

Newsletter

HELLO AUTUMN 

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Fellow Gardeners,

I am happy to say that 2025 has been a year full of accomplishments and firsts for LVBHS. We obtained 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit, which opens many options for donations and will help carry the Society into the future. Not only did LVBHS win first prize in the mini float category for the Flower Festival parade, but we also won first prize among eight states for the Pacific region garden clubs for our website! The LVBHS was featured in a [newspaper article](#) in the *Santa Maria Sun* in September. We began our first annual spring garden tour at the Burton Mesa Chaparral Garden in May, and we hosted our first children's tour at the same garden in October. Finally, this November, the Society is topping off a year of achievements by hosting an event that has been dormant for 14 years: a plant sale!



Guided tour of the Burton Mesa Chaparral Garden. May 2025

The programs for 2025 were fun and engaging. Loretta Diaz presented on the Wonderful World of Herbs in January and Vito Vitelli presented on Central Coast Cacti in March. Our September program had a guest speaker from Manzanita Nursery, Mackenzie Duncan. She gave an interactive and heartfelt presentation on her journey of reacquaintance with the world of plants - A Year in a Native Plant Nursery.

It is no secret that gardeners love to tour gardens: a group from the Society, organized by Martina Livingston, took a field trip to the Huntington Gardens in early June. It was a very full day, but everyone was happy and looking forward to the next visit. Closer to home, four private gardens were opened to Society members on a lovely day in mid-June. Hannelore Nixon noted that she had seen many gardens around the world, but the most special ones were often in someone's backyard.



Sunday November 23, 2025
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

At the Route One Farmers Market
3745 Constellation Rd
Lompoc, CA 93436

Succulents, cacti, indoor and outdoor
plants, holiday specialties, bulbs and seeds
Cash and Zelle accepted
www.lvbhs.org

(Cont.)

The Society was sought out by the Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) to advise on a demonstration garden in Vandenberg Village. A committee led by Martina Livingston mapped and planned a fantastic design that the VVCSD approved and will begin to implement in March 2026, wrapping up a successful collaboration. The City of Lompoc has also reached out to us for advice on their new Water Smart Landscaping Program. Members of the Society are creating a dataset that allows utility conservation coordinators to expand the plants in their program and make it user friendly. Both projects help residents in obtaining rebates for transforming their grass yards to personal, low-water-use oases.

Peppered throughout the year, Society members also partook in Garden Care Days for both the Burton Mesa Chaparral Garden (BMCG) and the Drought Tolerant Garden (DTG). The volunteers did a fantastic job clearing the paths at the BMCG, which set us up for the successful Children's Garden Tour. On 'Make A Difference Day', our members and new friends spread mulch throughout the DTG, beautifying the garden and getting it ready for winter.



72nd Flower Festival Parade crew by J. Levy

We have so many talented and smart members - the Society benefits greatly when we all contribute a couple of hours throughout the year. Help can be given in many ways: sharing your knowledge or experience in the form of a newsletter article, assisting on a project or helping at one of our garden care days. Finding your unique way to help LVBHS stay active in the community and support our mission is greatly appreciated. I am looking forward to what we can do in 2026!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOVEMBER 16, 2025

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Location: Stone Pine Hall

Time: 2 – 4 p.m.

Business meeting
Plant, seed & bulb exchange
Refreshments & conversation

NOVEMBER 23, 2025

PLANT SALE

Location: Vandenberg Village

Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Plants, seeds, bulbs, tubers
and more for sale at Route
One Farmers' Market (3745
Constellation Rd).

JANUARY 18, 2026

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Location: Stone Pine Hall

Time: 2 – 4 p.m.

Business meeting
Program (TBA)
Refreshments & conversation

*You will receive more details as the dates get closer.
Meanwhile, mark your calendar and spread the word!*

Where to find us online

Website: lvbhs.org

Facebook: facebook.com/LVBHS

Instagram: *coming soon!*

LVBHS

An award-winning 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of the Montaña de Oro District and a proud member of [California Garden Clubs, Inc.](#), [Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc.](#) and [National Garden Clubs, Inc.](#)

IN MEMORY OF MEMBER AL THOMPSON

As a youngster in his home state of Ohio, Albert “Al” Thompson, became intrigued with the plants and flowers he found along the rural paths and local gardens. Although trained as an artist, his fondness for collecting and raising plants became a lasting passion.

His teaching career brought him to Lompoc and, fortunately for LVBHS, he became a loyal and energetic member of our organization during its formative years. Over the past 45 years, Al contributed numerous horticultural articles to our newsletter and, occasionally, an original poem. He was also the one who built the first kiosk at the Chaparral Garden.

Al was a docent and garden historian at La Purisima Mission, where he encouraged the exploration of wildflowers and plants along the mission trails. He was also a docent at the Arroyo Hondo Preserve, where he led hiking tours and explained the importance of natural habitats.

At home, Al maintained a thriving garden, growing a great variety of flowers, as well as vegetables and fruit trees. He opened his garden for our summer members’ garden tours on several occasions. Al frequently brought lovely bouquets to our bimonthly meetings, as well as many plants to our garden club’s annual plant and seed exchange. Of his many activities outside of our group, he was also a Rosarian (a certified expert on roses), contributing to published works and giving presentations at the Society’s meetings on roses.



