

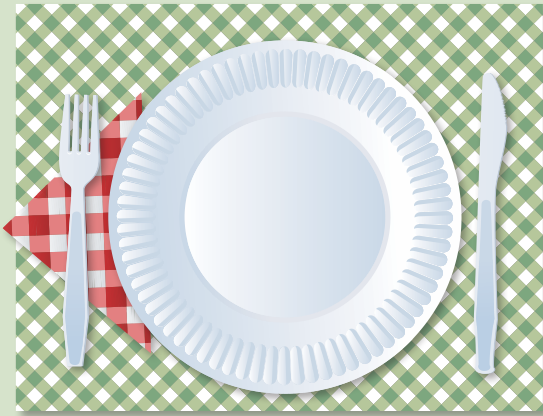


viewpoints

Summer 2013

Volume 43 Issue 4

A Community Newsletter from the Grossmont – Mt. Helix Improvement Association



Annual Dinner Meeting June 23rd, 5:30 – 8:30

We heard you! GMIA members let us know they prefer a dinner format for our Annual Meeting. We listened!

Join us June 23rd at the wonderful Cuyamaca Water Conservation Garden for an outstanding evening featuring Phil's BBQ, a community update by Supervisor Dianne Jacob, and an opportunity to meet and mingle with neighbors.

Reservations for GMIA members are only \$10 and include an informal buffet style dinner, soft drinks, as well as craft beer from San Diego's own Ballast Point and local wine from vintner San Pasqual Wineries. (Non-members may attend for \$20.) As a special treat, complimentary docent led tours are available preceding the event.

Reserve online today at our secure website www.gmia.net or complete and return the enclosed form. Please don't delay—we want to be sure to have an ample quantity of Phil's delicious fare. 🌱

A New Improvement Project Underway

Our Improvement Committee continues steady progress upgrading the Park and Ride and off ramp of the Fuerte/Severin exit at the southwest corner of the Fuerte and I-8. GMIA has partnered with CalTrans to adopt and enhance the area. Knee-high weeds have been cleared, a working irrigation system installed, existing palm trees trimmed, and truckloads of mulch delivered and spread. The 4" thick bed of mulch will inhibit weed germination.

Here's what's next: we will amend the sandy soil and then plant approximately thirty (30) five-gallon red trumpet vines. That's a lot of holes to dig! If you would like to lend a hand, we welcome help from a few volunteers. Please contact Larry Nichols at (619) 440-1607 to sign up. CalTrans requires our volunteers to watch a brief safety video prior to par-



See **IMPROVEMENT** on page 3

Time to Renew

Please check your mailing label for the renewal date of your membership. Memberships renew annually on July 1st, so it is time for many to update their dues. Annual membership is just \$18. Benefits include:

- ◆ Complimentary admission to our Art & Garden Tour
- ◆ Subscription to Viewpoints, our informative quarterly newsletter
- ◆ Invitations to our Annual Meeting, Neighborhood Walks and other events

When neighbors come together as a community, we can influence the proceedings of government, developers, and other external forces that affect the quality of our lives.

That's why your membership in GMIA makes a difference. Please renew today and encourage your neighbors to join. 🌱



GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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440-1607

Dan Mitrovich, 1st Vice President

Larry Nichols, Treasurer/Membership
440-1607

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Tom Osteen	

Viewpoints is a community newsletter published by the Grossmont – Mt. Helix Improvement Association. Letters to the Editor should be sent to P. O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

This newsletter reflects the efforts of your entire Board of Directors.

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www.gmia.net

MISSION

GMIA is a 70+ year old nonprofit 501(c)4 public benefit membership organization. Our mission is to preserve and enhance the character and quality of the community and foster pride in the area. We do not employ a paid staff and are served by an all-volunteer board.

Message from the President

The secret of getting ahead is getting started ~Mark Twain

Truer words were never spoken. Your GMIA board is running at full steam ahead, advocating for our community and bringing our residents together. Here's an update on how we are fulfilling our mission to "Preserve and enhance the character of the community and foster pride in the region."

PRESERVING: We are actively working, along with many concerned residents, to help prevent the commercial designation of properties at the intersection of Lemon Avenue and Bancroft currently proposed by planners from the City of La Mesa. Representatives from GMIA will speak at the La Mesa Planning Commission public meeting, the outcome of which will be decided while this newsletter is at the printer. Influencing the actions of governmental agencies, developers and special interest groups to ensure preservation of our semi-rural way of life is a big focus of our organization. This type of issue never goes away – we recognize we must be ever vigilant.

