



COUNCIL THYMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSULTANTS COUNCIL
Published since 2013

CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC. - NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

Chairman's Message

Greetings to all you wonderful CCC members and gardening friends. I hope you and your plants are all ready for cold winter weather in your area. Let's be happy we don't live in Minnesota where the temperatures already plummeted to a record breaking -37 degrees! If you live in the higher elevations in the northern part of California, you have experienced some freezing temperatures and possibly a dusting of snow but nothing like the weather they are having back east! My daughter and her family took the snow train to Reno last week and she said there is very little snow pack on Donner. Hopefully the snow is coming with the new year as those of you in the lower elevations depend on the snow melt to fill your reservoirs so that water rationing doesn't happen again.

Dennis and I sold our place in northern California and moved to West Plains, Missouri in the middle of December. We moved in just in time for the first zero-degree weather of this winter season. We hear that it is unusually cold for this month but being in growing zone 6, I expect the temperatures are going to drop a lot more before it starts warming up again!

I have met numerous transplants from California, one lady from Long Beach! I'm sure I'll meet many more once I start attending garden club events in the spring.

This means that the CCC is once again looking for a volunteer to be Chairman. Won't you please consider filling this position? I will continue to do the Council Thymes and oversee the Landscape Design Commendations until a replacement is found or the end of this fiscal year. I will not be attending any more CGCI meetings and will no longer be a CGCI member come July 2018.

If you'd like to share gardening related information with your fellow gardeners, please send me your articles for the upcoming Thymes. We would all love to read about what you and/or your club is doing!

Thanks,
Josie

Our Next Meeting



Tuesday, January 30, 2018

6:30 pm to 7:15pm in the Palm II room of the Palm Garden Hotel (Newbury Park)

495 North Ventu Park Road,
Thousand Oaks, California

2017 - 2019 Council Officers

Chairman: Josephine Goodenow,
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Treasurer: Sue Bennett,
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julieawest@aol.com

Gardening Consultants: David West,
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Landscape Design Consultants: Carolyn Villi,
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CGCI Schools News

*By Greg Pokorski, GS
Chairman*

What is happening (or not happening) in California garden clubs? Our districts and clubs have a history of sponsoring and conducting many NGC schools, but we have had very little activity in recent years. If you look at the schools' pages of the NGC website you will see that these schools are continually being conducted all over the U.S. States such as Florida are continually running all schools, sometimes more than one series of each school at the same time. And CGCI has twice the garden club membership of Florida! Conducting a school can have many benefits. Each school is comprised of four courses and each course contains ten hours of instruction. These courses may all be held within one garden club year or they may be spread over two or more years. This can be a great team project which provides valuable education and information to your members. A school can be a great way to reach out to the public, publicize the existence and value of your club or district and can be a means of obtaining new members. Conducting a school can be a source of revenue for your club or district. And a school can also be a great social opportunity to get to know your members better and enjoy some great lunches together.

It would be wonderful if our Consultants who have attended these schools and benefitted from the knowledge obtained in them would share their talents in encouraging their clubs and districts to hold a school and then take an active role in supporting the school. Consultants are also invited to write for this publication about your school experiences and how you have utilized school subject matter.

Your CGCI Schools Chairmen are ready and willing to provide you more information, answer your questions and walk you through the process. Please contact us.

Read NGC's *The National Gardener, Keeping in Touch* and *Newscape* and Pacific Region's *WACONIAH* for more articles and information about NGC Schools. Remember that Consultants are required to read *The National Gardener* for updates about the school programs. If you are not a subscriber you can still access the publication on the NGC website.

Southern California Garden Club in Encino is tentatively planning to offer a Bi- or Tri-Refresher in 2018. Details to be determined.

Help Wanted from Landscape Design Consultants

If you are interested in joining the board of directors of National Garden Clubs as a member of the Landscape Design Schools Committee, please contact NGC Landscape Design Schools Chairman Greg Pokorski.

Landscape Design Schools

by Alexis Slafer, CGCI LDS Chairman

Have you checked your calendar lately?

Landscape Design Consultants: *What is on your calendar?* Have you made a note of when your credentials will lapse? Do you have plans to refresh your credentials? Perhaps you attended four courses of a Landscape Design School and passed all of the exams. Perhaps you refreshed your credentials – and perhaps you are a Landscape Design Master Consultant. But, have you tracked when your credentials will lapse? There are seven landscape design consultants whose credentials lapsed on December 31, 2017. Are you one of them? Contact this chairman if you have questions or concerns about your current status.

