



# Sacramento Perennial Plant Club

## NEWSLETTER

Founded 1988

www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.com

March / April 2012

### Contents

Upcoming Programs - page 1

Vendor Sale- page 2

Spring Plant Sale - page 2

Membership roster - page 2

New members - page 2

Picnic & Vernal Pools- pg. 2

Cemetery Open Garden Day  
- page 3

Garden Tours - page 4-5

Troll Knoll Bus Trip- page 6

Bergenia - page 7

What's Blooming - page 7

Meet the Members - page 8

Early Spring garden- page 9

Fran's Next Trip - page 9

President's message- page 10

Flyers for Vendor Sale pg 10

### March Program

**Sacramento Perennial Plant Club**

**11th Annual Vendor Sale**

**Unusual Plants and Garden Treasures**

**March 31, 2012, Saturday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**Shepherd Garden and Arts Center at McKinley Park**

**Speaker 12 noon: Gary Doerr, President of Blooms of Bressingham**

**The March meeting will be replaced with this special event.** Guest Speaker will be Gary Doerr, president of Blooms of Bressingham. His Topic: "You May Find or Breed A Future Perennial Plant of the Year." Blooms of Bressingham® has been recognized as a leader in identifying and selecting the finest of herbaceous perennials for almost 100 years. During that time, the father and son team of Alan and Adrian Bloom have been responsible for introducing over 200 perennial cultivars. Among these are Geranium "Rozanne" the 2008 Perennial Plant of the Year.

This is a great opportunity for you to visit specialty nurseries, many from outside the Sacramento area, and get a jump-start on this year's gardening season. In this time of financial hardship, it is important that we support these small businesses. They are the people who are propagating and selling the rich variety of plants that we have come to love. Without the small independent nurseries, the look of our gardens will change forever. Many of the plants sell for \$5.00 - \$10.00 so **come support** the nurseries and buy one or two special plants. We hope you can come; this is a friendly and fun day. Take advantage of all the knowledgeable plant growers you can talk to and have your questions answered. Tell your neighbors and friends about the sale.

*More information on page two:*

### April Program

**Rose Lovell - Sale and Linda Boddy**  
**From Small Cuttings to Full Flower Beds**  
**Shepard Garden and Arts Center**  
**Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 7:00 PM**

Rose and Linda were the speakers at our May meeting last year. The meeting was so informative and so many questions were asked and answered that they did not finish their program, they agreed to come back and speak this April. Rose, owner of Morningsun Farm introduced us to Linda Boddy. Linda had been living for years in Mendocino and was the propagator for Digging Dog Nursery. She moved back to Vacaville, stopped by to say hello to Rose and is now propagating with Rose. Linda and Rose shared so much information with us and are two very friendly and easy to talk to women. The nursery has grown over the years and includes over 500 varieties of annuals, perennials, herbs and vegetables. Linda will give us information and answer questions about propagating and Rose will share her slides and knowledge about some new herbs and plants she is growing and that do well in our area. They will share with us something new they learned last year. Some difficult to propagate plants like to be started in Vodka!! **Rose will sell plants at the Vendor Sale.**



Photo -Van Bourgondien's

# Perennial Plant Club

## Vendor Sale

Our perennial plant club will be selling used garden related **books and magazines**. If you have any to donate please bring them either to the Center on Friday, March 30th between 1:30-5:00, or early Saturday morning, the day of the sale. We also need you to look in your garden for what is **blooming** and bring in a sample on Friday (**just one bloom or branch**) of the plant, shrub or tree and **label** it. We will have a display table. This display has been very popular. If you have any questions about the books or blooms, **contact Janice Sutherland**. Raffles will be held through out the day of items donated by the vendors. The proceeds from this event help to fund our work supporting community gardens and local horticulture projects.

