



# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society



Blue-eyed Speedwell, or  
Blue-eyed Veronica  
*Veronica persica*  
photo Warren Arnold

## *Belly Botanizing at River Park* by Warren Arnold (Feb. 2021)

Following these recent rains, the “lawn” at River Park is lush and has quite a number of non-grass species among the blades. When I first stepped into the grass, filaree covered 80% of the lawn, a pink haze over the area. As I grazed (visually, not feeding) over the meadow, I kept saying “Now what is that?” as every few yards another unknown herb was displaying its blossom. But the one that most caught my interest was a cute little blue flower, and I had to get her name! I grabbed a handful of vegetation and hoped it would stay fresh until I got it

home. There I put it in a bowl of water and left it until the next day. Alas, the petals (corollas to you botany geeks) had come off and were floating among the stems and leaves. Under the dissecting microscope, these petals, joined at their bases, revealed two, and only two stamens.

Looking back at the places where the petals had been on the plant, there remained four sepals and an odd two-lobed ovary with a very thin style/stigma rising between the lobes. With these unorthodox characteristics, this should be a cinch to key out, right?

Wrong! I was not a botany major. I am not a botanist but have come to that discipline only because people want to know “what is the name of that plant” more often than “what is the name of that animal?”. So, I am not great at keying out plants. I was first thrown off by “leaves opposite or alternate.” I chose alternate as that’s what they were, on the upper stems, anyway. Getting nowhere, I decided to “cheat”. Indians wouldn’t have rubbed sticks together if they had had matches, and Rembrandt wouldn’t have made sketches if he had a camera, so I

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Fried Eggs or Matilija Poppy  
*Romneya coulteri*  
Photo Julie Levy

## *Meeting November 21<sup>st</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 un-potted, just include a few bags for easier carrying.

If you have a chance, try to label plants with names and any other information that

would help others to grow them.

As before, Warren has offered to sharpen tools, so round up those shovels, hoes and pruners for their yearly maintenance.

Nominations for Board positions will also be opened, so start thinking of who you want to run the Society before the

January elections.

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, so invite your friends and neighbors to join in.

## Australia, The Big Island *by Jan Keller*



Illawarra Flame Tree  
*Brachychiton acerifolius*



Blanket-leaf  
*Bedfordia arborescens*  
Victoria, New South Wales and  
Tasmania



Bird's Nest Fern  
*Asplenium australasicum*  
New South Wales and  
Queensland

In the last newsletter, I recounted my botanical adventures in Tasmania in December 2019. This article will cover some of the things seen and done in the rest of Australia, but separated from the mainland by Bass Strait.

We flew to Melbourne, New South Wales, from Tasmania. Melbourne, a truly charming city, is dotted with parks and gardens. One of our first stops (it was almost next door to our hotel) was the Fitzroy Gardens. Although I have seen it elsewhere, an Illawarra Flame Tree was in bloom and lovely.

Something I found very interesting and somewhat unique was the water catchment system on the roof of the soccer stadium. The captured water was used to irrigate the grass in and around the stadium.

Next we visited Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria which is actually two gardens. The Melbourne Gardens, which we actually experienced, was founded in 1846 on the south side of the Yarra River which flows through Melbourne. The Gardens extend across 94 sloping acres with trees, garden beds, lakes and lawns. The 30 living plant collections contain almost 50,000 individual plants representing 8,500 different species. At another location, the Cranbourne Gardens was established in 1970 exclusively to feature Australian plants. It

is a wild, 897-acre site significant for biodiversity conservation. It opened to the public in 1989. In addition to the outdoor areas, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is home to the State Botanical Collection, which is referred to by the Tasmanians as The Big Island, the Mainland, or the North Island. As you may recall, Tasmania is part of Australia, but separated from the mainland by Bass Strait. The collection, the largest in Australia and wider Oceania, includes 1.5 million preserved plants, algae and fungi. It also includes Australia's most comprehensive botanical library. (I must admit that I got some of this information from Wikipedia!!)



Cabbage Tree Palm  
*Livistona australis*

A beautiful specimen of this tree grows near the train station in Santa Barbara.

In contrast to the lushness of Melbourne, we traveled to the Northern Territory (northwest) to the Telegraph Train Station near Alice Springs. Red and ghost gum trees dotted the landscape. The springs were once on the surface but are now underground except during very rare heavy rainfall.



Red Gum  
*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*

In Alice Springs, where it was 113 degrees, we visited the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens - quite different from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in Melbourne. The signage, though not uniform, was for the most part very informative.



