

Safety Alert !

Please make sure you don't allow plants to grow beyond your parcel boundaries, especially at eye level. Vines are particularly an issue, and we recently had a member suffer an injury. Let's help keep each other safe and keep your plants trimmed !



SHADE STRUCTURE UPDATE.

Jeff V, Nelson, Bob and various helpers together with the Rancho Simi Recreation Park District have been busy laying the infrastructure for our new pair of shade structures. After carefully laying out the boundaries, the ground was leveled and the foundation holes dug. Next the cement footings and then the poles go up! Our very own barn raising! We can't thank the team enough for taking the lead on this project. It should be completed by Thanksgiving if all goes to plan. Outside of being a cool, shady place for members to take a break from the sun while working on their parcels, we should now be able to host speakers and tour groups at the garden in a much more comfortable manner.

One could say on this project.....good things come to those who wait !



Please extend a warm welcome to our newest member Heather Doty B8 when you see them at the garden.

TREASURERS REPORT

Greetings!

Just a reminder for the close of this year – Rent has increased by \$20 annually to \$140 per parcel. This is due to the cost of material/supplies and most notably, water. Invoices will be sent out by Dec 1st. If your contact information has changed, please let me know ASAP

With rent now covering our basic projected garden costs I would love to open discussion on how we can best put our fundraising funds and savings money to use. Below are just a few suggestions I have compiled from gardeners. We will discuss ideas at meetings in the new year.

One time outlay

- Filtered drinking water/filling station (\$1400)
- Upgrades to the greenhouse- solar powered fan/mister system for seed starting

Ongoing /Yearly Offerings

- Soil dump true planting soil, not compost from Peach Hill Soil 10 yd truck \$380 1x/yr
- Pest spray – Captains Jacks DeadBug Brew - \$181 from concentrate that will make up 48 G – 1x/yr

Other ideas? Contact Alison Batten

alison.batten1@gmail.com or 510-725-8455

How does our garden work?



ELECTIONS

Like most things in life, it takes a village, and our garden is no different. In our January meeting we will be holding our annual elections for the board and committees in 2026. We invite you to review the various role descriptions available upon request from the current board and consider how you would like to contribute to the vibrant community that is Oak Park Community Garden!

Nomination forms will be sent out by early November and are also available on our website- oakparkcommunitygarden.org





“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have, into enough, and more” *Melody Beattie*



Mediterranean Barlotto

Great end of summer season recipe for the last of those zucchini and squash !

Ingredients:

- 1 /2 medium zucchini sliced thin
- 1 medium red onion diced small
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 2 cups canned crushed tomatoes and juices
- 1 ½ cups pearl barley
- Salt to taste
- 1 tbspn of extra virgin olive oil
- ½ yellow squash sliced thin
- 1 roasted red pepper jarred or self prepared
- 8 sundried tomatoes
- 4 ½ cups vegetable broth
- Parmasane cheese to serve



Board Members:

President: Bill Colango

VP: Julie Cristiano

Treasurer: Alison Batten

Secretary: Lekshmi Shailesh

Garden Manager: Bob Kieling

Important Links:

oakparkcommunitygarden@gmail.com

www.instagram.com/oakparkcommunitygardenca

www.facebook.com/oakparkcommunitygarden.org

Important Dates:

January General Meeting at the Mae Boyer Meeting Room – 7pm, 01/15/2026
Shade Structure Workdays – TBD

Directions:

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil until it shimmers and add the garlic, onions and ¼ tsp of salt cook 6-8 mins. Stirring as needed. Add the pearl barley to the pan, cook 2 minutes to coat with oil. Add zucchini, squash, roasted red pepper and sundried tomatoes. Add 1 cup of broth, cook a few minutes, then add the 1/2 cup. Cook adding ½ cup of broth stirring frequently until 3 ½ cups of broth used. Add the canned tomatoes and their juice, return to bubbling at the edges and taste barley for doneness. Should be a little chewy. Add more broth if needed until the barley plumps and thickens like risotto.. Taste and season with salt.

- Top with parmesan cheese to serve.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Sandhya and Krishna at A3, C5.

Q: How did you find out about the garden?

A: We had seen the Santa Monica community garden, and it planted a seed LOL....! Then when we moved to Oak Park in 2019, we discovered the garden on a walk. A kind member showed us around and we joined !

Q: You garden as a family, why is this important to you?

A: The garden is a place of joy for my family! We try something new every year. Our daughters enjoy connecting with nature both in our parcels and at the Monarch Waystation. They loved following the Monarch butterfly life cycle.

Q: Your favorite plant success story from 2025?

A: Buttercup Squash! Seeds were from a store-bought squash. Grew well, 4/5 fruit. It is a sweet nutty, buttery squash good for roasting or in traditional Indian recipes.

Q: What has the garden and working on the education committee taught you this year ?

A: Through helping run the field trips we host at the garden, I can really see how the garden gives kids an awareness of their environment, the role it plays in our lives and the importance of the plants and animals around us. Kids ask great questions e.g., turns out butterflies have taste buds on their feet!