

Chair for April Plant Sale 2010:

Job Descriptions and Processes for LAVGC Plant Sale Chair

The Plant Sale is our largest fund raiser. However, the most important goal of the event is to encourage members to learn about and share knowledge of propagation and try out new plants and learn from each others' experience. Keep it fun, delegate to the suggested chairs and avoid making it an unwelcome job!

The events listed below describes what previous Plant Sale Chairs have done and suggests ideas for future Plant Sale Chairs. Dates in this document assume that the Plant Sale is held early to mid April, hopefully after the April LAVGC meeting. You will need to make sure it does not land on Easter weekend.

There will be occasions when bulk donations are offered. It is at the discretion of the Plant Sale Chair to decide what to accept, or discretely refuse or destroy. Too many of one item are hard to sell, common plants in large quantities become a problem (how many agapanthus, day lilies, and society garlic can we sell!) Blooming plants or bulbs with no color indicated will not sell and should not be priced or loaded on the trucks.

Leftover Plants

Annuals: (spring flowers, vegetables) go in the green bin (are composted) or to our members, another non-profit group, a special project within LAVGC, or one of the local schools for their gardens.

Perennials: (flowering plants, shrubs, trees, bushes) in good shape, will go back to LAVGC propagators for future sales.

You should know before the sale where you may be depositing un-sold plants.

September

Determine the date and place for the sale. We use the Amador High School parking lot. Contact the school and let them know the date we want. This should be done early to avoid any conflicts with school events.

Usually early-to mid-April is good, the time is always 9 to noon. Select the date early enough to be included in the calendar published in the LAVGC handbook, and let the Board know so that you won't miss the printing deadline.

Meetings and Newsletter

Contact the Horticulture Report chair and request that at least one of the Fall meetings have a propagation theme, especially on roses, if possible, because they are always a big demand, and there are never enough. A report might demonstrate how to make cuttings and list the plants that can be propagated at this time. In October, division of perennials could be a topic, and in January or February (no later!) the report might demonstrate seed starting and give germination rates timed for the Plant Sale so people are encouraged to grow for the Plant Sale while growing their own plants.

Optionally, contact the Workshop chair to discuss projects that could result in items to be sold at the Plant Sale.

Write an article for the October newsletter, talking about the sale, and encouraging members to start their plants in the Fall, so that they will be rooted and looking good by the Sale (**NOTHING SHOULD BE POTTED LESS THAN 60 DAYS BEFORE THE SALE-WE LOOK BAD WHEN THE PURCHASER CAN'T FIND ANY ROOTS ON THAT "STICK"**) It would also be good to encourage members to pot what they consider "nice" plants, avoiding invasive or common (agapanthus, dietes, naked ladies, and so on) plants. Edibles (herbs, vegetables, fruits) are always popular, as are roses, ferns, and abutilon.

Prepare items for a “Plant Sale” display at the monthly meetings. Items could be propagation tips on popular items, 8 1/2 x 11 sheets that are ready-to-complete plant labels, 4" or 6-pack pots for starting plant divisions to be put in large pots later. It is never too early to list chairs needing volunteers, or ask for specific tasks to be filled, and asking a new member to work with an experienced volunteer brings in new blood and makes the new member feel part of the group. Keep encouraging members to pot up stuff before the weather turns. September and October are great times to have “Potting Parties” at member residences. Ask at a meeting or call interested people. We go over to the member’s house and pull plants from their gardens (we did Dolores Moffat’s and Judy Person’s gardens last year), take them home or to a member’s house that has propagation supplies and pot them up for the sale.

November Meeting

At the November meeting: Our Novembers are still pretty mild, so it is not unreasonable to remind members to pot plants as the year progresses—the more time started, the better condition the plant appears at sale time. Things to do: Start saving black plastic flats, 4" and 1 gallon pots and bring them to the meetings to sit outside the door for member to take as they leave. You can make a little “Plant Sale Pots, Take Some, Leave Some” sign to hang above them, and that way, others will start sharing in the pot search.

For the January newsletter, announce the date for the Plant Sale and request members to start grooming plants they can have ready by that date. Request that members watch for mini-blinds being thrown out; mini-blinds can be cut up and used to label the plants. As the chair, you can also pop into some re-sale shops while there is no time crunch

January

Seed Starting in January & February

The months January and February are for “Seed Starting Get Togethers”. The one in late January is a “Seed Propagation Workshop”, it is mainly to show new propagators and new member the best ways to start seed in containers. There should be a fee of \$10 for supplies, you need to get the money up front. Announcements, Flyers, and Sign-up sheets can be created for this event.

Many members have their own green houses or seed starting set up, and will be starting seeds. January is for plants that need an early start (Tomatoes) and late February is for big seed vegetables squash, cucumber. Keep in contact with the propagators to know what is being produced. Do an inventory of your supplies: if you need price books (see Lydia for computer) or colored pricing tags (name of company) order of purchase what is needed NOW. There are white painter hats with flowers on them to identify the sales clerks. You can try something else it not too expensive. Most members wear their aprons.

There are word docs of all the sign-up sheets, samples and job discriptions are attached.

Plant & Price signs

Laminated paper signs that designate plant categories, such as Sun, Shade, Trees and Shrubs, Roses, Houseplants, Cactus and Succulents, can be taped to the appropriate tables.