A selection of vendors will arrive with their specialties to provide a wonderful collection of plants and garden related art. Some of the Vendors coming: Rose from Morningsun Herb Farm, Vacaville, herbs, vegetables and perennials; Robin Parer, Geraniaceae, Geraniums; Golden Pond, Loomis, aquatic plants, perennials, shrubs; Bob Hamm, perennials; Glen Rowley from Magalia, original handmade birdhouses; Monte Cristo Farm, Placerville, Azaleas and Rhododendrons; Bob Tadlock Design, Garden Valley, shrubs and perennials; Mad Man Bamboo, Rocklin; Friends of San Juan de Oreinte, Sacramento, pottery; Merlyn Leneer, Stockton, The OG, succulents and succulent wreaths; Dragon Fly Peony Farm, peonies; Mad Man Bamboo; Worm Fancy; Wild Hare Native Plants; Bamboo 4U; All Things Wild; Hapbea & Friends, greeting cards & wire Art.

## New Members

Welcome to the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Marty Anne Langley



**Picnic & Garden Tour  
Garden and Vernal Pools at  
George and Judy Waegell's Ranch  
7700 Eagles Nest Road Sacramento, 95830  
Sunday April 15, 2012 10:00 AM**

After we have toured the Vernal Pools, we will come back to Judy's garden and have a picnic. **Please bring a bag lunch with you**. Everyone enjoyed the picnic last year. **Directions: Take Jackson Highway to Eagle Nest Road turn south and continue on passed Florin Road. Judy's home is on the right. Eagle Nest Road is off Jackson Hwy between Sunrise Blvd. and Excelsior Rd.**

## Annual Spring Plant Sale

**Shepard Garden and Art Center**

**March 24, 2012 Saturday 10:00AM – 4:00 PM**

**March 25, 2012 Sunday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

Please donate plants and garden related items. Labels with pictures of the plants are helpful. Bring plants and items to Center on Friday, March 23th. We have a large selection of plants ready for spring planting. Many of the flats of perennials have been propagated by club member Emma Ahart. We need **volunteers** to pick up the flats Friday morning and transport them to the center and help set up. **Volunteers are needed to man our tables and clean up**. 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**.

We are looking for some members to each take care of a few of the plants that do not sell at the spring sale and care for them until the fall sale. Each person would take only a few plants. Please volunteer so that one person does not have to do all the work.

## Membership list and Newsletter

Please check that your name has been listed correctly in the membership roster. If there are any corrections or if you want to be removed from the list please call Jeanne Christopherson, 916-283-6999. **Check the mailing label on this newsletter to see if your membership dues are paid. You need to have your dues paid in order to receive the newsletter**. If you have any questions about the information in the newsletters or you are not receiving your copy of the newsletters; please call Janice Sutherland 481-2137.



George and Judy live in the farmhouse where George was born and raised. The farm-ranch is still in operation with

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

the next generation working the land. The Waegell family including SPPC members, Margaret, Ellen, and Marilyn have been good stewards of the land. George spends many days planting oak trees. We will tour Judy's garden and then walk to the vernal pools. If walking is difficult for you, you may drive and park close to the pools.

Judy has a country garden surrounded by open space. The view from the front of the house looks out across the fields toward the Sierra Mountains. Having the space, Judy is able to grow many California native shrubs and let them reach their natural size. Many of them have clematis growing thru them. The garden is filled with trees, perennials and bulbs.

Vernal pools are seasonally flooded depressions found on ancient soils with an impermeable layer such as a hardpan, claypan, or volcanic basalt. The impermeable layer allows the pools to retain water much longer than the surrounding uplands; nonetheless, the pools are shallow enough to dry up each season. Vernal pools often fill and empty several times during the rainy season. Only plants and animals that are adapted to this cycle of wetting and drying can survive in vernal pools over time.

These specialized plants and animals are what make vernal pools unique. As winter rains fill the pools, freshwater invertebrates, crustaceans, and amphibians emerge. Vernal pool plants sprout underwater, some using special floating leaves and air-filled stems to stay afloat. Some of these plants even flower underwater! Birds arrive to feed on the vernal pool plants and animals.

