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# *The Spindrifter*

*Volume 43, Issue 4 December, 2016*

**General Meeting-Members Only**  
**Thursday, December 8**

***CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL***  
***9001 TOWNE CENTRE DRIVE, SAN DIEGO***

***Parking garage on site; Enter from Golden Haven Drive***  
***9 –10 am Hospitality hour***  
***10-10:30 am Business meeting***  
***10:30-11:45 Program***

***BRINGING NATURE HOME AND***

***THE LIVING LANDSCAPE***

***PROFESSOR DOUG TALLAMY***



Doug Tallamy has been a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware for 34 years. Chief among his research goals has been to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. He realized that as we have destroyed native vegetation by importing plants indigenous to Europe, Asia, and Australia, the ecosystem that took millennia to create has been broken. There is an unbreakable link between native plant species and native wildlife. Native insects cannot, or will not, eat alien plants. When native plants disappear, the insects disappear, impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. Doug

Tallamy's book, Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens, first published in 2007, sparked a national conversation about the need to maintain this native web for wildlife.

In 2014 Doug joined with landscape designer Rick Darke to produce The Living Landscapes. (cont'd pg. 3)

*~From the President's Desk~*

It's hard to believe the December President's letter is due. As I write this, it is 80 degrees, and the weather makes me unsure whether the holidays truly are around the corner. However, checking the calendar says they are, and we will soon be decorating. This month we celebrate with friends and families, and slow our pace a bit for joyful gatherings. I love the traditions we observe at this time of year.

One tradition I've treasured is our December Nights Tree contribution. I am eagerly anticipating what new member Ray Conser and his elves will produce. I mentioned at the meeting they are creating ornaments to depict the loaf of bread with a mouse inside that was found at The Zoo. Remember you can see the tree at Balboa Park on December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3 to 10 p.m., and December 3<sup>rd</sup> from noon to 10 p.m. Admission is free. The theme of our tree is "San Diego Zoo, A Retrospective."



Another cherished tradition is the December Pantry and Bake Sale headed up by the very capable Lois Stanton. I will certainly be arriving early to purchase the goodies I've been counting on, like Lois's delicious mustard! And of course, I'm bringing goodies, too. The Pantry and Bake Sale will be your sole "shopportunity" at our meeting, so come prepared, and don't be left out!

I also look forward to the tradition of the Holiday Luncheon at The Marine Room. Diana Lombrozo, Sue Miller, and Pam Filley have arranged for a delightful luncheon after the December meeting. My mouth waters just thinking of the food and the view! Be sure to check in at The Marine Room. I treasure these traditions and feel fortunate to spend time with such talented and interesting members!

On another note, I've received emails and calls about members leaving the meeting early. We are a club of gracious people, so if you have to leave the meeting before the speaker finishes, please sit at the back or at the end of a row. One member was very interested in the Q + A after the last meeting but couldn't hear because other members were leaving and talking on the way out. Please be considerate, and only leave when the speaker has left the stage. If it is necessary to leave early, please do so quietly. Thank you. (cont'd pg. 5)

### Doug Tallamy (cont'd)

The emphasis is on creating a garden that is full of life and that fulfills both human needs and the needs of wildlife communities. Doug will bring this home to the Southern California region suggesting plants that will encourage the biodiversity of habitat necessary to sustain our native species yet still provide for the beautiful and practical.

Among his awards are the Garden Club of America Margaret Douglas Medal for Conservation, the Tom Dodd, Jr. Award of Excellence (formerly the North American Native Plantsman Award), and in 2016, The Garden Club of America Honorary Membership.

Doug is an extremely active, engaging speaker whose research started the national movement to create natural wildlife habitats. It is a great pleasure to welcome him to the Village Garden Club of La Jolla.

### Photography



Don't miss the updated VGCLJ happenings on Flickr. Check out the albums which include the field trip to Baja, horticulture, the workshop, Gifts from the Garden, A Make and Take, and Sharrie Wood's floral arrangement. You can access all albums by clicking

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ljgarden/albums>.

### KUDOS



A new column for those who work behind the scenes.

Kudos to the refreshment committee headed by Brenda Schneider with committee members Susan Maggio, Mary Rogondino, and Linda Shaw. Thank you for arriving early and setting up our delicious refreshment table, receiving the treats as they arrive, and cleaning up before the beginning of the meeting.



