



GARDEN VIEWS

A Master Gardener Newsletter



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October 2004

Thoughts From the Chairman

I would like to welcome all of the Riverside County Master Gardeners to the 2004/2005 Veterans year. We had a successful and enjoyable Kick-off Pot-luck at Sims Tree Learning Center on Saturday, September 11. Those who couldn't attend missed a fun afternoon and evening of camaraderie and fun.

Chair-elect Shelley Wardrop has developed an interesting schedule of classes for the Veterans year, which starts on October 3 with Alison Shilling's "Selection and Care of Native Plants" and is followed on October 20 with Joe Milligan's program on vermicomposting.

Tour Chair Cindy Friday-Beeman is arranging a number of different tours for the coming year. On October 16, we will tour the Tree of Life Nursery in San Juan Capistrano and on November 6, we are scheduled to be at the Sam and Alfreda Maloof Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga. Be sure to sign up for the first tours at the October 3 class.

Calling All Volunteers

The New Projects committee is busy developing new programs including the Calendar project for 2006 and a new awards program for accumulated hours. Stay tuned for progress. As a reminder, if you haven't joined the New Projects or Calendar committees, please step up to the plate. It's going to take a lot of work to get these ambitious projects off the ground, and we need all the help we can get. The standing committees such as the Phone Squad and the Newsletter Committee are also in need of help. Working the phones or writing for the newsletter are fun ways to get your volunteer hours in. Please contact Mike Urquhart for the Calendar committee, Nancy Sappington for the Newsletter or New Projects committee, or Barbara Locke for the Phone Squad.

I look forward to seeing you at the Veterans classes starting in October. We are meeting again this year at the Expectation Party Sales facility located at 3117 Durahart Street in Riverside.

—John Ernsberger, MG Chair 2004/2005



Don't Get Stuck By a Beavertail Cactus!

By Donna Claypool, MG

The Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) grows naturally in our Mojave and Colorado deserts. It grows in Sunset zones 2, 3, and 7–24. It is in the Cactaceae family, and the name *Opuntia* comes from a small town in Greece that was overrun with them.

(See **Beavertail** on Page 5)

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Online Resources for Gardeners

By Nancy Sappington, MG

What did we ever do without the Internet? Personally, I made a lot of trips to the library, and while access to the Internet has saved me a tremendous amount of time, I must admit I rather miss chatting with the librarian. Nowadays, you can find almost anything online, and the deluge of information can even be overwhelming. Here are a few resources to help narrow your searches.

Planting trees too deeply has become a concern among arborists. The International Society of Arboriculture implores us to plant with flare. (The pun is intended.) For more detailed information regarding soil depth, the use of organic amendment, and planting details, visit the society's Web site at <http://www.isa-arbor.com/publications/cadDetails.asp>.

The Green Industry Yellow Pages (www.virtualplanttags.com) is a plant database that enables you to find out which ornamental cultivars are currently available in your area. Each search lists nursery sources doing business in the state you request including contact information and Web sites for the sources.

The Green Spot, Ltd., a supplier of beneficial organisms in New Hampshire has set up the GreenMethods Forum (www.greenmethodsforum.com), which is devoted to biocontrol techniques and integrated pest management. There is no charge to register to participate. Some topics include "Pest and Disease Talk," "Plant Health," "Regulatory Matters," and "Garden Chat" (specifically for home gardeners). There is even a topic called "Weird Science."

The Northeast-Midwest Institute in Washington, D.C., maintains a Web site (www.nemw.org/ansstatelaws.htm) that provides a list of links to both existing and proposed invasive species laws, by state. The list covers the entire 50 states. The University of California's Statewide Integrated Pest Management program has just added the Guide to Healthy Lawns to its Web site (<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/TURF/>). Developed for home gardeners and managers of parks, school grounds, and other low-maintenance turf, this site shows you how to establish a vigorous lawn and maintain it with an environmentally friendly lawn care program. You can enter information specific to your situation and design an irrigation program, calculate the amount of fertilizer

to use, or determine proper mowing height or frequency. The site also helps you to identify pest problems.