In spring, flowering plants produce the brightly-colored concentric rings of flowers that vernal pools are famous for. Native bees nest in vernal pools and pollinate pool flowers. Insects and crustaceans produce cysts and eggs, and plants produce seeds that are buried in the muddy pool bottom. The mud protects cysts, eggs, and seeds from the hot, dry Central Valley summer. By late summer, amphibians have dug deep into the soils and gone dormant, awaiting the next rainy season. Vernal pools have completely dried out and most of the plant and animal species have either disappeared into the soils or set seed and died. In this phase, vernal pools are really "banks" full of resting seeds, cysts, and eggs that can survive through summer, and even extended droughts, until the onset of the rains begin the life cycle anew. *Information: San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District Photo: VernalPool.org*

## Spring Garden Tour Sacramento Historic City Cemetery Hamilton Square and The Heritage Rose Garden Saturday, April 21, 2012, 9:30AM-2:00 PM 10<sup>th</sup> and Broadway Parking across from main entrance on Broadway



**Hamilton Square**, sponsored by the Perennial Plant Club as one of its community projects and managed by Sharon Patrician, long-time club member, is a wonderful garden in the midst of Sacramento's history. Sharon and many volunteers have planted the half-acre site with many species of aster, buddleia, cistus, Echinacea, lavender, shrub roses, penstemon, salvia and bulbs. Sharon will guide visitors thru the garden on Saturday. Club member Anita Clevenger, is the manager of the award winning **Historic Rose Garden** in the cemetery. The beautiful rose garden (celebrating its **20th anniversary** this year) will be in

full bloom and there will be free tours of the garden.

(Check out how they support and grow some of the climbing and shrub roses.) The

sale of rooted rose cuttings and other items, and a silent auction will raise funds for the maintenance of the rose



(Continued on page 4)

## Perennial Plant Club

garden. We have many club members who volunteer many hours to maintain these wonderful gardens. If you have not been to the Open Garden Day put the date on your calendar. The roses are beautiful and the fragrance is heavenly. The perennial gardens in Hamilton garden are beautiful and full of ideas for your own garden. The historic roses will be featured at the front of the cemetery, then stroll south to Hamilton Square to view what's blooming. Stroll to the east and visit the **California Native Plant Garden**.



### Garden Tour

**Gardens East Sacramento, Elmhurst, Tahoe Park**  
**Saturday, April 28, 2012**

**Tour Starts at 9:30: Maps at 1st garden**

**Caution:** Due to proximity of the Elmhurst neighborhood to the Sacramento Med Center, there is restricted parking at the Dodson garden. Please consult directions that will be handed out at the first garden.

**Garden#1:** Madeleine Mullins Garden, 1400 38<sup>th</sup> Street, just north off of Folsom Blvd. When you visit Madeleine's garden, be sure to notice the details: whimsical little statues peeking out among the large pots on the patio, a weathered sundial she got at a yard sale, square clay-pipe sections used as pedestals for pots, and colorful ceramic stepping-stones made by three grandchildren, Madeline, Colleen, and Liam. Don't miss the large variety of potted



plants under the shady overhang. Madeleine's west-facing sunny garden is small but it has a clear design. A central arch, covered with roses and clematis, frames a purple Japanese maple exactly in the middle. In front of that, a

tiny grass area sets off the vibrant colors of the flowers and colored foliage. The garage on the left is balanced by a small citrus tree and a tall silver cedar on the right, and by mature shrubs along the back fence. For plants, Madeleine says she likes to have "one of everything," but there is method to her madness. Though she has more than 50 different kinds of plants, many are repeated. She has 5 butterfly bushes. (Madeleine likes butterflies.) She has several different varieties of Heuchera, Euphorbia, and of course, many roses. She keeps all the plants fairly upright, using decorative metal supports. Madeleine admits she has too many plants but, "I make them behave." Enjoy Madeleine's garden.

