



Sacramento Perennial Plant Club NEWSLETTER

Founded 1988

www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.com

Sept / Oct 2009

Contents

Upcoming Programs - page 1

Garden Tours - page 2

Fall Plant Sale - page 2

Mark Your Calendar - page 2

Book Review - page 3

The Love of Scented Geraniums- pages 4-5

Summer Herb Growing FAQ
- pages 6-7- 8

Rose's Recipes - page 8

Native Bees Give Visitors A
Buzz - page 9

President's message- page 10

Board meeting - page 10

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

Chuck McMullens

'The Natural Look'- Hypertufa Planters and Troughs

Shepard Garden and Arts Center

Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 7:00 PM

Chuck McMullens, an SPPC member, will be presenting 'The Natural Look - Hypertufa Planters and Troughs' at the September 24th meeting. He has been making Hypertufa containers since 1992. His first encounter with Hypertufa was in 1991 and he still has the article that first peaked his interest. He makes small pots and troughs and plants succulents for his own use, birthdays and special occasions. He has done several presentations and demonstrations for various groups.

Hypertufa is a combination of cement, peat moss, and sand that is molded to make plant containers and other garden ornaments that look like weathered stone. In the early 19th century, English gardeners discovered that old stone sinks from cottage kitchens and limestone and sandstone troughs, which were used to feed & water livestock for centuries, made ideal containers for alpine and rock plants. As a consequence these containers became quite scarce by the 1930's. This is when enterprising gardeners developed the Hypertufa mixture.

OCTOBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

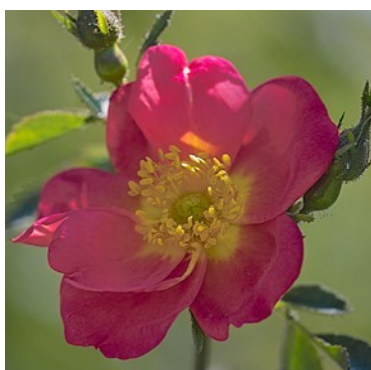
Gregg Lowery

Owner - "Vintage Gardens" - Sebastopol, California
Antique Roses and Hydrangeas for the Perennial Garden
Shepard Garden and Arts Center
Thursday, October 22, 2009, 7:00 PM

Gregg Lowery will be our Guest Speaker on Thursday, October 22nd. Gregg has spent twenty-seven years developing a collection of rare old roses that has become one of the largest old rose collections in private hands in North America. The collection has formed the basis of Vintage Gardens, a retail/mail order rose nursery in Sebastopol. Vintage Gardens began selling on a small scale in 1984. By 1994 the business had developed such a following that Gregg opened a retail store. In 1997 the store moved to a larger location nearby. In 2006 Vintage Gardens returned to its roots and now operates only via mail order.

Gregg has consulted on a number of historic rose garden plantings including Boone Hall Plantation in South Carolina, and Hearst Castle at San Simeon in California. His most current projects include the redesign of a garden surrounding the 1870 MacDonald mansion in Santa Rosa, California, known as Mableton, and a new rose garden for the Albuquerque Botanic Gardens.

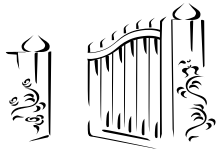
Gregg is a founding member of the Heritage Rose Foundation, a non-profit society that promotes education about old roses and their preservation.



Lady Penzance

Coppery-pink, single flowers, flushed salmon-pink on first opening; a striking color effect for an Eglantine, and one of the loveliest of this group. Fragrant foliage, and flowers sweet and spicy. Modest display of rose hips.

Perennial Plant Club



THE LATE SHOW GARDENS

Friday September 18, Saturday September 19, Sunday September 20

9:30 A.M. –5:30P.M.

