



# GATHERINGS



VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER 2012

## Volunteers In The Garden

### LIBERTY WILDLIFE

will give us a real-life view into the whats, whys and hows of their efforts to rescue wild birds and animals.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5

DORRANCE HALL

9:30 a.m. - Refreshments

10:00 a.m. - Program



Photo by Jeff Stemshorn.

# PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

November is the month when we give thanks for nature's bounty, and hope the spooky characters of Halloween do not take up permanent residence in the Desert Botanical Garden. During these long nights, ghosts of people associated with the Garden in past years make their presence known. With the 75th anniversary of the Garden approaching in February, their presence may be more apparent.

On a recent night in the Garden, visiting my favorite plants as the shadows of night consumed the sky, I thought I could hear the ghostly voices of GERTRUDE DIVINE WEBSTER and GUSTAF HALVAR STARCK conversing in the air nearby. I remind you that Gertrude was the philanthropic lady who gave money to start the Garden, and Gustaf was the fellow who collected desert plants in the late 1920s and early 1930s and wanted to start a desert botanical garden but did not have the means to do so.

**Gustaf:** Can you believe that the Garden's 75th anniversary is just around the corner? And look what has happened since 1938. We were so worried that the citizens of Phoenix did not fully appreciate the Sonoran Desert, and we wanted to establish a garden to help ensure that Arizonans would protect and glorify – not destroy – our beloved desert plants. As I observe daily, I cannot believe how the Garden has grown from its original 1500 plants. You would not believe what opportunities the Garden provides to people who work in the Garden; to visitors from Phoenix and the United States; and to people from the whole world who love plants.

**Gertrude:** Oh, Gustaf, tell me more.

**Gustaf:** OK! First of all, the Garden and its staff and volunteers are doing a fantastic job of taking care of our plants. They have built an internationally recognized living collection, created stunning displays and permanent exhibitions, and developed a well respected education program that is offered to everyone from preschoolers to seniors. Everyone learns plant identification, conservation, ecology, water usage, and how to maintain a desert garden.

**Gertrude:** What else is going on?

**Gustaf:** The Garden has attracted a talented team of botanists and scientific researchers who are identifying new plants in the Sonoran Desert, who are conducting advanced research on DNA of desert plants, and who regularly provide expertise to land management agencies.

**Gertrude:** Is there anything special planned for the 75th Anniversary?

**Gustaf:** Yes! A yearlong series of activities is being planned from February 2013 to February 2014. I am especially happy about work that is currently being done to develop special anniversary tours. Traveling Exhibits by artists Carolina Escobar, Philip Haas, and Dale Chihuly will grace the Garden during the Anniversary celebration.

**Gertrude:** Fantastic! I know the Desert Botanical Garden is a place of beauty, and I am so proud of what has been accomplished – more than we ever imagined. I hope the visitors, volunteers, and staff appreciate it, and are having fun!

**MIKE GILMAN**

PRESIDENT, VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN

P.S. We look forward to sharing a special preview of the 75th Anniversary plans at a future VIG Monthly Meeting and in a future issue of *Gatherings*.

P.P.S. Special thanks to BEV DUZIK for providing facts and editing.

## VOLUNTEERS IN THE GARDEN EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	MIKE GILMAN
VICE PRESIDENT	ARCHER SHELTON
SECRETARY	RUTH TILY
TREASURER	JIM JOLING

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

EDITOR/LAYOUT	NANCY WALKER
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Many of you may remember George Nash. He was a mentor of mine and taught me how to be a great *Envoy*. Anyway, here is a letter from him that I thought you all might be interest in:

"We are now back in Texas for the winter. Had a great summer in northern Wisconsin. Wanted to report an incident that occurred a week ago. We were in Kenosha, WI where Bobbie my wife was working with the school district and I was walking along the shores of Lake Michigan. I came upon a flower garden that was being trimmed and cleaned up by a young lady. I commented to her that that was a strange way to cut flowers as they were laying on the side walk. She looked up at me and said, "Desert Botanical Garden" as she read my tee shirt. I looked at her hat and said, 'Desert Botanical Garden" as I read her hat.

She had been a member of the Garden and was now living in Kenosha, volunteering to keep their water-front gardens cleaned up and looking great. We had a great conversation about the Garden and how we missed it."