ENHANCING: GMIA has adopted a proactive role to identify and improve gateways to our community. This has taken the efforts of a tenacious Improvement Committee willing to work their way through the process (read here: bureaucracy) of aligning with County agencies. We are pleased to report our progress —see the article herein, "Improvement Project Underway." Getting started (thank you Mark Twain!), sticking with it, and following through with this initiative have given us a viable blueprint for further projects.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY: In 2012, GMIA conducted a member survey. Many of our constituents told us they valued our ability to build community by bringing residents together at neighborhood events. Linking neighbors together is an essential GMIA undertaking. Of course, first we need a robust membership. GMIA recognized that due to the housing crisis of the last few years, a sizable number of homes changed hands in our area. To reinvigorate our ranks, our Membership Committee produced a mailing program inviting non-member households to join us. Thanks



See **PRESIDENT** on page 5

Thank You Donors!

Thanks to the following donors who have made gifts to GMIA of \$25 or more in excess of their annual dues in the past three months: Norm & Valerie Hapke, Frank & DeAnna Verbeke, Frank & Andrea Goicoechea, Paul Hahn, Guy & Signa Wilcox, and Bobby Harris.

Our sincere apologies to donors Ronald & Margaret Weller who were incorrectly identified in our last Viewpoints. ▲

To Shuttle or Not to Shuttle The Ice Cream Social Question

We would like your input! Your GMIA Board is planning our first members-only Ice Cream Social for September 22nd. This will be a complimentary event and we have reserved the amphitheater at the Mt. Helix summit for the afternoon.



Here's our question: Should GMIA hire a shuttle to help transport our members to the top?

Background: because of limited parking, our option is to walk from the parking lot at the Fire Station on Viviera to the summit—a round trip is approximately 1.3 miles. Our concern is some members who would like to attend may not be able to manage this uphill

amble. What do you think?

There are three ways you can let us know your opinion:

1. We will be sending a brief 3 question survey to our members whose email address we have in our records. Please take a moment to respond.
2. You may email us at yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com.
3. Phone Susan Nichols at 619-440-1607.

We want to hear from you. Please let us know if you want us to secure transportation so more members can enjoy this activity. Thanks for helping make this decision. 🌱

IMPROVEMENT from page 1

icipating. Our date and time to plant will be determined in the next few weeks. BYOS – Bring Your Own Shovel!

Thanks to our members who have let us know of other community gateways that could use some sprucing up. The Avocado/Fuerte intersection has been cited repeatedly as a major crossroads where a lack of maintenance and barren asphalt reflect poorly on our neighborhood. We will keep you posted as we explore future improvement projects. 🌱



Five Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You...

- 1 To you, leaving that window open just a crack during the day is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.
- 2 The two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors.
- 3 Yes, I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.
- 4 I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. (Don't take me up on it.) Sometimes, I carry a clipboard. I do my best to never, ever look like a crook.
- 5 Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.

Sources: Convicted burglars in North Carolina, Oregon, California, and Kentucky; security consultant Chris McGoe, who runs crimedocter.com; and Richard T. Wright, a criminology professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, who interviewed 105 burglars for his book *Burglars on the Job*. 🌱

Watch for GMIA's
FALL COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM
for more valuable tips.

Suburban Coyotes of Mt. Helix

by Pat Ryan

We Grossmont-Mt. Helix residents often feel proud that our semi-rural neighborhoods still attract the wildlife that has disappeared from the urban areas of San Diego County. Along with our skunks, opossums, snakes, hawks and rabbits, the coyote is a survivor that learns quickly and has adapted to live among humans as its natural habitats have been lost to development. Once limited to the Plains of North America, they now inhabit every state in the union except Hawaii.

Western coyotes weigh less than their eastern cousins; males typically weigh 20 to 35 pounds when full-grown, while females are about 18-25 pounds. They usually stand about 18 inches at the shoulders, resemble a small German shepherd dog, but with a longer, narrower snout and a bushy black-tipped tail. Rodents and rabbits are a major portion of their diet, however they will rely on insects, fruits, berries, songbirds, and carrion.

Lately, some members have been sharing stories about coyotes roaming their neighborhoods in broad daylight

and preying on small domestic animals, even in the presence of their owners. Although this behavior has always occurred in our area, they are wondering if it is escalating and what is being done about it.