Cornerstone, Sonoma, California

The Late Show Gardens is an alliance of professionals and dedicated gardeners many of whom are world renowned and travel extensively speaking about their work. The designers and speakers will share how they are responding to the demands of global climate change. Our bus trip to the Garden Show on Saturday, September 19 is full. If you are interested in attending the show information about the speakers and designers are on their website www.thelateshowgardens.org

Some of the many speakers are Tom Fisher, Timber Press; Authors and Designers, Glen Withey, Charles Price, Roger Gossler, Topher Delaney, Ken Duse, Phil von Soelen; Ketzell Levin from NPR, Dick Turner, editor of Pacific Horticulture. Sean Hogan, owner of Cistus Nursery in Oregon and from Sacramento will be a designer and vendor. Kate Frey, gold metal winner at the Chelsea Flower Show and designer of the gardens at Fetzer vineyard, Jack Chandler, Landscape Architect and designer of outdoor furniture and sculptures, Jon Greenlee Author and designer, Robin Parer owner of Geraniaceae are among the many designers and vendors who will be participating.



Annual Fall Plant Sale

Shepard Garden and Art Center

Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18, 2009

10 AM to 5 PM

The Fall Plant Sale will be the third weekend of October. Please donate plants and garden related items. Labels with pictures of the plants are helpful. **Bring plants and items to Center on Friday, October 16th between 10AM and 5 PM.** We have a large selection of plants ready for fall planting. Many of the flats of perennials have been propagated by club member Emma Ahart. **Volunteers are needed to man our tables. We need volunteers to pick-up plants at Emma's house on Friday morning and transport to the center. We also need volunteers to help with the cleanup and packing up of plants on Sunday afternoon.** This is a good way to get to know other members of the club and it is fun to work at the sale. For information call Madeleine Mullins at 455-7815.



Mark Your Calendar Plant Sales and Tours

Saturday September 19 –Sunday September 20

Bob Hamm

9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. behind The Gifted Gardener at 18th and J. Street

Saturday, September 19

Native Plant Club Fall Sale

10:00a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Shepard Garden and Art Center

Saturday, September 26

Guided Tour: Perennial Plants for the Central Valley

10 a.m., Gazebo UC Davis Arboretum

Saturday, October 2 - Sunday, October 3

Bob Hamm

9:00a.m -3:00 p.m. behind The Gifted Gardener at 18th and J Street

Saturday, October 3

UC Davis Arboretum Fall Plant Sale

Member sale 9–11 a.m., public sale 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Arboretum Teaching Nursery, Garrod Drive (across from the Vet School).

Sunday, October 4

Guided Tour: Planting Perennials

2 p.m., Gazebo, Garrod Drive UC Davis Arboretum

Wednesday, October 14

Walk with Warren

12 p.m., Arboretum Headquarters, LaRue Road

Enjoy stories about the collections with Arboretum Superintendent Warren Roberts.

Saturday, October 17 and Sunday October 18

Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Fall Sale

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Shepard Garden and Art Center



Madeleine's "Magic and Medicine of Plants"

By: Diana Morris

Sometimes at night, the mandrake plant will give off a pale, eerie light causing ancient cultures to attribute spiritual and magical forces to the plant. Mandrake plants were said to have charms against demons, protected against battlewounds, cured all diseases, brought luck in love, promoted fertility, guaranteed perfect marksmanship and unearthed hidden treasures.

*Go, and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
--John Donne, 17th century poet*

However, modern science explains the eerie light as phosphoresces—a phenomenon by which the chemical substances in the mandrake berries react with dew causing a lingering emission of light.

This is just one of many fascinating myths and explanations found in "Magic and Medicine of Plants", a book published by Reader's Digest in 1986 and still available (amazon.com). Recently SPPC member Madeleine Mullins loaned me her copy of the book and it has proven to be delightful summer reading and reference.

In addition to ancient myths, the book also covers histories of early cultures, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and more, their beliefs and traditions associated with the plant world. Examples of trees, herbs, and flowers used for medicinal purposes and also sorcery—think Shakespeare's witches in Macbeth stirring the bubbling cauldron.

The introduction to the book includes history, myths, medicinal uses of plants, a brief illustrated section on the botany of plants, photosynthesis, explanation of botanical Latin plant names, and much more.