Ten Tip Sheets showing homeowners how to apply conservation practices similar to those used on agricultural land are available for download at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Web site, http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/for_homeowners.html. You can request free hardcopy versions of the Tip Sheets and a 28-page booklet on backyard conservation by phone at 888.526.3227. The Tip Sheet topics are Backyard Pond, Backyard Wetland, Composting, Mulching, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Terracing, Tree Planting, Water Conservation, and Wildlife Habitat.

The U.S. Forest Service recently launched the Treearch Web site (www.treearch.fs.fed.us), providing access to full-text versions of many public-domain natural resources publications dating back to the late 19th century. Included are articles authored by Forest Service workers that appeared in journals, books, and conference proceedings. There are also articles from all six of the Forest Service's regional research stations.

The Cornell Herbaceous Perennials database (http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/Cornell_Herbaceous/index.html) was created by a Cornell University student with help from a professor at Texas A&M University. Currently, more than 150 plants with detailed descriptions and color images are included in the database. There are plans to add more. The information about the plants is derived from observations at the Bluegrass Lane Perennial Test Plots in Ithaca, New York, where more than 750 cultivars have been planted with an emphasis on less-known and recently released cultivars. You can search the database by many attributes including scientific name, common name, family, flower color, bloom period, leaf texture, plant type, form or habit, propagation method, light requirement, hardiness zone, water requirement. 



To Build a Pond

By Alison Shilling, MG

I like water. Maybe because of my English background—no, contrary to American beliefs, it does not rain all the time—but because in my childhood I lived next to a river with numerous streams and bogs (translation: creeks and wetlands) nearby. My garden birds like it too. I have a measly two-foot birdbath outside my den window, and they drink and splash in it all day.

So, needing another garden project to avoid tasks such as renewing mulch, trimming rosemary and salvia, and repairing gopher-gnawed drip lines, I decided that the wildlife and I could benefit from a pond. I thought of this around June, assuming that there was plenty of time to get it established to plant around it in the fall.

There is a wide variation in water features for gardens—still or moving, formal or wild, for fish or not-for-fish—and in the books written about establishing them. I have definite constraints: I still want to watch the wildlife enjoy the water, but I have several trees near my window, so the pond has to fit between them; and if small creatures are to drink easily, there needs to be a shallow area. In any case, a stylized pond with nymphs pouring water from Greek urns would not fit the natural (read unkempt) style of my garden.

I cleared most of the herb garden and started digging. Gradually, (it was summer) I realized that the boulders, which I felt would nicely frame the area, were inconsiderate enough to extend under the open space. I got help, but it soon became clear that the decomposed granite was turning into granite, and I would not be able to reach the recommended 2-foot minimum to achieve a good ratio of surface area to volume of water. I also could not accommodate any of the preformed ponds. Ah, well, I wanted the sound of water anyway, so I will use a pump and filter to keep the water from getting cloudy, and express my own creativity in the design of a free-form pool.

The pond can be flexible liner or concrete, however, my husband says that there are three things that are inevitable—death, taxes, and cracks in concrete. So the latter is out. Of the flexible liners, butyl is the most expensive but is somewhat elastic and unaffected by sunlight. Polythene is improving but I would still worry about ultra-violet deterioration. PVC, in various thicknesses, is intermediate between the two.

In addition to the liner, it is probably worth having an underlay, rather than just sand, especially in rocky soil.

I needed a water source, since evaporation will demand continual topping-off. No problem there; I had the spigot from the garden. For the pump electricity, I will have to find a way under the concrete pathway from an outlet on the house, burying the wire in conduit. What a pity we did not put in outdoor lights when we were building!

We have so many rocks on our property that it seemed logical to use them to surround the pond, but when I started collecting, I realized that you need flattish ones to hold down the liner, and to stick out a little over the edge to hide the plastic. Our rocks are nearly all disobligingly rounded. I looked reluctantly at offerings in the landscaping yard, but they did not seem to match our local stone, so instead I have been gradually collecting suitable specimens from the open land around. Let's hope that the developers have not counted all their rocks!