Reimagining the Existing Garden, with instructors from the Theodore Payne Foundation, Long Beach City College, Association of Professional Landscape Designers, National Garden Clubs, Inc. and CSU Dominguez Hills -- held in Long Beach on October 27 & 28, 2017, was a great success. There were four Landscape Design Consultants and four Master Landscape Design Consultants who refreshed their credentials. Congratulations go to Launa Gould, Gudy Kimmel, Emily Lacina, Julie West, Cheryl Burns, Joan Craig, Greg Pokorski and Robin Pokorski. Special kudos go to Julie West. This was her fourth refresher as a Landscape Design Consultant and she is eligible to become a Master Landscape Design Consultant.

Unfortunately, the CGCI LDS Series 27 scheduled for Colfax in February and March of 2018, has been postponed due to instructor scheduling conflicts. Discussions are underway to set the new dates. Look for information on these new dates following the 2018 Winter Board Meeting. The new dates will be posted on the calendar on the CGCI website: <http://californiagardenclubs.com/calendar>.

Currently there are no Landscape Design Schools on the CGCI calendar. Look at your calendar and see if there is a slot where your club or district can hold a LDS. It is rewarding to sponsor a Landscape Design School or Refresher...and **you**, our current Landscape Design Consultants are the best ones to help host the event. We must provide opportunities for refreshing so our California LD Consultants can maintain their credentials.

Please feel free to contact this chairman to start discussions on sponsoring a Landscape Design School or refresher.

Gardening Schools

By Greg Pokorski, CGCI Gardening Schools Chairman



The name of this school changed from Gardening Study School to Gardening School as of the last NGC convention.

We are sorry to lose these Gardening Consultants who lapsed as of December 31, 2017: Beverly Brune, Margaret Strachan, Sharon Thorne and George Speer. We thank them for their years of participation in the Gardening School program.

Contact this chairman for information about starting a Gardening School in your club or district.

TRI-REFRESHER RECAP – OCTOBER 27 & 28 By Bette Tang, Gardening Consultant

I attended the Tri-Refresher "Reimagining the Existing Garden" in October sponsored by the Long Beach Garden Club. It gave me the chance to refresh my Gardening Consultant Certificate, but more importantly to me, the topic was pertinent and interesting. I have been trying to "reimagine" my front yard for many years now. The presentations were excellent and gave me plenty of thoughtful advice to consider. Our own club member Alexis Slafer was one of the speakers.

One of the handouts included questions to pinpoint what you want in a garden. Do you want a garden that looks neat and carefully planned or has a natural look? Do you want to grow vegetables or plants that have a special meaning to you? Do you want garden accessories such as sculptures or a fountain? Do you want to attract birds or butterflies? Questions such as these are helpful to determine what kind of garden you like. Participants also toured two home gardens to look firsthand at design ideas and see what works and what doesn't. I have

a better idea now of how I want my front yard to look and what kind of plants I want. I thought it was inspiring that the Long Beach Garden Club, a small club of about 25 members, was able to put together an organized and excellent tri-refresher. ***Kudos to them for a great job!***



Did You Know? Individual artists were rarely credited for their work on early 20th century fruit crate labels. Many of the artists were German immigrants who worked anonymously for large printing houses. The labels capture the initial impressions & romantic image of life in California. As the railroad systems grew California fruit was shipped across the country & these labels, pasted on the side of the fruit crates, were the calling card. The labels did more than sell fruit, they sold the American west. California was idealized with portraits of glorious fruit, beautiful women, colorful cowboys & Indians that reflect the exotic frontier & new horizons out west. The labels are now collector's items. It's still a good time to begin a collection. Check out fruitcratelabels.com or citruslabelsociety.com Other fun gardening & agriculture collectables include vintage seed packets, flower girl cards, old canning jars, birdhouses, old buckets. It's limitless & fun.

Bee Poop and other interesting things about honey bees - by Josephine Goodenow, CGCI Bee Chairman While presenting my bee program in Laguna Beach this fall, I was asked about bee poop and bees being attracted to saltwater swimming pools. It seems that some bees are making quite a mess on people's walks, walls, laundry, and cars as well as keeping swimmers out of their saltwater swimming pools!

I must admit that I've never been asked about these two subjects in the past, so I did some research on both and found more than I was expecting!

First of all, we all know that honeybees are very tidy. The worker bees do not poop inside their home. The queen, larvae, and drones have their feces cleaned up by the workers and the result is an amazingly clean area, especially when we consider how many individuals live in such a small and confined space.

When bees first leave their nest in the morning to forage, they poop and after they are through collecting pollen and nectar, they poop on their way back to the hive. Good for bee housekeeping! Unfortunately, if there are many bees in the area, this housekeeping practice may cause a problem for some human folks living in urban areas.

