

Garden Event

5-7-24, 7pm, Mushrooms, Magical (And Not So Secret) and Intriguing Companions in Gardens and in Nature with Florence Nishida, Culver City 90230

Description = The Culver City Garden Club hosts Florence Nishida discussing mushrooms -- beautiful, curious, intriguing, and sometimes delicious or deadly. Neither plant nor animal, but with resemblances - appear sometimes mysteriously, sometimes welcome, always as intriguing companions to our gardens, fields, and woods. Get acquainted with some regular fungal residents of Los Angeles. Mycologist, botanist, and gardening expert Florence Nishida visits the Culver City Garden Club for an enlightening, fungus-ridden talk. From bread molds and beer fermenters to portobello-cremini, oysters, and shitakes, you're invited to discover the captivating secret life (and not so secret) life of mushrooms. Whether you love eating mushrooms, are a seasoned mycophile, or are simply curious about these fascinating fungi, this presentation is for you! What are the benefits of mushrooms? Are the mushrooms in my yard toxic? Are the medicinal claims true?

👉 Not Plants, Not Animals: Learn about the unique kingdom of mushrooms and fellow fungi, distinct from both animals and plants, in context to their place in the whole universe of living things - and how plants rely on them for survival.

👉 Explore a variety of interesting mushroom examples from the cultivatable Bear's, and crown jewel of the culinary world -- the delectable California golden chanterelle, to the phallic mushrooms that cause people to say, "mushrooms are so weird!" These were a source of frequent "What IS this?" calls to Florence, during her work as a mycology researcher, at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

👉 Discover the vast and hidden network of threads called mycelium that connects mushrooms beneath the soil that tirelessly work to break down organic matter and recycle nutrients back into the ecosystem.

👉 Identify the distinctions between toxic and non-toxic mushrooms and point out "twins"; where two mushrooms are almost indistinguishable from each other in looks but one is potentially dangerous.

👉 Discover "medicinal mushrooms" that you are most likely to encounter in Los Angeles.

Florence believes that the unpredictability of mushrooms adds to their mystique. "They have this mysterious quality of just popping up... "If you are interested in a plant, you can always go back and watch as it develops flowers and seeds. But the mushroom is ephemeral — you happen to be there when it comes up out of the ground, or you don't."

Join us for an eye-opening presentation on fascinating mushrooms. Let's celebrate their vital role in our ecosystems, their mysterious mycelial networks, and their impact on our plates and our health. Don't miss this fungi-filled trek into the mushroom kingdom! 🌿🍄🌿

Florence Nishida is a mycologist, botanist, life-long gardener and one of the original UC Master Gardeners tasked with teaching Angelenos to garden and grow plants sustainably, with special emphasis on those living in the under-served food deserts of Los Angeles. She joined the Master Gardeners of Los Angeles County in 2008 after retiring from careers in teaching (English- LAUSD), editorial research at Time Inc., and research in Mycology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHM).

Florence is a champion of plants that have a long harvest season and shares ways to cook them. "My mission is to expose people to different things that are easy to grow..." If you plant kale, you will have food for months."

In 2010, she co-founded the nonprofit LA Green Grounds with former student Ron Finley (aka Gangsta Gardener) and Vanessa Vobis. LA Green the Grounds is committed to enabling residents of South Los Angeles to create their own edible gardens. It is a catalyst for "Dig-Ins" community-driven workdays manned by locals and volunteers who transform front yards and parkways into edible, inspirational spaces visible to the public. She is a staunch advocate for the recovery and transformation of barren land and abandoned spaces into blooming oases.

In 2013, Florence's activism helped change minds in L.A. City Council led to a vote that now allows LA residents to cultivate edibles in their parkways without a permit. Her response during an interview with the LA Times clearly reinforces her view that "Poor access to good, fresh food led to poor diets that were directly related to poor health among many in the South L.A. communities... It is so satisfying to show how we can transform a very barren, lifeless parcel of ground into a welcome oasis for biological beings, including humans, in the city."

Cost = Free

Location = Veterans' Memorial Complex Garden Room, 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City 90230

For more information = Culver City Garden Club, garden@CulverCityGardenClub.org, 424-404-2019, <https://www.facebook.com/CulverCityGardenClub/>