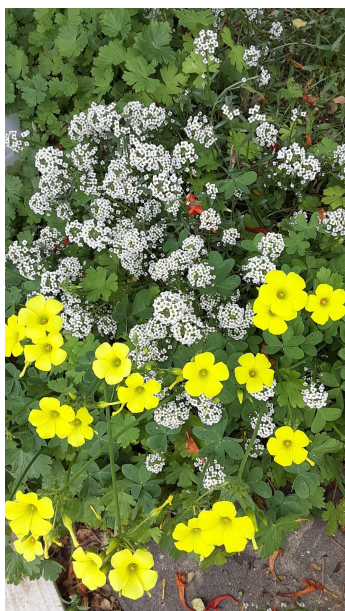




# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society

## Two “Alice” Flowering Plants by Julie Levy



Sweet Alyssum and Bermuda Buttercup above, radish-like root, below. photos Julie Levy



### Sweet Alyssum

To catch the sweet honeyed scent of a sweet alyssum in bloom is like to catch sight of a butterfly fluttering about. It is uplifting!

A little-known fact about *Lobularia maritima*, commonly called “sweet alyssum”, is that it’s a member of the mustard family, which is evident when sampling its edible flowers and leaves, which taste somewhat like a broccoli leaf. In Spain, it is added to salads. (Who knew?!) Well, let’s start a trend and add it to our salads!

### Oxalis

Another “alice” - which I’d call “Ox-Alice in Wonderland”. It

is a true wonder that it will grow anywhere! It must be strong as an ox. To see it is to feel happiness that it is so yellow, so easy to grow. Much easier to grow than yellow daffodils, although not fragrant.

It is very easy to pull up or even uproot, if you do feel like removing it. But oh, how I love the way it blends with all of my plants! It cheers up the view of the yard, mixed in as it is with white sweet alyssums or pink pelargoniums or even green fleshy succulents. It provides a nice contrast to the orange calendulas and bright orange tangerines, too. I’ll keep mine around.

Little tidbits about the Ox that we see in California yards: *Oxalis albicans* ssp. *pilosa* is called “radish root wood sorrel”, and it is a perennial herb native to California. The UC Master Gardeners might call another variety a weed, for sure, and they tell us this one is not native to CA and is called *Oxalis pes caprae* with common name “sourgrass” or “Bermuda buttercup”.

For any variety of Oxalis that has sprung up, it is edible but high in oxalic acid. Small amounts of leaves, flowers, seeds, tubers/roots eaten raw are not dangerous.

## Meeting March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2:00

### Cabrillo High Horticulture

Shelby Daniel, the new Horticulture teacher at Cabrillo High School, will discuss the diverse classes available, which include instruction in floriculture, landscaping, greenhouse growing and viticulture.

Elections for LVBHS officers in 2020 will be held. See page 3

for current list of nominations.

The program will begin at 2:00, Stone Pine Hall, 200 South “H” Street, next to the Lompoc Museum.

Light refreshments are provided. All garden and botany enthusiasts are welcome.



Calendulas blooming even after the frost!

Photo by Julie Levy

## *Favorite Roses and Care* by Al Thompson

*Editor's note: this is the third rose article in a series from November, 2019.*

'DR. W. Van Fleet', not remontant [not repeat flowering], was a very popular climbing rose in the NE Ohio climate. All these roses have a similar light-pleasant scent and exhibit glossy healthy foliage here as well. I grew Dr. W. Van Fleet along the 30 ft. house eave when I lived on Lompoc's westside. They are easily propagated from cuttings & are vigorous climbers. I used to lightly trowel in rose fertilizer around all my rose bases in Feb-March & in June but haven't bothered lately.

What I call "old California favorite climbing roses" (I grow them) are 'Belle of Portugal' a large-flowering pink which is vigorous and is best grown where it can nod down from an overhead arbor,- it generally does not repeat, and

the "Sweetheart Rose", 'Cecile (female) Brunner' which lightly does repeat. They are healthy.