Thanks George and we miss you too. Until next time,

**MARY STOCK**  
ENVOY CHAIR

## GOT 5 GALLON BUCKETS?

The Horticulture Department Volunteers have been using five gallon paint buckets for carrying gravel, soil, top dressing and trash. After years of use our buckets are falling apart and we need new ones. If anybody has clean five gallon paint buckets that do not leak and which have intact handles, please bring them to the Garden. Drop them off, stacked neatly, open end down, against the north side of the fence beside the Horticulture Department's potting shed, east of the Pulliam Building. We all thank you.

**TOM AND SHIRLEY BEKEY**  
HORTICULTURE AIDES

## THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE

I have a pet rooster. I didn't mean for it to happen.

He was a feral chick whose mother was killed. When I found him in our yard, chirping forlornly, I could not help myself. I fell in love. I rescued him. Now he lives inside and has his own TV.

I'm not alone as an animal rescuer. Some folks do it in a very serious way.

If you have ever wondered how to rescue an eagle, hawk or owl that does not want to be rescued, or meet the fastest animal on the planet, or learn how you, as an individual, can help Arizona's wildlife, join us at the November 5th VIG meeting.

Representatives from Liberty Wildlife will give us a real-life view into the "whats, whys and hows" of their efforts to rescue wild birds and animals, and introduce us to some of them.

There will be no VIG meeting in December. Stay tuned for information on the January program.

Make a note that the NOVEMBER VIG MEETING WILL BE ON THE FIRST MONDAY instead of the second.

**DATE: November 5, 2012**  
**TIME: Food and fellowship 9:30, program 10:00**  
**PLACE: Dorrance Hall**

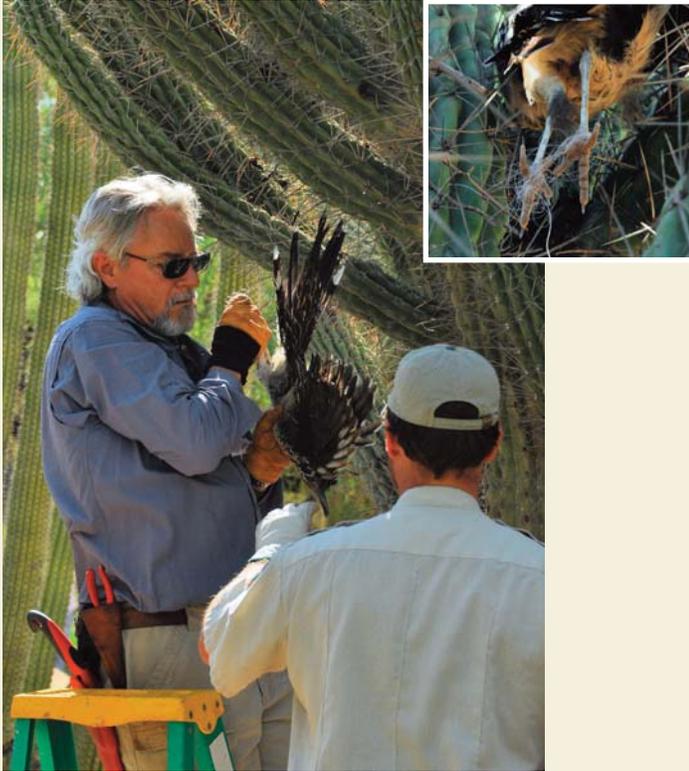
**ARCHER SHELTON**  
CONTINUING EDUCATION



# The Garden Corner

## ROADRUNNER RESCUE

One warm morning last May, Garden photographers JEFF STEMSHORN and SAIJA LEHTONEN spotted a greater road-runner entangled in monofilament fishing line and hanging upside down near its nest in a columnar toothpick cactus just north of Webster Auditorium. They immediately notified Garden staff. Cactus curator SCOTT McMAHON, and then head ranger JIM CARLSON, and horticulture volunteer DAN SMITH came to the rescue.



This roadrunner, found tangled in fishing line near Webster Auditorium, was rescued by Curator of Cactus Scott McMahon and then Head Ranger Jim Carlson. Photo by Jeff Stemshorn.

