



# Sacramento Perennial Plant Club NEWSLETTER

Founded 1988

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

Sept / Oct 2011

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## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

Shepard Garden and Arts Center

Carolyn Singer

Renovating and Revitalizing Old Gardens

Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 7:00 PM

**Remember September has 5 Thursdays. Meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday**

Carolyn Singer of Foothill Cottage Garden has owned a perennial plant nursery, taught gardening classes, designed and landscaped gardens in the foothill area for over 30 years. Carolyn has written articles for Fine Gardening, Garden Gate, Better Homes and Gardening, Special Interest Publications and the Sierra Heritage Magazine and does many speaking engagements. Carolyn's first book published in 2006 "Deer in My Garden: Perennials & Subshrubs" has won seven awards including winner of the Best Books 2006 Book Award in Gardening. In 2009, Carolyn published her second book, also an award winner, "Deer in My Garden: Groundcovers and Edgers". Carolyn spoke to our club in 2007, and after the meeting she drove back to my home with me and a couple of other members. We talked about gardening all the way home. As we all lived in older homes and had older gardens, we had many questions for Carolyn about updating our gardens and dealing with some of the problems of an older garden. We knew our members would be interested in this subject and asked her if she would speak to our club again. Carolyn is an engaging and knowledgeable speaker and I know you will enjoy this evening. Carolyn will have her books available for purchase.

## OCTOBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

Sue and Ernie Magill

Pruning and Caring for Your Tools

Shepard Garden and Arts Center

Thursday, October 27, 2011, 7:00 PM

We are heading into the pruning season and if you have the right tools and the tools are clean and sharpened, the job will be so much easier. Sue and Ernie will be showing us the proper care of our tools. Proper care will make your tools last for many years. Sue and Ernie are both retired teachers who have been gardening for many years. Their special love is roses. They are both very active in the Mother Lode, Gold Country, Sierra Foothills and Sacramento Rose Societies. They have relocated several gardens, the last being from their ranch in Newcastle to their new home in Roseville. With each move, Sue and Ernie have dug up and moved many of their plants with them. They have done a lot of pruning in all these large to small gardens. Sue and Ernie will answer your questions about pruning and tools. This should be a very informative evening.



Fiskars pruner

# Perennial Plant Club

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**Annual Fall Plant Festival**  
**Shepard Garden and Art Center**  
**Saturday, October 1 and Sunday, October 2, 2011**  
**10AM to 4 PM**

The Fall Plant Sale now called "The Annual Fall Festival" is moving back to the **first weekend in October**. Please donate plants and garden related items. This is a good time to check around the house for garden items you are no longer using, someone else may have a use for your item. **Bring Plants** (labels with pictures of the plants are helpful) **and items to Center on Friday, September 30th between 10AM and 5 PM.** We have a 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 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 have fun working at the sale. **To sign-up or for information call Madeleine Mullins at 455-7815.**



**Autumn Tour**  
**Lakes Nursery**  
**Thursday November 10th, 10:00 A.M.**  
**8435 Crater Hill Road, Newcastle, California**  
**Pack a lunch**

It's time for fall foliage to brighten our gardens and what better place to see fall color than at Lakes Nursery located in Northern California's famed Gold Country in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. They have the largest selection of Japanese Maples in Northern California and are specialists at helping you choose the perfect Japanese maple for your garden. They also have 70 varieties of bamboo including mature groves on the grounds and can suggest bamboos which will fit into your landscape. The nursery has a wide variety of trees and shrubs, in addition to garden art, benches, pottery, and whimsical items for your garden. We will tour several demonstration gardens and the beautiful Japanese garden with a 28,000 gallon koi pond. Pack a lunch we will picnic at the nursery after our tour.

Directions: Take I-80 to Lincoln exit, which is Highway 193, swing around under the freeway and turn right on Orphir Road, turn left on Lozanos Road, turn left on Wise Road and Left on Crater Hill Road. Proceed to 8435 Crater Hill Road (530-885-1027).



