



# Sacramento Perennial Plant Club NEWSLETTER

Founded 1988

[www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.com](http://www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.com)

May/June 2012

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### MAY PROGRAM SPEAKER Shepard Garden and Arts Center John Whittlesey: Garden Designer Reconsidering the Lawn - Making Garden Spaces Thursday, May 24, 2012 at 7:00 PM

John has owned Canyon Creek Nursery, near Oroville - growers of uncommon and drought tolerant plants - since 1985 and is a graduate of the California School of Garden Design. His nursery had been featured on 'The Martha Stewart Show' and he has had articles in gardening magazines. Some of you may have heard his talk at our 2006 Vendor Sale and have some of his plants in your garden. He is a landscape contractor and garden designer and has been doing design work and installations since 2004. His interest is in designing gardens appropriate for our Mediterranean climate, gardens that incorporate drought tolerant plants, use water wisely, and provide an attractive habitat for people and wildlife. Do you need a lawn or maybe just a smaller lawn? John will talk about lawn alternatives, methods for removing a lawn, converting your irrigation. garden design considerations and the selection of plants. He will show pictures of some of the gardens he has designed. John has been a long time member of the Mount Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and was their horticulture chairperson for several years.



### JUNE PROGRAM SPEAKER Sue Golden: Owner of Golden Pond Nursery Making Miniature Aquatic Gardens Shepard Garden and Arts Center Thursday, June 28, 2012 at 7:00 PM



Photo: Water Garden

Sue Golden, a Cal Poly graduate in landscape design and owner of Golden Pond Nursery in Loomis, will discuss techniques to bring water into the garden using aquatic and bog plants in unusual and innovative ways. Sue will show us ways to make miniature aquatic gardens. Sue will demonstrate a new design in floating water gardens; you may have seen them on display at the Vendor Sale. Sue will show us how to make the frame which has to cure for 24 hours and then can be planted. **We are planning a morning class on making water gardens at her nursery this summer and will have a sign-up sheet at the meeting.** We have had classes at Sue's nursery and they have always been a lot of fun.

# Perennial Plant Club

## SUCCESSFUL SPRING PLANT SALE!

Despite the cold cloudy threatening weekend, we had many customer. It seems gardeners did not want to be working on a garden project and have it start to rain so instead came to the sale to buy plants. We happily sold them lots of plants and made a nice profit. We were happy to see so many members of the club at the sale, the money we make at these sales help fund our yearly activities and public gardens. Many thanks to these members who worked and brought plants to make The Spring Plant Sale such a success: Loretta Landers, Brenda Kennedy, Bruce and Elizabeth Jones, Sara Hunt, Peggy Gerick, Rosemary Bingham, Cheryl McDonald, Barbara Lane-Piert, Marcia Leddy, Wayne Martinson, Barbara Pepper, Janice and Bill Sutherland, Jeanne Christopherson, Bobby Frieze, John Bodie and his magic truck, Mae Ferral, Therese Ruth, Noelle Anderson, Daisy Mah, Beverly Shilling, Deborah Renfrew, Diana Morris, Charlene Durrant, JoEllen Arnold. Thank you Kirsten Salomon and Janice Kuykendall for providing music to the event. We could not have a successful sale without the enormous contribution of Emma Ahart, to whom we are deeply grateful; and to Madeleine Mullins, who has organized the Plant Sales for years, words can not express our deep thanks for all you do for the club.

## Co Chairs For The 2013 Vendor Sale

We are looking for a couple of members to step forward and chair the 2013 Vendor Sale. All of the vendors expressed interest in coming back next year for this one day event. All the information you would need has been put together in a binder and you will have the help of members who have worked the vendor sale before. This is a very satisfying event to work on, it is a fun day and everyone from the vendors to the members who work at the sale, are great. Please consider volunteering. Call Saul Wiseman 530-885-9248

### SUMMER MEETINGS

There will be no general meetings in July and August. Next newsletter will be the September / October issue. Have a wonderful summer and take time to sit down, have a cool drink, and enjoy your garden.