To address these questions, I contacted the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures. They are our link to the Wildlife Services who oversee such concerns. I spoke with Terry Cox who reported that we should take measures to keep coyotes from getting comfortable around humans. Proposition 4, passed in 1998, mandates that coyotes can only be trapped and removed if they are a threat to human health and safety. He referred me to Larry Hawkins, USDA spokesman for California in Sacramento for more information.

According to Mr. Hawkins, no active coyote control measures are in place in the La Mesa-Mt. Helix area. His office has received calls about them being spotted, but no reports of coyote incidents have been made to them.

"They live in our habitat and we expect to see them. They love living in cities where they have food, water, shelter and no apex predators," he reported. "Your area is pretty quiet," he added.

Speaking of quiet, some members have observed that coyotes are not vocalizing as much in many areas right now. They tend not to vocalize (bark and howl) in May and June because they are rearing their 4-7 pups that were born in March and April. Because food requirements increase dramatically during pup rearing, this is a period when conflicts between humans and coyotes are more likely to occur. If food is deliberately or inadvertently provided by people, the youngsters quickly learn not to fear humans and will develop a dependency on easy food sources.



The USDA recommends some steps we can take around our homes to reduce the chances of human-coyote conflicts:

- ◆ Do not feed coyotes! Intentionally feeding coyotes can increase the risk to pets and children throughout the neighborhood
- ◆ Eliminate sources of water, especially in our dry climate
- ◆ Position bird feeders so that coyotes can't get the birds, attracted rodents or the feed
- ◆ Feed pets indoors or pick up any leftovers if feeding outdoors
- ◆ Trim and clean, up to 2 feet, any shrubbery that provides hiding cover for coyotes or prey
- ◆ Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks and garden sheds
- ◆ Enclose your yard with a 6 foot fence with the bottom (or wire mesh) extending 6 inches below ground level for best results
- ◆ Pick up fruit that has fallen to the ground under fruit trees. Coyotes prefer the fruit and seeds of these common landscape plants: Indian laurel fig, Passion fruit, Strawberry tree, Elderberry, Avocado, Fig, Guava, Loquat
- ◆ Manage compost piles so coyotes aren't attracted by rodents and don't dig for grubs and worms

See COYOTES on page 5





Photo by Bob Cederdahl

2013 Art and Garden Tour

by Sue Creveling

GMIA members enjoyed spectacular garden viewing this past May 5th. The rain held off just long enough for all who ventured into the amazing gardens that were part of this year's tour. Thank you to Gary and Carol Prior, Lee and Muan Knight, Richard and Nancy Fassett, Jonathan Becker and Tere Trout for sharing their landscapes and gardening experiences with our guests. Thanks also to Ed and Peggy Paradis for displaying their birdhouses, bluebird nest boxes and bird feeders and also to Gerald Darnell for exhibiting his hand-crafted owl boxes. We always appreciate and offer a sincere thanks to GMIA members who help us out with this event: Mary Annette Hall, Kristi and Craig Anderson, Betsy Quinn, Kelly Moore, and GMIA Director spouses. A special "well done" to the Art and Garden Tour Curator Jeff Rule for once again organizing such a wonderful event and to Tour Writer Pat Ryan whose descriptions of the gardens were as thoughtfully crafted as the gardens themselves.

SEE PHOTOS ON PAGE 6!

COYOTES from page 4

◆ Install motion sensor lights to help deter coyotes

Most complaints from pet owners regarding coyote encounters in our area involve our cats and small dogs. One source suggests that small white animals under thirty pounds are sometimes mistaken for rabbits. UC Cooperative Extension advises that we keep our animals secured either inside or in a kennel both day and night when they are left unsupervised. When exercising your dog, always use a leash, especially when walking in known coyote areas. Carry a walking stick, air horn, whistle, or aluminum can filled with coins to help scare off a coyote. Avoid walking pets at dawn or dusk, and avoid areas of dense vegetation. Vary your route or time of day as coyotes can pick up on daily patterns.

If an aggressive or fearless coyote approaches you or your pets, UC Extension advises you to try to frighten it away by shouting in a deep voice, waving your arms, throwing objects at the animal, and looking it directly in the eyes. Stand up if you are seated. If you are wearing a jacket, spread it open like a cape so you appear larger. Retreat from the situation by walking slowly backward and do not turn your back on the coyote. Running can trigger the predator response.