Although the amaryllis can be purchased at any stage of development, for many the real fun is growing their own plant from a bulb. Most amaryllis bulbs are sold already potted and with complete growing instructions. Once watering is started, you can expect magnificent lily-like blooms of red, pink, white, or orange in four to six weeks. After flowering, grow the amaryllis as a foliage plant until the leaves turn yellow. Then store the potted bulb on its side in a cool, dark room or basement to rest for eight to ten weeks. When new growth appears, repot the bulb and return it to the light to start the cycle again.





## Over the Garden Gate Sandy McCreight

"Come into my garden. My roses would love to meet you." This is my favorite saying because I am passionate about growing roses and sharing them with my friends. Over the years I have learned much about the successful growing of roses, and I am still learning! I also enjoy growing camellias and sweet peas, which I order from Matthewman Sweet Peas in York, England. I have had the good fortune to visit the Chelsea Garden Show and

the Seattle and San Francisco flower shows on VGCLJ trips. Some of my best times are spent reading a good book or working out in the garden! I guess I am passionate about getting my hands dirty! My great grandfather was a landscape gardener for a large estate in Scotland, and I think I may have inherited some of his love for gardening.

I was born in Michigan, and my family moved to San Diego in 1948. We moved to Ontario, California in 1958. Weeks Roses had their growing fields three blocks from our house. My mom and I often walked the fields to see the new hybrids.

From grade 3, I was a classmate of my future husband, Dr. Peter McCreight. We had our first date in seventh grade and parted to pursue our college educations. I attended the University of Redlands and graduated with a degree in English Literature and a teaching credential. Peter and I married in 1965, and I returned with him to The University of Chicago, where he attended medical school and I taught school. After a military stint in San Antonio, Texas and the birth of our daughter Julia, we moved to La Jolla in 1976. A year later our family was complete with the birth of our son Matthew.

I joined the Village Garden Club of La Jolla in 1995 and was proud to have our Founder, Adrienne Green, as a mentor and friend. I served as Secretary and Treasurer before becoming President in 2001-2002. My theme was "How does your garden grow?" I also served on various committees and helped with the founding of the Schoolyard Gardening Grant program and Expressions in Art and Flowers. I continue to serve as Parliamentarian and Bylaws Chairman. It is a joy to be a part of the VGCLJ and watch the growth and involvement of so many energetic and wonderful members over the years. To close, I will give you my second favorite saying - "Don't forget to take time to

We will be voting on capping the Life Membership Category at the members only meeting in December. The revised language was published in the October newsletter, and it is below for your information:

### ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Classifications and Qualifications:

(a) Membership shall consist of three classes: Active, Supporting and Life Members who joined the Life Category prior to September 2016. After that date, the category of life membership will no longer be offered.

Instead of deleting (e) the language will be as follows:

(e) Existing Life Members will retain their life membership, which carries with it the rights and privileges of membership without the obligation of paying annual dues.

delete (f)

## UPCOMING GARDENING EVENTS

by Jan Nelte

**Now until Dec. 22**

### **S. D. Floral Association Floral Design Series #2**

Six classes underway now to teach advanced design skills. Enrollment fee includes all supplies needed for each student to take home a completed floral design from each class. [www.sdfloral.org](http://www.sdfloral.org)

**December 2 & 3, Friday and Saturday**

### **S.D. Floral Association December Nights**

Free holiday event with dazzling lights, floral displays, and gingerbread cookies. Decorated trees will feature the theme *"Talk To The Animals"* including one dedicated to the history of the Zoo by new VGCLJ member Ray Conser. Be sure to bring the whole family. [www.sdfloral.org](http://www.sdfloral.org)

**January 9, Monday**

### **San Diego Horticultural Society "Down Under Wonders"**

Presented by Jo O'Connell, owner of Australia Native Plants Nursery, located in Ojai Valley. She'll concentrate on plants that are hardy, drought tolerant, cut flower producing, and bird attracting. [www.sdhort.org](http://www.sdhort.org)



**Event details are also on our VGCLJ website [www.vgclj.com](http://www.vgclj.com).**

*(President's Message cont'd)*

*When Shane Connolly was here for Meet the Masters, we spoke about traditional meanings of certain flowers and plants. I learned that sharing mistletoe signified peace and friendship. I had been under the mistaken impression that mistletoe involved kissing and romantic love, but one old tradition was to give mistletoe to bring peace and friendship. Use your imagination to envision me bringing a sprig of mistletoe to each of you, members and friends. One of my favorite thoughts of the season is, "Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me."*

*Sending you peaceful and joyful holiday wishes,*

*Devonna*



## Bouquet of Thanks News



**Holiday Floral Donation Request.** As the holiday season approaches, the Bouquet of Thanks Committee is asking each club member to consider bringing a seasonal plant or flower arrangement to the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting for delivery to our local Veterans Medical Center.

