

VOL. 21



Laguna Beach Garden Club Weeder's Digest



May 2026
MEMBER NEWS

Sowing Seeds of Wonder through
a Community of Gardeners.

COME JOIN IN
THE FUN

Inside This Issue

Gate & Garden Tour May 2

A sold out success!

By the time you read this, our 2026 tour will be in the books. Check out photos of our wonderful event on page 5 and soon more will be posted on our website

LagunaBeachGardenClub.org

General Meeting May 8

Dennis Edmund Desjardin "The Wonder of Mushrooms"



Laguna Presbyterian Church

- 9:30 am social — treats will be served
- 10:00 am meeting (see page 3).

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR • DALYNN MALEK

The best part about being part of a hive is that you know that the other members of your nest that have the same goals and interests. Our club is one great hive and I have had the pleasure of editing the story of all that the Laguna Beach Garden Club has done for the past ten years.

Our membership has grown and the amount of giving we have provided to our local community and schools is a true testament to the dedication of our leadership team and all of the worker bees. We have an amazing hive, this

was truly evident in the amazing *Gate & Garden Tour* we put on last weekend.

May marks the end of our club year and we have the summer to enjoy time in our gardens and then look forward to an exciting new year of LBGC. I am looking forward to new jobs in the hive.

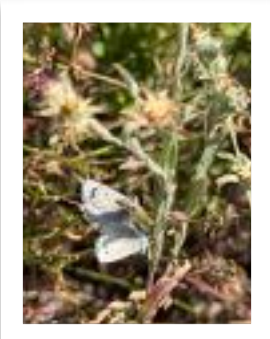
All the best, *Dalynn*



The Butterfly Effect

I hope most of you remember our dynamic December speaker, Dr. Jana Johnson, who brought the Palos Verdes Blue Butterfly back from the brink of extinction. In April the board was invited to join Dr. Johnson and some of her students to release the endangered butterflies.

After signing agreements not to disclose the location (poachers!), we listened to more information about the butterflies.



We learned their techniques for separating the caterpillars, which have to be raised in isolation because they are lazy little cannibals, looking for an easy meal. We were shown the various equipment used to care for them, then told what to expect when we released them – girls hang around, boys zip off – and then headed down the trail. When we found a suitable patch of deerweed, the butterfly's preferred plant for nectaring and egg-laying, we were handed containers labeled with the lineage and gender of the



individual inside. Each group of about ten people released around 40 butterflies, bringing the total to 1000 released this year.

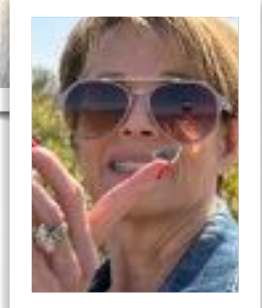
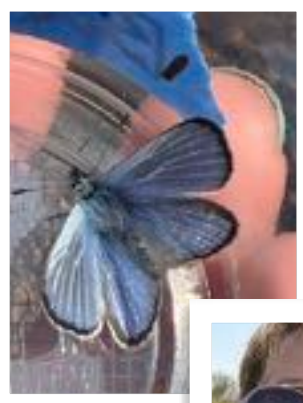
Males and females look different. Males are a brighter blue with a finer black line along their wings. In sunlight, females have a silvery sheen on their wings. Both have adorable striped antennae. Once released, they flutter off, but not far. They are tiny, but we learned to spot them and were delighted to observe some pairs ensuring future generations. We also sprinkled pupae on deerweed. Then each of us was given two or three 4th-instar larvae, green or brown, depending on their age. They climbed from our hands onto deerweed, but we had to be careful to give each little potential cannibal some space. The experience was

rather magical and gave us hope. Dr. Johnson's passion is infectious.

If you would like to be included in events like this, join the board. We have an opening for Past President, a title that does not require having been President in the past or even having served on the board. The Past President advises the nominating committee, bylaws, and member recognition awards. This role gives you the opportunity to see how the board operates, provide input on future ideas, make lifelong friends, and meet the speaker at a cocktail party.

Expect a phone call over the summer outlining the open positions and activities, and giving you the opportunity to choose the one that suits you.