So there you have it—a rock-lined hole awaiting a jack-hammer for final leveling, a heap of rocks, and two boulders from which I hope will flow the recirculating water. Meanwhile, the quail are lining up on the edge of the birdbath, unaware of the naturalistic gem from which they will drink in a few months! 🐔

Pilot Program Starts for Online Gardening Classes

By Sally Peerbolt, MG

The Horticultural Gardening Institute (HGI) of Michigan State University has teamed with the American Horticultural Society (AHS) to launch a new online gardening course "The Art and Science of Container Gardening." For busy Master Gardeners this course is ideal because you can sign up at anytime, year round. The \$70 fee entitles you to the 12-week course, one-year membership to the American Horticultural Society and a one year subscription to the *The American Gardener* magazine.

The course is an anytime, anywhere, at your own pace program with interviews with Mary McLellan, Michigan State Master Gardener Coordinator and nationally recognized AHS experts including a narrated slide show, printer-friendly

(See [On Line Gardening Classes](#) on page 7)

MOVING?

Please let us know when you change your address or phone number. Contact **Buck Hemenway**, Membership Coordinator, at a meeting or call him at (909) 360-8802. He will make sure the information gets changed on the membership roster so you will not miss out on newsletters and phone calls. Thanks!

**UCCE Riverside County MASTER GARDENERS
Advisory Board Members and Coordinators
July 2003 - June 2004**

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Garden Views

The *Garden Views* newsletter is published monthly, September through June, by the U. C. Master Gardeners, Cooperative Extension, University of California, Riverside County. All reporters are Master Gardeners or Master Gardeners-in-training.

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To simplify information, trade names have been used. No endorsements of name products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.

Hort ShortsCompiled by **Nancy Sappington, MG****Geography Matters...**

...even in gardening circles. Who you are, what you earn, and where you live affect how you garden. The latest edition of the *The American Gardener* (Sept./Oct. 2004) reports on a study sponsored by the Garden Writers of America and conducted from June 8 through June 13. More than 1,000 computer-assisted telephone interviews were done throughout several U.S. regions. The data was weighed by gender, age, and race to reflect U.S. Census data.

Some results were expected such as ease-of-use hand tools were more preferable than affordable price to the 65-and-over age group. The durability of hand tools was more important than price for wealthier respondents who also spend more money on fertilizers than groups in lower income levels. It was also no surprise that westerners were the least likely group to depend on rainfall for watering needs and were almost twice as likely to install water-conserving irrigation. In a bizarre twist, the survey found that divorcees and singles are the most likely not to conserve water. ("I'm gonna wash that man right outta my hair...")

Westerners and southerners are less likely to address insect problems than either Midwesterners or Northeasterners. Midwesterners, who freeze and preserve the vegetables they grow more than any other group, use more chemical products than other regions.

Northeasterners are the stingiest with fertilizer and are only half as likely to donate the vegetables they grow to others.

Weather Observations

"How Climate Affects Biological Cycles" by Dr. H. Marc Cathey also appeared in *The American Gardener* (September/October 2004). Cathey has observed a number of plants flowering much earlier than their normal time at the American Horticultural Society's River Farm in Virginia. On the other hand, other plants flowered during their normal cycle. Cathey attributes these aberrations to climate differences over several years. He says the vicissitudes in weather and the varied flowering times and combinations of plants in flower at the same time are definitely noteworthy. Gardeners are encouraged to keep careful records of the temperature changes and levels of rain, snow, and wind each year.

Because of the unusual variations he has observed, Cathey says this type of record keeping is more important than ever. Developing this type of detailed historical knowledge about local weather conditions can help gardeners make wise decisions about plant selection and placement in their landscapes. Currently, the only comprehensive species/cultivar research program that focuses on hardy perennials is at the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University where researchers are evaluating plants species by species and cultivar by cultivar with regard to chilling requirements, temperature tolerance, day length, supplemental lighting, growth regulators, and acclimatization in the garden.

Also in the American Gardener...