But the real meat of the book falls into the full page descriptions of numerous plants arranged alphabetically, agrimony to yellowroot. Each page contains an actual color photo of the plant along with a full color, enlarged illustration of the same. A written description and fascinating facts about the history—myths, literary references, and medicinal uses associated with each entry, further descriptions include habitat, range, identification, and uses.

One of my favorite all time plants is maidenhair fern, so delicate and lacy looking. Long ago, maidenhair fern tea was said to prevent hair from falling out. Modern science says this is sadly a myth.

For the mystery buff, a poisonous plant section describes various plants poisonous to humans and animals. The exotic plant section features plants selected "because they are among the most important and widely used medicinal plants in the world...and are rarely found wild in temperate North America."

WARNING: some of the entries are noted with a large black X indicating a toxic plant, read entry carefully. Others are marked with a large red X with the note "Ingestion of the plant may cause immediate dire effects."

In the back of the book chapters focus on cultivation practices, recipes, making natural dyes, herbs for face and skin care, herbs for health, even "Easing Cold Symptoms" suggests hyssop cough syrup and eucalyptus steam inhalant.

My favorite, because I remember my grandmother using it, is a recipe for horehound cough drops. Horehound is also listed in the full page section with a complete description and background. Horehound has been used for cold and chest infections since ancient times. The cough drops are hard to find today but can still be purchased. A note to the wise: careful, horehound is an acquired taste.

Useless trivia: the ancients Celts worshipped trees. Their priests, the Druids, gave magical powers to mistletoe because it grows without touching the ground and appears to spread spontaneously. Today, we know mistletoe as a parasite that is spread as birds travel from tree to tree expelling the seeds in their droppings.

More useless trivia: in the John Wayne classic movie, "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon," Wayne discusses a cyclamen plant calling it "Flaming Arrow" and continues by saying the early Greeks called it "Rabbit's Ears."

THE LOVE OF SCENTED GERANIUMS/PELARGONIUMS

By: Barbara Lane-Piert.

The name is questionable but the beauty of flower, foliage and scent is remarkable.

Forgive me Robin if I use the name incorrectly but I love the word "Geranium" so in this article the plant I have come to love I shall call geranium not the proper name which probably is pelargonium. I believe a small nectar tube that extends down the stalk of the floret from the base of the sepals distinguishes pelargonium from other genera. I'll have to look into that one cold winter night when I have nothing else on my agenda.

Several years ago at one of our plant sales with guilty feelings about not buying very much, I noticed Robin Parer the owner of "Geraniaceae" selling her wares...She is so very persuasive, a good salesperson (not to mention a good speaker) and so I spent my little change on many tiny plants of scented geraniums. Those were the days when roses took most of my money, not to mention my time.

Having a large oblong wooden box that was empty I put in a few plastic pots at the bottom (to take up space and save my "dirt") and planted them. They were quite a diverse mix but they didn't really get my attention until a couple of years later. Somehow the little plant fairies visited and talked them into living through light frosts, and to get larger and larger. Once in a while I would stroke their leaves and sniff, but other plants were getting my attention. Then: a plant miracle. I walked into the garden early one spring morning a few years ago and a waft of fragrance greeted me from the dew covered garden. I went in search of it....it wasn't roses...or wisteria...or jasmine, lavender or rosemary. What was it? As I turned, I froze in space. Those little plants were now standing at attention. Showing me all their glory, flowers in droves...colors of pink and lavender... and what a fragrance. Hastily I went over to stand in awe. Those scented geraniums were in full flower, with wonderfully diverse foliage, and fragrance, talking to me in their plant-like talk. "Look at me, feel me, smell me" they all said.

Now I am always looking for a plant to add to my collection. One geranium is soooo huge, I trim it back constantly. It was a plant I didn't know what to do with, so tucked it in with a bird seeded palm at the back of the baby pond. It has steadily grown. My original wooden box over-flows with many different types of scented geraniums. Many geraniums find comfort in their pots of mixed plantings. They mix with everything...fuchsias, ivies, and so many other plants too numerous to list.