All aggressive coyote encounters, as well as increased activity by bold coyotes, should be reported to the San Diego County Department of Agriculture. To reach Wildlife Specialist Terry Cox, call 1-800-486-0010. This office shares information with the USDA and the UC Cooperative Extension. Currently there is no information readily available on the number of coyotes in our area or a reliable record of any reported incidents.

We should be advised to heed the recommended advice and adapt or modify it for our area. Coyotes are crafty, elusive survivors who are not going to go away. Many people consider themselves lucky to have seen, and even heard them. They lend an aura of wildness to our area that is appreciated by many. By observing proper precautions, we can co-exist with them in this beautiful habitat we call Mt. Helix.

For more information on coyote control and management, go to:

http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/wildlife_services.html.

Call 1-800-486-0010 to report any incidents involving coyotes. ▲

Go Green And Go COLOR ...

... graphics, that is. If you would like to receive this newsletter by email instead of postal mail, please let us know at: yourgmianeighbor@gmail.com.

Your online version will be delivered to you in full color. ▲





Thank You, Homeowners!



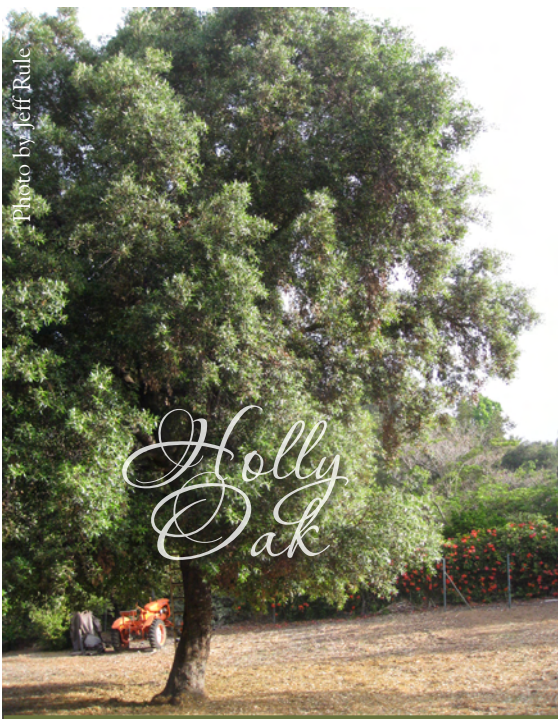
Trees of Mt. Helix *Quercus Ilex* – Holly Oak

by Jeff Rule

This continues a series of articles about interesting trees within the GMIA area. Members are encouraged to share their favorite or special tree with others through these articles.

The Holly Oak featured is located in the lower back yard of GMIA board member Jeffrey Rule and his family who have lived in the Horizon Hills neighborhood for 13 years. Most likely planted in the mid 1960's when the house was built, it's special to the homeowners because of its sheer size and ability to screen the neighbors below as well as create a focal point from above. The Holly Oak is an evergreen canopy tree and can grow to 30-60' feet tall by 60' wide. It has a fast growth rate in the inland area and takes regular watering. This tree is most likely located between two septic leach lines which contributed to its towering height of 60' plus. The tree is native to the Mediterranean area with a dense round head. A long line of Holly Oak trees lines Sunset Cliffs Blvd. along Rob Field soccer fields at the entry to Ocean Beach.

If you have a tree that you would like to share with fellow members, please call Jeffrey Rule (Director) at (619) 466-0362, and he can schedule a site visit. Thank you for your interest. 🌱



TIDBITS of History

by Tom O'Steen



In the last Viewpoints it was revealed how William Gross (upper right) and Ed Fletcher (upper left) had a chance introduction around a campfire at Yellowstone Park. These new acquaintances later became partners and purchased two East San Diego County ranches that included the hillsides of what is now known as Grossmont.

These two men had significantly different backgrounds and personalities, but as partners they worked well together. Gross had contacts with people of acting, literary and musical fame. Those connections contributed to the start of an artists' colony on the hillsides of Grossmont. Fletcher was well suited for overseeing infrastructure tasks such as roads, power and water.

For many years, onlookers and press were negative on the two men's vision. The development was nick-named "Fletcher's Folly." Fletcher had the last laugh as the lots began selling at \$2500 per acre to many of Gross' famous friends.

