



# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society

Founded June 5, 1977

## *El Charco Del Ingenio* by Jan Keller



Candelabra Cactus  
Photo Jan Keller

Acacia, small leaves help it conserve water  
Photo Jan Keller



In mid-March 2022, I had the opportunity again to visit El Charco del Ingenio (The Mill Puddle), the botanic gardens/nature reserve in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. My first visit was in 2007 and much has changed since that time. The changes were not so much in the vegetation (though global warming has affected even the flora and fauna of the high desert), but in the nature of the place.

Back in 2007, the paths were not delineated,

and the signage was almost non-existent. Also, what was then just “botanic gardens” established in 1989, are now “El Charco del Ingenio”, which includes local plants as well as a conservatory of plant species from all over Mexico. El Charco is not government run, but relies on donations, fund raising events, and admissions (150 pesos or about \$7.50 per person).

The garden is not that of a lush green garden found in tropical climes, but as mentioned above,

that of the high desert (about 6,200 feet) with temperatures generally ranging from the mid-80s to the mid-30s. El Charco encompasses 67 hectares and is divided into numerous distinct sections.

Volunteers give guided walks a few times a week and it is well worth timing your visit to catch one of these. The volunteers for the English-language tours are mostly expats who have made San Miguel their home.

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## *Meeting November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:00*

### **Plant and Seed Exchange**

Come share any extra plants you may have taking over your patio and garden at our annual plant and seed exchange. Succulents can even be brought in unpotted, just include a few bags to help others take them home easier.

If you have a chance, try to

label plants with names and any other information that would help others to grow them.

Carl Jones will be sharpening tools this year, so round up those shovels, hoes and pruners for their annual maintenance.

Nominations for Board positions will be opened, so

start thinking of who you want to run the Society before the January elections.

The meeting will start at 2:00 at Stone Pine Hall, 210 South “H” Street, next to the Lompoc Museum.

All garden and botany enthusiasts are welcome, so invite your friends and neighbors to join in.

### *...El Charco cont. by Jan Keller*

*(Continued from page 1)*



Kapoc flower  
Photo Jan Keller

The location, on the outskirts of town, was selected because of the reservoir (presa) which was created by the damming of the Obraje River in 1910-13 to provide electricity for a textile factory (Fabrica Aurora). Around 1917, electricity came to San Miguel and the dam was rendered moot. However, over the subsequent decades the reservoir became a habitat for wildlife, many species of birds, and some aquatic plant species. And, so, the El Charco came to be.

At the entrance is a new interpretation center featuring the bio culture of the site. The exhibits are beautifully done and informative. Just outside the center many paths (senderos) lead you to different parts of the garden. To name a few, there is: the path of regional plants; the garden of rescued plants (rescatadas); the Conservatory of Mexican Plants; cliff path (acantilados); bird area; the reservoir; garden of the pollinators; and more.

Predominant amongst the plants are cactus and

agave. The varieties present are numerous, each having their own unique characteristics. Acacia, mesquite, copal, and Peruvian pepper trees can be spotted as well.

The Conservatory provided a nice respite from the hot and dry outdoor areas. In it were found a young kapok tree, a palm with cones, and ferns.

Mexico always is an interesting place to visit. I recommend San Miguel de Allende and El Charco del Ingenio the next time you plan a vacation.

### *Forwards and Backwards by Julie "Leafy"*



Dioon edule Chamal Pama de Teresita  
Photo Jan Keller

**Looking backwards:** At the Sept 2022 meeting, we had the opportunity to talk about our own home-grown plants that we were enthusiastic about. Our gardens for many of us bring great joy, and this was obvious in our presentations.

I spoke first, because I wanted to get it over with and be at ease when listening to all the other folks, instead of fretting over how well it would go. Some (including me) are nervous when speaking to many people. But you all are my friends in spirit! So, once talking, I wasn't afraid.