This is a plant that has everything...flowers, foliage, fragrance. They are so easy to grow. Pruning is advised (a quick scalping with hedge shears.) If you live in the foothills they may need covering on frosty nights. In Sac Town I have never covered them. Bugs don't seem to like them too much....at least in my garden. I fertilize in the spring usually with the most reasonable fertilizer I can find but believe a balanced fertilizer is probably best....15-15-15 should be just fine. I often use controlled release on everything and then forget it until fall. I am sure that you could get even better results with more thought going into a fertilizer program. I am totally noncompulsive when it comes to my garden...what is easy, and reasonable, is my way of gardening. Even with minimal care, like mine, these plants bring great joy. I water them frequently, even though they are on a watering system, because I want to inhale their glorious fragrance. Watering just wakes them all up (guess it would wake me as well). I read somewhere that Scented Geraniums are heavy users of magnesium, maybe they are, I must check on that because it would be really easy to add a little Epsom salts to the watering can (and I'll use the rest in the bath for yours truly). My plants grow in more shade than sun but I am sure they could take a little more UVA/UVB and would probably flourish. My beloved geranium can be an espalier, a standard or in a pot alone or with other plants...so many choices.

Scented Geraniums can be used in the kitchen...check the internet I am sure they have recipes. I have tried a few leaves in tea...Think I may have chosen the wrong ones...must try again. Herbal vinegars look great, and taste great...try the rose or lemon scented ones.

Freeze some in an ice tray for the coolest ice tea. Potpourri should be a wonderful way of using them...I must try it. Think I'll try and mix it with my lavender or rosemary.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Propagation of these fabulous plants is so easy. Once your plants have reached maturity just cut some cuttings, strip lower leaves, and stick in clean pots and dirt. You could attend Daisy's propagation classes for the expert's advice on this. Seed propagation is possible for those with patience (I have little).

Scented Geraniums: There are so many choices...foliage shape and color, variegation in leaf colors, foliage marked with the colors white, gold or even a brown. I would like to try a variegated one. It's on my priority list. Hybridization is possible (never happens here) if you have an analytical mind and lots of that aforementioned patience....have fun. There are too many varieties to mention here but the internet will help you out. The experts will have, I hope, suggestions of the very best varieties. Robin Parer grows wonderful plants go to her website www.geraniaceae.com Plant them, fertilize them, water them and then ignore them. One day you will walk in YOUR garden and be captivated by these fascinating plants...Happy growing.....Barbara...



Pelargoniums: Scented-Leaf Robin Parer –Geraniaceae

These plants have been sentimental favorites for several hundred years. Over 100 varieties of scented leaf pelargoniums are available. The range of detectable scents is remarkable, and includes rose, lime, ginger, peach, lemon, peppermint, nutmeg, oak, strawberry, balsam, apricot, coconut, apple, and many others. Although many scented leaf pelargoniums grow to a large size in the ground, their size can be controlled by keeping them in pots, and by pruning the tips during the growing season. Most are frost tender, and need to be protected during the winter from temperatures in the low 30's (F) and below, and from excessive moisture when they are not in growth. Cuttings root easily in potting soil, and new cuttings can be made for the following year. Plants should be placed where they can be easily touched. Leaves can be utilized in potpourri, cooking, and for toiletries. www.geraniaceae.com



P. 'Pineapple'
Pelargoniums (scented-leaf)

Leathery, dark green leaves have a faint canned-pineapple fragrance. Lavender flowers.

Photos by Donn Reiners



P. 'Strawberry'
Pelargoniums (scented-leaf)

Sweet strawberry candy fragrance. Dissected, toothed small, mid green leaves are very fragrant. Flowers have pale lilac -white petals with raspberry and plum veins and streaks on upper petals

Summer Herb Growing FAQ's

By: Rosemary Loveall-Sale

This is the time of year when the same questions come up many times regarding herbs and vegetables, so perhaps it is time to revisit some of these topics as we enter another summer of herb growing.

