever the plant, the Nursery staff transplants the plugs into quarts. After two to four months (depending on the size of the starter and the time of the year), they are transplanted into gallons. Wholesale nurseries operate pretty much the same way. They buy plugs and starters from a specialty propagator and 'grow them out' to 1-gallons, that are then sold to retail outlets. The first of our grown-from-plug plants will be ready for

Festival Volunteers

Festival Volunteers, from Page 1

plant sale and a second helping with parking for the artists.

During the Festival, volunteers work the entry gate—checking in the Friends and taking general admission. Other volunteers work as cashiers, take out assistants, restocking, sales, answering the phones.

After the Festival, there's the cleanup shift where we assist the artists with their departure and return the Arboretum to normal.

See Volunteer Schedule on page 1 for shift details.

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our "Art of Flowers" Fall Art and Flower Festival, and look for more in sales this fall and, especially, next spring.

The big benefit of growing out plugs is COST. These days a 1-gallon plant wholesales for an average of \$5. I can buy quarts for half that and plugs for as little as a \$1 each. The end result is a much higher net profit for the Arboretum, even when our gross remains unchanged.



Another advantage is selection. When I buy a patented plug from a propagator, part of the cost is a small royalty that goes back to whoever owns the patent. Once I've bought a plug and paid its patent fee, I could grow that plant to 15-gallon before selling it, if I wanted to. Buying patented plugs allows us to buy more plants and more varieties of them; thus expanding our selection.

From these new plant sources, we have some very interesting new succulents—the nursery staff can't wait till I start releasing them for sale! Judging from THEIR reaction, these should be excellent sellers this fall and next spring.

Our Nursery staff has been very busy this summer and a thank you to them. Besides working with the purchased plants, they continue to propagate perennials from our own plants for next winter and spring. Additionally, volunteers have replanted young bulbs into larger containers for grow out, and transplanted mature bulbs into 1-gallons for next winter's sales.

Next spring look for opportunities to volunteer at some Saturday propagation days and help our nursery staff keep up with the feeding, weeding, transplanting, and care our stock needs to stay healthy. Helping, also, gives you an opportunity to learn some new skills.

Until then, keep on growin'!



Portulacaria afra Surprise

By Tom McCranie, Volunteer

Recently a friend and I pondered the reason for "elephant's food" being a common name for the African native, *Portulacaria afra*. A quick search on the Internet took me to a well researched monogram by Robert J. Baran of the Phoenix Bonsai Society (www.phoenixbonsai.com).

Mr. Baran advises "The common names derive from ... the observation that elephants will browse upon this."

Confirming the most obvious conjecture.



IMPORTANT DATES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
October 1	Perennial Garden, 9 a.m. to noon
October 2	Bulb Workday, 9 a.m. to noon
October 7	Prep for Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to noon
October 8	Perennial Garden, 9 a.m. to noon
October 14	Prep for Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to noon
October 16	Final Setup for Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to noon
October 16	Final Garden Prep, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
October 17	Art of Flowers, Fall Art and Flowers Festival

LOOKING AHEAD

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
November 7	Fall Clearance Sale, 9 a.m. to 3. p.m.
November 11	Veterans Day - Arboretum Closed
November 26-28	Thanksgiving - Arboretum Closed
December 21 to	UCI Winter Holiday
January 2, 2010	Arboretum Closed

CURRENT VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

<u>PROJECT</u>	<u>DAY AND TIME</u>
Nursery Group	Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon
Orchid Care Group	Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon
SA Bulb Garden	Wednesday 9 a.m. – noon
Perennial Garden	Thursday 9 a.m. – noon
California Garden	Thursday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Herbarium Group	Thursday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Friday Club	Friday 9 a.m. – noon
Special Events	See Cover

For information on any of these or for general information on volunteering, call Laura Lyons at: (949) 824-5833 or e-mail: ldlyons@uci.edu