Victoria Avenews

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The Lewis Garden Phases I and II

If you happened to drive by the Lewis Garden after the recent October and November Saturday work parties, you undoubtedly were surprised and amazed at the huge pile of green waste piled along the curb at Jane and Victoria. VAF volunteers worked hard both days and the results were clearly evident.

Many of the plants had just gotten too big. The Texas rangers were cut back severely to a more manageable size. The Cleveland sages were encroaching on their neighbors. The westringia bushes had lost their rounded shape. The barberries were lightly cut back to a more pleasing shape. (Some pruning will wait until February after the chance of freezing weather.) Others, like the Mexican marigolds which are just now coming into full, glorious bloom, must wait until the flowers have faded.

In preparation for putting down a fresh layer of decomposed granite in the paths, all the plants at the edges were trimmed back, or in some cases, removed to make the work easier. For example, the mahonia plants around the central oval were hanging out over the path, while some of the succulents, agaves and aloes were dug out to expose the metal edging strips.

Here and there, self-sown seedlings had cropped up and needed to be removed before they got any larger. A number of palo verde tree volunteers were dug up, in spite of their stickers, as were some surprisingly large lantana and rosemary bushes. Some of the younger volunteers (students, not plants) cut back almost to the ground the catmint and Santa Barbara daisy plants so they could put out new, fresh growth.

Every gardener knows how easy it is to get accustomed to the way his garden looks and to miss some details that need to be taken care of, or to say, for one reason or another, that action will be taken later (usually when the problem is worse).

Often a fresh eye to evaluate a garden can be extremely helpful. Adam Timura, recently elected to the VAF board, is such a person. He took a careful look at the Lewis garden and drew up a detailed three-page list of suggestions. Many of them have recently been accomplished: some of the others will be taken care of in February.

Dates to Remember

Dr. Lewis Garden Phase III • Victoria and Jane

December 8, 2007 • 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Plant and mulch forty 1-gallon sulfur flowers

Plant three 15-gallon horse chestnut trees in the median (Jane - Mary)

Bring shovels and buckets clearly marked with your name.

Tree Planting • Jackson and Victoria

January 12, 2008 • 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Bring shovels clearly marked with your name.

Message from the President

Dave Roger

Happy Holidays to all of you from myself and the Board of Directors!

I hope that you have noticed the improvements on the Avenue. Well, not in terms of our upcoming capital program, but in terms of the overall looks of the Avenue. As promised, the Public Works Department instructed Azteca Landscape to clean up a lot of the debris and litter that has marred the Avenue over the past several years. Public Works increased the scope of the maintenance contract and the contractor, and with the guidance of Kathy Swanson, the new city Landscape Inspector, moved quickly to clean things up. Thanks, Kathy, and thank you, Public Works.

The October and November work days were spent at the Peter Lewis Garden hacking away at overgrown shrubs and ground cover. Hopefully, it will look a lot nicer in the spring. We are currently hunting for a contractor who can repair the decomposed granite pathway. So, if you know anyone, let us know.

Over twelve thousand cuttings were recently taken from our famous 'Ragged Robin' roses. The Public Works Department contracted with a nursery to grow the much needed roses to fill in the vacancies on the Avenue.

Please note the work days that are scheduled for the remainder of the year. We can always use your help. Thanks for your generous support through the year. Again, Happy Holidays!

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The VAF board meets at 6:30 on the 1st Thursday of each month (except

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Bacterial Leaf Scorch

Bacterial leaf scorch–not exactly a title that will catch your attention and drive you to go on reading; however, it should! Why? Because it is impacting Riverside's urban forest.

Bacterial leaf scorch is a bacterial disease known as Xylella fastidiosa and is the same disease that wiped out our oleanders. Scientists have now determined that this disease is beginning to kill landscape plants.

Have you noticed any stone fruit trees around your homes with branches that are dying back? What about liquidamber trees, also known as sweet gum? These have been the main tree we choose for fall color and, yes, they are dying all over town.

Add olive trees, another main focus tree in our landscape. There is a list of some fifty trees that have been identified as hosts of this disease. Some of the common ones we find here in Riverside's urban forest are:

Silk Tree (Mimosa)
Silver & Sugar Maples
Gingko (Maidenhair)
Jacaranda
Magnolia
Mulberry
California Sycamore
Flowering Plum
Pin Oak
Red Oak
Black Oak
Southern Live Oak
Western Redbud
Walnut
Sengal Date Palm

How is bacterial leaf scorch transmitted? Have you heard of the sharpshooter leafhopper? It is a tiny insect that is difficult to see; however, you know its presence if you stand under a tree and it feels like there is a slight rain falling.

