

VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN

GATHERINGS



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

MAY 2016



PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

Since the winter of 2015, our ranks have been increased by 153 newly trained VIGs. They range, to mention only a few, from ASU students in the sciences and sustainability, to teachers, several with PhDs, a NASA worker and a professional sports manager, artists, architects, hospital director, and those who have traveled and hiked the world to enjoy nature. Many, but not all, are retired. A few are Arizona natives. We are enriched by each new volunteer and thank them for joining us. You will find a brief summary of the newest class elsewhere in this edition.

As this season begins to slow down (for some), it's time for a bit of reflection. Time to thank the outgoing Chairs and Nominating Committee for their able service over the past two years. They have adjusted to two VIG Presidents with differing styles and ideas and have continued to offer ideas, make suggestions, and laugh at our foibles. Muchas gracias to Chairs Mary Behr, Michael Jones, Sue Lanker, Leslie Leviness, Joan McDonnell, Bonnie Pace, Wendy Rose, Sharon Ryan, and Janet Wieder, as well as Jim Joling, interim VP. (See photos on right.) Thanks, too, to Nominating Committee members Pat Fickes, Mike Gilman, Yvonne Sappenfield, and Ed Turcotte.

It's also time to think ahead. We are all actively involved in the many pieces of The Saguaro Initiative (TSI). Its foundation is based on the extensive questioning, study, and planning that resulted in the current Strategic Plan which runs 2012-2017. Ken Schutz, Executive Director, is beginning the search for ideas for the next five years. Now is everyone's chance to step back and think about what changes or improvements one would like to see. That old adage "think outside the box" is just what's needed now. When you're in the Garden, what comes to mind that you'd like to see improved or added? Think broadly and narrowly. The current plan includes capital projects, community engagement activities/actions and increasing our endowment & permanent funds. During 2018-2023, a new Children and Family Garden will be built (hoorah), but what else? Send your ideas to me,

OUTGOING VIG CHAIRS



Left to right - Wendy Rose (Youth), Leslie Leviness (Guest Guides), Janet Wieder (Instructor Aide), Bonnie Pace (Nominating), Joan McDonnell (Hort), and Michael Jones (Docents). Absent: Sharon Ryan (Research, Conservation and Collections), Mary Behr (Special Events), Sue Lanker (Trip).

I'll accumulate them (with your names attached) and forward the results to Ken.

The VIG program continues throughout summer with "Summer Fun" programs. The schedule will be posted soon. Plan on joining us when you're not enjoying other gardens.

MARILYN WOLFE
VIG PRESIDENT

VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	MARILYN WOLFE
VICE PRESIDENT	TBD
SECRETARY	CHARLA BUCKLIN
TREASURER	GENE ALMENDINGER

A bimonthly newsletter for and by the
Volunteers of the Desert Botanical Garden

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INTERPRETIVE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION AT DBG

The Desert Botanical Garden will once again offer a stand-alone Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course at the Desert Botanical Garden July 18 – 21. Classes will be held at the Garden each day from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

This nationally recognized course was developed by the National Association for Interpretation, an international organization dedicated to improving the quality and professionalism in interpretation.

Previously available only as part of docent training, the 2016 summer Certified Interpretive Guide course is open to all volunteers in any position. It will be taught at the Garden by NAI trainers Archer Shelton, Anna Coor, and Nancy White.

The Certified Interpretive Guide program offers a nationally recognized credential indicating an advanced level of training in interpretation. It combines the theoretical foundations of interpretation with practical skills in delivering quality interpretive programming.

The program will benefit anyone who is or wants to be a docent, guest guide, or special events volunteer. It

is also helpful to anyone who is interested in summer work in a state or national park or national monument. The Certified Interpretive Guide certification is recognized by organizations including Arizona State Parks, National Park Service, US Forest Service, and the Phoenix Zoo.

Upon completion of the course participants may choose to become nationally certified as a CIG. You may also take the training without becoming certified.

For those who choose to be certified, the fee is \$145. For those not becoming certified, the fee is \$15. Membership in NAI is not required for certification.

For more information or to sign up for the course, email or call Nancy White at the Garden. She can be reached at nwhite@dbg.org, or by phone at (480) 481-8197.

Currently there are approximately 35 CIGs at the Garden.

ARCHER SHELTON
VOLUNTEER

DELIGHTFUL ENCOUNTERS

A few weeks ago I was staffing the cactus station when a young girl about five years old and her mom approached the table. "May I touch these?" the little girl asked.

"Of course," I answered.