-Nancy Englund



May Speaker

Dennis Edmund Desjardin, PhD, American mycologist and the “The Wonder of Mushrooms”

Dennis Desjardin has been called the “Mushroom Guru of the West Coast”. He graduated in 1989 with a Ph.D. in mycology. After completing his education, he became an assistant professor at Oberlin College, then onto San Francisco State University where he later was appointed as the director of SFSU’s Harry D. Theirs Herbarium. After retirement he became the Chief Mycologist/ Advisor for the corporation Sempera Organics. Desjardin is the author of over 150 scientific publications. His research deals with the ecology and biogeology of fungal species associated with tropical and island habitats, bioluminescent fungi, and fungal systematics. He is credited as the discoverer or co-discoverer of over 300 fungal species. Desjardin is the author of California Mushrooms: The Comprehensive Identification Guide.



Please join us on Friday May 8th, 2026, at 09:30-10:00 for social time and refreshments, meeting begins promptly at 10:00AM. Meetings are held at Laguna Presbyterian Church in Tankersley Hall located at 415 Forest Avenue, Laguna Beach, Ca. Non-members are invited to attend for free on their first visit. For more information on the garden club: www.lagunabeachgardenclub.org



Sage Advice

The beauty of plants is that they enrich our lives so much. Sage is a plant that provides a variety of benefits in the kitchen, the garden, and in our health. The “hidden reason” every backyard needs a sun-drenched sage bush isn’t just about the kitchen – it’s about the profound way this plant bridges the gap between environmental health and human wellness. This link will take you to an article that will make you want to go to your favorite nursery and stock up on a few of these wonderful plants.

https://vegetablegardenblog.com/the-hidden-reason-every-backyard-needs-a-sun-drenched-sage-bush/?utm_id=97758_v0_s00_e0_tv1_a1demonjdouhy3&fbclid=IwY2xjawRMZQJleHRuA2FibQlxMA BicmlkETFPtKzXYzhkUGkzemZGZXZwc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5Mg ABHuD-RQU_KE9Alo1yw8ViY5NBW-bkVojwZUQ9xrvzB9MG6wmXq84gi44Hphz_aem_t_3b-ysldF7mX53m7JzVw <https://vegetablegardenblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Vibrant-sage-in-a-blooming-garden.png>



Last Call for Egg Cartons until September!

(Unless you drop them off at Farmers & Merchants Bank Downtown Over the Summer)

Did you bake a whole bunch of cookies for our tour guests and have a whole bunch of empty egg cartons? If so, fantastic!! Please bring your clean, empty cardboard egg cartons to our meeting on Friday, May 8 for our very own Laguna Food Pantry.

Between Sept 2025 and April 2026 we've collected **1807 cartons**, thanks to you, our Club members and **Mary Lewis's** generous egg-eating neighbors, translating into to about \$820 in savings that the Pantry has used for nutritious food. Not only do we help feed our neighbors, we give those cardboard cartons a second life. We've surpassed our Sept 2024-May 2025 total of 1422 by 385 and with your May donations we'll hit a new high.

How about following Mary's lead by asking your neighbors to donate their egg cartons? It's great way to build community in your neighborhood and help the Pantry help those in need.

Please bring only clean cardboard cartons, half or full dozen, with lids (not 18s) and open and stack them for easy transport. None of the food pantries take plastic, nor do we have a home for any cartons except half and full dozen cardboard.

As always - a shout out to Club member Tom Hensel's son Casey for being our pickup and delivery service for the Pantry. I appreciate him and every one of you for supporting the Laguna Food Pantry and our neighbors in need.

And a special thank you to Dalynn for all the cute graphics she's used in my articles to grab your attention. Dalynn is the bees knees!

I look forward to seeing you and your egg cartons on Friday, May 8!

-Jane Leary



2026 Gate & Garden Tour

The Big Day! Gate & Garden Tour is Here in Photos!

Planning the tour feels a lot like planning a wedding. All the anticipation, excitement and worrying about the details. But just like a wedding, it is totally worth it in the end. When Susan and I start feeling weary from the hours that we put into this endeavor we remind one another who we are really doing it for, and then we smile, take a deep breath and keep on keeping on!

We think about how many scholarships will be given out, how many grants to worthy non-profits and ecologically minded organizations, how many actual human beings will be touched by the efforts of this incredible club full of service minded members and

then it makes it all worth it in spades.

A life lived in service leaves a lasting mark, often described as weaving love into others' lives rather than engraving stone monuments. Or in the words of Albert Einstein, "Only a life lived for others is worthwhile". Thank you to each and every one of you that has stepped up!

-Karen Nelson







Just When You Thought You Knew Everything About How Amazing Bees Are...

When Notre-Dame caught fire in April 2019, attention was on the collapsing spire and the damaged roof. But something much smaller—and unexpected—was also at risk.