Central Coastal Ca. main rose pruning time is Jan. thru early March. I often jump the gun and start a few weeks earlier to no ill effect. I remove any rose branch which seems diseased or out of place at any time.

One may notice over town neglected rose plants- unpruned, etc., which don't seem to be any the worst for wear, except looking unsightly. It is good to check rose foliage and pull off diseased leaves at any time.

Mildew is our main coastal rose disease, with rose plants ranging from totally resistant to very susceptible. Check rose labels when buying.

Here's a concise rose-care list:

Jan. – Main coastal rose pruning/planting

Feb. – Continue pruning/planting

Mar. – First feeding; deadhead early blooms – First

Apr. – Begins main bloom season; deadhead; cut blooms for house; remove diseased leaves, check next months for (and remove) any sucker growth

May/ June – Continue feeding (6-week intervals); cutting; control disease-hand pick off leaves

July, Aug. – Last feeding; continue disease control, light prune to shape, cut flowers

Sept./Oct./Nov. – Continue disease control, shaping; cut longer stem flowers

Dec.- Continue disease control; cut longer stems; assess disease resistance & plant vigor for possible removal/replacement



## *LVBHS Elections at March Meeting*

Elections are all around us this month! Just like our city, county, state and country, LVBHS needs caring and thoughtful people to direct it too.

People who offer to help as board members and committee chairs are active and busy with family, job and garden, but take a little time every two months to meet and discuss what local projects to focus on

and where to spend the Society's money.

In order for the Society to continue to meet the needs of its members, it must have new voices with fresh ideas. If you have never served, please consider it.

At the January meeting, a few members offered their names. Additional nominations for each office are welcome and

will be added to the voting.

Preliminary Slate:

President: Warren Arnold

Vice President: Charlie Blair

Secretary: Judy Mckinnon

Treasurer: In need of a nomination

**Volunteer!**

## When a Wetland Burns *By Vern Human (reprinted from Dec. 1988)*

Golden Eyes Wetland, one of many wetlands that dot the sand dunes of San Antonio Terrace, Vandenberg Air Force Base, is unique in providing a home for three plant species found in none of the others – *Jaumea carnosa*, *Frankenia grandifolia* and *Potentilla egedii*. Although it is waterless, like most of its counterparts, its soil must contain a strongly saline element.

It went up in flames on May 3, 1988. I didn't work that day, so I didn't see the inferno, but it must have been glorious, for the wetland also supported an immense, dense and already-brown-leaved colony of head-high California Blackberries, *Rubus californicus*, Coyote Bush also was abundant, as were Indian Rush, *Juncus textilis*, and poison oak. The flames thoroughly swept away the wetland's vegetation, leaving only charred, gnomish skeletons of the shrubs.

New plants sprang up almost overnight. I could hardly credit the evidence of my eyes – until I considered that fireman fighting the blaze must have poured on it copious quantities of water, much of which had percolated into the soil. Especially astonishing were a few emerging plants of Water Shield, *Hydrocotyle verticillata*, a species I am not accustomed to seeing except in standing water. Here they sprang from soil utterly arid, even from a deposit of peat so dry that it could have been used for tinder. A novelty and nice surprise, but surely they would die within a

couple of weeks.

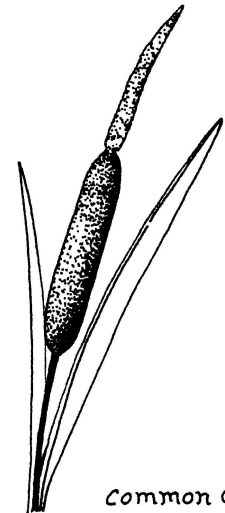
By June 25, Golden Eyes Wetland was far and away the greenest place on San Antonio Terrace. I expected to see people playing golf on it. I surveyed it as time permitted, with the three unique species especially in mind, for they ordinarily live in salt marshes, areas rarely swept by fires. Would they recover? They would – and did. Indeed, *Potentilla*, a-flower when the fire struck, used the disaster as an excuse for putting forth a second burst of bloom.