## 11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL VENDOR SALE A BIG SUCCESS

After a one year hiatus, we had the Vendor Sale again. Twenty Vendors filled their tables with a wonderful selection of plants and art items. Then the pouring rain came but also the gardeners. (A little rain will not stop a true gardener from searching and finding that special plant.) We had a very good attendance and the vendors were very happy with the sale. We had a good turn out for our **speaker Garry Doerr**; everyone enjoyed his talk. He gave a very insightful talk on bringing a new plant into production. As one person said "I will never look at a plant in the nursery the same as before." As with everything good, it takes a lot of time, talent and people. We want to express our thanks to Mr. Doerr for being a part of the vendor Sale. We need to thank Debbie Arrington for the wonderful article she wrote in the Sacramento Bee about Garry Doerr and the Vendor Sale. Thank you to Farmer Fred for talking on his radio program about the sale and Garry Doerr.

The sale ran smoothly due to all of our members who volunteered and shared their time in making this year's Vendor Sale a fun and profitable experience for all. **Thank**

**you:** Mae Ferral, Madeleine Mullins, Barbara Lane-Piert, Sharon Patrician, Daisy Mah, Lee Perrone, Janice Sutherland, Peggy Weseloh, Beverly Shilling, Saul Wiseman, Peggy Gerick, Barbara Monroe, Sara Lu Vorhes, Pat Wells, Marcia Leddy, Jane Thompson, Colleen Barnett, Diana Morris, Deborah Renfrew, Sara Hunt **Thank you to all the nurseries that participated in the sale including;** Golden Pond Flower Farm of Loomis; Morningsun Herb Farm, Vacaville; Friends of San Juan de Oriente, Sacramento; Bob Tadlock Design, Garden Valley; Mad Man Bamboo, Rocklin; Monte Cristo Farm, Placerville; Rustic Birdhouse, Magalia; The Secret Garden, Elk Grove; The OG (succulents), Stockton; Robin Parer, Geraniaceae, Kentfield; Hapbea & Friends, Sacramento; Bamboo 4U Penryn; Big Oaks Nursery, Elk Grove; Wild Hare Native Plants, Rio Linda; All Things Wild, Wilton; Bob Hamm, Sacramento; Dragon Fly Peony Farm, West Point; Barsch Tropicals, Sacramento; Dragon Cloud Japanese Maples, Rocklin and The Cymbidium Orchid Society. In your summer travels make a stop at some of these nurseries (some of them sell at farmer's markets) or order some plants from their websites.



## April Garden Tour

Gardens of 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. **More information about these gardens can be found in the March-April Newsletter.**

**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. Madeleine's charming Irish cottage garden is small but it has a clear design. Madeleine admits she has many plants but, "I make them behave." Enjoy Madeleine's garden.

**Garden#2:** Dale Dodson's Garden, 4651 U Street. A wood fence screens the house and garden from the street, lending privacy and a sense of mystery. A side garden room is planted with a graceful Mexican weeping bamboo, lacy leaf Japanese maple, dogwood, roses and succulents in pots. His gardening has expanded to the gated alley where his neighbors happily allow him to grow vegetables, iris and roses.

**Garden#3:** Sandy Capeletti and Lynn Place, 5016 Y Street. Sandy's childhood mini-wheelbarrow has been granted a special place of honor. Off to the right of the house, just through the gate is a flakey barked birch (*Betula 'Youngii'*), paths take you through the garden filled with plants, visiting birds, sculpture and art objects.

**Garden#4:** Sharon Patrician's Garden, 3633 57<sup>th</sup> Street. Stucco walls that compliment her home define the driveway and front beds. In the back 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.

**Garden#5:** Lee Perrone's Garden, 5860 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Upon moving to Sacramento in 2001, Lee Perrone has 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. Through the side gate are planted a series of vines including passion vine, host plant to the orange gulf fritillary. Birds, bees and butterflies have found Lee's garden a safe and peaceful haven.