If you're looking for a specific plant, *The Plant Locator Western Region* by Susan Hill and Susan Narizny (Timber Press, 2004, \$19.95) lists 336 retail nurseries in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and British Columbia, along with more than 50,000 of the plants they carry. The book's extensive index includes more than 9,000 entries listing both common and botanical names. 🌱

Beavertail continued from Page 1

Opuntias are divided into three sub-groups—*Cylindropuntia*, cylindrical, jointed and tall, *Playtopuntia*, joints or sections flattened into pads; and *Tephrocactus*, cylindrical or globular, low growing with one or two joints only. *O. basilaris* is in the *Playtopuntia* sub-group. This is the best-known group, which includes Prickly Pears and Bunny Ears, and the Beavertails.



Grow *Opuntia* in moderately fertile, well-drained, gritty, humus-rich soil in full sun. *Opuntias* have a type of spine called 'glochids.' They are real troublemakers—crescent-shaped and barbed. I have been lucky enough to avoid being stuck by a glochid, but I am told that they are nearly impossible to remove and that a magnifying glass and a steady hand are required. I have removed stubborn spines from other cacti by applying rubber cement, letting it dry, and then pulling it off.

The Beavertail cactus is a low-growing succulent with clumps up to three feet high and wide. The pads are narrow at the bottom and wide at the top, giving them the appearance of a beaver's tail; they are from 4 to 8 inches in size. Flowers are bowl-shaped that are usually magenta in late spring. The fruit can be up to one and one-half inches long. They can take a little more cold weather than other *Opuntia* varieties.

O. basilaris was an important source of food for the Native Americans; they collected, cleaned, and cooked the fruit. The seeds were ground, mixed with water, and cooked into mush. Young pads were collected and dried in the sun, and they would keep for a long time. When needed, they were boiled and eaten with salt.

The pulp of older pads was scraped off and used as a wet dressing on wounds. It is supposed to have drawing power like *Aloe vera*, and still makes a good emergency dressing. Cahuilla Indians used the pads to combat heart disease and diabetes. They boiled the pads and drank the liquid.

The prolific Luther Burbank developed a spineless *Opuntia* to be used for cattle fodder. It was too successful; cows loved it and ate it so quickly that planted areas became bare. Since *Opuntia* needs good soil and adequate water, it made more sense to grow other plants that provided better nourishment.

O. basilaris would be an asset to any desert garden, as long as it is grown away from walkways for safety from the glochids. 🌱

Fairy Bowls for Your Garden

By Sally Peerbolt, MG

While searching for a 50th birthday present for my sister, I stopped at our local Parkview Nursery to look at plants for her yard and discovered a new form of container gardening called "Fairy Bowls". Miniature plants such as tiny *Dianthus*, trailing thyme, *Euphorbia* and mosses are arranged in the planter of your choice and tiny gardening tools, benches, tables, wheelbarrows, wagons, and other assorted decorations are placed among the plants. I also found a miniature turtle, rabbit, and frog at a gift shop. Delicate fairies are tucked in to create your "Fairy Bowl." Needless-to-say I spent a significant amount of time picking the right plants and accessories to create a perfect gift. Of course, if she doesn't like it, I have the perfect spot picked out in my garden. 🌱

First Sundial Awarded to Tanks

During the past several months, the MG Board of Directors has considered several award and recognition programs to recognize Riverside County's Master Gardeners. Based on various criteria, several awards are being developed.

There are many ways to report time and mark hours. Perhaps man's oldest timepiece is the sundial. The first award program approved is aptly named the Sundial Award. It honors the Master Gardener with the most volunteer hours for the year starting July 1 and ending the following year on June 30. The County Extension Office Agent will present the Sundial Award—a sundial—at the Fall Kick-Off potluck each year.

Riverside County Master Gardeners, Robert and Bernice Tank, received the first Sundial Award at the Fall Kick-off Potluck on September 11. They each turned in an astounding 758 hours, resulting in a tie.

Isn't this a great reason to not only volunteer but *report* your hours? By the way, you can only win the Sundial Award once.

If you have an idea for an award or recognition program, please contact one of the sub-committee members: Mike Henry, Tom Shea, Buck Hemenway, Gail Hernandez, or Shelley Wardrop. Watch for new award programs in the newsletter!

Who knows, you may already be a winner!