There are 40,000+ bees in a typical bee hive and this much poop can create a huge mess on fences, walls, boats and cars. Since the pooping occurs in the same place day after day, slanted markings appear as the bees fly in the same direction as they are defecating. All of the marks are slanted in the direction in which the insects are flying. So, to keep their homes clean, bees are making a mess elsewhere and, in built up areas, this may well be on someone's home or vehicle!

This is typically more of a problem in the spring and early summer when there is the greatest number of individuals in the hive and they are actively foraging

not only to build up their winter reserves but also to feed the developing brood.

Many people think that chilly temperatures of winter kill bees. It's not the temperatures, it's constipation! Inside the hive it's nice and toasty due to thousands of bodies moving about so, if a hive is healthy and full of bees, the chances of freezing to death are very slim.

The problem caused by cold weather is that to generate heat during times of low temperatures, bees need to eat more. The more you eat, the more you poop, or, the more you need to poop. If you're a bee trapped in your hive because it's too cold or too wet out to fly, well, let's just say that it's not a good thing. Bees that have to hold too much poop for too long basically run the risk of poisoning themselves with their own waste.

Winter worker bees will hold their droppings for many weeks during cold weather. They wait until the air is warm enough for a short *cleansing* flight and you don't want to be under them while they are performing this duty.

Note that these droppings are good fertilizer for your plants so they aren't all bad, they're just messy!

So, if you have a backyard hive, or your neighbors do, you may want to observe the bee's flight patterns before you put out a clothesline or your yard furniture. Bee poop tends to stain terribly. The droppings, sometimes called frass, are incredibly sticky and even car washes leave them perfectly intact! If you are experiencing this problem on your laundry, try soaking the items in a degreaser prior to washing.

I've read that baby wipes are good for removing frass from your car and it is much easier to keep your car clean if you wax it regularly. The wax keeps the poop off of the paint too. I'd also recommend keeping your vehicles in the garage if possible, at least during the spring and summer months! If you do not have a garage, purchase a fabric car cover.

Now on to the saltwater swimming pool issue.

The first-ever investigation of the honeybee ability to taste with their front feet may explain why bees are attracted to saltwater pools. Scientists have discovered that bees have taste receptors on their feet that are more sensitive to salt than to sweets!

Saltwater swimming pools do not require chlorine or other chemicals and apparently attract honeybees in masse. The bees need salt for their own metabolic processes and to carry back to their hives to help larvae develop. Thus, homeowners' saltwater pools attract bees like flies to honey. It's the salt and minerals they want. Bees also use salt to cure their honey.

If you have this problem, try placing salt licks out or a bird bath with salty water and totally cover the pool to make it inaccessible and force them to go to the alternative source.

Cotton Top Barrel Cactus

By Bob Middag

The Cotton Top barrel cactus, common name, (Genus: *Echinocactus*, Species: *E. polycephalus*, binomial name *Echinocactus polycephalus*) is a common barrel cactus found in the desert southwest of CA, AZ, NV, UT and in NW Sonora, MX. It is easily recognizable since it forms conspicuous mounds of large spherical plants with its reddish/pale yellow 5-inch-long curving spines. The plant may have up to 50 individual heads, although 10 to 20 are more common on mature plants. It takes a while, since the cotton top barrel has a very slow growth rate.

The cotton top's favorite habitat is under the harsh desert sun growing on loose gravelly soils with good drainage. It is found in some of the hottest deserts, including Death Valley, CA. This beautiful cactus is not particularly threatened in its natural growing areas, although urban sprawl on upward slopes, like in Las Vegas, is taking a toll in these areas. Like all native desert cactus, illegal collection can be a problem.

Specimens used in desert gardens are extracted from the wild and should have proper tags on them. They are relatively expensive and not commonly found in landscaping. Since they grow in areas of little rainfall (often less than 4 inches per year), rotting from overwatering in a garden is to be taken very seriously. Once rotting begins, the plant is doomed.

Summer flowers are small and are bright yellow forming on top the cactus. Full flower opening can be difficult due to thick lattice spines on top. After flowering, a roundish seed pod develops, visually and texturally resembling cotton, hence the name, cotton top! The large amount of "cotton" is used not only a shade barrier on top, but also to protect the large number of small black seeds. The "cotton" is used by some birds as nesting material. The spines are extremely thick and numerous, protecting the plant's skin from the hot desert sun and making it difficult to even see the green skin.

The cotton top barrel cactus is a truly magnificent native desert plant. I never get tired of seeing these on my journeys off in the desert. Hopefully you'll spot some yourself.



cotton top cactus Mormon Well Rd ne of visitor center 9-2-17



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