1. Why can't I grow cilantro? You can, at your weekend home in Carmel. Cilantro is a cool season annual; it does not like temperatures over 90 degrees and it prefer high humidity. Even in the shade, hot dry California summers are too much for the delicate nature of cilantro. Grow cilantro from transplants March thru early June, and in the mid fall through early winter. If you insist on growing cilantro in the summer, direct sow in a shady well composted area of the garden, with ample water and fertilizer. Harvest as soon as you get several sets of leaves. If you continue to direct sow throughout the summer you can get a regular harvest. There are two other possibilities however. The first is to grow cilantro (*Eryngium foetidum*), a tender perennial that is related to cilantro but will withstand more summer heat. It has somewhat prickly leaves, and the prickly flowers should be removed as soon as they start to set, but if grown in afternoon shade it will actually produce plenty of leaf material throughout the summer. It is slightly stronger than cilantro. In Vietnam the common name is ngo gai, in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic it is commonly called cilantro. A second substitute to grow is Vietnamese coriander, also called rau ram or pak pai in Thailand. The botanical name is *Polygonum odoratum* – it is a knotweed, which often strikes fear in gardener's hearts because knotweeds can be such vicious weeds. We have grown a stock plant of this in our demonstration garden for ten years, and it has stayed well behaved. Although it is listed as a tender perennial not liking extreme heat, it fares beautifully in our afternoon shade garden, and has returned from dormancy with flying colors the last 10 winters. I think it is a great cilantro substitute, with a pleasant lemony cilantro flavor. For our 2009 Open House we featured it in a salad recipe with jicama, red cabbage and carrot, and it was a big hit!

2. Why does my basil flower, and how do I make it stop (or is it too late)? Basil is a warm season annual, and its entire goal is to produce flowers, seed and die. Your entire goal is to stop it from producing flowers and keep it in vegetative growth. Any bit of stress will send basil into flowering mode – a dry down or lack of fertilizer is common, especially because we forget that basil prefers more water and fertilizer, especially nitrogen, than most other herbs we commonly grow. If your basil is flowering, prune back not just the blooms, but several sets of leaves, even up to half of the plant, and fertilize. Using a liquid fertilizer usually gets the fertilizer to the root zone more rapidly – try a sea kelp/fish emulsion blend at the recommended strength, or if you are using an inorganic such as Miracle Gro use it at half the recommended strength. Using a slow release granular fertilizer will give more gradual release of nutrients, but needs to be worked into the soil and watered in on a regular basis, usually once a month. In containers, fertilize basil every 2 weeks, and in the ground fertilize once a month. This is much more frequent than any of our perennial herbs, which we fertilize maybe once a year in the ground!

Basil also prefers more water than most herbs, in beds several times a week, and in containers often every 2 to 3 days.

If you are struggling with basil, try growing 'Pesto Perpetuo' which never blooms and is a bit more drought tolerant. Some basil's such as African Blue are sterile and never produce seed, so allowing them to bloom doesn't really affect the flavor of the leaf.

3. My herbs are all blooming. Can I still use them? Although annual and biennial herbs such as basil, parsley and cilantro are grown for their leaves and are prevented from blooming because it terminates their life cycle and affects their flavor, perennial herbs are relatively unaffected by blooms. Although some energy goes into the bloom, and some people believe that the flavor of the leaves are affected, in truth most of us just don't have that fine of a palate to tell the difference. Actually, any plant that you can eat the leaves, you can eat the flowers, and it is always a pleasant surprise for our garden tours to try the flowers of Italian oregano, thyme and rosemary! Herb flowers are sweet and robust flavored at the same time, adding complexity to a dish. Whereas the leaves of winter savory may be overpowering for grilled fish, the flowers have a spicy pepper kick, but also a nice mellow flavor to them that makes them very appealing for light summer fare.

