A Hobbit in the Garden?
New Exhibits Highlighting Stormwater Pollution Prevention Are Completed
by Paul Redeker and Laurie Furry

If you happen to stroll through the Garden, you might come across a tiny, rustic cottage with plants sprouting from the roof, and a beautiful, spherical fountain just outside the door. It seems to have appeared overnight, and you might wonder, “Has a Hobbit taken up residence in the Garden?”

This charming cottage is in fact a strawbale building with a green roof, and its sidekick, a mysterious flowing sphere, highlights the Garden’s new permeable paving exhibit. Thanks to a generous grant from the County to highlight stormwater pollution prevention, the Garden was able to create this unique building to demonstrate innovative growing options and sustainable building materials.

Urban runoff has a negative impact on sea life, ocean habitat, tourism, and recreational use of beaches. When homeowners overwater lawns and landscapes, the resulting runoff flows into storm drains. Pollutants from storm drains make their way into the watershed and eventually to the ocean, resulting in beach closures during San Diego’s rainy season. Some of the chemicals found in urban runoff include those that homeowners use to stimulate plant growth, manage weeds and deter garden pests. Homeowners can help reduce urban runoff by capturing rain and irrigation water and keeping it on their properties.

Fall Garden & Home Festival:
The Art of Conservation
By Elizabeth Ramos

Re-read the name of this year’s fall event, and you know there is going to be a lot going on at this fun, family-friendly event, scheduled for Saturday, November 5, 9am-4pm. Of course, there will be the ever-popular plant sale, gardening experts, and demonstrations, but this year a special guest partner—Lakeside’s River Park Conservancy—will add a fabulous sustainable homes expo as part of the event. Lakeside’s River Park Conservancy preserves and restores the biological diversity of the San Diego River, which is a nice complement to our mission of conserving water in the landscape. We are thrilled about this new partnership and the new audiences that will be introduced to both organizations.

The theme of this year’s event—The Art of Conservation—allows us to explore both conservation and art in its many forms. In the works are plans for performing arts, culinary arts, and “arts” of all kinds, including the art of F-U-N, with the introduction of the Ms. Smarty Plants Kidz Zone, an enchanting place full of games, activities, and surprises to delight the little ones.
Executive Director’s Report
by Marty Eberhardt

The temperatures are dropping and we hope the rain will fall. It’s that gardening time of year again – time to find plants, advice, and fun at our Fall Garden and Home Festival on November 5. This year, we’re partnering with the Lakeside’s River Park Conservancy to bring you ideas for indoor as well as outdoor sustainability.

Speaking of sustainability, we have a new mission statement: “To educate and inspire through excellent exhibits and programs that promote water conservation and the sustainable use of related natural resources.” It’s not too different from our former mission statement, with this exception: we’re now promoting a greener world beyond water conservation alone. Our new storm water exhibit (see the article on page 1) is an example of this expanded emphasis; the exhibit explains how water conservation decreases storm water runoff, which leads to cleaner watersheds and oceans.

Fall is also the season of Thanksgiving. If you’re reading this, you may be a long-term member and supporter, or you may be meeting us for the first time. You may be a docent, or you may be considering contributing your talents and joining our wonderful cadre of volunteers; please read the stories in the newsletter about Marilyn Hamilton and Vince McGrath to see how incredibly important our volunteers and docents are to all of us. Whatever your relationship with us, thank you for your interest in the Garden and its work. With our actual and virtual visitors, our members and donors, and all of those who have yet to discover the Garden, but will do so in the coming year, we are helping to make this region we love more sustainable for future generations.

New Exhibits, continued from page 1

One way to capture rainfall is to plant on a rooftop. Green roofs provide a unique aesthetic while expanding growing space. A green roof requires professional installation and assessment by an engineer to ensure proper support of the added weight, and we are very thankful to roofer Ulf Waldmann and Jim Mumford of GreenScaped Buildings for the installation of our green roof system. (See below for information on an upcoming seminar on green roofs.)

Want to make sure our straw bale house is really made out of straw? Take a peek at the Truth Window; a small opening in the stuccoed wall that allows you to see the straw bales inside. The walls are literally constructed from stacked bales of straw, covered with a concrete stucco coating, professionally sculpted by Cliff Davenport and his crew from Lemon Grove Stucco. The beautiful wooden accents were harvested sustainably from our local mountains and incorporated into the cottage. The Garden wishes to thank Lane and Laurie McClellan from Willow Lane Construction for their expertise in the construction and design of this charming addition to the Garden. Nearly everyone who sees it says, “I want one in my yard!”