My topic was the Ivy Geranium (*Pelargonium peltatum*), and it's my fave plant because it is no trouble at all to grow, hardly needing any water, and without diseases or pests. It bears beautiful flowers most of the year. My second topic was a houseplant known as "mother-in-law's tongue" or "snake plant". It is so good-looking and the ultimate in easy care.

Jana spoke next about the perennial Hibiscus, how prolific its blooms are, its health benefits, and how to grow it. It comes in many colors, and her specimen,

in an impressive bouquet in a vase, had gorgeous yellow-gold, large flowers.

Then Joe Heuring spoke about his sage, *Salvia* 'Celestial Blue' with fragrant blue flowers and told us we could find it at the Manzanita Nursery. It attracts butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. He brought a few glass jars with a stem of the plant and gave them to whomever wanted one. I accepted one and was tremendously pleased by the pungent-sweet aroma that lasted for weeks.

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## ...Forwards and Backwards cont.

(Continued from page 2)

Jan Keller volunteered next, to talk about her perennial Pineapple Sage. She brought in a branch that was flamboyantly covered with bright red tubular flowers. She spoke of how it had been chopped all the way to the ground earlier this year and had regrown quickly to a bushy height of over 6 feet. The hummingbirds love it; humans admire it; and she was pleased that it was such a survivor. She also brought gigantic lemons, which she invited us to take home. They are from her abundantly bearing trees.

Charlie Blair talked next, with a handsome specimen of Queen Anne's Lace. He said it was a volunteer. What's not to like about that?! He also brought a cute stem with bristly seed pods. He didn't know what its name was, but it was fun to look at.

And then David Lemon came to the front of the room and held up the most beautifully groomed 'Martha Washington' Geranium (*Pelargonium x domesticum*) with multitudinous pink flowers. He says he adds perlite to the soil mix. Whatever other tricks he uses, I don't know, but it certainly is a plant to drool over. It made me smile to look at it!

Next: Mimi showed a potted Kangaroo Paw in

bloom, with unusually attractive colors. She likes it because it is drought tolerant and super easy to grow.

After Mimi, Richard Stroud spoke about his fruit trees, and he brought in a large quince. It is related to apple and pear. It is a tree he is proud of, and it makes a nice fruit. He told us his tree is 8' tall and 16' wide! He also brought several red tomatoes that he invited us to take home. His tomatoes are called "Celebrity". I took a few and can vouch for how incredibly perfectly delicious they are, and also not too acidic, nor too thick a skin—they were very sweet and juicy.

Joe Goetz stood next, with a tomato in his hand, and said little about it; he invited us to have some, which he had placed in a box at the back of the room. (It sat next to Richard's tomatoes.) I took a large multi-colored heirloom "Berkeley Tie-Dye" home. (It was so delicious!) There were some black ones too, called "black Krim".

Visitor Kristin Worthley brought an amazingly large Aloe houseplant. Its virtues are the medicinal properties of aloe leaves and the ease with which it can be grown.

Last, and least, was a plant that Warren Arnold disliked, but he did feel passionate about it, that much we can say! It is called "puncturevine" weed. It

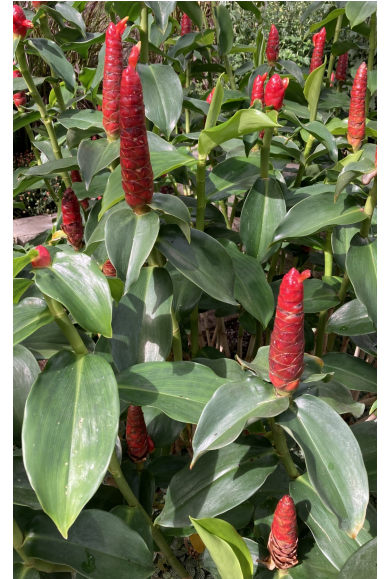
produces burs with sharp spines that can injure humans and animals.