Picking up a cholla skeleton, she said to her mom, "We have these at the Boston Aquarium." Thinking she was confusing the cholla with a piece of coral, I replied, "That is not coral; it's part of the skeleton of a cholla cactus."

"Mom," she said, "We have these at the Boston Natural History Museum."

As you might imagine, I then got to spend a delightful five or ten minutes with this little girl as she inquired about all the things displayed on the discovery cart. When done, she said, "Thank you for sharing the skeletons with me. Have a nice day." As she and her mom continued walking the garden path, I couldn't help but wonder, "What will become of this enchanting little girl, and what will she be doing in another fifteen or twenty years?"

While this was a particularly delightful encounter with a Garden guest, it is but a reminder of how many delightful encounters we docents have with our visitors. It does not matter whether we are doing discovery stations, giving tours, or just roaming the Garden. There are always

people whose lives we have the opportunity to enrich by sharing this magnificent environment of which we are a part; and there are always people who enrich our lives by asking an insightful question or sharing their experience of our garden or other places they have visited.

As my "tour of duty" as one of the docent co-chairs comes to an end, I am thankful that the 'docent' part of the job title does not. I look forward to continuing having the kinds of opportunity described above. Before stepping down, I want publically to thank all of my fellow docents for the magnificent jobs they do to make out Garden the wonderful place that it is. I also want to thank the day captains who have served with gracious hearts and have contributed so much to making the Garden a place where people want to be – guests and docents alike.

I also want to thank Sandy Tufel for all that she has done this year and for her always gracious approach to whatever issues we have faced. Sandy, I learned a lot from you. Thank you.

Also, thanks to Ali, Judy, and Nancy. You make being a volunteer a priceless opportunity.

See you around the Garden.

MICHAEL JONES
DOCENT CO-CHAIR

SAM AND BETTY KITCHELL FAMILY HERITAGE GARDEN



As part of The Saguaro Initiative and the Garden's 75th Anniversary Celebration, the Garden revitalized the historic area in front of the Webster building which is the heart of the original Garden. This area has many plants provided by our founders, early supporters, and our first director. Many of these specimens were planted in 1939-40.

The highlight of the present Heritage Garden is the collection of the giant Cardons measuring over 30 feet in height. They were acquired by George Lindsey, the Garden's first director, on a collecting trip to the Baja Peninsula in 1939. The Cardons were no taller than a person when planted. WOW have they grown!

In updating the Heritage Garden the planners looked to the future by creating a new Cardon Garden. These plants may be small now but will be the giants of the Garden when it celebrates its 150th anniversary.

The Volunteers in the Garden played a very special part in the new Cardon Garden. When Nancy White retired in 2012, 164 volunteers contributed \$4,976 in her honor. This became the first contribution towards the Heritage Garden refurbishment. The Garden has honored that tribute and our contribution with a bronze plaque in the new Cardon Garden. "See the plaque pictured above."

Years from now we will look at the new Cardon Garden and see it as a lasting tribute to Nancy, who happily decided to return to the Garden after her brief retirement.

BARB LIEBERSON
VOLUNTEER

MEET OUR NEWEST VIGS

Lucia Cockrill - Has been in farming and farm management with her husband for 18 yrs and event planning for 25 yrs. She was inspired by a friend to volunteer at the Garden.

Meredith Griffin - A longtime member who wants to help out in one of her favorite places is an environmental consultant, traveler and photographer.

Lee Barker - A native Arizonan who has been in IT for 38 years is now working on a novel when not using culinary skills as a chef.

Melanie Koenig - An ASU student passionate about protecting the earth from climate change is majoring in sustainability and minoring in non-profit management.

Michelle Sullivan - A PhD student and instructor at ASU in the School of Life Sciences thought when she arrived 2 years ago in Arizona that it was a wasteland! She says DBG and hiking in the area changed her mind and heart.

Sijia Liu - An ASU student who speaks both Chinese and English is majoring in landscape architecture with a particular interest in the desert and its animals.

Ellen Lishewski - A PhD in community health, who taught at the college level and has experience in community organization, wants to give her time to a "place that celebrates nature."