This year, we hope to fill the chapel and public areas of the hospital with joyous flowers and plants commemorating Christmas and Hanukah. Poinsettias, hydrangeas, small decorated trees, or seasonal flower arrangements would be perfect. As you may recall, the VA lost its funding for flowers, so they depend on donations to bring holiday cheer into the lives of the patients, their families and the VA staff. Life in a hospital can be especially dreary during the holiday season, so let's give them something to smile about and know they have not been forgotten.

Your donations may be dropped off at tables downstairs by the parking turnaround, near the elevator, or upstairs in the foyer/registration area. Our signature cards will be added, and the Bouquet of Thanks Committee will deliver to the VA immediately after our December meeting

**Pumpkin Workshop Wrap Up.** The fourth annual "Pumpkins for Patriots Workshop" was a resounding success thanks to 30 volunteer pumpkin designers who gathered at St. James by the Sea Episcopal Church in La Jolla on October 24<sup>th</sup>. In two hours, we exuberantly decorated over 100 pumpkins of all sizes and varieties with a kaleidoscope of colorful materials. This year's pumpkins were the most stunning ever! They far surpassed the comparable sizes I saw offered for \$40-\$150 at Roger's Gardens.

Many hands are needed to carry out an event of this magnitude. Penelope West generously donated many flats of cuttings from her garden, which were augmented by more donations from other volunteers, plus colorful purchased cuttings. My husband Jim helped gather pumpkins from as far north as Visalia as well as berries, pods, cones, bark and acorns to embellish the pumpkins. Jill Holmes spent two days helping me moss pumpkins before the workshop. Alice Harmon produced the delightful enclosure cards and gathered some great additional material. Ann Hill and Carol Rumsey brought delicious treats. Jane Haskel, assisted by my husband, loaded hundreds of pounds of pumpkins for delivery to the VA hospital. A special thanks to Jill Holmes, Susan Dawson, Jonnie Hoffman, and Alice Harmon for helping with set up and clean up.



Once again, we are indebted to St. James for donating our workspace. We are especially grateful to Lyn Ganschinetz, Minister of Operations, who worked tirelessly to set up our room and provide beverages.

Please take a moment to view the inspirational photos taken by Marge Palmer, Sandy McCreight, Jill Holmes, and Alice Harmon. They are posted on Flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ljgarden/albums/72157675695871035>

Happy holidays and thanks for your generosity in honoring those who have served!

Julia Sheldon, Chair, Bouquet of Thanks

**Another VGCLJ member on the move.....please update your yearbooks to reflect the following:**



Connie Brown  
4313 East Raven Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85044

Phone and email remain the same.

## HORTICULTURE ART IN THE GARDEN

**Art in the Garden, presented by our talented artists Devon Hedding and Louise Buckley, was a whimsical potpourri of how to make your autumn garden “finds” into art. By grouping seedpods, dried flowers, branches, and bark with interesting containers, sculptures and other pieces of art, they showed us how it can be done. Louise applied her home crafting skills to come up with some very clever and colorful crochet covers for rocks, of all things! She also put her garden sketchbook on display, filled with wonderful landscape drawings and floral watercolors.**

**Devon brought in dainty ceramic shoes and sprinkled dried flowers inside and around them as if they had been left out in the garden. A rustic brown ceramic pot with dried pods, accompanied by her lovely impressionistic watercolors, just spoke “autumn” to all who passed by. We also had a lazy cat and a sleeping pig festooned with red eucalyptus and *Pyrocantha* berries brought in by Leisa Wilson. Both were very cute garden sculptures.**

**Our rosarians Lucy Borsenburger, Sharon Patel, and Joyce Fox brought in some lovely last roses of summer such as Peace, Just Joey, Julia Child, and Abraham Darby. They are so lovely and fragrant. We encourage everyone to show and share from their gardens be it roses, camellias or whatever you are proud to share.**