## May Garden Tour

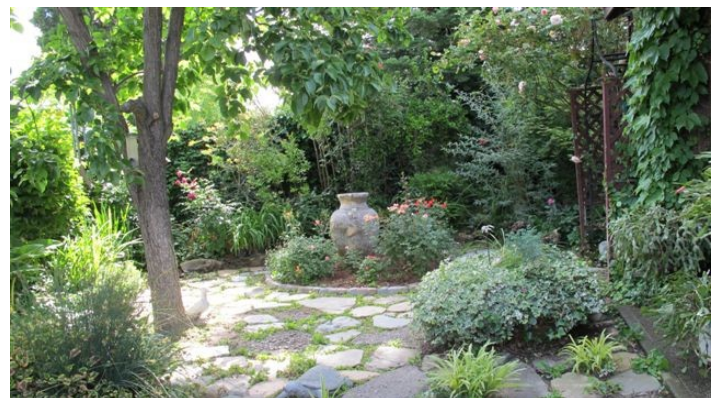
Gardens of Barbara Lane-Piert and Mary Griggs

Sunday May 6, 2012

Tour Starts At 9:30 Maps at 1st garden

**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 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

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# Perennial Plant Club

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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.

commodate 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, but 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."

After our tour of Troll Knoll, we will enjoy our lunch in the garden.

On our way home we will stop at Eisley Nursery in Auburn.

**The bus trip is now open to non-members. Please invite a guest.**

**To sign up – phone Elizabeth Jones 916-488-8465. You may bring guests.**



**May Garden Tour**  
**Bus Trip -Now Open to Guests**  
**Troll Knoll Garden & Eisley Nursery**  
**Saturday, May 19, 2012**  
**Meet at Shepard Garden and Art Center**  
**Bus leaves at 8:00 – home about 4:30**  
**Cost is \$40.00 which includes lunch**

Some of you may have visited Troll Knoll in 2007 when it was on the **Garden Conservancy's Open Garden Day** Tour. John says "there have been many changes made since then". 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 ac-



**HARVEST DAY**  
**Fair Oaks Horticulture Center**  
**Sacramento County Master Gardeners**  
**at the Fair Oaks Horticulture Center**  
**11549 Fair Oaks Boulevard**  
**Fair Oaks, CA 95628**  
**Saturday, August 4, 2012**  
**8:00 am - 2:00 pm**

Sacramento's biggest one-day gardening event. Featured speakers, demonstrations, educational booths, open gardens, produce tastings, a plant clinic and more. Bring your questions and enjoy!

### May Garden Tour Gardens of Midtown Saturday, May 12, 2012 Tour Starts at 9:00: Maps at 1<sup>st</sup> garden

**The midtown gardens:** So many sweet and petite gardens, with their rich old river bed soil and their warm winter climate, are waiting for us to explore. Too numerous for us to visit all of them we are fortunate to have a select few to tour Gardens where the owners take pride in their personal space and with their ever active green thumbs. All of these gardens are within walking distance of each other.

**From Business 80 West, exit at E Street. Stay on 29th Street past E, turn right on F Street. Proceed until 25th Street and turn right and continue to Lori and Sean Ward's garden at 410 25th Street. From Business 80 East, exit at H Street. Continue along 30th Street, turn left at F Street. Proceed to 25th Street and turn right, continue on to Lori and Sean's garden at 410 25th Street.**

**The Garden of Lori and Sean Ward:** The garden of rock and stone at least that is my interpretation of this lovely midtown garden. Lori & Sean's garden begins in a petite sized front garden of golden grass, japanese maples, azaleas, pulmonaria, helleborus, bleeding hearts, lime colored spirea & a large princess plant "Tibouchina urvilleana". The garden is divided by a walkway and on both sides the garden overflows with bloom. The arch to the front door is flanked by two types of jasmine, one about to come into full bloom. The fragrance in spring is wonderful for the owners and for midtown daily walkers. The driveway is a combination of cement and stones. Entering a garden gate you are greeted immediately by a focal point of a massive stone about four feet tall with a carving of ying/yang. Flagstone, a rocking wooden seat, more large and powerful rocks attract the eye. They act as backdrops to the garden plantings. The rocks were bought and brought from out of town and it was a horrendous task to locate them in their designated spots. Now the rocks reside happily for Lori & Sean, along with visitors to enjoy.