Gross' active participation in the partnership ended in 1911 at his request. He was content to let Fletcher take the lead. By 1916, Gross had realized over a 500% profit on his original investment. He later stated it was the best return on any investment he had ever made.

That same year Fletcher started a new development that included Mount Helix. Gross was invited to join as a partner but declined, as he was ready for full retirement. Gross continued to be involved in social and civic affairs and authored a novel named *The Conquest of California* that was well received.

Ed Fletcher went on to make significant contributions to the history of San Diego County. As a developer he was not only involved with Grossmont and Mt. Helix, but also contributed to the original subdivisions of Del Mar, erected the Thum Block at the northeast corner of Sixth and Broadway, subdivided Pine Hills in Julian, built the Pine Hills Lodge, and was co-owner of 400 acres adjoining Cuyamaca Lake. Ed Fletcher's name is connected to the origin of public water in San Diego County. His foresight, along with his strong connections with men of wealth, made possible the development of the majority of our county water systems. This in turn made possible the subdividing of thousands of acres throughout the county.

Elected in 1934, Fletcher held the office of state senator for 12 years during which time our county benefited significantly from his representation. He picked up the title of Colonel due to his tenure in the National Guard of California. Colonel Ed Fletcher is considered a pioneer and a significant positive force in the progress of San Diego County. The Colonel died in 1955 at the age of 83. 🌱

WATER-WISE GROSSMONT-MT. HELIX HOMEOWNER

Rainwater Harvesting ... Why Not?

by Kathleen Hedberg

We all want free water, so why is it when it rains we let so much of it flow away? Rainwater harvesting is the collection, diversion and storage of rainwater for later use. Water that is running down the street into the storm drain to the ocean is a lost water supply. On your property there are three potential sources for harvesting the rain: direct rainfall, street harvesting, and roof harvesting. This article will focus on roof harvesting. Zero runoff should be the goal for every property owner.

Roof Harvesting: The average rainfall in La Mesa is 13.8 inches per year. For every inch of rain falling on a 1,000 square foot roof you can harvest approximately 600 gallons of rainwater. That's a potential rainwater collection of over 8,000 gallons over the course of one year! It is as easy as connecting a container to your rain gutters and start filling. Screening the top of the tank prevents debris and any mosquitoes from entering and a dark tank will prevent the growth of algae. Once there is water in the tank you can attach a hose to the bottom and use on a dry day!

Rain barrels vary in costs and can be installed along houses. There is a wide range of options from 50 gal-

lon containers to 1000+ gallon storage tanks. You can find the Helix Water District Rainwater Harvesting Fact Sheet with more information and resources on their website, www.hwd.com.

There are many resources available to help you construct your own rainwater harvesting system. Brook Sarson, a local Rainwater Harvesting and Water Reuse Professional, is available for consultation on water reuse and storage opportunities. She also has classes to learn how to do it yourself, www.h2o-me.com. Another great reference for the do-it-yourselfer is the book *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands: Guiding Principles to Welcome Rain into Your Life and Landscape*, by Brad Lancaster, check it out at

www.harvestingrainwater.com.

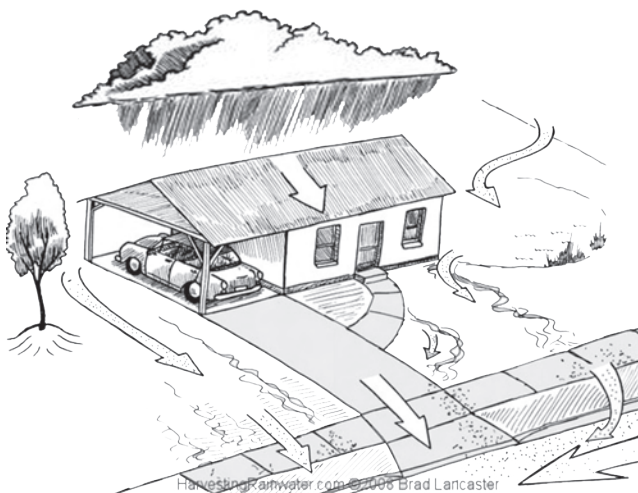
Don't forget that our best teaching tool is in our own backyard. The Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College has a variety of classes every month. More information about their schedule is available at www.thegarden.org.

So, get your buckets and gardens ready this summer for the rainy days to come... ▲

WITH RAINWATER HARVESTING...