My favorite flowers to cook with are winter savory, caraway thyme, Thai basil, Italian oregano, pineapple sage and any of Agastaches and Monarda. Besides the obvious place to use herbal flowers in vegetable salads, many herb flowers are excel-

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

lent in fruit salads as well. Try the licorice scented flowers of Agastache 'Summer Breeze' mixed in with nectarines or peaches for a great kick, or cinnamon or lemon basil flowers mixed with butters to put on your morning toast and honey. An unusual treat are the flowers of Salvia melissodora, or Grape scented sage, which bloom all fall and winter with the delicious scent and flavor of grapes.

One other important note about herb flowers is that they bring visitors to the garden that both delight us and assist us with pollination. Basil and rosemary brings in honeybees and other pollinators, Agastache, Monarda, and Salvia are terrific for hummingbirds, and dill, lovage and parsley are important for both adults and the larval stages of butterflies.

4. I guess it's too late to plant this year. Never, if you are reading this and you live in California. We live in the land of milk and honey. Sure, the state is handing out IOU's and our houses are worth half what they were worth a year ago, but we can grow perennials and vegetables year round. So long as water is available, you have an irrigation system in place during the hottest months of the year, and you aren't slogging around in the mud compacting soil during the winter, there is always something you can be planting. In August I usually suggest to avoid planting California natives and to wait to plant out heat intolerant vegetables, but hardy perennials such as lavender, penstemon, sage, even daisy flower members such as Rudbeckia and Echinacea, will transplant fine so long as irrigation is available. Cutting back large leafy plants before transplanting may remove flowers, but will reduce transplant shock. And fall planting is the BEST time to plant most hardy perennials. Planting from mid September until early November allows even the brownest thumb out there the chance of success. So, if you don't want to waste water getting plants established during the hottest part of the year, why not spend that time enjoying some herbal tea, mapping out your garden and planning for some fall planting. One of the best benefits from planting in the fall can be on your wallet, since almost all nurseries have great sales to promote fall planting and decrease inventory.

5. Why are my tomatoes not setting/not ripening? When night time temperatures are cool, fruit set and ripening is slowed. This is often truer of heirlooms than hybrids, while cherries often will set even under cooler conditions...

6. Can I use fresh herbs for tea or do I have to dry it first? I am always surprised by this question, but it makes me realize that we are used to buying little packages of dried up stuff, and we are a little bit disconnected from our garden. Lemon verbena, which I think makes the most refreshing tea possible, is easy to grow and easy to use fresh in tea. Use 1 tbsp of fresh leaves or flowers for each 8 oz cup of tea. Squeeze or gently twist the leaves to release the oil, and place them in water that has been brought to a boil. Turn off the water (don't boil the leaves and flowers) cover the pot and allow to steep for 5 to 10 minutes. Try some of the stranger plants you would never think of using for tea, like lemon basil or lemon thyme, which are both delicious after dinner digestive teas.

7. My lavender looks leggy/woody/old. When do I prune my lavender? The most serious pruning is done after bloom, and it should look rather sad looking after pruning. While you cannot prune below all of the green material and expect the plant to survive, you can prune down to just a few sets of leaves. Do this every time the lavender blooms and you will keep your plant looking compact and vigorous, and maximize the life span. After pruning, fertilize your plant with an organic fertilizer that includes sea kelp (or use sea kelp) to minimize shock. Rose shows you how to keep your lavender plants looking great at the Morningsun Herb Farm website.

Of course, some lavenders seem to always be in bloom. Often French lavender, Goodwin Creek Grey lavender or sweet lavender will bloom even during the winter, so at some point you have to make the decision to go ahead and prune to shape the plant and remove spent blooms. I like to prune these lavenders in August even if they are blooming heavily; to be sure they are blooming with lovely flowers for November and December.

8. Can I leave this plant in the container I bought it in? Well, you can, but it will never flourish. Since our plants are grown in 3 or 4 inch pots, they are easy to transplant with a minimum amount of shock, but will definitely get root bound, get hungry, not be very productive, be more susceptible to disease and never give you all of the delicious flavorful foliage and flowers that you will want.