## **Mark Your Calendar** **Plant Sales and Tour**

**Saturday, September 24 and Sunday, September 25**  
**Sacramento Valley Native Plant Society Plant Sale**  
10:00 am-3:00 pm Shepard Garden and Arts Center

**Saturday, September 24, 2011**  
**UC Davis Arboretum 75th Anniversary Plant Faire & Sale**  
Member sale 9-11 a.m., Public sale 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Saturday, October 1 and Sunday October 2, 2011**  
**Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Fall Sale**  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Shepard Garden and Art Center

**Thursday, November 10, 10:00am Lake Nursery Tour**

## **Website**

We are in need of a web master. We need someone who will be able to manage the website; updating the calendar, adding photos of garden tours and members gardens, have the membership application available, etc. If you have knowledge of setting up a website--great--but if you don't we have allotted money to hire a web designer to get the website running and you would manage the site. An email will be sent out with information and a contact person. If you know of anyone who is interested in setting up our website, please let us know.

## **Welcome New Members**

Welcome to the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club; Rose Hoskinson, Lara Lance, Marilyn Herrmann, Carol Meinger, and Marie Salers.

**Aunt Mary K's English Apple Spice Cake**

Virginia Schnitt brought this delicious cake to last years Potluck Dinner. This is an old family recipe. It's time for a trip to Apple Hill, get some apples and bake a cake.

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and lightly flour a 13X9 baking pan

3 eggs

2 tsp cinnamon

1/2 cup oil

2 cups flour

1 tsp vanilla

4 cups fresh diced apples (skins left on)

2 tsp soda

3/4 cup chopped nuts

2 cups sugar

1 tsp salt

Beat eggs. Add sugar, oil and vanilla. Beat.

Add dry ingredients and beat by hand as it is very stiff.

Stir in apples and nuts.

Spread batter in 13X9 baking pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes (some cakes take up to an hour depending on the apples' juiciness.)

Cool and frost.



**Cream Cheese Frosting**

3 Tbls. butter or margarine, softened

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

6 oz. cream cheese, softened

1 tsp. vanilla

Mix all ingredients together. Spread on cake.



**What's Blooming in September and October**



**Dahlia  
'Paul Emory'**

This is one of the varieties of dahlias that Emma sold last spring. A late-blooming dinnerplate dahlia, Emory Paul boasts large rosy pink/purple flowers. One of the largest flower, this is an award winner. Plant in sunny location. Makes a great cut flower



**Salvia guarantica  
'Black and Blue'**

This Salvia has tall, dark green stems; bright sage green leaves; abundant 1 1/2" florets of rich blue with truly black sepals just below the petals. The tall, graceful plants, 4 ft x 3 ft looks good in large container. Blooms from late spring thorough autumn. Dies back, cut to ground in winter.



**Sedum  
'Cloud Walker'**

A newer sedum with bright rosy pink blooms that open the end of August. The flower color is darker than the spectabilis types and the foliage is also a darker bronzy green. Sun loving and drought tolerant.

**French Pumpkin  
Rouge Vif D Etampes**

Rouge vif means vivid red. This bright scarlet French pumpkin, actually a squash, is an attractive variety for fall display. These 10-15 lb. flat pumpkins are sometimes called Cinderella pumpkins. The sweet, orange flesh is suited for pumpkin pie.



# Perennial Plant Club

## FALL PERENNIALS

By Trey Pitsenberger, co-owner Golden Gecko

Besides trees and shrubs, plants can be divided into three types—annuals, biennials and perennials. Annuals grow from seed to flowering size and then die in the course of one year. Annuals are important for keeping our yards colorful throughout the summer or winter months.



Marigolds, Zinnias, and Pansies are well known annuals. Biennials, such as foxglove and hollyhocks, usually take two years to complete their lifecycle. They grow the green leafy portion in the first year, and flower in the second.

Perennials can be divided into two camps. Short-lived perennials last for about four years, but can be kept longer by dividing them every year. Long-lived perennials can sometimes outlive the gardener that planted them. While technically trees and shrubs are perennials, the perennials we are discussing are called herbaceous. Herbaceous means the plants have soft, non-woody stems. Their growth above ground dies out each winter, while the roots remain alive to send up new growth each spring. Here in the foothills our winters are mild enough that sometimes the growth does not disappear completely.



The reason that fall means perennials is that now is the time to plant, as well as divide these plants. Now that the weather has cooled is when the least amount of stress is put on these plants as you dig them from the ground or pull them out of their containers to plant in the ground. The soil is warm from a long summer and this will encourage root growth for the next month or so. You may not get lots of top growth now, but the larger root system of fall planted perennials will mean rapid, lush growth come next spring.