**Garden#2:** Dale Dodson's Garden, 4651 U Street. Dale's early interest in gardening was nurtured by his grandmother and mother. It was years later, upon purchasing his first home, that he was able to pursue his love of gardening. A wood fence screens the house and garden from the street, lending privacy, a sense of mystery and Asian feeling to the site. The small front yard contains a mix of bird of paradise tree, grasses and perennials. Flanking the gateway are fragrant roses, winter daphne and pink jasmine. Upon entering the gateway is a fountain providing moist conditions for Egyptian papyrus. It is also a pleasant setting for the seating area beneath a shade structure and well screened outdoors shower. A deck that leads into the house provides additional seating. A side garden room is planted with a graceful Mexican weeping bamboo, lacy leaf Japanese maple, dogwood, roses and succulents in pots. Since retiring from principle of Elk Grove High School, his gardening has expanded to the gated alley where his neighbors happily allow him to grow vegetables, iris and roses. Chairs and fountain also provide for community gatherings and a safe playground for young children. Access to alley is a path along the house. Dale has joined the gardening volunteers, a highly valued and needed group at the WPA Rock Garden.

**Garden#3:** Sandy Cappelletti and Lynn Place, 5016 Y Street. Sandy's childhood mini-wheelbarrow has been granted a special place of honor, as it has been a source among many lifelong forms of artistic expression. Besides designing and constructing gardens, she exhibits at local galleries and has illustrated cards and books. The very front strip along the street is a mosaic of various types of rocks, gravel, lava and broken concrete. A newly developed area is home to sun and heat loving succulents. The woodland plantings along the wall include lily of the valley shrub and Japanese maple and sculpture "Pie hole" by fellow artist Gale Hartman. The gate is embellished with a charming metal drum bird scene. Off to the right of the

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

house, just through the gate is a flakey barked birch (*Betula 'Youngii'*). Near the house is lounging area and formal pool embellished with tiles. Georgie, the dog has exclusive rights to a small patch of astro-turf. As with much of the hardscapes, the poured concrete table was crafted by Cappeletti. A fish spouts into a pond at edge of woodland walk. In a small space that includes two buildings, it is spacious and serene. Plants include Japanese anemone and ornamental grasses. Vegetables are grown at a neighboring yard. Many surprises include visiting birds, sculpture and collection of bells.



**Garden#4:** Sharon Patrician's Garden, 3633 57<sup>th</sup> Street. For the past 14 years, Sharon has volunteered her time as the old city cemetery volunteer manager as well as head gardener at Hamilton Square. The latter is a demonstration garden of mostly perennials suited to our Mediterranean conditions designed with color and form that compliment the historic grave markers. An area in the garden is planted to appeal to native bees and is an important study site for UC Berkeley native bee researcher Dr. Gordon Frankie. Though she has formally resigned as the volunteer manager, she still serves in that capacity until someone steps forward. Despite these commitments as well as the vice-president of the Perennial Plant Club, she has not deterred from gardening at home. Stucco walls that compliment her home define the driveway and front beds. Spacious concrete walks with bands of brick and terra cotta urns provide colorful and bold contrast. The zelcova tree dominates size-wise as well as root-wise, but after five attempts to establish a flowering tree, the Chinese fringe tree is growing successfully. Continue down the driveway to the back garden with the new additions of raised beds and concrete work. A strawberry tree

(*Arbutus unedo*) provides shelter for flowering maples, clematis and magnolia. Behind the house is a covered patio providing safe haven for tender begonias and seating / entertaining area to enjoy the garden in the company of her cats.

**Garden#5:** Lee Perrone's Garden, 5860 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Upon moving to Sacramento in 2001, Lee Perrone wasted no time in sinking down roots on his double lot. He has renovated his home now capped with a handsome metal roof and painted the fences green. He also embraced the valley's Mediterranean climate and focused on plants that can survive with minimal or no supplemental watering. Instead of the obligatory swathe of lawn which was better suited to his former home in the Midwest, he combines plants of Australian, Californian and Mediterranean origins beneath a spreading acacia tree in the front. Through the side gate are planted a series of vines including passion vine, host plant to the orange gulf fritillary butterfly. From the covered patio behind his house is a seating area with a great vantage point to survey the expansive views punctuated by clipped Italian cypress. They were chosen to compliment the borrowed scenery of neighboring yards. Here again, plants are mostly surviving on rainfall. The garden goes into summer dormancy as it would in nature in a Mediterranean climate. Gravel, not turf pathways meander through raised bed formed with soil excavated from the construction of the garden shed provide ideal drainage conditions for the plants. Circular forms are repeated in an above ground water tank planted with aquatics, flagstone seating areas and many ceramic pots, many planted with drought tolerant succulents. A multitude of birds, bees and butterflies have found Lee's garden a safe and peaceful haven.



