

Oak Park Community Garden – General Meeting Minutes

Date: April 16, 2026

Location: Mae Boyer Park Meeting Room, Oak Park, CA 91377

Meeting Commenced: 7:07 PM

PRESENT

Lekshmi Shailesh – A2, Alison Batten – G2 & 8, Jennifer Washington – E4, Christopher Adib – E8,

Lesa Manzo – A9, B10 Madelyne Green – E3, Jeff Hoyt – B6 & 7, Jeff Vidrinskas – G3

Andrew Howe – B5, Steve Kozel – H2 & I2, Naga Harini Kodey – D4, B4, Sandhya K – C5 & A3

Bill Keiling – E6, Joann Fritzen – C2, D1 & 2, Poompavai Punnuchamy – G9

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Madelyne G motioned to approve the March 2026 minutes; seconded by Steve K.

All in favor — yes. Approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking: \$17,102.49

Savings: \$9,961.73

More field trip money to come in.

We were nominated for an award from Supervisor Jeff Gorrell's office for our community outreach. A charity event is being planned for the presentation; Madelyne and Alison were interviewed for the presentation. An email with more information will be sent out.

Amanda M commented: Thank you to Alison, she has been instrumental to the success of the program.

Alison commented: Bill, our president has been very supportive of the program, thank you.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Newsletter is being pushed to after the Open House at the end of May.

The VC Master Gardeners newsletter was distributed. Discussion on Dani Brusius presentations, including a fire-proofing landscape presentation at the garden with Jeff V.

GARDEN MANAGER'S REPORT

Athens compost going forward.

Chris A is working on a relationship with Peach Tree Hill Soils.

Thank you to those growing plants for the Open House.

Pop-ups selling well — approximately 55–60 sold.

DISCUSSION: MILKWEED MANAGEMENT

Bob K submitted a statement about Milkweed for the record.

The milkweed supports our Monarch program but has been becoming invasive — appearing in the aisles and entering the greenhouse. Discussion on what to do.

- Madelyne asked how it spreads; Bob stated it travels primarily by roots rather than seed.
- Lekshmi noted our Monarch population is robust, breeding year round; other butterflies are also using our pollinator area.
- Proposed solutions: redirect milkweed to other areas such as the vacant parcel or outside the fence line. Lesa M suggested some perimeter areas. Create a dedicated area. Growing in pots is also an option.
- Amanda/Lekshmi: We did have a native population that started independently — it inspired the program and is great for our education program.

- We need to approach this in a planful way: remove from pathways using a staggered approach, remove red marker flags.
- If you have milkweed in your parcel, you may remove it if you don't want it.
- Need to work with RSRPD and Oak Park Open Space to determine if we can use the area outside the chain-link fence.
- Note: Alison B mentioned that Monarchs return to the same areas to form chrysalis, often under the handrails of parcels.
- Mention of the tropical milkweed ban in Ventura County. Our narrow-leaf milkweed is the least invasive of the species.
- All in agreement: we need to work together using our in-house expertise to resolve the issue.

OPEN HOUSE — MAY 16TH

Advertising is underway. Please come.

Outsourcing most of the tables.

Donations for raffle from Underwood Farm, Huntington, etc.

If growing plants for the Open House sale, please label them. Remove any non-sale items from the greenhouse ASAP.

Reminder: parcels must be 75% planted by May 15.

Steve K: Gold Spotted Oak Borer class — April 25.

Meeting Concluded: 7:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Martin

OPCG Recording Secretary 2026

MILKWEED

GOOD, BAD OR BOTH

The good thing about narrow leaf milkweed (*ASCLEPIAS FACCICULARIS*) is that this plant is extremely beneficial in the production of monarch butterflies.

The bad thing about this milkweed is that it is highly invasive. Normally, I would take an Laissez-faire approach and let it do but I have now been invaded in my own parcel. I have removed 5 plants in three weeks and now have two new sprouts. As you are aware we have milkweed intruding into our walkways which will only expand. This is a safety issue as gardeners may trip on the plants. I am aware of a gardener who has tripped on a red wire flag.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?????

Common Bob its no big deal.....NOW.....but it could develop into a big deal.

1. We could let it go unhindered and focus on butterfly production.
2. We could get seeds (200 for 9\$) and grow in areas such as the area outside the fence near the green house. Another area would be seeding the current flower gardens we currently have. Another idea would be to capture one of the current unused parcels and turn it into a milkweed garden. Another idea would be for those who feel strongly about this they could volunteer to plant in their own parcels.
3. We could go scorched earth and remove all plants in the isles and maybe get a variance to use roundup?

JUST KIDDING

THE BOTTOM LINE IS ...HAVE WE HIT THE POINT OF ENOUGH MILKWEED OR IS THERE NEVER GOING TO BE ENOUGH?

I bring this up to begin a discussion of how the community wishes to deal with this issue.

LETS TALK