**Next Meeting-Holiday Swags for sale by Leisa Wilson and the committee.**



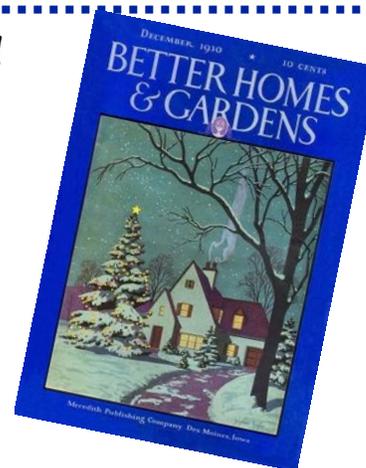
**Happy Holidays to All,  
Eva Richman**



Seasons Greetings to one and all from the Magazine Library

Please remember to return outstanding magazines and, hopefully, donate one or two to help build the library.

Gaynor, Marilyn and Rosalind





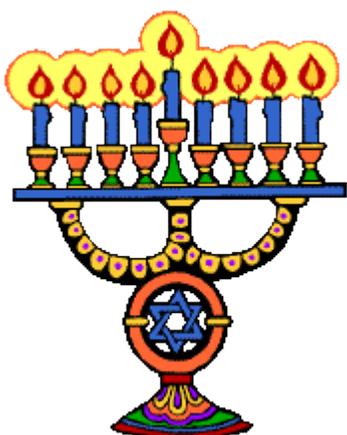
The so-called Christmas cactus is an easy plant to grow and propagate, and it blooms around the holidays. Not necessarily the Christmas holidays, though. Why, if it's called Christmas cactus, does it usually bloom closer to Thanksgiving?

In fact, you may have a Thanksgiving cactus. They are two different plants, but Thanksgiving cactus is often mistakenly sold as Christmas cactus. You can tell the two plants apart because the Thanksgiving cactus has pointed claws or teeth on each of its leaf segments while the Christmas cactus leaf segments are scalloped and lack teeth.

With both plants (botanical name *Schlumbergera*), the bloom is initiated both by a drop in temperatures to about 55 degrees and the shorter periods of daylight. If you provide heat and leave the lights on in a room containing these plants in early to mid fall, you will delay the bloom.

Propagating either plant is simple. Find a healthy leaf, cut off three segments at the narrowest point, let it dry out for six to 24 hours, then stick it into moist potting soil. Keep the soil evenly moist, and give the pot lots of light. After three or four weeks, tug gently on one of the leaves. If it comes out, stick it back in the soil but if it resists, that means it's rooted. Once the leaf roots, you've got a new plant.

*Happy Holidays from your Spin editors*



Diane  
Lynn  
Nancy  
Melanie  
Donna



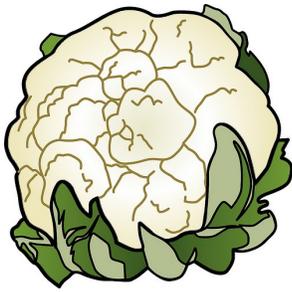


## What to do in the garden in December

**There's always something to be done in the garden whether it's pruning, tidying or sowing.**

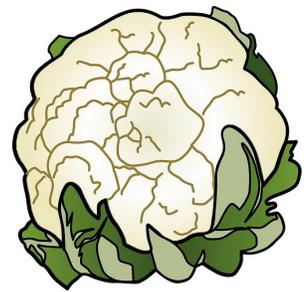
### In the flower garden

- \* Start to winter-prune your Wisteria, cutting back summer side-shoots to two or three buds.
- \* Prune climbing roses now; cutting away diseased or damaged growth and tying in any new shoots to their supports
- \* Prune older flowered side-shoots back by two thirds of their length.
- \* Prune Japanese Maples (Acer) and vines now if needed, as they will bleed sap if pruning is done any later.
- \* Leave the faded flower heads on your hydrangeas until the spring if you are worried about frost protection.
- \* Gather up fallen leaves from around the base of rose bushes which suffered from blackspot or rust this summer to reduce the chance of infection next year.
- \* Move containers of shrubs or bedding plants to a sheltered spot; clustering them together helps protect the root systems from suffering frost damage, if that is a problem in your area.
- \* Lift and store dahlia tubers once their leaves are blackened by frost.
- \* Check climbers are securely attached with plant ties to their supports.
- \* Harvest holly with berries for making Christmas garlands and Christmas wreaths; stand them in a bucket of water until you're ready to use them.
- \* Take root cuttings of oriental poppies and grow them in cold frames.
- \* Take hardwood cuttings from suitable trees and shrubs.
- .
- \* Plant up winter containers with hardy cyclamen, ivy, skimmia and evergreen grasses such as Carex to add colour to your garden. Place them in prominent places beside entrances and well-used paths to enjoy their winter display.
- \* Plant some shrubs for winter interest. Sarcococca confusa adds color and fragrance to your garden at this time of the year.
- \* If you still haven't planted your tulip bulbs, there is still time.