What can you do about it? Unfortunately, not much. The agricultural industry is working hard to control this insect since this disease is also impacting our grape vines. Since the grape and wine industry is so large in California, a lot of money is going towards trying to eradicate or reduce the sharpshooter population. At home keep your trees adequately watered, since trees under drought stress are unable to fight off the disease.

It is also recommended that if you see what is called die-back in a branch, (a branch that has some dead leaves or small dead branches at the end) remove the branch if you can, back to a main branch or the trunk. The disease is usually into the branch stem farther down the branch than there are visible signs. That is why it is recommended that you remove some of the healthy branch as well.

It is not recommended that we remove the entire tree at the first sign of infection. There are two reasons: one, it can take several years before the tree actually dies, so the tree will continue to benefit the urban forest. Second, studies have shown that the removal of infected trees does not reduce the impact of this disease on other trees.

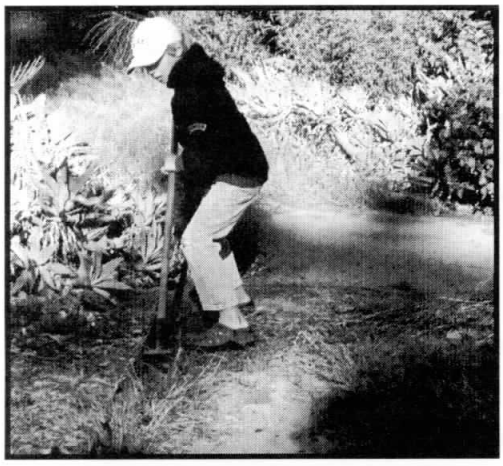
This article is a brief summary of a more extensive article in the Scientific Journal of the International Society of Arboriculture, November 2007.

Making a Difference at a Young Age

At every Saturday morning work party that VAF schedules, there is one volunteer who is sure to show up. He's easy to spot–driving his red cart loaded with cans of mulch, carrying weeds and clippings to the curb, raking up leaves, blowing off the sidewalk at the end. Whatever needs doing, he's there, pitching in with gusto. Meet Tyler R. Koerber!

Tyler likes things to look neat and tidy. Just look at his yard. He carefully mows and edges the lawn, and the plants he has planted are carefully tended. It is not surprising that the weedy paths at the Lewis Garden bothered him.

When Miss Patrick, Tyler's 4th grade teacher at Washington School, suggested to her students that they undertake a project to demonstrate that "I Can Make a Difference", Tyler knew exactly what he would do. After several hours of hard toil with his hula hoe, the paths at the Lewis Garden were immaculately clear of weeds. Tyler demonstrated that "Yes, I Can Make a Difference."



Tyler belongs to Cub Scout Pack #62

But 9-year-old Tyler doesn't stop there. With his grandpa, Gordon Williams, in their golf cart, he picks up trash and recyclables along Victoria Avenue and on the streets from Mary to Horace in the Gage Middle School neighborhood. Tyler realizes a surprising amount of cash from the sale of the bottles and cans, some of which probably goes for his favorite #1 cheeseburger from In-N-Out. Besides volunteering for every VAF project since he was 6-years-old, Tyler also takes part in the tree plantings organized by Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful. He also finds time to play baseball with the Indians of the Magnolia Center Little League, to enjoy the Anaheim Angels (His favorite player is Vlad Guerrero), to swim and play tennis at Shamel Park, and to care for his two dogs–a Lab (Belle) and a mixed terrier (Jack).

Good going, Tyler. You *DO* make a difference!

Want to see a video of Victoria Avenue?
Go to http://www.riversideca.gov/city-video.asp
It is the first part of "Show 4" the six part part video of (10/31/07).
That URL takes you to the right page, :: City Videos

Endowment Fund Contributions

Victoria Avenue Forever gratefully acknowledges the following recent donations to the Endowment Fund.

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JOIN VICTORIA AVENUE FOREVER
(Current members will be notified when their membership expires)

Victoria Avenue Forever (VAF) is a non-profit organization founded in 1990, dedicated to the preservation and beautification of Victoria Avenue. Through fund raisers and membership support, VAF has purchased plants and trees, organized tree planting parties, planted over 600 trees, organized tree care activities, and informed our members about the history and value of the plantings on the avenue. Present goal is to take cuttings and fill in missing "Ragged Robin" roses which frame the trees and larger plants in the medians.

To find out more about the history of Victoria Avenue, to find out how you can become a member, and to volunteer for activities, please fill in the form below and mail today. We'd love to have you join us!

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS _____

Make your tax-deductible checks payable to Victoria Avenue Forever
and mail to 6475 Victoria Avenue, Riverside, CA 92506

____ $10.00 Individual ____ $20.00 Family
____ $50.00 Sustaining ____ I would like to volunteer

$_____ for VAF Endowment Fund in honor/memory of _____

Please mail to Victoria Avenue Forever • 6475 Victoria Avenue • Riverside, CA 92506