As of this writing (Sep. 10), Golden Eyes is still the dunes' green wonderland, though it no longer can be mistaken for a golf course. Blackberry vines, much greener than before the fire, billow about my knees; the shrubs have sent forth healthy shoots, and the great colonies of Indian Rush are waist-high and in flower. Also blooming are its relatives – *Juncus lesneurii*, *J. patens*, and *J. bufonius*, the latter not here prior to the fire. Others enjoying a first or second bloom are *Elymus condensatus*, *E. triticoides*, and the white-flowered variety of *Cirsium brevistylum*. Using the firemen's water as an excuse to germinate, and now blooming, are such as Bull Thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*, Marsh Cress, *Rorippa palustris* ssp. *occidentalis*, and Old-World Nightshade, *Solanum nodiflorum*.

I was especially keen to discover which species had not reappeared. The only now-absent one that I am sure was here

prior to the conflagration is *Carex praegracilis*. Has it been permanently killed? I doubt it. I imagine that it simply has decided to wait until next year.

And what has become of the incredible Water Shield? Why, it is absolutely lush, thank you. Its leaves are thick and succulent, its vines fully a foot in length. I even found a second colony! Incredible that fire should have the effect of germinating a water dwelling plant!



Common Cattail



*Solanum xanti*



California Blackberry  
*Rubus ursinus*

## Outings in March and April *by Charlie Blair*



Charlie Blair

### Saturday, 28 March, 9:00 AM, "Drive and Stroll Tour" of Figueroa Mountain.

The Santa Lucia District, Los Padres National Forest (LPNF) will hold one of its fifteenth annual Wildflower Weekends on Figueroa Mountain in conjunction with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). Meet at 9 AM at the Fire Station on Figueroa Mtn. Rd. Turn at the SR 154-Figueroa Mtn. Rd intersection

near Los Olivos and proceed to the Fire Station parking lot. In view of this year's early rains and current dry spell, Helen Tarbet is guessing early peaking of blooming this year.

Sturdy shoes, lunch and liquids, and camera and binoculars recommended. Call Helen Tarbet at 925-9538 ext. 246 or Charles Blair 733-3189 for details.

### Saturday 11 April 2019 9:30 AM, La Purisima Burton Mesa Wildflower Walk

Meet at the La Purisima Mission Parking Lot, corner of Purisima and Mission Gate Rds. (2295 Purisima Rd. Lompoc) at 9:30 AM for this annual California Native Plant Society and LVBHS spring tour of the beauties of the Burton Mesa Chaparral.

Sturdy shoes, lunch & liquids, camera and binoculars advised. For more information, call Charlie at 733-3189

## Minutes from January 19, 2020 *by Judy McKinnon*



Julie Levy

The meeting was opened by President Charlie Blair at 2:10 pm. He welcomed members and new attendees.

Minutes from the November general meeting were approved on a motion by Hannalore Nixon and second by Laura Lee Parks.

The Treasurer's Report was given by Julie Levy. Balance is currently \$17,794.76.

Charlie gave a report of the fall's activities: plant exchange and tool sharpening at the November meeting, a table staffed at the Sunday Farmers Market in Vandenberg Village the previous Sunday (next one will be on March 8, a week before the next general meeting).

He announced that the Drought Tolerant Garden will have a cleanup day on Feb 29,

beginning at 9 am. The city will provide mulch to be spread by our volunteers.

A Nominating Committee is needed to provide a slate of officers for 2020. Warren Arnold agreed to serve as President, Charlie offered to serve as Vice President, Judy McKinnon will continue as Secretary, and Julie Levy will continue to serve as Website Manager. She asked that someone else take over as Treasurer.

A Budget Committee consisting of Judy, Julie and Mimi Erland will meet to work on the new budget. Charlie asked members to consider serving as officers and on the board as at-large members.

During Announcements, Laura Lee asked for people to take turns providing refreshments, and will circulate a sign-up

sheet.