**The Garden of Bill Cowden:** An apartment complex...who would know that a garden of such lush growth, wonderful plantings, and loving care could lurk there. In the hands of Bill Cowden, apartment manager, the complex is alive with all his propagated plants. Everywhere you look, in the front and down the long pathway between a division fence and the apartments are raised beds overflowing with healthy well-tended and gorgeous plants. Abutilon, of all colors, clarkia, confederate violets, hostas,

a cascading maple, variegated ginger, scented geraniums (the nutmeg scented one is a delight for the senses), fuchsia, the tower of jewels "Echium wildpretti" (already two feet tall) and a paphiopedilum (Lady Slipper Orchid) with variegated foliage manages to survive outdoors in his microclimate. Other plants too numerous to mention are raising their early spring heads. Plant stands, made from old, and very large privets have been cut down to four or five feet and topped with plant pots overflowing with happy plants. Shelving built by Bill, hold "giveaway" plants propagated by him. A true gardener.... Bill shares. Bill also cares for a traffic circle close by his house. Information on the circles will follow.

**The Garden of Anne Cunningham:** A garden of whimsy & rabbits. It sounds like a statement in a Beatrix Potter writing and yes that is what I thought about as I toured this lovely midtown garden. Lots of spring bloom greeted me...daffodils still in full bloom, dogwoods, hellebores, columbine, peonies, freesia and coral bells. It took time to take it all in. Down the driveway to the back garden hides a focal point, indeed a large focal point, that is a divider between Anne Cunningham's garden and her neighbors. Made of rebar it is an amazing piece of garden art. Winding, and suggesting movement, it has kitchen and garden parts hanging in strategic places. Again it takes time to take it all in. There are cups, and plates, from the kitchen, or kitchens, and then forks and shovels integrated into the rebar. This runs the length of the side of the back garden. The fence was designed and built by Anne's brother, Tom. Onward we are greeted by the sweetest sweet peas, roses, grasses, wallflowers and alstroemeria showing its early spring growth. Lilacs, including a white one, beginning to bud out. Climbing plants clamber over the garden fence. A tiny Buddha stands guard and this petite garden even has fruit trees. Obviously a lot of tender lov-



erly spring growth. Lilacs, including a white one, beginning to bud out. Climbing plants clamber over the garden fence. A tiny Buddha stands guard and this petite garden even has fruit trees. Obviously a lot of tender lov-

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# Perennial Plant Club

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ing care has contributed to Anne's garden. Anne's interest in gardening began as a child with her Grandfather, she spent hours inspecting all the plants around his farmhouse. Anne is a volunteer in the traffic circles of midtown.

**The Garden of Daisy Mah and John Hickey:** As typical of the Midtown neighborhood, Daisy and John's home has a small front yard beneath a tree canopy. Sycamore trees line this street. Rather than lawn, groundcovers, dwarf bulbs and cyclamen are planted in an informal manner to blend in with neighboring yards. Many of the plants thriving in dappled light are thus suppressed by the tree roots with intervention from Mah. The driveway strip contains CA native annuals and poppies interplanted with grapes, raspberries, passion vine and CA pipevine. The latter two are host plants for the butterflies, gulf fritillary and pipe-line swallowtail. Beyond the gate the edible, ornamental and wildlife friendly theme continues in a surprisingly spacious but overplanted space. John designed the layout and is responsible for nearly all of the hardscapes including the brick walks, arbors, irrigation and lighting while Daisy collects, propagates and tends the plants. Other features are woodland, succulent / alpine and a few friendly carnivorous pitcher plants and sundews. With strategic placement of iron fencing and other measures, John and Daisy have met the perennial challenge of pet dogs.

**The circles of midtown:** In this warmer climate of midtown, with its wonderful riverbed soil are traffic circles of bloom tended by volunteer neighbors. These circles are work intensive since there is no irrigation. Everything is hand watered and these hard-working gardeners must be devoted to their neighborhood and obviously have very "green thumbs". (For lack of a better word). The circles are very large and act as division between streets, slowing traffic (supposedly), and making this neighborhood safer. One is tended by Bill Cowden, whose appt. garden is on our tour. There Iris grow, scented geraniums, lavender (Goodwin Creek), pelargoniums, oriental poppies, hellebore (the stinking kind), wallflowers, clarkia (farewell to spring), sages, arum and many others too numerous to mention. New seedlings are growing everywhere and Bill's hard work is evident. Summer must be very challenging for both the circles and for those that care enough to beautify them.