... TURN THIS:

INTO THIS:



Brad Lancaster, www.harvestingrainwater.com

PRESIDENT from page 2

to this mail drive we have increased our membership by almost 20%. Here are GMIA's upcoming happenings:

- ◆ We continue to fine-tune our Annual Dinner Meeting to enhance our members' experience. I hope you'll join us for a fun, friendly, informative evening on June 23rd featuring Phil's BBQ under the stars at the Cuyamaca Water Conservation Garden.
- ◆ GMIA will host a "Backyard Chicken Class & Tour" on July 27th.
- ◆ Looking ahead, our Board is busy planning an old fashioned, family friendly Ice Cream Social for September 22. Details will be in our next edition of Viewpoints.
- ◆ On the serious side, GMIA will sponsor a Fall Community Safety Forum to help our members do everything possible to ensure their personal security and reduce crime. Coinciding with our Community Forum will be the launch of a large scale Neighborhood Watch program.
- ◆ Finishing out 2013 and then on to 2014, we will host our 7th Annual Walk Up Mt. Helix to welcome the New Year.
- ◆ Also on our radar: participants at our Garden Tour have asked us to sponsor a "Succulent Swap."

That's a lot going on! We realize that some folks prefer to support GMIA by joining but choose not to be actively involved, while others want a lot of social interaction. We are all different and have different needs. I hope you will find something on this "menu" (whether actively participating or quietly supporting) that piques your interest. I invite you to let me know how else we may serve you, and encourage you to pass this newsletter on to a neighbor. Thank you for your membership. 🌱



Jeff
Silva in
his vineyard

Photo by Patricia Ryan

Update on Mt. Helix Vineyards Association

by Kay Bickley

Recently I met with wine enthusiasts from the Mt. Helix Vineyards Association, whose numbers continue to increase. For more information about the Association, contact Dawn Silva at dnjsilva@cox.net.

Kristi Anderson spoke with me after working in her vineyard "de-anting the vines." This year aphids are quite active thus bringing out the ants; Kristi wanted to make sure all was well as summer begins. After attending a class at Cuyamaca College on growing grapes, Kristi and husband Craig ordered vines from a Paso Robles/Santa Inez grower (25 each of cabernet sauvignon, syrah and merlot). Their first planting was Easter Sunday 2012 following removal of unwanted junipers in the front yard. They've done all the work themselves -- digging holes, inserting gopher cages, planting, installing irrigation, and mounting support posts for the vines. Of course that is just the start -- maintenance is ongoing but as Kristi says, "I have so much fun out there."

Fellow enthusiasts Dawn and Jeff Silva are busy tending their 50 Sangiovese vines. Like the Anderson's, they water, weed, train suckers, and prune, which takes the most time. "It's hard getting up the nerve to decide which ones to keep and which ones to cut." Lately

pests (above and below ground) have created some concern. Jeff noted that glassy winged sharpshooters spread a bacteria which kills oleanders and can also infect vines with harmful Pierce disease. Every morning Dawn goes on "gopher patrol" and has perfected successfully trapping every gopher she hunts.

And as mentioned in the Fall 2012 issue, Vic and Janet Ryder's grassy lawn is gone. The ground is being readied for 24 Primitivo vines which have been maturing in pots for two years. In addition to adding these vines they will install a bocce ball court (an Italian game similar to lawn bowling) and a putting green. How great is that! 🌱



Photo by Patricia Ryan

To ensure your membership is current: please look at your mailing label on this newsletter. On it you will find the renewal date of your membership. Note: if the date is June 2014 or later, your dues are paid in full. Thank you! Annual membership is just \$18. You may renew online at our secure website www.gmia.net or mail your payment to GMIA, P.O. Box 2751, La Mesa, CA 91943-2751.

Free Backyard Chicken Class

"Chicken Whisperer" GMIA Director Don Newcom will lead a Backyard Chicken Class on July 27th at 10:00 a.m. This free class is open to the community and will take place at the La Mesa Library at 8074 Allison Avenue. No need to sign up, just show up.

Beginners will learn how to get started keeping chickens. We'll cover a variety of topics including types of chickens, coop construction, feeding your flock, deterring predators, plus local and online resources. Following the class there will be an informal, self-guided Backyard Chicken Coop Tour in our neighborhood.



Experienced chicken owners are welcome to participate in the class and share their knowledge. We'd love to feature your chicken mansion! If you would like your coop to be included in our tour, please contact Susan Nichols at (619) 440-1607. 🌱