### Garden Tour

Gardens of Barbara Lane-Piert and Mary Griggs  
Sunday May 6, 2012  
Tour Starts At 9:30

**Garden #1:** The garden of Mary Griggs. The back garden of the home Mary bought was nice but it did not fit a Sacramento Master Gardener who wanted to get her hands dirty. So Mary cleared out shrubs and trees and designed her garden. Her beautiful garden now curves and flows around her patio and paths. The garden has been designed to have a lovely view from every room in her home. She placed the vegetable garden in the back corner of her garden and angled the entrance under an arbor; making the space appear larger. Along one side of the house she has a

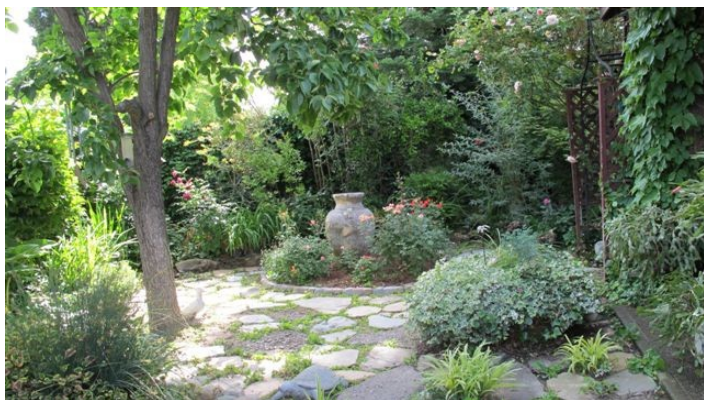
(Continued on page 6)

## *Perennial Plant Club*

*(Continued from page 5)*

shade garden anchored with large hydrangea plants. On the other side, she has a narrow walkway of azaleas that lead to a focal point of a large pot. Mary's garden is a mix of Japanese Maples, shrubs with interesting foliage, roses, and lots of perennials that blend beautifully. Tucked in among the plants are pieces of artwork or found objects that have been given a new use. A small water pool with a fish spouting water has been tucked into a corner next to the patio and Mary has containers filled with succulents on the patio and along the paths. Mary now has a place to garden, sit and enjoy the fruits of her labor and plan another day.

**Garden #2:** The garden of Barbara and Eugene Piert. A barren wasteland in a new Rosemont subdivision with its clay and hardpan became, over the years, a much loved garden for its owners. With plants bought and propagated, trial and error, castoff garden art from other gardeners and learning along the way, their personal space was born. The garden has many layers beginning in the small front garden with its Mediterranean flare of rosemary & lavender interspersed with Austin Roses and a small porch with a fountain and chairs. Through the garden gate you find a country space of fruit, vegetables and even chickens. Down the garden path a formal rose garden of floribunda roses in pots and a miniature rose garden show the owner's love of the national flower...the rose. Underneath fig and persimmon trees a chimenea is flanked by tropical plants including cannas and banana plants. Grasses grow between the pavers and a cacti & succulent garden are close by. An old refurbished shed is a delightful place for tea, toys and tools. Behind a wisteria covered pergola a space is reserved for the latest passion of cymbidiums. A shade garden of hydrangeas, maples and other shade lovers is protected by a tree covered by a 40 ft. high rose named "Kiftsgate". Entering a small, paved side yard are more roses with honeysuckle, potted citrus trees, an asian pear and a tiny, tiny pond. Between the garden layers reside pots, statues of many faiths, whimsical creatures and rescued artifacts.