Another circle which is tended by a tour garden owner, Anne Cunningham, is overflowing with plants in bloom and more blooms on their way. A stand of daffodils is waving in the breeze; also Scabiosa, alyssum, Aloe, love-in-a-mist and Yarrow. So many plants in the circles are in bloom. In other areas of Sacramento these plants are blooming in mid-summer. Quite amazing. As well as the

hard work that these dedicated gardeners give to their neighborhood is the precariousness of their industry. Cars zip by, seeming to arrive from every angle. Hand watering and weeding means they take their lives in their hands.

Onward to yet another circle. This one tended by our member, tour garden host, and garden designer of the WPA, Daisy Mah. The circle can be viewed from afar since a large redbud tree resides in the center. It is clearly the focal point. In full bloom, with such a beautiful shape, it stands saying "look at me". Surrounding this beautiful tree are native hybrid coral bells, hellebore, Lilly of the Nile, aloe, Australian fuchsia, feverfew, white Iris, Santa Barbara daisies, larkspur and poppies. A gorgeous red one was in bloom. How grateful the residents of midtown must be to these volunteers that contribute not only their personal gardens but their expertise, grooming, and care of the neighborhood circles.

Time allowing, our tour has the option of visiting the "community garden". Once an auto repair area with all things associated with that and not exactly community friendly it now is a "garden". Residents may rent space, grow to their heart's content, and enjoy fresh air and exercise. The garden is an amazing space of vegetables, herbs and flowers. Food to eat, herbs for spice, and bloom to feed the soul. This community garden has it all. Enjoy the day.



## Prepare for a sensual Summer garden now!

### Annie's Annuals

If you've already enjoyed a wonderful Spring garden it's easy to make your Summer dreams come true! Here's what to do:

- 1) Pull weeds now!!!** You shall not dismiss it! Remember every weed you let go to seed can equal 100 weeds
- 2) Pull out faded Spring blooming annuals now.** Save dried seeds or seed pods for Fall or early Spring planting.
- 3) Turn over the soil in the empty spaces a bit to prepare for planting.** It loosens & aerates the soil for plants.
- 4) Cut back Spring blooming perennials** like Columbines, perennial Foxgloves, Penstemons. Some will rebloom during Summer. Cut Columbines to the ground. New growth will sprout up & even if they don't bloom, the foliage will look healthy & pretty in your garden.
- 5) Add a bit of compost.** Adding a 1" layer of **good quality** compost around established plantings (including shrubs), as well as your new plantings will really give them a boost and keep them much more healthy over the rest of the season. It really makes a big difference.

### Meet the Members

#### Trial and Error Gardening: Barbara Lane-Piert

By: Diana Morris

Growing up in the home of her paternal grandparents in Cambridgeshire, England, Barbara Lane-Piert states her grandmother had a “backyard” which was a shady patio filled with ferns, lobelia and appropriate plants and then on past the patio was the “garden” filled with vegetables and more. She gives credit to her grandmother for a life-long love of gardening.

Though gardening time while raising seven children (six sons and one daughter) was limited, she has increased her gardening duties over the years. Besides her garden growing, her family has grown to include 17 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Barbara immigrated to the United States in 1961 and this spring she is looking forward to the arrival of a long-lost sister. It is easy to become emotional as Barbara recalls the story of losing contact with her sister and brother as young children and now how she is overcome with joy at the prospect of her sister traveling from England to visit the Lane-Piert family.

Barbara has a soft heart for abandoned animals and has rescued many, she has four dogs, four cats and three chickens. She tells a funny story of taking one of her dogs to the animal shelter for care and coming home with another rescued dog. “I’m not going to the pound anymore!” she says.

Barbara’s ‘day job’ included beginning in medical administration, transcriber in a psychology practice and ending a 30 year career as an administrator in a rheumatology lab. Along the way she joined the Rose Society and is a board member. In addition, Barbara took classes to become a consulting rosarian and judging school to enable her to judge rose competitions. She spends the months of April through June and September and October traveling throughout Northern California judging the competitive shows.

An avid traveler, Barbara has visited many exotic places and says on a recent trip to Spain to see the ‘Festival of the Patios’ in Cordoba she was astounded to see 20-30’ geraniums growing in pots! New Zealand made a lasting impression with its beautiful private gardens. Gardens are large and spacious as New Zealand has a small population and homes are sometimes five miles apart, says Barbara. She continues saying spring is the best time to visit and the inhabitants are friendly and provide an abundance of fresh food. She has traveled extensively in South America, cruised through the Straits of Magellan and went for a

short visit but ended up spending a month in Rio de Janeiro.