Xin Qu-An - An ASU landscape architecture student whose native language is Chinese, is looking forward to attending social

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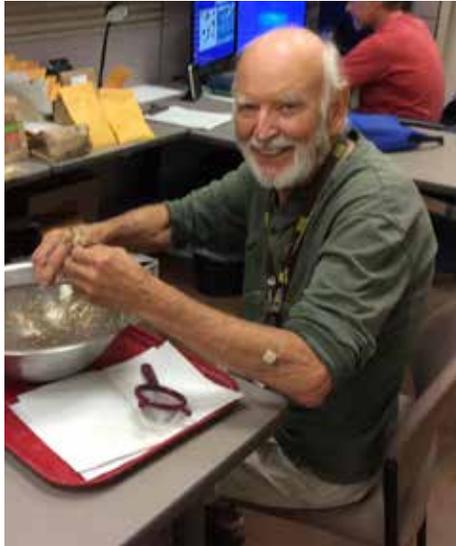
VOLUNTEER UPDATE

VIG JIM SCARLETT

VIG Jim Scarlett passed away in February. He had served over 2800 hours in his 7+ years at the Garden. Jim was a birder, an occasional Gatherings author on birds, and herbarium aide. Comments from those who knew him follow.

MARILYN WOLFE
VIG PRESIDENT

Jim was an important part of the DBG's Monday Morning Bird Walks. He will be missed. He always arrived at the Garden early for the walk and checked out the Wildflower Garden for possible warblers. He also took over from Charlie Brenner the duty of checking for the Great Horned Owls in the eucalyptus and cottonwood trees. Jim had a storehouse of many facts about birds in his brain that he could call on to answer almost any question raised by any visiting birder guest (not to mention questions from his fellow bird guides). Jim had a very complete collection of bird books in his large personal library and was generous in loaning them to fellow birders. He also volunteered to enter the Monday morning birding data into the online ebird database and was keeper of the DBG bird database that dates back over 25 years. We will miss his pleasant demeanor and his broad based knowledge of birds.



- Don Witter, VIG

Jim organized, scanned and archived over 10,000 photographic slides for the herbarium. This was a huge achievement and central to one of the goals of bringing the herbarium's slide collection up to museum archival standards.

- Andrew Salywon, Assistant Herbarium Curator

Jim was the "keeper of the Most Common Birds of the Garden" list, which was a "running 20-year history." In my Volunteer Bird Class each year, I spent some time discussing Jim's list. This is important information to keep current, and Jim will be difficult to replace. I hope someone will be able to fill his very big shoes.....

- Carlos Oldham, Volunteer

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activities in the Garden and hopes to find opportunities for her area of study.

Lynn Mason - A hydrologist for 22 years at Tonto National Forest, not only has a personal garden but tends the roses at her townhouse community.

Raquel Solares - A teaching intern with a BS in biology and a web developer, wants to provide "wonderful experiences to guests in her home state."

Sandy Miller - Has been a math and science middle school teacher for 16 years as well as a math coach. Also a birder, Sandy will use her life experience as an educator to support the mission of a place she "believes in and values."

Karla Scappini - Is a PhD with 35 years experience teaching international development programs, including agricultural development, around the world, helping countries to become self-governing.

Candance Porth - A longtime DBG member and recent retiree after 39 years at HonorHealth, Candance will use her birding and photography skills here to "give back to a place she likes."

CB Blohm - Has been involved in art and design in all media as well as in interior and landscape and horticulture design for many years. He wants to share the desert experience with visitors.

Erica Gail Anderson - Loves wildlife and plants as evidenced by her vocation - teaching natural science and working as an entomology lab tech. Currently a web designer.

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Hort Aide Trip to Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area

A beautiful morning greeted 12 Hort Aides as they gathered at Spur Cross to learn about the conservation area. Also there to greet us was our guide, Ranger Kevin Smith, who used to work at the Desert Botanical Garden. He took us on a meandering hike through a delightful Sonoran Desert landscape, pointing out all the wildflowers and shrubs in bloom. There were the usual suspects such as the poppies, lupines, penstemon, brittlebush, and globemallow. Kevin also pointed out the less familiar plants such as the janusia, a delicate little vine with small yellow flowers, and the hedeoma with purple flowers, belonging to the mint family. While the ground wasn't carpeted with flowers, there was a rich variety, and about 50 species were seen.



Large Saguaro with Hort Aides at Spur Cross
Left to right - Bob Buchwald, Carol Davis hidden behind Bob, Gabrielle Laudenschlager, Sandy Cielaszyk, Jayne Epstein, Joan McDonnell, Karen Sankman, Bonnie Dicus, Dwayne and Bonnie Lewis, Susan and Bill Ahearn

However, it was a non-blooming plant which Kevin pointed out that caught our attention. Growing along the edge of the now dry streambed was a large cucumber vine. Past floods had eaten away at the banks where the plant grows and exposed its large tuber, about the size of a basketball!! Another amazing specimen was an enormous saguaro with multiple large arms crisscrossing each other like a giant octopus waving its tentacles.