**Garden Tour  
Bus Trip  
Troll Knoll and Gardens in Lake of the Pine  
Saturday, May 19, 2012  
Meet at Shepard Garden and Art Center  
Bus leaves at 8:00 – home about 5:00  
Cost is \$40.00 which includes lunch**

Troll Knoll is the garden of John and Anne Morris. They bought the property about 10 miles west of Grass Valley after the 49er fire had charred the land. They cleared the burned trees and shrubs and began to build their garden that is a mix of formal and informal. John designed the Mediterranean style home with lots of windows to take in the views of the garden. The vision and development of this garden is a labor of love for John and Anne; they do all of the gardening themselves. There are paths, all with vistas of rivers and mountains, winding thru the 20 areas filled with natural settings, beautiful gardens, orchards, vineyards and whimsical humor. Pinky's Trailer Park is just down a path from Annesville, a mining town and the Squirrel Socialization Center has signs to help you get around. John with his southern drawl and sense of humor is a storyteller. He sent us a note: "It means that you folks are just the type of folks we like to have visit our garden. We are not so much trying to accommodate viewers that just want to see another garden and have no interest in gardening. We are interested in sharing information, learning and providing opportunities for others and us. Troll Knoll is a way of life that a gardener may appreciate. Very few others understand. To them "it's a lotta work." That we get to live in an extraordinary garden, are provided food, art, entertainment, socialization and more all in good spirit is incredible to us. Our home is part of our garden. You will be welcome here."

We are working on visiting gardens in Lake of the Pines. More information in the next newsletter. **To sign up – phone Elizabeth Jones 916-488-8465**



### **Bergenia Cordifolia** **John Gray**

We need to remember *Bergenia Cordifolia* or the common name Saxifrage. This wonderful perennial adds much joy to the garden here in the valley for late December through March.

The leathery cabbage like leaves with saw-toothed edges may be 5-6 inches long and wide. The green leaves can turn shades of red and bronze in the fall months. The plant can grow to about 24"x 24", and looks best in a mass planting or as a ground cover. Saxifrage prefers shade protection and likes moist humus rich soils. It is easily dug up and transplanted which is a big plus to the weekend gardener. The lovely pink flowers in the heart of the winter bring unexpected pleasure, and if the plants are in the right place and the right soil conditions, the flower cavalcade can be very striking. There are ten species of the genus *Bergenia* and most find their origins in Central Asia to the

Himalayas. They are very frost hardy below 0 degrees Fahrenheit and over the past 20 years many new cultivars have emerged that produce flowers with various shades of pink and red, purple, white and yellow. Those varieties may be hard to find, but the above species is easy to find at most nurseries. **Blooms of Bressingham , the speaker at our Vendor Sale, has introduced two Bergenia varieties to the trades.**

'Bressingham Ruby'



'Bressingham White'



### **What's Blooming in March and April**



#### **Paeonia peony**

Peonies (right) are old fashioned lovely, flamboyant flowers that like sun but in our hot climate they need light afternoon shade. They need good drainage and good air circulation. Plant peonies shallow, in warmer areas plant even a little shallower for as much exposure to winter cold as possible. Are drought resistant, once established. Colors range from white to shades of pink, lavender, yellow, coral and red. There are two forms of peony, herbaceous which died back to the ground and the tree peony, a 3-5 foot shrub. Peonies will be for sale at the Vendor Sale. Photo by: Beverly Shilling



#### **Cornus Dogwood**

What appears to be flower petals on the dogwood (left) are actually bracts that surround the inconspicuous true flower. You can see the flowers on this beautiful photo by Peggy Gerick. Dogwood trees grow as understory trees or with some afternoon shade. Dogwoods have attractive foliage and blossoms. Leaves turn a brilliant color in the fall and are covered with red fruit. Kousa Dogwood will take more sun and blooms later in May.

## *Perennial Plant Club*

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### **Meet the Members: Sally & Shelly Berlant**

**By Diana Morris**

Take a deep breath. You'll need it to fathom the total scope of Sally and Shelly Berlant's interests, participation, and knowledge of plants, gardening and gardens! Together they form a generous and dynamic garden duo capable of discussing a wide range of garden related topics.

A retired teacher, Sally has worked as a private reading tutor, taught elementary school and taught the library credential program at California State University Sacramento. An optometrist, Shelly retired as manager of Kaiser's optical program and now works at Bushnell Gardens.