2004 Kickoff Potluck at Sims Tree Learning Center was a great success.



Exceptional Fall Fruits

By Pat Romberg, MG

Persimmons are native to both Asia and America. The American persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) is both cultivated and grows wild in the east and southeast. Some American varieties do not require winter chill, and most are not self-fruitful. All American persimmons are astringent until ripe. These fruit trees also have beautiful bark that is fissured in a repeating pattern of squares or rectangles.

The persimmons that are commonly grown on the West Coast are originally from Asia. The Oriental persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*) is also a great shade tree and suitable for espalier. The leaves of both species provide spectacular fall color as do the fruits as they ripen. Even though the Asian persimmon is self-fruitful, pollinated trees produce more abundant and sweeter fruit. The pollinated trees also produce more seeds than the self-fruitful ones. Fruit-drop is a common problem in young trees. To prevent this, avoid inconsistent watering practices and do not over-fertilize.

Some Asian persimmons are astringent until soft-ripe, when they become very sweet. 'Hachiya' and 'Tamopan' fall into this category. Non-astringent varieties of persimmon, such as, 'Chocolate,' 'Fuyu,' and 'Izu' can be eaten when firm, but the flavor improves as they soften slightly.

To protect the fruit from the birds while it ripens, harvest when the flesh is fully colored but hard, and let it ripen in a cool place. Persimmons may be sliced and dried in a dehydrator or oven, but I prefer to air-dry them. I peel them while firm, and tie them with strings around the stem. When they appear translucent and flexible, but not sticky, they can be stored in plastic bags or containers in the refrigerator.

Persimmons are drought and disease resistant, and are great for cooking. The bright orange color of persimmons makes them perfectly suited as table accents or fall centerpiece additions.

Persimmon Cookies

2 cups flour	½ cup shortening
1 tsp. soda	1 cup sugar (may use ½ brown, may reduce to ½ or 2/3 cup)
1 tsp. cinnamon	1 egg
½ tsp. cloves	1 cup persimmon pulp, ripe
1 cup raisins	½ tsp. salt
1 cup chopped nuts	

Sift flour, soda, salt and spices. Stir in raisins and nuts. Cream shortening and sugar. Beat in egg and persimmon pulp. Whole persimmon including peel, may be pureed in blender. Stir in flour, nuts, and raisins. Drop batter from teaspoon or greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375° for 8 to 10 minutes. Makes 2-3 dozen very moist cookies.

Persimmon Salad

1 package (3-oz.) orange gelatin
 1 cup hot water
 1 tbsp. lemon juice
 2 cups mashed persimmon pulp
 ½ cup diced celery
 ½ cup chopped nuts
 Cottage cheese, avocado and/or sour cream if desired

Dissolve gelatin in hot water. Stir in lemon juice, persimmon pulp, celery, and nuts. Put in mold and refrigerate. Serve plain, with cottage cheese, avocado, and/or sour cream.

Variation: Pour half of salad mixture into pan and chill. When almost set, cover with sour cream. Pour remaining half of mixture over sour cream to make second layer. Refrigerate until set before serving.



Gardening Classes continued from page 3

transcripts with photos and Web links. Topics will include color bowls, bulbs in containers, floating gardens, hanging baskets, and containers for your health. It also includes project checklists and resources, quizzes, discussion boards, gardening plan submission forms, feed back on your forms by a Master Gardener review team, Master Gardener education credits (if applicable) and a certificate of completion.

By logging onto www.gardeninginstitute.com you can learn more about the program and other upcoming online courses. You can also find Master Gardening programs throughout the United States and scheduled events that may be of interest to you as a gardener. You can become a member of the Horticultural Gardening Institute free of charge. 🌱

Wilting AwayBy **Cynthia McCabe, MG**

How many of you have come home on a warm day and found one or more plants wilted only to diagnose the problem at first glance as an irrigation malfunction? If most of the other plants around the drooping specimen are fine, then a very likely cause for wilted leaves (besides transplant shock) might be fungus. One can actually exacerbate the fungal diseases *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* through knee-jerk watering. These fungi are called water molds because they swim short distances in water and spread to non-resistant plants.