We passed by one of several petroglyphs in the park, giving evidence of a people who lived in this area long ago. Kevin pointed out a modern day site where the Spur Cross Ranch operated as a dude ranch. It closed in 1953 and had other owners along the way. It was when developers threatened the area that efforts were made to preserve it.

We visited the wildlife pond that was built to provide extra water for the various animals that live here. The water is pumped from an old well to the pond using solar power. Endangered pup fish now live here as well as a species of dace. A "critter cam"

(motion-activated camera) is mounted on a tree to see what animals come to the water.

The flowing Cave Creek was teeming with lively "Red Spotted Toad" tadpoles which are the only native toad species that lays its eggs singly. The toads metamorphose in 6 to 8 weeks and are nocturnal during the hot summer months.

We all enjoyed our visit here, and have a greater appreciation of this smallest unit of the Maricopa County Park System.

JOAN MCDONNELL
HORT AIDE CHAIR

SUSAN AHEARN
HORT AIDE



Red Spotted Toad tadpoles in Cave Creek



Happy Hort Aides at the Museum of Northern Arizona
Left to right - Joan McDonnell, Sandy Cielaszyk, Karen Breuning, Carol Davis (New Hort aide chair) and Bill Lamire

THE GARDEN CORNER

DESIGNING YOUR GARDEN - A ROOM WITH A VIEW

We all want our homes to look nice inside and, as gardeners, strive to have an attractive garden outside as well. What is sometimes overlooked, however, is the interplay between the two areas. Referred to as a 'viewshed' by designers, this is just a fancy word for what you see when you look out of your window. Is it a gray block wall or are there colorful perennials that attract hummingbirds and butterflies?

We often design our gardens from the standpoint of what we see when we are outside in the garden. This is all well and good, but remember that many of us spend a good amount of time looking out from inside, especially when the temperature chases us indoors. So it is helpful to consider the view from your windows when you place your plants. What view would be most pleasant to wake up to when you look out of your bedroom window? What will your guests see from the guest room window? When you are rinsing off the dishes after dinner, is there a pot of colorful flowers in your viewshed out the kitchen window to make the task more enjoyable?

Sometimes it is desirable to have a tangle of thorny vegetation outside of a front window as a security barrier or a mass of tall, green growth to block the view from a nosy neighbor's window or an unsightly utility pole. Just be sure to leave space for quick and easy exits from your windows in the event of an emergency. However, if you don't have these constraints, be sure to take some time viewing your proposed plant placements from within the house as well as from outside.

If you have bird or hummingbird feeders, make the most of them by placing them close to a window that you look out of often. Surprisingly, studies have shown that fewer bird injuries occur when feeders are within 3 feet of (or more than 30 feet from) a window; apparently because the birds are not flying very fast if they bump into the glass when flushed by a noise or a hunting hawk.



A male Monarch Butterfly is drawn to a blue mistflower in the author's front yard.

The same applies to backyard ponds and water features. Rather than hiding them in a back corner of the yard that seldom gets visited, position them near a window or on the edge of the patio. That way, while you are relaxing in the air-conditioned comfort of your living room or the shade of your patio, you can enjoy the birds coming in to drink and bathe during the heat of the day.

I have installed irrigation drippers near several of my windows so I can rotate pots of perennial plants into view as they come into bloom over the seasons. An even lower maintenance alternative is to plant a bed near your windows with several varieties of flowering

perennials that will give you flowers over much of the year. To attract nectar-feeders such as hummingbirds and verdins, try aloes, chuparosa, *Salvia coccinea*, and *Penstemon parryi*. Queen and Monarch butterflies can't resist blue mistflowers (*Conoclinium* and *Ageratum*, sp.), and carpenter bees and hawk moths come to Sacred Datura. To attract seed-eaters such as Lesser Goldfinches, I've had good luck with Desert Marigolds, Angelita Daisies and other composite

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Hort volunteer Dan Smith often enjoys a fountain festooned with Rosy-faced Lovebirds and other birds from his windows.

THE GARDEN CORNER CONTINUED



The view from the author's bedroom window.

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flowers. Don't be too quick to dead-head them; leave some dried seed heads for the birds. If you can live with seeing your plants gradually disappear as they are consumed by caterpillars in exchange for a view full of beautiful butterflies, try planting a passion vine for Gulf Fritillary butterflies or various species of milkweed for Queen and Monarch butterflies near your windows. Arizona Milkweed (*Asclepias angustifolia*) is said to be a favorite.