Most all perennials can be divided but a few should be left alone.

Monkshood (Aconitum), most euphorbia, gypsophila, Christmas-rose (Helleborus), and oriental poppy (Papaver orientale) should never need to be divided. Generally if a plant is flowering and growing well division is not necessary. Sooner or later your perennial may stop flowering well, or out grow the area they inhabit. This is when you should divide.

Perennials that make strong, dense clumps can be divided by lifting the clump from the ground with a shovel or digging fork. Cut into the clump with the shovel or use two digging forks back to back in the center of the clump and pry them apart. If the foliage has died you can cut it back making it easier to reach the roots. If the plant has woody roots you may have to dig the clump from the ground and using a sharp knife sever it into sections, each with some roots and a growing bud or shoot. Plant these sections as you would perennials brought home from the garden center in cans. Dig the planting hole three times the width of the root mass, but only as deep as the root mass. Mix organic matter such as fir mulch, planting mix, or compost, into the soil. Add a pre-plant fertilizer like Master Start. Don't bury the plant any deeper than it grew in the ground or can. Water well after planting and until the rain arrives.

Yarrow, anemone, agapanthus, campanula, chrysanthemum, coreopsis, gaura, daylilies, iris, shasta daisy, veronica, salvia, and rudbeckia, are just some of the perennials that can be planted or divided now through late fall.

Try to finish before the ground gets cold and the wonderful benefits of fall planting diminish. Come spring you will be amazed at how quickly the plants grow and flower compared to one planted in spring.



## Garden Art and Propagating Classes

Members who were interested in getting together as a group and learning about propagating plants have met twice this summer and it was decided that they would continue to meet every two months. The first meeting was with Daisy, she gave the group information on starting plants from seeds. Our second meeting was with Saul; we shared cuttings and he showed us his method of propagating from cuttings. Our next meeting, we will do both seeding and propagating cuttings. Some day we may have plants to share with the club.

The art group under the instruction of Loretta Landers has been learning to do mosaic art. The groups have been small groups of 6-7 members and Loretta has been a wonderful teacher. She is a talented and gifted artist in so many different mediums, sculpture, painting, mosaic, etc, but she was patient and encouraging of us amateurs. This has been a lot of fun. On your membership application there is a place for you to check if you are interested in either the propagation or art group. Let us know if you have any art projects you could share with us.

**The Legacy of Trees**  
**Planning and Planting for the Future**  
by Carolyn Singer

Fall color is inspiring in our region, with deciduous trees dominating the autumn landscape. Appreciated for the shade they provide in the summer months, their beauty deepens as they change with the approach of winter dormancy. Seed pods and cones hold the promise of future generations and add more beauty to the seasonal transitions.



In the valley and Sierra foothills, planting a tree in fall makes much more sense than planting on Arbor Day in the spring. In the next few weeks, the soil is warm and growth is slowing. With the addition of aged compost, organic phosphorus for strong roots and oyster shell to balance the soil pH, a tree planted in native soil in fall will have a much larger root system by spring. Before you select a tree in a local nursery, take time to study the site where it will grow for many generations. How tall and how wide can it get with maturity? Are there utility wires to consider? Is it possible that walkways or driveways might be damaged by shallow roots? Will the tree be receiving regular irrigation when it might prefer to be dry once established? How much sun (or shade) does it have now, and in ten years or more?

In the nursery, you can provide the information needed to make the best selection for your site, and there is usually more than one perfect choice for your particular elevation and microclimate. Remember that leaves may show stress at the end of the season, but the buds for next year's growth are what you should be examining. If they are plump, not withered, the tree is ready for its next season of growth and is a good choice for your garden.

As always, the best trees for the foothills are the natives, which will need irrigation to establish (3-5 years), and will then usually do well with natural rainfall. However, it's hard to resist the spring and summer bloom or fall color of the many other trees suited to our climate. Some of these need little or no summer irrigation as they mature. Mulching always helps retain soil moisture during our periods of little or no rainfall. Avoid nitrogen fertilization, including adjacent lawn areas if the tree is in the affected zone. It is not uncommon for leaves to burn or the tree to be killed if it receives nitrogen (including organic forms) intended for nearby grass.



