

April 2014

## Garden Debris Pick-up - A Homestead Exclusive...and a Work Party Too!

By Margaret Harding

Join our Homestead celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, April 26, 9:30 – noon at Stolte Grove. It's a family affair for everyone over the age of 5, and if you work especially hard you'll get pizza and drinks at noon! French and Scotch broom are in full regalia right now – they're the big bushes that are covered with pretty yellow flowers. These exotics (i.e. non-native, introduced species) have successfully taken over much of our open space landscape, crowding out every other plant. No animals eat it, the only creature that benefits from it is the tick, which hangs out in its foliage waiting for a meal-producing critter (deer, dogs, cats, you) to wander along so it can hop aboard. The only good thing about broom is that it is very easy to pull up, roots and all, when the ground is soft. Hopefully that will be the case at the end of April and you can vent all your aggression on broom. If you're a mellow pacifist, Maverick, our guru of land management, will find a non-aggressive task for you (how does raking the pathways sound?). Bring the family, gloves, clippers (put your name on them), wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, plan on meeting your neighbors and helping to spruce up our open space.

Directions: Stolte Grove is at the far end of Homestead Valley, where LaVerne and Montford Avenues meet. There's virtually no on-site parking, so drop off your kids and your tools and park down the road a bit.

Chipper Day won't happen this spring due to construction at the Community Center, but there's a terrific alternative for your garden debris thanks to an exclusive arrangement between Homestead and Mill Valley Refuse. They will pick up up to 21 bags, boxes or bundles (no larger than 2'x5') from the curb on your regular garbage day! For free! The bags must be paper, you can get (I just got) a 5-pack of 30 gallon bags at Goodman's for \$2.99. You must call them (457-9760, ext. 5) to tell them you want to use their Yard Waste Clean-up. You can do this 4 times a year, and it's available either for yard waste or for garbage. Such a deal!