And, speaking of gray block walls, don't be afraid to paint them a bright color as a great contrast to the different shades of green in your yard. Be brave!

TOM GATZ
VOLUNTEER

VIG BACKYARD GARDENING PERSPECTIVE

I am a native of Arizona, born in Tucson, but moved to Scottsdale when I was 13. I spent 35+ years in Information Technology. I lived in the Bay Area and worked in the Silicon Valley for 15 years. We moved back to AZ in 1991. We have lived in our house in North Scottsdale since we built it in 1996. I have two passions: cooking and gardening.

No matter where we lived I always had a garden. It may have been a few pots on a patio or a full blown garden as these pictures illustrate.

We picked our lot to back up on a preserve so no one could ever build behind us and block the view of the desert we all love. We used a landscape "architect" when we first moved in. I have spent the last 20 years trying to correct his mistakes (like putting a drip system that watered twice a day on ocotillos who all seemed to die from root-rot). Gradually, I have changed out to plants that represent the Sonoran Desert as much as possible. When I retired, it seemed like a forgone conclusion



that I would become a volunteer at the DBG.

The pictures show a few shots of the backyard overall. They are mostly flowering plants that attract butterflies, bees, and birds. About 5 years ago I put up a 40 foot long raised garden for roses (in the pictures they are just showing off) and would put in a few herbs and tomato plants. The produce results were generally low yield and poor quality. This is the first year here in AZ that I made a separate vegetable garden.

Thanks to things that I learned speaking to the horticulture and docent staff at DBG, I think I have a reasonable chance at vegetables that taste like what they are. I have different varieties of tomatoes, herbs, squash, and eggplants. I can pretend I am Matt Taylor when I go out and pick fresh herbs for our weekly BFD (Barker Family Dinners).

My wife and I have been married 34 years (May 1) and have 28 year old triplets.

LEE BARKER
VOLUNTEER



THE ROADRUNNER



He was a little startled by me as I rounded the corner on my way through the Garden, then looked around as if saying, “Now, where was I headed? . . . before being so rudely interrupted!”

They’re gutsy little guys, those Roadrunners. A different kind of gutsy from the Cactus Wren, they seem to know how much “space” their presence takes up. Once I saw one practically jump onto a table at the Cafe. Sometimes I wonder if they’re going to single-handedly eliminate all the lizards in the Garden before nesting season ends.

For a few years, we watched the nest in the large cactus in front of Webster—from their sitting on the eggs through the fledging of the younguns. That seemed to be their spot. That was fun!

We’ll see where they choose next.

MELINDA LOUISE
VOLUNTEER

SUMMER’S ON THE WAY

VIGs, as you travel far and wide this summer visiting gardens and arboretums, please take photos! Then send them to Kathy Weber (Gatherings’ editor) kathy@4weber.com with the name of the location, your name, name of anyone in the photos, and the approximate time frame.

We’ll showcase the photos in upcoming Gatherings’ editions. Bon voyage!

ASK A GARDENER

Tucked back in the Center for Desert Living (CDL) on Saturdays, Sundays and free days are an impressive group of volunteers.

Approximately 25 active volunteers alternate staffing the Ask A Gardener (AAG) station. All are Maricopa County Master Gardeners and/or Desert Landscape School grads; many are VIGs. In the past year they have given over 750 hours, working February-April and October-November from 10:00am-2:00pm.

The purpose of the AAG program is to assist Garden visitors with information on the best practices and principles of low-desert landscaping and gardening. Located in CDL in order to have close proximity to good examples of plants and landscaping available to local residents, the AAG volunteers answer questions, provide recommendations and hand out plant-specific literature.

This program is led by staff member Angelica Elliott and team leads David and Pam McCarroll. Originally, the AAGs worked weekends only. Free days were added since many of the visitors on those days are local.

I met with David for this interview and a tour of the AAG station on Free Day (crazy, wild)! His enthusiasm and pride for this group permeates all of his discussions.

AAG has expanded and matured over a few short years. The literature has been organized and updated, over a thousand plant information sheets have been generated, training takes place twice a year, a web page and Facebook page just for AAGs have been created as a mechanism for better communication, station equipment has been repaired and replaced, and so much more.