Mimi announced that AHC is starting a Green Gardening class on the SM campus, and introduced Karis Clinton, who will teach the class. Mimi also brought gardening books that are for sale as a fundraiser for LVBHS.

Carol Redhead, Horticultural Committee chair, provided handouts on winter gardening.

Connie Geiger brought seeds to share.

The meeting was adjourned for refreshments (provided by Laura Lee) and the program, presented by Eve Vigil from the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. Next meeting will be March 15. Shelby Daniel, teacher of Ornamental Horticulture at Cabrillo High School will be the speaker.

## Toads Need Love Too *reprinted from Dec. 1988 newsletter, no author listed*

Some people are really crazy about toads, but most of us wouldn't go quite so far as to share our homes with them. Stephen Kennedy has successfully kept five toads happy in his house in a 25 square foot planter for several years. Writing about his house pets in the September/October 1988 issue of *Fine Gardening*, Mr. Kennedy points out a number of reasons why we should be a little kinder to our weird warty friends. Toads spend their time mostly eating bugs and meditating.

Most of us don't have time in our busy schedules for either of these worthwhile pursuits, so it is good that toads can take care of these activities for us. Some of the toads' favorite snack foods are cutworms, caterpillars, weevils, beetles and other insect pests. Toads snatch them out of the air with a long sticky tongue that is virtually quicker than the human eye. If you would like a friend to sit around your garden and eat pests for you, give him a happy home. A damp area near a fre-

quently used hose bib is good. A great toad home is a large clay flowerpot with a chunk broken out of the lip. Turn the pot upside down in a shady spot near some loose soil and a source of moisture. For truly happy and fulfilled toads, a mud puddle is the place to propagate. During cold weather toads hibernate. They need to be able to burrow deep enough into the soil so that they will not freeze. It is important that you not forget where your toad

sanctuary is during the winter. They are grumpy enough when they emerge in the spring without having to crawl out from under a pallet of bricks you stacked on top of them in February.

## Newsletter Articles Welcome

This newsletter is published 5 times per year by the Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society. Its purpose is to increase public awareness of native and cultivated plants.

Subscription is free of charge to all members. Articles written by members are welcome and heartily encouraged. Photos of all sorts of

plants are also needed to enliven the pages. Manuscripts can be sent to Mimi Erland, Editor, at: [MimiErland1@gmail.com](mailto:MimiErland1@gmail.com)



Alan Erland

Rosemary Holmes



## LVBHS *founded June 5, 1977*

### BOARD MEMBERS:

**President**  
Charlie Blair 733-3189  
**Vice President**  
Warren Arnold 736-7633  
**Secretary**  
Judy McKinnon 735-1032  
**Treasurer**  
Julie Levy 735-8061

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

**Chaparral Garden**  
Mimi, Julie, Charlie  
**Drought Tolerant Garden**  
Rosemary Holmes, Mimi  
**Horticultural**  
Carol Redhead 819-0760  
**Membership** Jane Rees 310-951-1151  
**Newsletter**  
Mimi Erland 315-7105

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Patcine Beaman 736-7687  
Jane Rees 310-951-1151

# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society

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Lompoc, CA 93438-1266



Peach blossom  
*photo Julie Levy*

## *DTG Workday*

Eleven dedicated volunteers turned up Saturday, February 28 at the Drought Tolerant Demonstration Garden on Central Avenue.

December rains had brought up a lot of field grass, but staff at the Wastewater Plant had mowed and weeded to make it easier for our mulch project.

We were able to spread four of the six large heaps that the City had placed all along Central Avenue. Afterwards, Brian Fox at Wastewater offered to have City staff spread the remaining heaps as time permits.

If you walk the garden path you will notice that even after all that work, a lot more mulch is needed, especially on the slope leading up to the fence. The Society will be counting on Make A Difference Day in October to bring in some more volunteers!



### *Volunteers :*

*Roberta Mitchell, Charlie Blair,  
Carol Redbead, Eric Erland,  
Warren Arnold and Judy  
Mckinnon*