The roadrunner was released after all of the fishing line was carefully removed. It limped away but appeared to be otherwise unharmed. Garden volunteers and birders monitored its recovery over the coming weeks. It appeared to do better each week and it resumed helping its mate feed their nestlings. This near tragedy with a happy ending was posted on the Internet blog of Garden photographer and birder PEGGY THOMAS. It received 4,000 hits the first day. The next day it was mentioned on all four major Valley TV network stations.

Where did the fishing line come from? Possibly it was brought in by the birds themselves as nest-lining material from the nearby canal or perhaps from the ponds near the zoo. Discarded fishing line has been documented as a mortality factor for aquatic and fish-eating birds such as

herons and bald eagles, but this may be one of the first near calamities for the desert-nesting roadrunner involving this hazardous material. If you are an angler, please do not leave old fishing line in the environment. If you are a hiker and encounter any along our waterways, please pick it up and discard it appropriately.

We know we have at least one pair of roadrunners resident in the Garden. They have had pretty good nesting success for the past few years and they sometimes raise second broods in the same season here. In the Tucson area, there are up to 10 birds per square kilometer. At that density, the Garden could potentially support about six of them. Ten years ago, seeing even one roadrunner in the Garden would have been a red-letter day. Now, daily sightings are frequent. Apparently they have honed in on our abundant lizard and insect populations, their diet mainstays. They also eat scorpions, spiders, small birds (as large as Inca doves which they tenderize against a rock to facilitate swallowing), snakes, (including small rattlesnakes), rodents, occasionally fruits and seeds and even hummingbirds (usually at feeders), swifts and bats (near water). In times of food shortages (unlikely at the Garden) they will even consume their own young, an adaptation that allows them to survive to breed in more favorable years, rather than having the whole family starve to death in a poor year. However, rumors of heavy predation on quail chicks by roadrunners are more often than not a result of roadrunners seen following quail coveys to eat the insects flushed by the movement of the quail family, and "quail are rarely consumed" according to ornithologist Dr. Janice Hughes.

If you come across a roadrunner perched motionless with its wings hanging down and its back feathers spread and disheveled, don't be too quick to call the ranger. Although it may look sick or injured this is actually how chilly roadrunners heat up in the morning, especially in the winter, by exposing their dark skin to the sun's warm rays.

More information on roadrunners is available in Dr. Hughes's thorough account in issue #244 of the [Birds of North America](#) series available in the Garden's Schilling Library, where much of the information used in this article was found.

**TOM GATZ**

THE GARDEN CORNER

Thanks to DIANA HERRON and JEFF STEMSHORN for helping me with this article.

# GARDEN FLOAT VIES AGAIN! Butterflies: A Living Breathing Exhibit

If you have not signed up for Lumi that last weekend in November, come and join your fellow volunteers cheering on the VIG Float to another first place victory in the APS Festival of Lights Parade. Though the actual parade takes place Saturday, December 1st, judging occurs on Friday, November 30th. In the past, our float has won first or second place in the Community/Non-profit category.

Here is an opportunity to wander amongst all the entrants, who, with their lights on and music playing, fill the night with the sights and sounds of the holiday. ASU Special Event majors create a themed area for kids, so don't hesitate to bring any children along. Volunteers will be serving hot chocolate and cookies to all those who wear a Desert Botanical Garden badge. It's a wonderful night of fellowship, community, and pride.

This year's theme is Toys, Treasures and Traditions. Without giving away too much of the design secrets, Volunteers are being depicted as one of the Garden's "Treasures." **You gotta love that!**

Please mark your calendar to come November 30th, starting at 5:30 p.m., to the North Phoenix Baptist Church, Bethany Home Road and Central Avenue. There is parking on site or along the streets north of Bethany Home Road. Look for the bright Garden logo.

This is one of life's "feel good moments." You don't want to miss it.

**DAWN GOLDMAN**  
DBG FLOAT COMMITTEE MEMBER



A fine mist, lush trees, beautiful plants and the sound of a faint trickle surround you. A lily pond is filled with golden fish. An orange, yellow, and purple flurry of color delights your eyes, as the butterflies welcome the morning sun.



You are in the Sonoran Desert; is it a dream? No, you are in the *Marshall Butterfly Pavilion* at the Desert Botanical Garden, the oasis in the desert, where you

can have the unique opportunity to connect with nature by viewing and interacting with hundreds of butterflies. The spacious 36-by-80 foot outdoor screened-in exhibit is a place to enjoy the flight of the butterfly, never knowing what is around the next turn, to savor their brilliant colors and bathe in the fragrances and beauty of the flowers.