Harlequin Poverty Bush  
*Eremophila duttonii*

The Harlequin poverty bush, known by the original peoples as Aherre-intenhe, grows on gravel flats. Its leaves have strong medicinal properties, with the juice being used to treat scabies and sores. The leaves are also crushed and

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## *President's Message* by Charlie Blair

We are looking forward to meeting in person again at Stone Pine Hall with COVID precautions for our annual Plant and Seed Exchange and Tool Sharpening. Here is a chance to find homes for those extra plants, bulbs, and seeds, by trading with friends. Also, a chance to rejuvenate those tired tools. Our books and

Burton Mesa Chaparral DVD will be available for sale. We are looking for volunteers to help with tasks for the next year, especially officers, publicity, education liaison, and hospitality.

Our next meetings will be 16 January and 20 March. On 12 February at 9 AM till around noon we will do some clean-up

in the Burton Mesa Interpretive area on Alan Hancock College, and on 2 April, near Earth Day, we will do some weeding and cleaning up in the Drought Tolerant area in front of the Lompoc Wastewater Plant on Central Ave.

Best wishes to all,  
Charlie Blair

**To plant a garden is  
to believe in  
tomorrow**

**Audrey Hepburn**

## *Message from the Vice President* by Julie Levy

It has been a distinct pleasure to serve on the Board of LVBHS since 2012; serving two years as member at large, then seven years as treasurer and membership chair, and now for not yet one year, as Vice President. Finding speakers to entertain and enlighten us at our meetings has been a challenge and a joy. I plan to turn over the reins of VP when our next election is final, early next year. If we do not get a qualified person to run for Treasurer, I will be more than happy to resume that role (if elected, that is).

During our Board meeting in September, I presented a breakdown of how our money is spent and said it would be nice to find schools to give our money to for their garden projects, since we have a bit over \$17,000 in the bank—sitting pretty—and I stressed how important it would be to have

an Education Chair who would reach out to the schools.

Warren (the current membership chair and ex-VP; also our founding father) turned to me and asked me directly how long our money would last. I answered, if we continue with our operating costs of around \$1000 and income of \$300 per year, we could offer \$500 a year to local schools for 14 years or \$1,000 per year for ten years.

In conclusion, I just want to say to all of you that without your enthusiasm for plants and gardening and without your monetary support coming from dues and donations, we would not be who we are – a thriving organization of people with essentially the same goals: a beautiful world and friendship with those who care.

best, --JL



Some green and some gold, Autumn tangerines developing on Julie's tree. Photo Julie Levy

## *Saving the Harvest* by Mimi Erland



A two inch cut is made down the middle of the bag from the top and the two halves are folded around the little fruit stem and stapled together with the fruit hanging inside



Nice color after removing bags

This apple is oddly named  
Winter Banana

It is either too hard or too mealy  
though it makes tasty apple  
sauce, pie and crisp.

*Photos Mimi Erland*

When we moved to our current house, I had this dream of a yard full of fruit trees. I went to the nurseries and chose my trees by the glowing superlatives written on the labels. Some died, some languished, but most have worked out.

My soil is very sandy, with few nutrients, so I added what I thought was plenty of amendment into each planting hole. I watered and watered and watered and fertilized and watered about 10 months out of each year. I pruned my infant trees for structure, making sure the fruit would be easy to reach on low branches. The deer came and helped with my Fuji apple, and it is permanently a low, wide bush now. The top is stunted, and it only grows outward along the branches. The fruit is wonderfully sweet anyway.

I have realized that as the trees grew, they used up the original compost in their planting holes and were starving for nutrients. Fertilizer, especially organic fertilizer, is a pricy investment. I need to find a source with a volume discount. I did find a source for manure. I have a friend with a horse and as long as I have energy to pull the pigweed, grasses, radishes and mustard that sprout, the trees should benefit in the long run.

After the trees started to really mature, the first crops of apples, pears, apricots and plums were wonderful. I had to call reinforcements to help pick and take boxes and bags of fruit away. Then the insects started to realize I had the best

smorgasbord around. The plum leaves were covered with black pear slugs (a fly larva) and the apples and Asian pears were being eaten from the inside by codling moth larva. All of the trees were subject to aphids and deer browsing. With some reading, and some experimentation and elbow grease, I have had some success saving my harvest.

For the aphids, I spray with a strong stream of water to knock them off. This has to be done at the immediate start of when they are first taking hold. After they've become established, they secrete a substance that makes the leaves curl up around them and they are quite safe in their leafy homes unless you smash or pull off the leaves. Spray with water at least twice a week for a couple of weeks until the leaves mature and are not so tempting.

For pear slugs on plum and pear leaves I smush with my hands or dust the whole tree with diatomaceous earth. I have read that regular white baking flour works well for this too. It dries the slugs (also aphids and other soft insects) and they die. Wind and rain can make frequent applications necessary.