There are signs that show the price/color codes, and others give common plant photos and descriptions. The signs have a wooden stick taped to the back and can be stuck in the pots (see supply boxes). There are 2 or 3 “Holding Area” signs.

Cashier sign: Welcome sign listing hours, payment information, etc.

March meeting

At the March meeting: sign-up sheets should be filled out, ask for final volunteers. Have flyers available and ask everyone to tape them to the rear or side rear window of their car to advertise as they drive around in the community.

Check the sign-ups from the March meeting and note who plans to be at the Friday Pricing Party. You should have 10 or more people, as they will also be taking plants with them when they leave, to be delivered the next morning. Make sure that some of the people are willing to stay late to do a little sorting of items left after the pricing so that plants are pre-arranged for easy group delivery Saturday morning. Select an experienced person to ask to be the Pricing Chair (Betty Nostrand has done this for several years).

Info about renting tables

We rent 20 to 25 tables from All Rents. They deliver to the site at 7 a.m., the morning of the Sale. Contact them in early March for quantity of tables and the cost. *Contact name and address and phone.*

The Friday Pricing Parties:

We have 2 pricing parties; one for Livermore in the morning (9 a.m.) and one for Pleasanton (11 a.m.). The Chair will prepare the bags of colored tags and pens for pricing; passing them to the workers. Announce guidelines/examples for how to price. Once flats are labeled and priced, as many as possible will be loaded into members' cars and trucks to be kept over night and delivered to the sale Saturday morning. The rest will be picked-up first thing Saturday morning.

Friday Pricing Party Purchase Policy: The Friday pricers pay the same amount that the item would be sold for the next day, and they may only purchase TWO ITEMS. First selection of plants is a privilege for Friday workers, making it a fun day. LAVGC gets the same amount of money, but doesn't need to truck the sold plants to the parking lot. For these reasons, Friday purchases have been allowed, though others counter that it decreases the number and variety of plants available at the Saturday sale, hence the limit to two. Give collected money to Cashiers.

April meeting

State that more flyers are available at the tables. List drop off for plants and any instructions for them (side of house, front patio, etc.) Encourage people to bring plant or gardening White Elephant items to the sale site on Saturday morning, noting that they must be SALEABLE. Emphasize that ALL PLANTS need to be priced Friday, not delivered without pricing on Saturday morning. Members can drive their plants over on the pricing day and have them priced in their vehicle, if they only want to move them once.

Set the date for a post-sale de-briefing. A simple lunch has been done in the past, the date should be close to the sale date so that successes and disappointments to be improved upon will be fresh in everyone's mind. Invite the chairs and major volunteers. Not everybody will be able to come, and anyone who can't should be asked for comments.

Friday Night

Things to Do. Organize the following for Saturday morning:

Make sure Sign chair has markers and tagboard for last-minute sign making (non-plant items are likely to arrive at the last minute and can be quite unusual!).

Confirm that Holding area chair has markers, clipboard, and paper for the Holding area

Flats and box tops are set up for transport to the sale site on Saturday morning.

Pricing materials are in the hands of the Information Booth chair for last-minute pricing

Clean up chair has garbage bags, brooms, dustpan and anything else needed for cleanup

In 2004, we went to Amador High at 10 pm and put "Caution" tape, secured by the potted boards, entirely around the sale area. This discouraged "car for sale" and overnight parkers, and guaranteed space for the next morning in the event of overflow parking for other functions not listed by the school.

Sale Day

6 a.m. Arrive at AHS parking lot (I know this is early-but you will be glad when you realize that everything is running so smoothly). Being there early discourages the "Cars for Sale" and others who use the parking lot. Hang the "Plant Sale, 9-12" sign for drivers passing by. Assist the Facilities Chair in setting up the "potted" signs (Sun, Shade, Roses, etc) for grouping plants. It is important to have these category signs set up before trucks of plants arrive so workers know where to put everything, leaving time available for last minute grooming and plant arrangement.

7 to 7:30 a.m.. Workers arrive to set up tables and umbrellas and put out plants. Have the plants arranged so that you can walk between rows. Items on the table sell faster, so encourage your clerks to constantly be checking the appearance of the items and re-arranging as needed. If you have large quantities of plants (300 iris for example) set up some in the front so that they will move, and can be replenished for a rear area. Any large quantities of plants are probably multi-category, too. They could be in the "Perennial" section and the "Sun plant" section.

8:00 a.m.

Use Caution Tape to close off the ends and/or perimeter of the sale area so that Customers must wait outside till opening. Distribute Worker ID's, to be able to clearly see who should be there, and who should be outside the caution tape. NOBODY gets to "Hold" any item until 9 a.m. Allowing members to pre-select angers the public, and they are standing right there waiting to get in.

Customers are starting to arrive. You must keep them out of the sale area, nicely, so that work can be completed. Caution Security to do this. Confirm that the Holding Area chair has everything needed, and that clerks understand their responsibilities.

Have the Sales Clerk Chair round up clerks and give them their pads and pens and any last minute instruction. Encourage them to be bringing plants to the holding area for safe-keeping, and to free customer's hands to buy more! Holding area clerks can also write up tags, being sure to total them before sending the client to the cashier. Customers can then bring their paid receipt, by car, to the marked Loading Area to pick up their plants. Explain that sales clerks can simply write quantities and pricing (i.e. "3@ \$2") and that they don't have to make copies or itemize.