*‘Pink Promise’ rose by
Al Thompson, 2015*

Over the past few years, Al’s contributions to LVBHS slowly diminished, but not his enthusiasm and interest in plants. A past article written by him will sometimes appear in our newsletter when local input is missing. LVBHS has thrived for almost 50 years, buoyed along by the efforts such as those of Al Thompson.

LVBHS STAFF



Al Thompson passed away on September 25, 2025, at age 93 – Photo courtesy of Mimi Erland

BONSAI TREE THAT SURVIVED HIROSHIMA

HELGA GEORGE, PHD

Japanese Bonsai trees are often handed down from generation to generation, and such trees are prized possessions of families. One such tree was the Yamaki bonsai in Hiroshima, which had been in the Yamaki family for five generations.

The Yamaki Nursery was devastated by the atomic bomb. Yet the Yamaki bonsai remained intact among the wreckage. It is now deemed priceless, although it is valued at \$1 million.

Bonsai Master Masaru Yamaki gifted the tree to the USA in honor of the 1976 bicentennial. The nearly 400-year-old tree is now in the [US National Arboretum](#) in Washington, DC – a fitting home for such a glorious survivor.

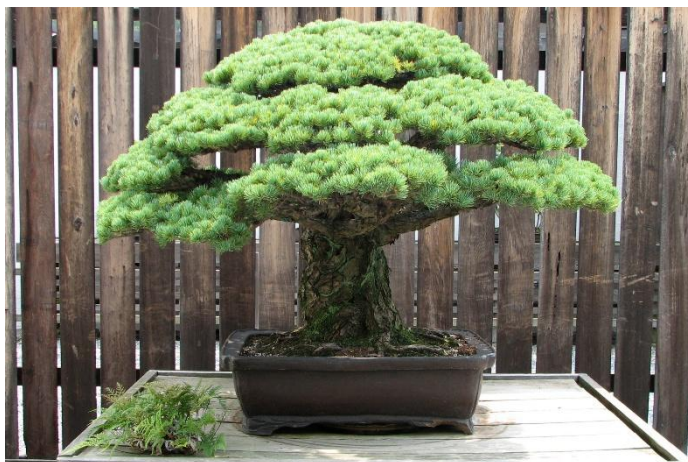


Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons user ragesoss

SPIDER TRIVIA GAME

- A) What female spider occasionally eats its mate?
- B) What spider venom is being studied as an alternative to opioids?
- C) What is the largest spider in the world?
- D) What spider can move up to two feet per second?



Photo of a Goliath bird-eating spider – American Association
for the Advancement of Science

SELECT FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- Wolf spider
- Black widow
- Tarantula
- Goliath bird-eating spider

[Find the answers on the last page 😊]

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The November 2025 Newsletter Team wishes to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. If you would like to be involved with the future publications of our newsletter, please contact us via email or call us at 805-450-3668.

Submissions for the January 2026 newsletter are due on December 15, 2025. Earlier submissions are always appreciated! Please send your inquiries and submissions to lvbothortsoc@gmail.com.

Helga George, Elena Jones, Mark Zuhlsdorf

GARDENING & MORE

MAKE YOUR OWN SIMMERING HOLIDAY POTPOURRI

[Adapted from the *Farmers'
Almanac for the Year 2025*]



- 2 oranges, sliced
- 1 cup cranberries - fresh or frozen
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice berries
- 2 or 3 sprigs of fresh rosemary or pine needles

• 4 cups of water
Simmer in a pot on the stovetop or in a slow cooker on low setting for 4-6 hours. Check often adding water as needed.

(Options: 1 or 2 whole star anise; 1 tsp vanilla extract; apple juice in place of water)



#POLLINATORGARDEN

Now is the time to collect milkweed seeds: pods naturally split open in autumn - perfect for harvesting. Let them dry and store safely through winter. They will be ready for planting in the spring.

(Credit: Monarch Joint Venture)





CARE TO SHARE?

Our member Jan Keller took this cute critter photo while visiting the gardens of the [Newfields](#) museum in Indianapolis in October.

"The squirrel was having quite a feast on the fall decorations!"



Do you have something you would like to share with the club? A photo of a favorite plant, an upcoming gardening event, a travelogue or something else? Send your items to lvbothortsoc@gmail.com.

Answers to the trivia:

- A) Black widow
- B) Tarantula
- C) Goliath bird-eating spider
- D) Wolf spider

[Thanks go to our secretary Helga for challenging us with this seasonal quiz!]

CLUB INFORMATION

Mailing address: LVBHS c/o Carl Jones – Treasurer
416 North C St, Lompoc, CA 93436
E-mail: lvbothortsoc@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues for 2025: \$20.00

Membership meetings 3rd Sunday in Jan, Mar, May, Sep & Nov

Regular meeting location: Stone Pine Hall, 210 South H St

2025 BOARD & COMMITTEES

President: Christine Zuhlsdorf

Vice President: Vito Vitelli

Treasurer: Carl Jones

Secretary: Helga George

Botany: Elena Jones, Charlie Blair

Communications: Elena Jones, Charlie Blair

Education: Christine Zuhlsdorf

Horticulture: Patcine Beaman, Carl Jones

Membership: Helga George

At-Large Reps: Kristeen Caldwell, Julie Levy, Mark Zuhlsdorf