## GROWING EDIBLES ON THE COAST – 83

### Cauliflower



Cauliflower lovers in Canada faced a crisis in January when the price per head rose to around 8 dollars owing to the combination of a weak loonie, low oil prices and a drought in California. California accounts for some 85 percent of the United States cauliflower production though its harvest is dwarfed by those of China and India. Most of the export crop is grown in the central coast region, but it is an excellent cool season vegetable for the San Diego home gardener.

The cole vegetables, all variants of *Brassica oleracea*, are derived from a wild cabbage, probably native to the Mediterranean and southwestern coasts of Europe. Cabbages and cultivars, similar to broccoli and cauliflower, were well known by classical Roman times, but the modern cauliflowers were developed in western Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

I grow cauliflower from seed rather than buying seedlings from the nursery. That lets me select the variety I want and to space the plantings so that we have a nearly continuous harvest. If you buy a 6-pack, you'll have a glut of heads all maturing at the same time. While cauliflower can be kept for a week or so after it is cut, the quality deteriorates within a day or two. The nursery plants can also be root-bound, which will prevent them from heading properly.

Having tried many varieties, we have settled on Snow Crown, an early maturing F1 hybrid. It is said to require 55 days from seed to harvest and this may be true in the long May and June days of a northeastern spring. In our hands, it can take 10 weeks or more, depending on when we start the seed, with plantings separated by two to four weeks from mid-August to February. We plant half a dozen seeds in a 4-inch pot, thinning to three plants, which will be ready to set out in 4 to 6 weeks. The seedlings can be protected from insect pests under hot caps, which also maintain humidity and reduce chilling during the winter nights. Cauliflowers are quite tolerant of the lowest temperatures we experience on the coast though their growth slows down a lot through December and January. They are less forgiving of crowding and of irregular watering than the other cole vegetables. I give the seedlings a dose of balanced fertilizer (e.g. 14-14-14) a couple of days after setting them out, and that seems to keep them growing vigorously until they are ready to harvest.

Once they outgrow the hot caps, they aren't too much bothered by caterpillars, which are more interested in the young leaves than in the heads. The most troublesome pest is the cabbage aphid, *Brevicoryne brassicae*, which will stunt and deform the plants if it gets established. The greyish insects have a waxy covering that makes them resistant to strong jets of water and to the insecticidal soaps that are effective against most aphids. The best way to control them is with vigilance, squashing the small colonies before they can spread. Row cover helps to protect the plants after they get too big for hot caps, but you need to remove the cover every two or three days to inspect the plants carefully. Otherwise, slugs, snails, and the occasional caterpillar that may have slipped through the defenses will be left to carry out their destructive work unchecked.

Most articles you will read stress the importance of blanching the heads, protecting them from the sun by tying together the outer leaves. This may be necessary for the commercial gardener, but we don't find a bit of pink discoloration of the heads affects their taste. It is more important to cut the heads before the curds begin to break up.

**Poinsettias** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) remain one of the most popular holiday flowers. Hybridizers have expanded the range of colors from the familiar red to pastel yellow and vibrant bi-colors. Because poinsettias have been forced into bloom, they need some extra care, to keep them in bloom throughout the holidays.

Besides their general care, one of the most common questions about poinsettias after Christmas is “How can I care for my poinsettia so that it will bloom again next Christmas?” While this can be done, it's a very fussy, exacting process and since the plants are not that expensive, you might just choose to start fresh next year. For those of you who are undaunted, the process for saving your poinsettia and getting it to rebloom begins with the care you give it the first season.

### When You First Bring Your Poinsettia Home

**Light** - Place it near a sunny window. South, east or west facing windows are preferable to a north facing window. Poinsettias are tropicals and will appreciate as much direct sunlight as you can provide.