To repel deer, I save 15 oz cans from the kitchen and fill about a quarter full of blood meal. Add some water and they stink terribly. One or two cans under a tree or rose bush works well. Sprinkling the leaves of roses and fruit trees with blood meal also works well but wind and rain make frequent applications necessary.

For codling moths, my extreme nemesis, I have resorted to complete protection for apples and Asian pears. I read somewhere to use bags to cover each fruit. It seemed ridiculous at first but after watching more of my apples and pears each year become disgusting messes of black feces, I decided it might be worth my time. I first tried plastic zip bags thinking they would be easier than paper. I didn't like the use of plastic, though, so this year I ordered 1,000 paper bags. The size was 4-1/8 x 2-5/8 x 7-7/8 inches. I cut about two inches off the top. I then found a hand-held stapler and figured out how to place the bag over a little, marble size fruit, fold the sides in and staple together so the bag was as close around the fruit stem as I could get it.

Timing was critical. Some of the fruit still came out buggy. I must have bagged those after they had moth eggs already laid on them. I will have to work a bit faster next year. It was hard to wait all summer watching the bags fill up and get round. I so wanted to peek inside and see how they were doing but didn't think I could get the bag back on if I took it off. The book had said the fruit would not develop a pretty color, so I pulled the bags off about a couple of weeks before harvesting and the apples reddened up beautifully. Bagging was actually pretty successful. I had spent a few evenings after work and a couple of Saturdays and ended up with a number of delicious apples and pears to last several months.

*...Botanizing... by Warren Arnold*

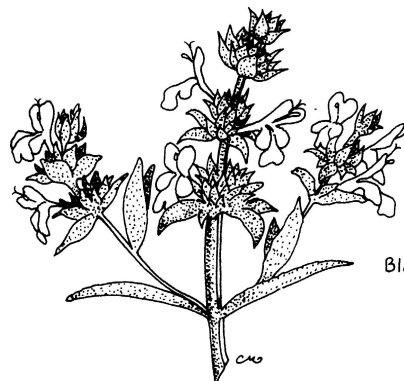
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used what works best in my time of history...

At first I tried "picture book-ing" and not getting any results, I went to the computer and typed in "flowering weeds in lawns" and bingo, there was

my plant, Blue-eyed Speedwell, or Blue-eyed Veronica, *Veronica persica*. In Jepson's Manual, Margriet Wetherwax names it Persian Speedwell. (what's the matter Margriet, are you jealous of Blue-eyed Veronica?)

Warren Arnold, Veronica's boyfriend.



Black Sage  
*Salvia mellifera*

*Soil and Dirt by Charlie Blair*

Here's another item. Thoughts inspired by a Cal Poly soil science professor whom I heard say "dirt".

What's The Difference Between Soil and Dirt? In one word, context. Although the words seem interchangeable,

how they are used differ.

If you are planting things in it; doing habitat restoration or building on it; it is soil. If it's on your hands, clothes, or floor, it is considered dirt, something to clean up.

Soil is a valuable entity that

supports life; has life and a physical structure of its own. Dirt is seen as a nuisance to be cleaned up or disposed of.

Unfortunately, some people think of soil as if it were dirt, rather than a resource to care for.

*LVBHS founded June 5, 1977*

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Mimi, Julie, Charlie

**Drought Tolerant Garden**

-volunteers needed

**Horticulture**

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Warren Arnold 736-7633

**Newsletter**

Mimi Erland 315-7105

**Publicity**

-volunteers needed

**Website**

Julie Levy

lvbothortsoc@gmail.com

**At Large**

**Representatives:**

Anita Friedman 736-2722

Jana Hunking 588-6458



This Agave bloom was great fun to watch shooting for the sky in a matter of weeks.

photo Mimi Erland

# Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society

P.O. Box 1266  
Lompoc, CA 93438-1266



Bee on California Fuchsia

*Photo by Julie Levy*

## ...Big Island cont.

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mixed with fat to make a rubbing medicine for aching muscles.

From Alice Springs, we traveled southwest to Uluru (Ayers Rock) where the soil became sandier, and the vegetation changed. I've included some signage to help with an understanding of the plants that grow in this very hot and arid environment. The Kurkara was especially interesting since the juvenile tree does not branch out until the taproot hits water.

From the hot and dry Northern Territory, we flew east to Cairns in Far North Queensland. That botanical adventure will be included in a future newsletter.

Kurkara  
*Allocasuarina decaisneana*



Fern Gully

Photos by  
Jan Keller



Waddy Wood



Royal Botanic Gardens