9. Why is my plant yellow? Generally, there is an easy answer for about 75 % of all those yellow plants, especially because they tend to be basil, tomatoes, other vegetables, or citrus where these symptoms first show up. My first ques-

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

tion is always 'How often are you fertilizing?' This is often met with a blank stare, or with the statement "Never, do I need to?" The answer is yes, especially when these plants are grown in containers, thereby restricting the root system to a very small space. In general, lower leaves yellowing or overall yellowing tends to be a nitrogen deficiency, easily overcome with higher nitrogen fertilizers. If using organic fertilizers such as fish emulsion, it may need to be applied every several weeks during the growing season. Dry slow release fertilizers will need to be applied every 4 to 6 weeks. Faster acting inorganic fertilizers will overcome the symptoms more quickly, but any excess nitrogen is more quickly lost during watering. The best way to get an accurate diagnosis, of course, is to bring in a nice sized leaf sample showing the symptoms to a nursery.

10. Why did my plant die? Well, my first employee Pam would respond to this question with 'Some plants have no will to live'. Of course, I used to hear her threatening plants that weren't growing well with certain death; I guess scaring them into thriving was tough love. When people ask me this question though, I usually have about 25 questions to ask them back. Remember, some plants only live one season, and some perennials, such as thyme, are short lived; usually only lasting 2 or 3 years. Of course, there is too much versus not enough water, root systems being girdled or eaten by gophers, insects, the accidental overspray with herbicide, too heavy pruning, 'vacation neglect', differences in watering and fertilizing needs in containers vs. in ground growing, planting in the wrong place, plants being overtaken by other plants, the problems with neglect in general and a myriad of other possibilities!

When you have this question, I always suggest bringing in as much of the plant and its symptoms as possible. This includes roots if they appear affected. Also, the more information the better – it is a bit frustrating to be asked why a plant isn't growing, ask 20 questions about it, and then finally have someone say, "well I planted it 2 weeks ago, I just thought I would see some growth by now"...ah, I never thought to ask if the gardener was impatient.

We of course get many other questions during the growing season, but these ten probably make up at least 50% of the daily questions! I hope this helps answer some of the burning questions you have had this summer!



Rose's recipes from the Morningsun Herb Farms 2009 Open House

Pineapple Sage Pound Cake

Slices of this cake hot from the toaster, with a bit of butter and honey, are delicious for breakfast!

- 1 cup butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 5 eggs
- 2 tbsp chopped pineapple sage leaves
- 3 tbsp coarsely chopped pineapple sage flowers, if available
- 1 tsp grated lemon peel
- 4 tbsp well-squeezed, chopped pineapple
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 cups flour

Cream the butter and the sugar until very light and fluffy. Beat in the honey. Add the eggs one at a time, making sure to beat for one minute after each addition. Beat in the sage leaves, flowers and lemon peel. Stir the dry ingredients together and add to the butter mixture. Add chopped pineapple. Fold these together gently, until just blended. Pour into four miniature loaf pan (6 inches by 3 1/4 inches by 2 inches). Bake in a pre-heated 325 degree F oven for approximately 45 minutes, or until golden brown (a toothpick inserted in the middle should come out clean). Cool for 10 minutes on a rack, then turn out of pans and continue to cool.

Scented Geranium Lemonade

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 6 cups water
- 8 rose scented geranium leaves
- 3/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Bring the sugar and 2 cups of the water to a boil in a small saucepan. Add the rose scented geranium, cover and remove from the heat. Let the syrup steep for at least 30 minutes. Strain the syrup into a pitcher. Stir in 1/2 cup lemon juice and the remaining 4 cups water. Taste and add more lemon juice if necessary. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Makes 1 1/2 quarts.

Native Bees Gave Visitors the Buzz By: Sharon Patrician, Manager, Hamilton Square

What's gold, fuzzy, looks like a teddy bear and has all the female carpenter bees in thrall? The male carpenter bee (*Xylocopa varipuncta*), who's stunning good looks make him a favorite in the Hamilton Square Garden.