On the cathedral's sacristy roof, there were three beehives with around 180,000 bees. They had been installed in 2013 as part of an urban beekeeping program in Paris.

After the fire, many assumed they had been lost. The heat and smoke looked too intense.

A few days later, the cathedral's beekeeper confirmed the opposite: all the bees were still alive. There are a couple of reasons why.

The hives were located away from the main blaze, on a lower section of the structure that was not directly affected by the flames. Also, bees don't react to smoke the same way humans do. Instead of fleeing, they tend to stay inside the hive and consume honey, which helps protect the colony. Since then, the bees have continued producing honey each year during the restoration of Notre-Dame. Wow, who knew!



Trips & Tours

Revisiting the Peterson's Terraced Haven

While our visit last April was on a gray and chilly morning, this year was a perfect, sunny spring day with Daytrippers enjoying for a second time the unique experience of exploring the home and gardens of **Sheila and Jimmy Peterson**. A magnificent 14,000 sq. ft. home on a seven acre lot, their home, garden and surrounding grounds speak of their devotion to family, and family activities, whether indoor or outdoor. It was fun to see the growth from the prior year and the new plantings that Sheila envisioned and enacted.

Synthia Scofield, our T&T veteran, observed that Sheila's plantings are special, not because she features exotic, expensive specimens, but because she does sweeping beds with eye arresting combinations of native and popular flowering plants or trees giving that special SoCal-Mediterranean vibe. We all oohed and ahed again at Sheila's design aesthetic and decorative ideas especially the beauty and detail of the hand painted dining room mural that rivaled the view of San Juan Capistrano from the room's large picture window.

We remain awed and inspired by the Peterson's garden and home, after which, we lunched on farm to table fare at The Ecology Center's Campesino Cafe.



This is the last T&T for Synthia and Patty as administrators, and it has been a pleasure getting to know you and spending time with you Daytrippers!!!

-Patty Gaffney







HOUSEPLANT LIGHT GUIDE

Match Your Plant to Its Light Level



FULL SUN — 6+ Hours Direct Light



Columnar Cactus



Aloe Vera



Yucca



Indoor Palm



Bird of Paradise



Jade Plant



Tropical Hibiscus



BRIGHT INDIRECT LIGHT — Near a Window, No Direct Sun



Monstera



Rubber Plant



Pothos



Anthurium



Umbrella Plant



Polka Dot Begonia



Boston Fern



Chinese Money Plant



SEMI-SHADE — Medium Indirect Light



Calathea



Dieffenbachia



Philodendron Birkin



Peace Lily



Arrowhead Plant



Peperomia caperata



Hoya carnosa



Tradescantia zebrina



SHADE-TOLERANT — Survives Low Light



Snake Plant



ZZ Plant



Dragon Tree



Chinese Evergreen



Cast Iron Plant



Spider Plant



English Ivy

April 11, 2026

The Laguna Beach Garden Club
PO Box 362
Laguna Beach, CA 92652-0362
US

To Our Friends at The Laguna Beach Garden Club,

On behalf of The Ecology Center, thank you so much for your contribution of \$5,000 towards the farmer training program made on 3/27/2026.

What began as a simple dirt lot has grown into a thriving ecological oasis, a living model of what's possible when community comes together with shared purpose. This work continues to flourish because of the belief, participation, and generosity of people like you.

As we step into our next chapter of growth and development, we are grateful to have you alongside us on this journey, one rooted in modeling creative solutions thriving on planet earth.

Your contribution directly supports our efforts to cultivate a more connected, resilient, and abundant future.

Thank you again for your meaningful support.

With gratitude,



Evan Marks
Founder & Executive Director
The Ecology Center

EcoCenter Inc,
DBA The Ecology Center
80-0308638
32701 Alipaz St
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675



GROWING AND GIVING

Dear Veteran,

We are absolutely thrilled to extend our warmest congratulations to you on being awarded a grant for the Veterans Garden. We have approved a grant of \$5,000 for your Veterans Garden on your lovely campus at Laguna College of Art & Design (LCAD). We were moved by your care and concern for veteran students and faculty and their need for a quiet place for reflection and peace. Gardens are restorative as they engage the senses and offer a quiet connection to nature which fosters mental, physical, and emotional healing. We hope that all your students will find rest and tranquility in that space.

The Laguna Beach Garden Club is honored to be a part of such a worthwhile project. Our Board of Directors was extremely pleased that this project will be a hands-on project, part of the student's curriculum to both design, build as well as to maintain. The Board would like to be updated when the students have a design to share so that we can update our members on what great things their contributions are doing in the community.