The *Fusarium oxysporum* fungi are dispersed not only through water, but also by infected garden equipment and plant roots. Fusarium Wilt spores overwinter in soil and can survive there indefinitely. Like *Pythium* and *Phytophthora*, *Fusarium oxysporum* usually reveals itself during warm weather. Many plants are resistant to Fusarium Wilt and should be used in lieu of susceptible specimens. Symptoms can include (aside from the obvious wilting); yellow or scorched foliage; plant stunting; and dark, clogged vascular tissue within the stem.

Verticillium Wilt is another common fungal disease that affects more than 200 species of plants. The spores can multiply in cool, moist weather, but the infection does not become apparent until warm weather stresses the plant. Herbaceous plants are normally more vulnerable than woody ones. Many weeds provide a vector for the fungus, so controlling them is also important.

Any one of these wilts is prevalent in our soil and nursery stock, but good cultural practices reduce the impact of these fungi. Again, choosing resistant varieties is the first important preventative step towards minimizing the frequency of wilts in the garden. Soil that is well-drained and not over-fertilized is another step in the right direction. Sterilization of tools, and even changing gloves, cannot be overemphasized.

Proper irrigation is another key. A happy medium must be found between too much watering and too little. Managing the insect population, which can not only weaken the plants, but also sometimes transmit diseases, is crucial. Many of these fungi also cause damping-off, so be sure to use sterile soil mixes and clean containers for starting seeds. Solarization is an effective technique for reducing large spore populations, but re-infection with fungi is an eventual probability. 🍄

MASTER GARDENER CALENDAR

CLASSES

Wednesday, October 6, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at EPS, 3117 Durahart

California Natives

Speaker: Alison Shilling

Wednesday, October 20, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at EPS, 3117 Durahart

Vermicomposting

Speaker: Joe Milligan

Wednesday, November 3, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at EPS, 3117 Durahart

Ferns for Home and Garden

Speaker: Steve Morgan

MEETINGS**Garden Views Staff Meetings --**

The Newsletter Committee will be holding a virtual meeting in October. If you would like to be on the e-list, please forward your email address to Nancy Sappington, nsappington@esri.com.

Wednesday, October 13, 6:30 pm -- Advisory Board Meeting at Cooperative Extension Office

 **MASTER GARDENER CALENDAR** 

CONTINUED

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Squad: Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Call Phone Squad Coordinator Shelley Wardrop to volunteer, 951-788-8197.

October 1 thru 22 - Preparation for UCRBG Fall Plant Sale

Volunteers are welcome to assist with grooming and tagging plants for the UCR Botanic Garden Fall Plant Sale. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm week days.

TOURS AND EVENTS

Saturday, October 16 -- Tree Of Life Nursery, San Juan Capistrano

Master Gardener tour. Details to be announced at the October 6 class.

Fall Plant Sales

October 8 & 9 -- Descanso Gardens Autumn Plant Sale

9 am to 4 pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada. 818-949-4200

October 15, 16 & 17 -- Theodore Payne Foundation Fall Festival and Native Plant Sale

8:30 am to 4:30 pm, all days. 1-450 Tuxford Street, Sun Valley. 818-768-1802

October 16 & 17 -- Fullerton Arboretum Fall Planting Festival

10:00 am to 4 pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1900 Associated Road, Fullerton. 714-278-4792

October 23 & 24 -- Fall Plant Sale at UCRBG

At the University of California, Riverside Botanic Gardens. Featuring nearly 10,000 plants.
Member's Sale: Saturday, October 25th from 9:00 til noon. Come and join! 951-784-6962
General Public Sale: Saturday, October 25th from 12:00 til 3:00 and Sunday from 9:00 til 3:00

October 23 & 24 -- Huntington Garden Fall Plant Sale

10:30 am to 4 pm, Saturday and Sunday. 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino. 626-405-2100

November 6 & 7 -- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden Plant Sale

11:00 am to 4 pm, Saturday and 9:00 am to noon, Sunday. 1500 North College Avenue, Claremont. 909-625-8767

U.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
Riverside County
21150 Box Springs Rd. Ste. 202
Moreno Valley, CA 92557

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