The pair shares a warm, entertaining story of Shelly's first plant experience. A Texas native, Sally begins by telling of bringing Shelly to meet her maternal Texas grandmother, an African violet devotee. Shelly continues saying growing up in New York he had never put his hands in soil until Sally's grandmother gently took his hand in hers and pressed his finger into the soil of one of her beloved African violets. From that moment on he was hooked on gardening.

A former member of the African Violet Society, Shelly now shares his time among many different volunteer groups. He is a member of the Orchid Society, president of the Begonia Society, a member of our own Sacramento Perennial Plant Club, a master gardener, board member of Shepherd Garden and Art Center, and board member of Kiwanis. And somehow he still finds time to lead a gardening program for the Easter Seal Society. Through the Master Gardener program, Shelly found the former Easter Seal gardening greenhouse in disuse and disarray. He saw great potential in the site and has worked to bring it back to peak performance by coordinating volunteers and participants in the Easter Seal program. The group grows a potpourri of plants from bulbs, seeds, geraniums, orchids with many of the plants contributed to a holiday sale benefiting the Easter Seal Society and sponsored by the Kiwanis. Bushnell Gardens donated plants to the latest project, raised planters located in the parking lot. Shelly tells endearing tales of Easter Seal participants and the beneficial, positive, therapeutic and educational effects gardening has had on the group. To honor his work with the Easter Seal greenhouse, Shelly was awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award by the Easter Seal Society.

Coming from a long line of librarians, Sally's ancestral line includes the first librarian for Benjamin Franklin's subscription library in Philadelphia, Lewis Timothy. A well-versed reader, Sally refers to a historical biography about Josephine Bonaparte and her involvement in collecting roses. And goes on to comment on orchid lovers in England during World War II sending plants to America

for safe keeping as bombs fell on England. Sally finds pleasure in colorful cut flowers.

Together, Sally and Shelly have traveled to many gardens and have wonderful recommendations for beautiful sites to visit. On a Hawaiian cruise they visited botanical gardens in each island, including the garden where Jurassic Park was filmed. Shelly says the Brooklyn Greenhouse and the Bronx Botanical Garden are typical East coast in that garden varieties are limited by the weather. He also says the Berkeley Botanical Garden has more species of plants than the New York Botanical Gardens. They have also toured the Getty Villa gardens in Santa Monica and the Huntington Library garden in Southern California.

Both Sally and Shelly have extensive knowledge of orchids and begonias, proper soil (Kellogs is recommended as a brand for good potting mix), and speak of the many plants they have in their garden. They are a wealth of information about different soils and the needs of plants. Shelly says orchids are easy to grow and need little attention, but cautions around watering because a common problem is overwatering orchids. "Ignore but don't neglect orchids" says Sally. Orchids need a lot of air around their roots and care should be taken to repot orchids in new bark as the bark tends to rot.

And then there are the begonias! Oh my, the Berlants have a greenhouse furnished with an Italian dry sink and growing lights. These are dedicated gardeners!

In the interest of keeping the newsletter under a pound for mailing, there is so much more to share about Sally and Shelly, I'll have to conclude the interview. But thanks to the Berlants for spending a morning sharing their gardening experiences and knowledge. If you should have a chance to chat with Sally or Shelly, take it!





**Early Spring Gardening  
By Bob Hamm**

March brings spring into gear in our area, trees bud out, every day sees new plants spouting and an increasing list of plants starting to grow and bloom.

With all the new growth comes the time to think of feeding the garden – light and more frequent is better than heavier, less frequent feedings.

After the winter rain (very little this year), the biggest need for most soils is nitrogen (The first number) since it is water-soluble and washes out. I always use a higher nitrogen fertilizer for the first feeding of the year to give things a kick start and then switch to a more balanced fertilizer. For those who don't want to worry about remembering a schedule, time release fertilizers that last for 6 or 8 months are a great way to go, especially for containers!