On July 25, 2009, Dr. Gordon Frankie, Entomologist for the University of California, Berkeley, and his graduate assistant, Jaime Pawelek, came to the Hamilton Square Garden for a native bee workshop. Hamilton Square is one of the public gardens throughout California. Dr. Frankie and his students have been studying for several years. Dr. Frankie is interested in the pollination capabilities of native bees and their ability to use our home gardens, parks and public areas to gather pollen for their larvae. In that process, they cross-pollinate many native species and some food crops.

Dr. Frankie and Pawelek led two groups of keen visitors on a bee identification walk through Hamilton. While there are over 60 species of native bees frequenting Hamilton's flowers, the most common bee spotted that day was *Svastra oblique*, or the sunflower bee. They are also known as long-horn bees because the males sport long antennae. While favoring the native California sunflower, the bees were also spotted on calamintha, asters and some salvias.

Sharon Patrician, manager of Hamilton Square Garden, Historic City Cemetery in Sacramento, invited Dr. Frankie and Pawelek to speak to visitors and garden volunteers in the cemetery. The Club generously donated stipends to Frankie and Pawelek for their ongoing work in the demonstration gardens. Dr. Frankie has donated many bee-friendly plants to Hamilton Square and uses his own funds for such plants.

There are preliminary plans to have Dr. Frankie come next year for another workshop. While the workshop is oriented toward the novice, you can learn more about native bees by going to Dr. Frankie's website: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/urbanbeegardens> it has many facts about native bees, suggested plants to nourish new generations of bees and lots of great information.

Visit Hamilton Square on your own. If Patrician is around, she will be happy to share bee and plant information with you. The cemetery's summer hours are 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. and winter hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the address is 1000 Broadway, Sacramento, CA. You may also contact Patrician (patricianone@att.net) if you would like a private tour.



Male carpenter bee

The green eyed golden insect is also known as a 'teddy bear'



Above, one of the fall blooming **Sunflowers (*Helianthus angustifolius*)** plants in the Old City Cemetery. Planted, on October 9, 2007. Photo by Bob Hamm.

Perennial Plant Club

PRESIDENT MESSAGE - Saul Wiseman

On Saturday, September 19, a bus load of Sacramento Perennial Plant Club members will be attending The Late Show Gardens in Sonoma. TLSG organizers call this “a revolutionary garden show unlike any other.” This is not going to be like the March garden shows many of us have attended.

The show will be held at Cornerstone Sonoma in the fall, providing an ideal setting to enjoy brilliantly designed gardens, listen to informative lectures given by highly-acclaimed speakers and shop for the latest in must have-plants and gifts from carefully chosen vendors.

Robin Parer, long time friend of the SPPC, is a member of the alliance of professionals, dedicated gardeners and respected speakers who have come together to celebrate design while addressing the challenges of our changing environment.

Lots of speakers: from Coast to Coast, Europe and beyond, renowned speakers will address how to respond to drought and global warming from design to appropriate plants.

The SPPC is one of the many sponsors. We donated \$500 and sponsor speaker, Tom Fischer, editor of Timber Press, who will be speaking at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday. His topic is “Low-Water Gardening with a Mediterranean/Californian Plant Palette.”

I’m hoping that the garden designers will have actual outdoor gardens on display so one can see how innovative designers are highlighting solutions to global climate change using contemporary and brilliantly imaginative styles. Celebrating design while addressing the challenges of our changing environment should be interesting.

Of course, there will be vendors including Digging Dog Nursery and San Marcos from Santa Barbara plus Gossler Farm Nursery and Cistus Nursery from Oregon and Australian Native Plant Nursery.

Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend. I hope some of you take photos and write about the show for either the Newsletter or for our club website. I hope this fall show becomes an annual event.

The next board meeting on October 13 will be at Janice Sutherland’s (481-2137) at 5:00. The potluck dinner is open to all members.



Janice Sutherland
Newsletter Editor
3221 Chenu Avenue
Sacramento, CA, 95821