Closer to home, Barbara is a fan of the McKinley Park Rose Garden, the World Peace Garden and has high praises for SPPC’s own Daisy Mah, her home garden as well as Midtown’s street gardens, some of which Daisy has designed and maintains.

In the mid-1970s, Barbara and family moved into a new, ½ acre, pie-shaped Rosemont subdivision home, a blank slate ready for years of gardening experiences. Barbara says gardening is “trial and error.” She has, of course, an extensive collection of roses, David Austin being her favorites because, she says, they are so fragrant. She has a bed of 100 miniature roses, a formal garden of floribunda roses in pots, fruit trees and her newest passion, cymbidium orchids. She has joined the cymbidium orchid society and shares some orchid facts, cymbidiums can be grown outdoors in the ground. Barbara boldly states, “My money is spent on plants and travel!” SPPC members have a special treat in that the Lane-Piert garden is on the Garden Tour for May 6. Be sure to make plans to visit Barbara’s garden and enjoy her humorous stories of how she has acquired many plants and treasures in her garden.





# Perennial Plant Club

## Heuchera by John Whittlesey

CNPS encourages the growing of 'California native plants'. However, California is such a large state with numerous bioregions, climates, diverse habitats and ecological zones that we are often offered 'native' plants from areas unlike that in which we garden. Trying to grow the moisture loving, cool climate denizens from the redwood and coastal forests in our hot interior climate can be successful but is often difficult, requiring special care and attention to soil and water. My goal as a gardener and nurseryman is to grow *appropriate* plants: plants from California and other Mediterranean climates that can withstand heat, some drought, and do not encroach on the native habitat.



Photo: UC Davis Arboretum

One particular group of plants I enjoy growing that stretches the term 'native' are the hybrid coral bells. These are hybrids of *Heuchera maxima*, which is native to the Channel Islands, and *Heuchera sanguinea*, which is a native of Arizona and northern Mexico. They are not mainland California plants, but they thrive in our climate and are beautiful plants to use in the landscape.

*Heuchera* makes clumps of low rounded leaves (10" high) from which rise slender stems carrying racemes of small urn-shaped flowers. In these particular hybrids the flowers are especially numerous and are carried on taller stems than usually seen on the coral bells commonly offered at nurseries. They begin to flower in late February and continue into June, if the spent flowers are removed. The cultivar 'Wendy', one of my favorites, has pink flowers on 30"-36" stems.

A number of years ago, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens made crosses from *H maxima* X *H sanguinea* and named five cultivars, which are available through specialty nurseries. Besides 'Wendy' there is 'Opal' with white flowers, rosy-magenta 'Genevieve', large red 'Santa Ana Cardinal', and red 'Susanna'. Also available in nurseries is 'Old La Rochette' which is a large plant with flowering stems reaching 3-1/2'.

The *Heucheras* in our hot interior climate appreciate some relief from all day sun. So growing them under large trees with filtered light is ideal, or in a situation with morning sun and some afternoon shade. They will tolerate full sun with frequent water. *Heucheras* are excellent to plant under oak trees, as the open shade is perfect, and their minimal water requirements compliment that of the oaks.

Propagation is done by cuttings of side shoots in spring or fall, and by division. To maintain healthy plants they are best divided every two to three years preferably in the fall.



## What's Blooming in May and June



Photo: Peggy Gerick

### Alcea rosea 'Hollyhock'

Old fashioned summer favorite that adds structure to the back of the border. Tall (6-9 ft.) spikes come out of clumps of big heart-shaped leaves. Flowers can be single, semi-double, or double and in colors of white, cream, shades of pink and purple, red and apricot. Sow seeds in late summer or early spring. After blooming cut stalks just above the ground. Feed and water for fall rebloom. Photo from Peggy's garden.



## Welcome to My Garden Is your garden ready? by Carolyn Singer

Is your garden ready? Garden tours, weddings, visits from editors, or even a dinner party thrown for friends may send the most peaceful gardener into frenzied activity. One solution, of course, is to invite over only those people who accept you and your garden for all the wonderful individuality and even imperfections each offers.