David explains "Originally the source material was extremely limited. Now there is a small AAG library in Archer with a spread sheet highlighting all the written resources. Available at the table is a fat notebook with over 1000 plant sheets. There is a Plant Inquiry Card which can be filled out if a question needs further study. In addition, the Facebook page and website offer current and upcoming event info, copies of plant, climate, and pest handouts, a method for volunteering to mentor new AAG members, and lists of questions still in research."

He continues "We had many questions about the plants in CDL. As a result, AAG, working with the Hort Staff, has mapped out the plants in the CDL by small groupings, identified all, and created a binder with



Karen Gracey, David McCarroll, Lynn Krabbe, and Bruce Kilbride

sheets on each plant with cross-referencing capabilities. For example, if one wants to know what is blooming now in the CDL, we can easily pull that information."

Tallies are kept on each question asked. There are 21 separate categories, with plant identification generating the highest percentage (10%), DBG questions a close second (9%), and wildflower and ground cover questions ranking the lowest (1% each). This information is then used to adjust both the training and literature provided.

If, after consulting multiple resources including Garden staff, a question cannot be answered, the AAGs will reach out to external sources such as the Cactus Society, Fish and Wildlife Services, and Maricopa Extension Service.

Training is held twice a year. Surprisingly, it doesn't just encompass how to use the available plant info. David explained, "Since we get a wide range of questions, the training has to be broad. We represent the Garden to the public, so we need all to be fully informed." The training includes topics as diverse as upcoming DBG events, where things are in the Garden (places to eat, restrooms), and where the baseball stadia are (!).

David concludes that "it's my opinion that the ongoing changes in the *Ask A Gardener* program have created volunteers who are happier because we can solve more problems. Teamwork makes us better at communicating with the public and answering their questions."

MARILYN WOLFE
VIG PRESIDENT

Volunteer DATELINE

MAY

Monday, May 2

VIG Board Meeting
Volunteer HQ, 9-10am

Friday, May 6

Music in the Garden
Guitarras Latinas, Latin World, 7-9pm

Sunday, May 8

Final day of Bruce Munro Exhibit

Tuesday, May 10

Garden Free Day, 8am-8pm

Friday, May 13

Music in the Garden
Big Pete Pearson Blues Band, 7:30-9:30pm

Friday, May 20

Music in the Garden, Hans Olson & Chuck Hall
Western Blues, Originals, 7:30-9:30pm

Friday, May 27

Music in the Garden
Delphine Cortez and Jazz Alive, 7:30-9:30pm

Thursdays and Saturdays, May 28-September 3

Flashlight Tours, 7-10pm

JUNE

Thursdays and Saturdays

Flashlight Tours, 7-10pm

Wednesday, June 1

July Gatherings Deadline

Thursday, June 2

Annual Members' Meeting
Dorrance Hall, 5:30-7pm

Friday, June 3

Music in the Garden,
Run Boy Run
Bluegrass, Folk, 7:30-9:30pm

Monday, June 6

Summer Fun, Speaker TBA
Dorrance Hall, 10am

Friday, June 10

Music in the Garden
A Touch of Class Jazz, Funk, 7:30-9:30pm

Tuesday, June 14

Garden Free Day, 8am-8pm

Friday, June 17

Music in the Garden
Turning Point, Jazz, 7:30-9:30pm

Monday, June 20

Summer Fun, Speaker TBA
Dorrance Hall, 10am

Friday, June 24

Music in the Garden
Sistahs Too, 7:30-9:30pm

JULY

Thursdays and Saturdays

Flashlight Tours, 7-10pm

Monday, July 4

DBG CLOSED

Monday, July 11

Summer Fun, Speaker TBA
Dorrance Hall, 10am

Tuesday, July 12

Garden Free Day, 8am-8pm

Monday, July 25

Summer Fun Speaker TBA
Dorrance Hall, 10am

UNEXPECTED VISITOR AT DBG



We had not been in the garden for a couple weeks due to visitors and so were having "withdrawal" from being there so we opted to walk through to see what was changed and blooming. It was around noon, we walked through the wildflowers then around through the herb garden and heritage, up the two trails and around into the cactus garden. We enjoyed seeing several lizards and a ground squirrel or two. We turned after looking at the "dome" and suddenly I stopped as I saw the snake going across the path. I gasped (I don't like snakes much) and noted it to several people around us so several of us got to "enjoy" the sighting. I knew from our training that it was not venomous, (I thought a king snake) so we just stood and enjoyed it moving on into the cactus garden as many took pictures. First time for a snake sighting in the garden! It's OK if it's the last also!

NANCY KINNEY
VOLUNTEER