Early in the month you may find some good deals as nurseries clearing out bare root material, but be careful about dried out material, material with long stringy shoots that will burn or die when planted, or material that has rotted in the packages

Another reminder for you, snails and slugs are out early, and will often eat the new shoots breaking ground before you even see them. A great example is Echinacea or "cone flower". This is a major reason some people have trouble keeping this plant. Be sure to start baiting for snails early to prevent this. Other plants with this problem include the true lilies, hostas, sometimes aquilegia [columbine], the hardy hibiscus, thalictrum, rhubarb and any others that have soft tender tips when they first emerge from the soil.

While many plants are in active growth, there are a few things that are normally late breaking dormancy, though they grow rapidly once they do. The most common of these plants are the hardy mallow type Hibiscus, some varieties of the large flowered Dahlias and Chocolate Cosmos, Baptista, Dictamnun, sometimes Platycoden, and the warm weather grasses. These probably won't emerge till later next month or even later in cool springs, and then grow at an amazingly fast rate.

In March perennials can still be moved or even divided as long as growth hasn't progressed too far. In fact, for many people, dividing the plants after they show a little growth makes it easier to see where to divide.

A lot of things can be planted in March including the cool weather vegetables, trees, shrubs, and perennials. At the end of March and into April if the weather cooperates, a lot of the mid temperature plants will be added to the list.

Wait till the real warm weather settles in before adding the warm weather loving vegetables, and annuals.

I've seen warm dry Aprils and other years it has rained almost the entire month—so who knows what will happen this year, but regardless every morning is an adventure in the garden.

Spring blooming trees and shrubs are usually pruned after blooming-so this is the time to prune azalea, rhododendron, dogwood, camellia, flowering plum, quince and other flowering forms of fruit trees as well as forsythia, Carolina jasmine and other early spring bloomers.

Evenings are often pleasant times to sit in the garden, but for those planting an area to be used at night- remember that bright colors like red and purple VANISH at night, and the light colors [white, pastel pink etc] SHOW UP AT NIGHT. So don't make the mistake many do—a garden that is bright in the daylight and unseen at night.

**Bob will be selling plants at the Vendor Sale .**



**Robin Parer from Geraniaceae** will be selling her geraniums at the Vendor Sale. Photo-*Geranium 'Brookside'*



*Photo By: Donn Reiners*



**DISCOVERING SLOVENIA AND CROATIA**

**September 12 – 28, 2012**

**Dates and itinerary subject to change**

Explore a rich crossroads of cultures with its backdrop of snow-capped mountains, stunning lakes, waterfalls, forests, sparkling Adriatic Sea islands, castles, Istrian hilltop towns, vineyards, markets, galleries and gardens. Excursions to the islands of **Hvar** and **Korčula** (two nights) on the **Dalmatian Coast** of Croatia, plus an overnight in historic **Mostar** (Herzegovina) are included. **Contact Fran Clarke for details. [fclarke@surewest.net](mailto:fclarke@surewest.net), (916) 283-5884**

# *Perennial Plant Club*

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## **President's Message - Saul Wiseman**

**Two items:** As I mentioned at the February meeting, Sacramento High School has a grant from ATT to develop websites for non-profit organizations in Sacramento who do community projects. Our Hamilton Square Garden at the Old Sacramento Cemetery met the requirement for a community project.

Mr. Anonio Sarabia, visual communications teacher, and Sac High students have been redesigning our existing website. Some club members have met with Mr. Sarabia at Sac High to learn more about how to develop and maintain the website. This has been a win-win situation for both Sac High and the club. We get a free design and they get practical experience in web design.

Alice Bowles will be our webmaster. We hope to have the new website up and running by April.

Our guest speaker for the Vendor Sale on March 31 is Gary Doerr, a Sacramento resident. He is president of Blooms of Bressingham, a company that develops new plants. Many good garden plants have been found by attentive gardens. Geranium 'Rozanne' is one such plant.

Gary will talk about how new plants are developed. He will show pictures of plants that are being trialed and about to be brought to the market. I'm hoping that members will both support our vendors and hear our guest speaker.

**Next Board Meeting at Madeleine Mullins home, Tuesday, March 13th at 5:00PM.**

**Please take the sheet of Vendor Sale Flyers that is included in the newsletter and cut out the two flyers. Pass them out to gardening friends or neighbors and invite them to join us at this fun event.**



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