The *Marshall Butterfly Pavilion* has a spring and fall renaissance. In the spring you will be lured by the many species of enchanting butterflies and moths with exotic and mysterious names such as painted lady, giant swallowtail, queen, julia, cloudless sulphur, malachite, and zebra swallowtail. The fall is a sea of bright orange and black, the *Mariposa Monarca Monarch Butterfly Exhibit*. Your journey begins as you stroll among hundreds of colorful plants and watch as butterflies flitter from flower to flower, sipping nectar from clusters. Benches are tucked away for you to rest and enjoy the experience and provide a chance for families to discuss their favorite butterflies.

All of this beauty and excitement would not be possible if it were not for our dedicated hort aides, especially my Butterfly Girls, Tracy, Sophia and Linda, I could not do it alone.

Come and join us this fall for our *Mariposa Monarca Monarch Butterfly Exhibit* which tells the story of the journey of the monarchs as they travel to and from Mexico, their lifecycle, their habitat and, the conservation needs of this butterfly. It has already started. Surround yourself with nature.

**JOAN BORIUQA**  
HORTICULTURIST

# COOL SEASON VEGETABLE GARDENING NOW

Our community garden project has stimulated a renewed interest in vegetable gardening among the volunteers and staff. While our friends and family back East are digging out their sweaters and coats, we can grab our spades and trowels and dig up the soil for a vegetable garden. The Valley's warm days and cool nights of fall and winter provide ideal growing conditions for a range of vegetables.



The garden location should receive direct sunlight at least half the day. Turn the soil to a depth of 8-10 inches, spread a 2-3-inch layer of organic matter—compost, forest mulch, composted manure—and work this into the soil. I also sprinkle some soil sulfur and an organic fertilizer over the compost before working it in.

Vegetables that are easy to plant from seed in the garden are lettuce, spinach, kale, mustard, Swiss chard, carrots, radishes, Chinese cabbage, Pak Choi, beets, collards, radishes, carrots, turnips, and rutabagas. Snow peas and sugar snap peas produce especially well here. Some types grow vines that are four to seven feet tall and might require a trellis or a support.

You can plant the cold crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and kohlrabi from seed in October, November, and December but transplants will produce more quickly and are readily available at nurseries. Be sure to plant these a little deeper in the garden than they were grown in the containers.



When planting seeds, the depth that you plant is important so follow the instructions on the seed packets. Generally the larger the seed the deeper you can plant it. Lettuce seeds are especially sensitive to

planting depth—these seeds need light to germinate, so just barely cover them with soil. Keep the soil continually moist until the seeds sprout and are growing, then gradually space out the watering to every other day and then to twice a week as the temperatures get cooler.



Additional information on vegetable gardening can be found at the Cooperative Extension website: [www.cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden](http://www.cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden). Under Publications. Look for [Ten Steps to a Successful Vegetable Garden](#). Another excellent site is [www.urbanfarm.org](http://www.urbanfarm.org).

**RITA HUTT**  
HORT AIDE

## OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

Volunteers and staff have been developing a community garden in the northeast corner of the Desert Botanical Garden.

Since July, they have met, planned, moved soil and compost, planned some more, built raised beds, filled them with layers of soil and compost, then turned it in, installed irrigation lines, installed fencing, flashing, put up bird netting, planted and are now anxiously awaiting the results. It has been a community exercise in gardening which we trust will bear fruit - er - vegetables.

**NANCY WALKER**  
COMMUNITY GARDENER



Gardeners filling the raised beds.