There are many paths we can take when we choose what to grow – or to accept what comes up of its own accord and inclination. The varieties are numerous, each having their own unique characteristics.

Of the plants we talked about, the predominant traits were that they were easy to grow and could get by with little water, though for some, regular water produced better foliage or flowers.

The member presentations provided a nice respite from lectures, and we hope to do it again and again, whenever we do not have a solo speaker.

**Looking forwards to the next meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup>:** our plant exchange. Autumn is the best time for propagating Mediterranean-climate succulents and for planting shrubs and trees. And most of the annuals have gone to seed. So, make some cuttings or collect some seeds to bring on the third Sunday of November.



Red Button Ginger  
*Costus woodsonii*

Photos taken by Mimi Erland on a recent visit to Brookside Gardens in Maryland.

These plants were in the conservatory along with brilliant seasonal displays of mums.

Blue Flowered Ginger  
*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*



## Minutes from September 18, 2022 *by Elena Jones*

### Calling All Gardens...

If you might be interested in your garden being a part of Alpha Club's Garden tours, May 6th, 2023, contact Marcia Hart (LVBHS member) at [mhart434@earthlink.net](mailto:mhart434@earthlink.net) or call her at 805 741-7122.

Any type of garden is eligible to apply.



Happy Fall

From Brookside Gardens,  
Maryland

*Photos Mimi Erland*



General Membership Meeting, Stone Pine Hall

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by President Warren Arnold, who also called roll. We had three guests.

Warren Arnold read the minutes of the May 2022 meeting and announced a few amendments. After Warren Arnold and Julie Levy clarified the point regarding life membership and they made the amendments, the minutes of the May 2022 meeting were approved as amended by Jan Keller's motion, seconded by Charlie Blair. Majority in favor.

Treasurer's Report: Julie Levy reported that, as of 09/16/2022, our petty cash was \$30.00, and our bank account balance was \$17,012.56. As per the budget: total credits \$473.20 (from dues, donations, and a large purchase of books); total debits - \$466.12 (newsletters, postage and web hosting); net total \$7.08.

### Committee Reports

Botanic: Mimi Erland shared that the board had approved an expense in the amount of \$250 for the new engraved signs that will be placed at the BMCG. Mimi informed that the committee was now in the process of choosing the format for the signs. She added that Warren Arnold had the signs that will go

on the taller posts at the garden. She finally announced that, on 'Make a Difference Day' planned for Oct. 22, our society will organize a spruce-up opportunity at the DTG.

Membership: Julie Levy announced that our number had grown by 5, for a total of 46 paying members. She noted that her mass emailing list included an additional 70 or so recipients, to encourage participation.

Historical: Joe Heuring reported that he had been steadily scanning our society's documents and Jan Keller publicly thanked him for taking up the job.

Publications: Charlie Blair reported no changes in the number of our publications and reminded everyone that there were copies of our books and DVDs available for purchase.

Newsletter: Mimi Erland noted a printing error (wrong date of this month's membership meeting), then invited members to submit articles and photos for the next newsletter publications. Elena Jones thanked Mimi for using a hyperlegible font.

### Other announcements

We no longer have a P.O. Box at the Post Office. All correspondence will go to Julie Levy. Elena Jones asked that, on our newsletter, we use the c/o format, right below our society's name or acronym.

### Old Business

Warren Arnold, Jan Keller, and Julie Levy went over the topic of life membership again and it was specified that those members who were nearing 25 years of membership would still be recognized as Life Members but would not be exempt from paying dues.

Warren Arnold reiterated that board meetings were closed to the general membership. However, if a member had pressing business with LVBHS that could not wait to be expressed at a general meeting, that member could request to meet with the board to express that concern, but it would not be debated at that meeting and the member would be excused from the remainder of the board meeting.