**Heat** - To keep the poinsettia in bloom as long as possible, maintain a temperature of 65 –75 degrees F during the day. Dropping the temperature to about 60 degrees F at night will not hurt the plant. However, cold drafts or allowing the leaves to touch a cold window can injure the leaves and cause premature leaf drop. If you've ever seen a leggy poinsettia in bloom, with only a couple of sad looking leaves hanging on, it was probably exposed to temperatures that were too cool or extreme shifts in temperature.

**Water** - Water the plant whenever the surface feels dry to the touch. Water until it drains out the bottom, but don't let the plant sit in water. Wilting is another common cause of leaf drop. A wilted plant can be revived and salvaged, but it will take another season to improve its appearance. Lack of humidity during dry seasons, in particular winter, is an ongoing houseplant problem. If your home tends to be dry and your poinsettia is in direct light, you will find yourself watering frequently, possibly every day.

### After Christmas Care

**January - March:** Keep watering the poinsettia whenever the surface is dry.

**April:** Starting April 1st, gradually decrease water, allowing the soil to get dry between waterings. Be careful the stem does not begin to shrivel. This is a sign the plant is too stressed and is dying. In a week or two, when the plant has acclimated to this drying process, move it to a cool spot, like the basement or a heated garage. You want to keep it at about 60 degrees F.

**May:** In mid-May, cut the stems back to about 4 inches and repot in a slightly larger container, with new potting soil. Water it well. Place the newly potted plant back into the brightest window you have and once again keep it at a temperature of 65 - 75 degrees F. Continue watering whenever the surface of the soil feels dry. Watch for new growth. Once new growth appears, begin fertilizing every two weeks with a complete fertilizer. Follow fertilizer label recommendations.

**June:** Move the poinsettia outside, pot and all. Keep in a partially shaded location, maintaining your watering and fertilizing schedule.

**July:** In early July, pinch back each stem by about one inch. This is to encourage a stout, well branched plant. If left unpinched, the poinsettia will grow tall and spindly.

**August:** By mid-August, the stems should have branched and leafed out. Once again, pinch or cut the new stems, leaving three to four leaves on each shoot. Bring the plant back indoors and back into your brightest window. Continue watering and fertilizing.

**September:** Continue regular watering and fertilizing. Make sure the temperature stays above 65 degrees F.

**October** Poinsettias are short-day plants, meaning their bud set is affected by the length of daylight. To re-bloom, poinsettias need about 10 weeks with 12 hours or less of sunlight per day. You will have to artificially create these conditions and it's crucial that you be diligent. Beginning October 1st, keep your plant in complete darkness from 5 pm to 8 am. Any exposure to light will delay blooming. Use an opaque box or material to block out light. Many people place their plants in a closet, but if light gets in through the cracks or if you open and use the closet, it will affect the bud set. Move the plant back to the sunny window during the daytime, and continue watering and fertilizing.

**November:** Around the last week of November, you can stop the darkness treatment and allow the plant to remain in the window. You should see flower buds at this point.

**December** - Stop fertilizing about December 15th. Keep watering and treat your plant the way you did when you first brought it home in bloom. If all has gone well, it should be back in bloom and ready to begin the process all over again.

*To me the choice is clear. The costs of increasing the percentage and biomass of natives in our suburban landscapes are small, and the benefits are immense.*

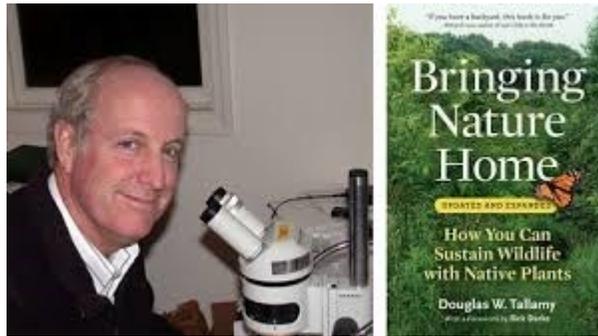
*Increasing the percentage of natives in suburbia is a grassroots solution to the extinction crisis.*

*Our success is up to each one of us individually.*

*We can each make a measurable difference almost immediately by planting a native nearby.*

*As gardeners and stewards of our land, we have never been so empowered—and the ecological stakes have never been so high.*

~ Douglas Tallamy, *Bringing Nature Home*



**The Village Garden Club of La Jolla  
c/o Kate Engler, Mailing Committee  
4039 Caminito Suero  
San Diego, CA 92122**