I love the crape myrtles that bloom so vibrantly in late summer, but at my site on the east side of Sonntag Hill in the Peardale area, winters are too cold for this lovely small tree (15-20 feet) to survive. Discovering this, my favorite late summer bloomer of a similar size has become the chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*, photo, left) with its blue flowers and attractive foliage. It also has a nice winter form and attractive bark. The most important attribute is that it is deer-resistant. It may be damaged or even killed with a severe spring frost. Do not overwater!

Another deer-resistant tree that does well at my 2600-foot elevation is the paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*, photos left & right). It has deep roots and can be grown next to a walkway if young branches have an upright habit. Of all the small maples, this particular one needs less water. Mine is watered once a month during the summer. Bark, seed pods, and long-lasting fall color make this tree striking year-round. My twenty-year-old specimen is now a mature 30 feet.



The linden (*Tilia cordata*, photos left) is a large tree, to 60 feet or more in height with a 40-foot spread. The tree's lower branches will be browsed by the deer, but those may be pruned to keep the foliage out of reach without compromising the tree's shape. Linden tolerates regular irrigation and provides shade fairly quickly. In late May and early June, small white flowers are intensely fragrant when you are close. I have a favorite place to sit nearby.

In Nevada City, a beautiful old linden graces Broad Street outside the Ott mansion, and more than one local resident has asked me what the early summer fragrance is in that neighborhood. Remember that you are planting not only for your own enjoyment, but for generations to come.

# Perennial Plant Club

## Our Favorite Flowers Barbara Lane-Piert

At the "crack of dawn" today I walked around the garden checking for changes that need to be made and admiring those plants that have done well and are looking good. The early morning hours always seem to show our plants in all their glory. Maybe damp from night time watering and just waking up. Waking up is true of us too...we haven't had time to wilt and neither have they.

I stopped and paused to be overwhelmed by a current favorite plant...*Solenostemon*... commonly known as Coleus or Painted Nettle. This year, after spending all winter babying the plants on my windowsills, I decided a better way to go was "bite the bullet" and spend a little cash for new plants. How rewarded I have been. Those tiny little plants are now spectacular monsters.

While sipping my tea I realized how my, and probably your, favorite plants change with the seasons. The spring bulbs usually arrive first and although I have few I often stop to admire those belonging to you my fellow gardeners. A trip to Daffodil Hill and I promise myself to plant some this year...too cold, I don't. The tulips and all the other early spring bloomers make me think that maybe they are my favorites...silly me...another season will soon arrive and I will discover that roses are my favorites... Their splendid spring bloom has me in a tizzy. My few hybrid teas are glorious with their form, color and beauty when I cut them for the house. Should we co-ordinate our hybrids with our decors? ....I have Marilyn Monroe, who in my opinion is one of the very

best roses. Marilyn with its pale apricot tinged with a slight pale green looks fabulous in my house. Country cottages would, I know, appreciate a wonderful white rose or pale pink. My other colors are vivid oranges and yellow. They warm a dismal overcast day in spring. The Austin roses, although not great as cut roses, are spectacular in April/May. Combined with other favorites of lavender and rosemary how could they not be our favorites. As spring becomes summer other plants take the lead for favorites. Daisies and Sunflowers...The Shasta Daisy was a relative's favorite bloom and now is mine. Sunflowers are my daughter's favorites and so they too have become mine. No luck with those that tower to the sky. I have decided that the shorter, bushier ones will have a special planting space. The sunflower named "Teddy Bear" I saw in a friend's garden and next year I



have to have it so I can claim it as one of my favorites. The sunflower with the colors of fall has my attention and may become a favorite if it behaves. In the tropical patch the Canna lilies have my attention. The brilliant orange flowers and their colorful leaves hold my admiration each morning.

The massive leaves of *musa acuminata* a banana plant, that will have dwarf lady finger bananas, stand tall and handsome. The climbers, of which I have many, are more subtle in my garden but still grab me and hold my admiring gaze at moments.