### New Business

Proposed change to the by-laws regarding new members joining after January: to pro-rate the dues at the treasurer's discretion. Patcine Beaman made a motion to amend our by-laws as indicated above and received a second by Charlie Blair. Majority approved.

New Member at Large appointed: Elena Jones. Warren Arnold invited members to go look at the kiosk at the Chaparral Botanic Garden and thanked Elena and Carl Jones for a well-done display. Elena men-

## ...Minutes Cont.

*(Continued from page 4)*

tioned that the current map needed to be replaced and she encouraged members to volunteer for the job or to reach out to anyone with the right skills.

Joe Heuring suggested we look into getting our own t-shirts so that we could identify with our society when doing work outdoors. He recommended an online business called Custom Ink, where we could order customized t-shirts (min. 6) and a portion of the sales would go to our society. He

made a motion offering to look into this and Jan Keller seconded it. All in favor.

Carl Jones mentioned that the picnic table at the BMCG was in very bad shape and that he was available to help set up a new one or more. Jan Keller suggested we contact AHC to see if they would take this matter into their own hands. Mimi Erland suggested that we offer to share the expense with the College and Carl Jones offered to reach out to Home Depot for the material/products.

President Warren Arnold reminded us that our next meeting would be held on November 20 at 2:00 p.m. at Stone Pine Hall, then he adjourned this meeting at 2:36 p.m. The business meeting was followed by a plant presentation and refreshments were served.

Respectfully submitted by Elena Jones, Acting Secretary

**Corrections:** President declared Minutes were approved as corrected. No motion or second required; no membership approval required.

**We will be voting on this motion at the November meeting:**

*New members joining LVBHS after January will have their dues pro-rated at the discretion of the treasurer and/or membership chair, but thereafter, all dues will be paid in January of each year.*

**A vote will be conducted at the November meeting for a bylaws change:**

*Current Bylaw #2, paragraph 3: Twenty-five-year honor - an individual member who has paid Society dues for twenty-five years shall become a life member and shall thereafter be exempt from the payment of Society dues.*

**Suggested amendment:**

From 2022 on, members reaching 25 years of membership will no longer be offered an exemption from annual dues. All current life members will continue to be exempt from paying annual dues, but those who wish to pay annual dues are welcome to do so.

Carol Redhead has resigned as LVBHS Secretary. We thank her for her generous service while recording minutes at our meetings. A special election will need to be held at the November meeting to fill the Secretary position. Please consider volunteering to take pen in hand to help the Society.

## LVBHS *founded June 5, 1977*

### BOARD MEMBERS:

**President**

Warren Arnold 757-7992

**Vice President**

Charlie Blair 717-0067

**Secretary**

**Volunteer needed**

**Treasurer**

Julie Levy 717-8713

### COMMITTEES:

**Chaparral Garden**

Elena, Julie, Charlie

**Drought Tolerant Garden**

Mimi Erland

**Education**

Julie Levy

**History**

Joe Heuring

**Horticulture**

-volunteers needed

**Membership**

Julie Levy

lvbothortsoc@gmail.com

**Newsletter**

Mimi Erland

mimierland1@gmail.com

**Publicity**

-volunteer needed

**Website** Julie Levy

www.lvbhs.org

**At Large**

**Representatives:**

Patcine Beaman

Elena Jones

Carl Jones

# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society

LVBHS  
C/O Julie Levy  
1717 East College Avenue  
Lompoc, CA 93436



## **A Brilliancy! A great Invention!**

Richard Stroud cut pipes and welded them to the front of his wheelbarrow for carrying gardening tools. He made it himself, the night before Make a Difference Day on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

He said that when he helped out at the Burton Mesa Chaparral Garden, he found it awkward to carry his tools in the wheelbarrow, and that inspired him to create a better way to transport them. Eureka!

*Story and photo by Julie "Leafy"*



El Chaco del Ingenio,  
Brain Cactus on left,  
Barrel Cactus on  
right  
*photos by Jan Keller*

