



April 22, 2012

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **National Public Gardens Day to Benefit Local Seniors**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA** – As part of National Public Gardens Day on May 11, San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden is asking local community members to visit the Garden anytime between 9 - 5 to explore, learn, and to help bring the color and spirit of the garden to seniors who can no longer make the journey.

Mike Bush, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden stated, *“we want people to bring flowers from their garden to our garden, so we can benefit the residents of local care facilities.”* County residents are encouraged to cut flowers from their home gardens and bring bouquet-sized reusable/recyclable containers like Mason jars to the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, located at 3450 Dairy Creek Road in San Luis Obispo, California. Volunteers will arrange donated flowers into bouquets and disburse them to people in local care facilities who are unable to travel to and enjoy a garden on National Public Gardens Day.

*“It’s not only a very nice thing to do for residents in care homes, but it’s very beneficial too,”* stated Bush. A recent Rutgers University study conducted to examine the behavioral effects of flowers on seniors. One of the biggest problems some seniors face is depression. According to Dr. Jeannette Halivand-Jones, the lead researcher and director of the Human Development lab at Rutgers, *“The results are significant because as our nation grows older and life becomes more stressful, we look for easy and natural ways to enhance our lives-and the lives of our aging parents. Now, one simple answer is right under our noses. Give them flowers.”* This surprising study demonstrated that flowers ease depression, inspire social networking and even help with short term memory as we age.

Although some might consider these results surprising, Dr. Halivand-Jones states that, *“Instinct tells us that flowers lift our spirits but, their effects on seniors are especially profound, if not surprising...Happier people live longer, healthier lives and are more open to change. Our research shows that a small dose of nature, like flowers, can do a world of good for our well-being...”*

National Public Gardens Day, occurring annually on the Friday before Mother's Day, is a day to promote awareness of public gardens and their important role in promoting environmental stewardship and sustainability. *“We take this opportunity,”* Bush continued, *“to highlight programs such as plant conservation, water conservation, the preservation of green spaces, and home gardening. The day celebrates the natural beauty and value of public gardens everywhere. Plus, we’ve added the extra layer of taking flowers to seniors.”*

Makena Tolley, Activity Director of Bayside Care and Casa de Flores (which translates to House of flowers) will be receiving the floral bouquets created by the SLO Botanical Garden volunteers. When asked if her two facilities would like the flowers she stated, *“words cannot express my gratitude and appreciation, not only to the botanical garden, but for our community. We are so lucky to live in a place where people take the time to member a population like ours in the facility. Our residents will be delighted with the flowers and the benefits they will receive are so great from a gesture so simple.”*

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Those who donate flowers to the garden will receive a 15% discount that day in the San Luis Obispo's Botanical Garden's Gift and Garden Shop.

For more information, please contact Mike Bush, Executive Director, at (805) 541-1400 ext. 303 or visit [slobg.org](http://slobg.org).

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The San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden is located on 150 acres in El Chorro Regional Park off Highway One between Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo, at 3450 Dairy Creek Rd. When the master plan is complete, the Garden will be the only garden of its kind in the world exclusively devoted to the ecosystems and plants of the five Mediterranean climate regions of the world. Through its programs and facilities, the Garden fosters an appreciation and understanding of the relationship between people and nature and encourages a sense of stewardship toward the natural environment.