My garden hat is off to those homeowners who are opening their gardens to the public this weekend. With winter weather that just would not quit in time to allow early maintenance, and every weed seed germinating in even the tidiest garden, this is a challenging year in which to "be ready" by mid-May.

Each garden has good and bad moments, much as the gardener does. At the very least, most gardeners will have to give up their expectations of perfection. In my own garden, the most perfect plant is the 350-year-old black oak behind the house. And if I had to give up all my other plants to keep only one, it would surely be this magnificent native. There is a powerful lesson here: this heritage tree has been and will hopefully continue to be perfect with no intervention from me.

The garden that challenges me the most is my rock garden, with the invasion of Johnson grass. But seen through my granddaughter's eyes when she was five years old, it was "Grandma's magic garden." Now almost 14 years old, it is still her favorite spot. She remembers sitting on a large rock, eating animal crackers. Sometimes, as I sit on a bench looking out on this garden, I realize that what is most important is the moment.

With limited time to garden, the nearby vegetable garden is most important. After 25 years of being "open to the public" I am much more relaxed about my flower gardens. It is the edible garden where I want to spend the most time.

One year an editor from Sunset magazine was visiting my garden. Thrown into what I call the "gardener's panic" the week before, I spread some compost over weeds I did not have time to pull. The compost was still hot, actively decomposing, and within 20 minutes had burned most of the foliage in my largest perennial bed. A good lesson in what not to do. And another of life's lessons in humility. Of course I showed the editor what I had done.

Another year I was writing an article about Artemisia for Fine Gardening magazine. Because I had mentioned that most of them were growing in my garden, the editor de-

cid-ed to fly from the East Coast to take photographs. While my garden looked wonderful, I left her a message (another manifestation of "gardener's panic") advising that there were picture-perfect Artemisia at the UC Davis Arboretum. Her message back: "I thought you said that your garden was ready". It had to be. She stayed for three days, photographing many areas of my garden. If a weed was in the way, she pulled it. And she loved my garden!

This weekend's garden tour is rain or shine. One year my own garden and perennial nursery were on this tour. Sunday was rainy, and I still have a vivid mental image of dozens of umbrellas of every imaginable color filling my garden paths.



Open gardens are a gift to the fortunate visitors, whether it is a crowd on the garden tour or a select few over for afternoon tea or dinner. If you are a visitor at a garden that has been opened to you, express your appreciation to the resident gardener, and take time to sit on the first bench you see. A



Photo: Janice Sutherland

garden is meant to be in, not just w a l k through. And for that it is "ready" a n y t i m e, a n y w e a t h e r, and in any season.



## Books by Carolyn Singer

I highly recommend two books by Carolyn Singer

### **Deer in My Garden, Vol. 1: Perennials & Subshrubs** **Deer in My Garden, Vol. 2: Groundcovers & Edgers**

Each book details hundreds of plants for description, cultural requirements, bloom, seasonal interest, landscape use, companion plants, propagation and maintenance. These are informative books written by an experienced gardener for gardeners with varying levels of expertise. Available thru bookstores, Garden Wisdom Press and Amazon.

# *Perennial Plant Club*

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## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

**Saul Wiseman**

At the April meeting, we will take nominations for club officers. At the May meeting we will have the election. Currently, the Board of Directors has a slate of candidates for the 2012-2014 election to be presented to the membership. Those include Saul Wiseman, president; Wayne Martinson, vice-president, Barbara Lane Piert, secretary. The term of office is two years. Anyone interested in running for president, vice-president, secretary, or treasurer can be nominated from the floor at the April meeting or if you are interested in running for one of these offices call Madeleine Mullins at 916 455 7815.

## **Welcome New Members**

Welcome to the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club; Carole Cukov, Mo Daly, Norma McCarter and Nancy Griffith

The next Perennial Plant club Board of Directors meetings will be held May 8<sup>th</sup> at Judy Waegell's home 916-423-1771 and June 12<sup>th</sup> at Beverly Shilling's home 916-452-4762. There will be no board meetings in July and August. As always, board meetings are open to all members. These meetings are a great chance to see how the club is run and where you might like to help. We also get a chance to tour the wonderful gardens of our members before dinner. Friends, gardens, food, and club business. Can't beat that! Meetings begin at 5 PM and start with a potluck dinner – informative *and* delicious. Please call so the host knows how many are coming.



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