# DOCENT UPDATE

## IN THE MOMENT

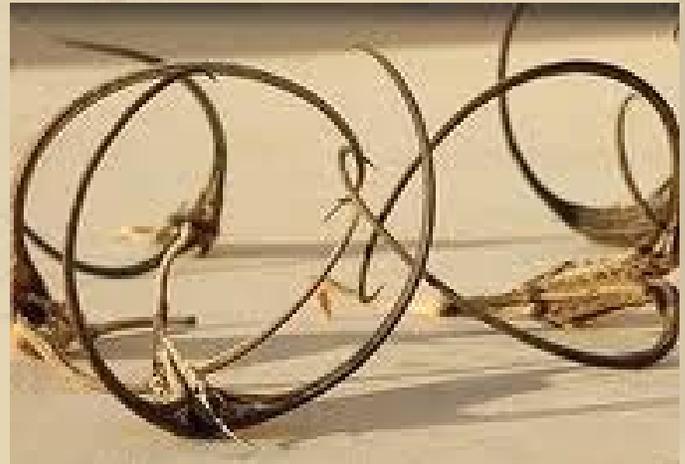
November is a gift, a season generous with its declining temperatures. Cool breezes soothe us as we pause to examine the world more closely. As summer fades to fall, we find reasons to be outside. We are pulled back into nature where treasures previously unseen reveal themselves to the curious. Perhaps they existed during the doldrums of summer but we failed to look closely. As George Santayana, American philosopher, poet and humanist, has written "To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring."

Late rains blessed the earth with unexpected gifts. The desert has responded by igniting a flurry of unusual fall growth. Front yards are crowded with mesquite and palo verde toddlers. They stand together as a miniature forest of potential. All glory and praise to this example of desert life's resilience.

Each seed patiently waited through summer heat until the perfect opportunity for germination arrived. Just as the bear cub's birth is genetically timed to the flowering and fruiting of food, so, too, desert plants seek the optimal conditions for their survival. Our garden visitors are also genetically tuned to decreasing light, arriving in celebration of sunshine and warmth. We identify these escapees from northern climes by their shorts and summer shoes while we, in the crisp fall morn, opt for cool weather garb. The desert has modified us just as we have modified her. We savor the chill – summer's rippling heat still exists in short-term memory- and share our desert knowledge.

Packed in their luggage is a mental construct about desert life. Many salute the Sonoran Desert as a haven in which summer reigns supreme. Ah, but our Sonoran Desert is so much more than a mere summer beauty and stories of how she flourishes and renews herself with the change of season are eagerly shared. We "docently-garbed" street performers bring out our full complement of mysteries. Our goal is to fuel curiosity about plant and desert life, which is the same, and yet different, from what our visitor has mentally packed in that luggage.

Perhaps we will talk about the devil's claw, which ripens and rolls away from its parent plant, *Proboxcidea*, and how, in fall, a weaver soaks that dried devil's claw in water. Gently the weaver coaxes the fibers apart, peeling them toward the tip of the dried fruit.



*Devil's Claw.*

The basket we offer for touching and holding demonstrates how nondescript plant fibers woven together create elegant designs. It is through our storytelling that the interaction of the person, plant, and desert comes alive for our visitors.

***"We do not remember days; we remember moments."*** ~ Cesare Pavese, Italian poet. Each day is your opportunity to share the desert and create moments of remembrance.

LEE ATONNA,  
DOCENT CO-CHAIR

### Mark Your Calendar:

November 15 - Philip Haas Program  
November 16 - Taliesin Tour with Anna Coor  
December 5 - Field Trip to the Central Arizona  
Project: "Water in the Desert"

(Note: American artist and filmmaker Philip Haas' monumental sculpture installation, *The Four Seasons*, will debut this fall at the Desert Botanical Garden.)

# Volunteer DATELINE

## WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES

Mondays, 8:00 a.m.

Bird walks - Meet at Admissions

Tuesdays at 4:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 4:00 p.m.

Yoga classes, Munson Classroom B

## OCTOBER

Fri., Oct. 26 to Sun., Nov. 4, during Garden hours

Day of the Dead at the Garden, *Ofrenda* Exhibit,

Webster Auditorium

## NOVEMBER

Through November 25, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Monarch Butterfly Exhibit, Marshall Butterfly Pavilion

Sat. and Sun., November 3, 4, 10:00 - 5:00 p.m.

*Día de los Muertos*

Monday, November 5

Deadline for December *Gatherings*

Monday, November 5, 9:30 a.m.

Volunteers in the Garden Meeting, Dorrance Hall

Fri. through Mon., Nov. 9 - 12, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Chiles & Chocolate

Thursday, November 15

Philip Haas Program

Saturday, November 17, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dogs' Day in the Garden

Friday, November 30, December 1 and 2, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

*Las Noches de las Luminarias* for Members

## DECEMBER

Monday, December 3

Deadline for January *Gatherings*

December 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,  
26, 27, 28, 29, 30; 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

*Las Noches de las Luminarias* - All public invited