

Garden Variety

L.A. CC'S HORTICULTURIST SPORTS GREEN THUMB

If you can't find Russell Watanabe on the golf course, he's probably in the garden growing vegetables. That's one of Watanabe's many duties as horticulturist at Los Angeles CC.

Watanabe, who reports to superintendent Bruce Williams, is also in charge of maintaining the clubhouse's landscape, cleaning the parking lot, growing indoor plants, planting annuals such as flowers on the grounds and providing floral arrangements for clubhouse tables.

"We have an extensive operation here for clubhouse grounds," says Watanabe, a California native who also helps care for the course's trees and shrubs.

Watanabe's most unusual duty is to grow herbs and vegetables for clubhouse chef Christian Reber, who serves them the country club's restaurant. Reber favors unusual lettuce types and heirloom tomatoes, and Watanabe will grow several organic varieties at a time.



Russell Watanabe grow herbs and vegetables for the restaurant at the Los Angeles CC.

"Sometimes I'll mix the lettuce seed, and it will come out mixed greens," Watanabe says.

Watanabe keeps a stock of rosemary, sage, bay leaf and lemon grass in the herb garden. Cooks will forage the garden to gather what they need for a day's meals.

Watanabe also planted fruit trees — peaches, figs, guavas and bananas — at Reber's request. He grows indoor plants for the clubhouse that are used in boxes for room dividers and decoration.

Quotable



"We had one Port-O-Pot for every keg of beer sold."

— Paul Jett, Pinehurst #2 superintendent, on vital preparations for the U.S. Open last summer.

"The transition zone is where superintendents transition from job to job as a result of turf losses."

— John C. Robinson, superintendent of Bayville GC in Virginia Beach, Va., describing how difficult it is to grow grass in his corner of the world.

"As architects, we're going to have to quit designing courses to impress other architects."

— John LaFoy, president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects

"Don't Let the Messenger They Shoot Be You"

— Title of a seminar hosted by Mike Jousan of the South Dakota GCSA, to be held in March

"My philosophy has always been that when you come to my golf course, you're coming to my home — and I want it to look perfect."

— Bob Graunke, superintendent of Tidewater GC and Plantation in North Myrtle Beach, S.C.