Permeable pavement is a new innovation that allows water to flow through surface material to the soil layer below. While we typically receive limited rainfall in San Diego, our extensively paved surfaces contribute to toxic urban runoff as water has nowhere to go but into storm drains. This appealing exhibit provides a multi-sensory experience, with its beautiful color palette and soothing sounds. We think you will agree that the design talents of our Horticulture and Facilities Manager, Paul Redeker, along with the efforts of his team are beautifully showcased in this enchanting new exhibit.

We invite you to come and explore these new exhibits. You may not encounter a Hobbit, but you will discover fresh ideas and inspiration for preventing

Gardening on the Rooftop: A Green Roof Seminar will be offered on Saturday, October 22, from 9:30-11:30. Learn about the benefits of planting a green roof from Rosalind Haselbeck of Building Green Futures, Co. See the Garden’s Fall class schedule or our website for more details.
Focus on a Species: Ribes speciosum, Fuchsia Flowering Gooseberry
by Paul Redeker

The Fuchsia Flowering Gooseberry is an attractive and unique shrub with dark green shiny leaves and scarlet flowers. Spiny and showy, this California native provides dangling fuchsia flowers that are spread out on sprawling branches and visited by hummingbirds from January to April. It will grow to about three to four feet tall and wide, and is not picky about soil type. When touching or pruning this plant be extra cautious as the thorns, grouped in threes, are sharp and in abundance.

If you are looking for a plant with a full set of leaves throughout the summer, this might not be the plant for you. This plant is summer deciduous, and as with other Ribes, it is prepared to be practically leafless during the summer months. If given a little extra water it may retain some of its leaves through the summer.

Where can you find an example of Fuchsia Flowering Gooseberry in the Water Conservation Garden? One location is in the California native section, specifically on the small path across from the vegetable garden. You may find it fun and interesting to locate and compare this plant with some of its relatives from the same genus, Ribes. They are Ribes aureum, the Golden Currant, and Ribes indecorum, the White Currant. A second location is between the design loop and the formal garden. Look to the left side of the path in the micro-climate cul-de-sac. We recently added it to this area, which it shares with a small group of plants that are drought tolerant and do well in light shade.

Docent Corner: Vince McGrath
By Marty Eberhardt

It’s no secret how Vince got involved with the Garden—his wife Kay is our part-time bookkeeper and part-time gardening docent. She started asking Vince to help her out at our festivals about a year before he retired. That was 5 1/2 years ago, and now Vince spends thirty hours a month at the Garden!

We’re fortunate that Vince’s professional talents are a wonderful fit for the Garden. Vince was an interior designer, as well as the architectural representative for a paint company. He specified products and colors for schools, shopping centers, hotels, and residential customers. Here at the Garden, he has painted the multipurpose room and the Retrofit House, refinished our benches, reconstructed the soil exhibit, built a new display for the brochure kiosk, and put up endless strings of holiday lights. “I love doing this stuff!” says Vince. He also makes whimsical birdhouses for sale at our spring and fall festivals (look for him at the November 5 festival).

Vince’s natural sales skills have also made him an active member of our membership committee. And he works on general maintenance projects every week—he was off to sweep the amphitheater after we met for a chat.

I asked Vince why he volunteers. He said, “Whether you’re retired or not, it’s an opportunity to give back. The Garden has limited funds and personnel; it takes a small army to fulfill our mission. It doesn’t take a lot of hours to help out.”

We’re so fortunate that Vince has found a niche at the Garden. His good cheer and helpful spirit make the place a little more fun for all of us.

Vince in the Garden
Annual Campaign 2011
by Elizabeth Ramos

Fall is San Diego’s second planting season. Plants put in the ground during the mild autumn months establish strong root systems that allow them to blossom to their full potential in the spring. The Garden’s annual campaign also begins each fall, a time when we reach out to our generous supporters for donations that will ensure that the Garden’s roots are deep, and our programs and services continue to blossom and enrich our community.

This year, our goal is to raise no less than $38,500 through annual campaign donations. Funds from the annual campaign will help us continue to expand our exhibits, offer new classes, create exciting new events, and continue the day-to-day operations that are the backbone of our mission. Our Board of Directors and our cadre of over 100 volunteers will be gearing up to promote and support this important annual fundraiser. To sweeten the challenge, long-time donor and Garden advocate, Mr. Bill Verbeck, will match up to $5,000 of annual campaign donations, doubling the impact of the first $5,000 collected!

Enclosed in this month’s newsletter is an annual campaign envelope. Please take the opportunity to get us off to a good start by being one of the first to contribute to this year’s annual campaign. Your contribution has an exponential impact, rippling out with the good works that we are able to do in the community. Thank you for fostering the environmental stewards of today, as well as those of the future.
In Memory of Marilyn
by Laurie Furry

We are so sad to share the news that one of our Garden docents, Marilyn Hamilton, passed on August 17, 2011.