We are excited to see the progress you will make with this project and look forward to witnessing the positive outcomes of your work. The Laguna Beach Garden Club is proud to partner with LCAD on this important addition to your garden space. I would like to be able to set up a time to present the check and perhaps get a photo that we may use for a press release.

Congratulations once again on this well-deserved achievement!

Warmest regards,

Karen Nelson-949-280-4417
GIVE Committee Chair
Laguna Beach Garden Club



A Job Title Worth Considering

Here's a job title you won't see on LinkedIn: "Ornamental Hermit." The position was part of a strange trend that lasted roughly 100 years and saw English landowners hiring people to live in seclusion on their estates, often in the gardens, with byzantine rules governing their behavior. The practice is believed to have emerged around 1727 and ended just over a century later in 1830. Horticultural norms were in flux at the time, and some homeowners rejected the geometric

designs of the past in favor of a more wild and natural approach. It would seem that nothing was considered more wild than an actual person, especially one forbidden from speaking, cutting their hair, trimming their nails, or wearing shoes.



Garden hermits were expected to do all this for a period of several months or years, and were generally paid handsomely before returning to the outside world. During their residency, they lived in hermitages, small structures that were as important in form as they were in function: In addition to providing a humble place to live, hermitages were meant to draw one's eye to the landscape. Decorative hermits eventually fell out of fashion, but even today we have something similar adorning our yards: the humble garden gnome.



**WHAT GOES WHERE:
Palm Fronds and Spring Flowers**

*Place all palm fronds
in your black lid
landfill carts!*

*Place all spring flowers
in your green lid
organics carts!*

*Before placing
palm fronds into
your black lid
landfill cart,
cut them down
into smaller
pieces to ensure
they fit inside
your cart!*

For more information, please visit
the City's website at
www.lagunahillsca.gov/206/Trash-Recycling-Services

 **CRSR**
COMMUNITY RESOURCES SERVICES
environmental services
the face of a greater green world

Open Garden Event

May 23 from 10am to 1:30pm

25262 Swanway Court, Dana Point

One of the perks of being a member of the Laguna Beach Garden Club is being able to visit member gardens. This month we are featuring **Chris Lutz's** spectacular garden in Dana Point.

Chris Lutz is a notable bromeliad collector and enthusiast based in Dana Point, known for transforming his property into an extensive "jungle paradise" featuring over 1,000 bromeliads. Chris has populated his home property with a massive collection of bromeliads and tillandsia, displaying them on walls, trees, fences, and custom plant pillars.

A notable feature in his garden is the 130-year-old olive tree completely covered in bromeliads. He utilizes specialized vertical conic displays built around palm tree trunks, as well as mounted displays on other mature tropical plants.

Chris is a past president of the Saddleback Valley Bromeliad Society. He has hosted garden tours for organizations like the San Diego Bromeliad and volunteers at the Blue Bell Foundation for Cats where he has installed an extensive bromeliad display.

-Mary Jones



Slate of Directors 2026-2027

Nancy Englund	President
Blair Contratto	Co-Vice President
Sharon Stephens	Co-Vice President
Sarah Jones	Recording Secretary
Vicki Borthwick	Co-Treasurer
Bali Thorn	Co-Treasurer
John Holcombe	Co-Financial Secretary
Jeff Whittiker	Co-Financial Secretary
Susan Denton	Director of Gate & Garden Tour
Karen Nelson	Director of Media & Publicity
Lynn Jax	Director of Membership
Susan South	Director of Ways & Means
Kari Nies	Director of Website
**Vacant	Past President

At this time, we are still searching for a member who is willing to fill the position of Past President, whose responsibilities include: advisor to the Board, the Bylaws Committee, and the Nominating Committee and attending the Board meetings once a month from late August through May (usually on the 4th Friday of the month).

You still have time to put your name in the hat. You can nominate yourself.

At the May 8 meeting, we will conduct a vote to approve this list.

Please contact: Mary Jones, Lynn Jax, or Sharon Stephens – We need our **HIVE** to step up.

Lynn Jax: lynnmjax@icloud.com

Mary Jones: ibjones@cox.net

Sharon Stephens: stephensco@gmail.com

Time to Renew Your Membership

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DRIVE

To date 150 members have renewed. If you have done so as yet, now is the time.

At the May 8 meeting the Membership Table will be set up in its typical spot to the right of the French doors entrance at Tankersley Hall. Please come prepared to renew your membership at the April 10 meeting.