Marilyn was a very important member of the Garden family who personally embodied the Garden’s mission to educate and inspire. She could regularly be found in the propagation area, with her team, the “Succulent Ladies” as we affectionately call them, sharing her latest artistic efforts and ideas. She made the most beautiful, detailed mosaics and loved to share her techniques and talents.

Marilyn loved working with the children who attended the Garden Discovery Day Camp, and she would introduce them to artistic techniques with great patience. She encouraged all of us to try new things, and to experience the pleasure she found in making art.

Marilyn inspired those who knew her with her positive attitude, kindness and warmth, as well as her determination to remain active despite her struggles with Lou Gehrig’s disease (ALS). She was with the Succulent Ladies two days before her passing, a testament to her love of the Garden and the friends who supported her.

“Marilyn was a source of knowledge and a hard worker. She gave so much of herself even as her illness began to take away her energy and spark. She will be remembered as the Best of the Best and an example of how to live your life to the fullest right until the end. Marilyn leaves behind many original, artful treasures, not to mention the treasure we found in her friendship all these years.”
- Connie Via

New Members
April - July 2011

Student
Catherine Barnett
Jim Barton
William McKinney

Individual
Diane Ayala
Edwina Bixby
Janet Black-Yznaga
Pat Boyce
Peggy Chapin
Joseph Cross
Jan Davis
Satsuki De Pinto
Lisa Deas
M Fair
Jean Francour
Teresa Gersch
William Haladay
Lisa Hecker
Judi Heitz
Pat Johnson
Jill Jones
Carolyn Macias
Cindea Metzler
Christine Murphy
Pat Brown
Paul Valen
Elizabeth Ramos
Margaret Sims
Ray Stagg
Angie Stuart
Sally Trank
Sally Vigil
Kristin Zink

Family
Amelia Knezevich
Barnett & Venghaus
Katherine Casey
Jason Foster
Robert & Carol Gladson
Stephanie Hammes
Cynthia Heinemann
Laura Hillier
Kai Johnson
Markworth Family
Celeste Pack
James & Akila Robinson
Diana Beron

Manzanita
Tim Saunders

The Garden would like to thank the following contributors to the new Stormwater Pollution Prevention exhibit:

Integrity Concrete
Backyard X-Scapes
Willow Lane Designs & Furniture
Ulf Waldmann
Lemon Grove Stucco
GreenScaped Buildings
Artefact Design
Legend Fence Company

“Her hands were strong in the earth, her glance on the sky, Her song was sweet on the wind.” (Judith Wright, The Hawthorn Hedge)

“Marilyn never stopped sowing seeds. She never stopped creating things that will survive her and continue to grow and to inspire other gardeners. Her gentle determination to continue to create and inspire never wavered or weakened. Until the final time I spoke with her this past week, Marilyn continued to sow her seeds of inspiration in others by her simple and direct example, her artistry, her humor, her grace, and her gentle spirit.”
- Anne Mayer
Membership Enrollment Form

Please make checks payable to “The Water Conservation Garden” and send your enrollment and payment to The Water Conservation Garden, 12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, CA 92019. You can also join at www.thegarden.org or in the Garden’s Gift Shop. Thank you for your support of the Garden!

I would like to register at the level indicated:

☑ Student $20
☑ Individual $40
☑ Family $60
☑ California Wild Grape $125
☑ California Sunflower $250
☑ California Lilac $500
☑ Manzanita $1000

☑ My employer will “match” my membership/donation.

Employer Name:_________________________

☑ I am interested in learning more about becoming a docent or volunteer at the Garden.

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Name(s)

____________
Address

____________
City/State/Zip

____________
Telephone Number

____________
Email Address

The Benefits of Membership

Student—$20
Free Newsletters
Free Garden Admission

Basic—$40 Single Individual
Same as Student, plus
Auto Decal Cling
Gift shop-10% Discount
Free or Discounted Admission to Classes/Events

Family—$60 All Household Family Members
Same as Individual, plus
Reciprocal Admission to 250+ Botanic Gardens
Garden Tote Bag or T-Shirt

Conservationist Circle
California Wild Grape—$125
Same as Family, plus
Aluminum Garden Water Bottle
Gift Shop: 15% Discount
1-Gallon Plant Nursery Voucher
One (1) Free Admission to Class of Your Choice
Facility Rental: 10% Discount

California Sunflower—$250
Same as Wild Grape, plus
Invitations to VIP Events and Lectures
Two (2) Free Admission to Class of Your Choice
Facility Rental: 15% Discount

California Lilac—$500
Same as Sunflower, plus
Inscribed Brick Paver in Garden Plaza
Facility Rental: 20% Discount

Manzanita—$1000
Same as Lilac, plus
Insider Updates from Executive Director
Private Tour of the Garden for Personal Guests
Facility Rental: 30% Discount

Open 7 days a week from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  Docent Tours: Saturday 10:30 am, Sunday 1:00 pm