ALL MEMBERS must **RENEW** for the next year; the full year membership is valid from September 2026 through May 2027. Applications will be available at the May 8 meeting.

At the March 13 meeting I explained that dues have increased. Our last increase was in 2019.

Payment Choices:

Dues = **\$90** paid by Credit Card at the meeting **ONLY**.

Our website is being updated to meet the security protocols, so for the time being ALL Credit Card transactions will occur at the meetings until the update is complete.

We offer a \$5 discount if paid by **Check** or **CASH**. = **\$85**

Checks made payable to: Laguna Beach Garden Club, Inc.

To ensure your name appears in next year's Membership Book, payment must be received by **June 1, 2026**. Complete the bottom portion of the application – PLEASE! LEGIBLY.

You can renew:

- at the next meeting on May 8
- use USPS and mail it to the PO Box: P.O., Box 362, Laguna Beach, CA 92652
- or mail it directly to me at Lynn Jax 456 Cress St, Laguna Beach, CA 92651

And consider making a tax-deductible donation with your renewal. Donations are tax deductible to extent allowed by law, help the Club offset costs and fund our great projects, which include: school gardens, scholarships for LBHS seniors and students enrolled in the Horticulture Department at Saddleback College, the apprenticeship program at The Ecology Center, Horticulture Department at OCC, and our beautification community projects, like our beautiful bee mural, "*The Good of the Hive®*".

See the application below for more details.

To save waiting in line, print a copy of the application by visiting our website: lagunabeachgardenclub.org
Complete the form at home & bring to the meeting ready to renew with payment.

Please feel free to contact me at any time via email lynnmjax@icloud.com or cell: 949-294-1500.

Lynn Jax, Director of Membership

P.S. – All **new** members your **official name tag** will be ready for you to pick up at the May 8 meeting.

-Lynn Jax



LAGUNA BEACH GARDEN CLUB, INC.

2026-2027 MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Returning Lifetime
 New Rejoining _____ Year Joined

- 💰 Our annual membership is **\$90**. Payments can be made by credit card at our general meeting.
- 💰 We offer a \$5 discount for payments by cash or check. Complete this form and attach a check for **\$85** made payable to "Laguna Beach Garden Club, Inc." **Mail to: Laguna Beach Garden Club, Inc. ~ P.O. Box 362 ~ Laguna Beach, CA 92652**
- 💰 Please consider making a tax-deductible donation in addition to membership dues. Donations of \$25 or more will be recognized on the **Wall of Fame** in our membership book, Gate & Garden Tour brochure, and website. Donations can offset some of our expenses or can be earmarked for community projects, scholarships, school gardens, etc.
- 💰 All donations are tax deductible and much appreciated.

You do not need to fill out your personal information unless it has changed
PLEASE PRINT NEATLY!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

MOBILE PHONE _____ LANDLINE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

This Area **MUST** be filled out completely

NAME _____ DATE _____

Your application is considered a photo release, giving Laguna Beach Garden Club, Inc. permission to use any photos taken at club functions.

Signature _____

Total amount Paid _____ Dues _____ Donation _____

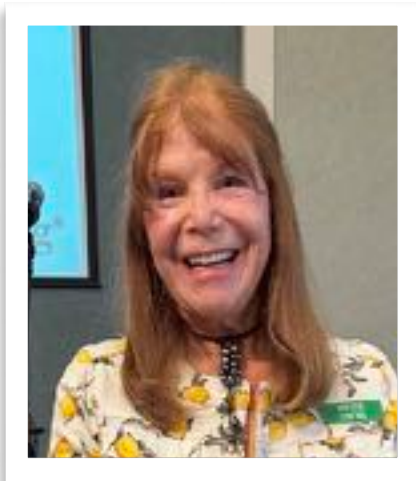
Cash _____ Check _____ Check # _____ Credit Card _____

I can help LBGC with: _____

Our Members Continue Growing & Giving

Volunteer of the Month

Our giving member of the month in April was **Maggie Owens**. Maggie has been a member of the Club since 2007. She volunteers her time to enrich our Club.



Name Tag Wearer

Pam Talarico was “caught” proudly wearing her LBGCC name tag at the April meeting. Pam has been a member since 2022.



Centerpiece

This delightful Spring centerpiece for the April treat table is the design of Bonnie David, a member since 2024.



Plant Table

Ty Hatfield and the plant table at the April meeting.



PO Box 362, Laguna Beach, CA 92652

www.LagunaBeachGardenClub.org

501(c)(3) Charitable Organization