At this moment the Coleus and the Begonia's are my favorites. Begonias are all grown from cuttings (usually broken from other peoples) they, and Coleus, grow sooo fast in the late summer. They look so forlorn earlier but take over the garden in mid-August. My begonias, native to the tropics and subtropics, are most diverse in South America. There are over 1,500 known species (I don't have them all unfortunately). My favorites are the canestemmed. Many of mine that started as cuttings are now growing all over the garden. They reseed themselves and pop up everywhere they feel comfortable. In winter, if I don't bring them in, they disappear to pop up in late spring and then become one of my favorite blooms in the late summer. The Rex has lovely variegated leaves and the tuberous begonia has breathtaking bloom. The other, at this moment, favorite is the Coleus. It hails from Africa or Asia and there are 60 known cultivars. Would like to have them all but would have to enlarge the garden. I settle instead for the ones with the most colorful leaves.



Soon it will be time for the very late summer blooms to become my favorites. The salvias are showing promise and the Angelonia. Then there will be the native fuchsia with its brilliant orange bloom...and finally in my garden my beloved roses will have their chance once again at being my favorites. The October bloom of roses is close to being as wonderful as their spring bloom. Winter will settle in, the catalogues will be stacked up ready for perusal and we will once again be trying to find our favorites for next year.

Enjoy your planning and look forward to another year that is special to those of us that call ourselves "gardeners". Grow more favorites so you have a "forever" smile... Make gardening the fun it's supposed to be and favorites are the great contributors...

**I Love Orange**  
By Carolyn Singer



Orange. The color in the most breathtaking of sunsets. A fruit that brings the citrus orchards of the valleys and lower foothills to life from mid to late winter. And of course, there's the California poppy, a delight wherever its vibrant flowers appear in late spring. And what would fall be without orange thrown into the palette? Imagine Halloween without orange pumpkins. Persimmons of another color? Unimaginable!

Yet orange is the one hue that many people do not want in their gardens, especially when color choices are being considered for spring and summer. Some go so far as to express stronger emotions. Others disdain any color with a hint of orange (such as gold). Some may not even want their neighbors to have orange in an adjacent garden.

I'm in the minority. Orange is a favorite. Contrasted with blue and purple hues, orange adds a vibrancy to the summer palette. At Filoli Gardens in Woodside CA one fall, there was a splendid display of orange with just a touch of blue-violet pansies on one edge.

I'm considering the purple-flowering Clematis 'Polish Spirit' with its long season of bloom, trailing over the fence corner at my garden entry, as a backdrop for annuals with tall habit and orange flowers, such as Tithonia and Zinnias. Since the Clematis will stop blooming by mid-summer, I could have blue morning glories as a late summer into fall contrast with a blast of orange nearby.

Or perhaps a bed of orange Cosmos or Zinnias with blue and purple larkspur or blue love-in-a-mist (Nigella). The range of orange shades and size of marigolds offers opportunity for this warm color from tall to dwarf. Other small annuals provide fun for playing with color combinations in containers. Orange Impatiens and deep blue Lobelia in a hanging basket? Dwarf Zinnias with dark blue Lobelia?



As I was writing today, clients south of Grass Valley CA sent photos of the orange daylilies along both sides of their front walk. The form and foliage soften the hard-

scape of the walk, and when the daylilies open, the flowers welcome visitors. I knew it would be very striking in bloom. I'm glad they remembered my desire to see it!

In fall, orange blends with red, yellow and gold, turning the foothills into one of the best areas for viewing fall color in our state. My favorite orange tree is the tupelo or sour gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*. The leaves are already glossy, and when they turn in autumn, the entire tree glows. It's one of the later trees to change color, well after the reds of maples. As a shade tree in a lawn or irrigated area, the tupelo adapts well to our climate.

Pyracantha berries are red or orange, and both are a great addition to the fall garden, carrying this season of color into early winter before the birds feast.



In my vegetable garden, Nasturtiums are now in full bloom. Some are bright orange, some soft and pale orange. All are volunteers from last year's seed, which germinated when conditions were favorable in early spring. The cold

spells that slowed the growth of many vegetables did nothing to discourage this cheerful annual. I use the sweet younger tender leaves for salad, and the flowers to add a spicy taste as well as --- you guessed it --- an orange touch to all the greens, an echo of the grated carrot.



**Small and Specialty Nurseries**

Picking up the newspaper late week, I was saddened by the news of another small nursery going out of business. Windmill Nursery will be closed soon. We lost the opportunity of buying wonderful plants from Bob Hamm this year. Both these nurseries were great supporters of our club and we will miss them. Bob has been saying for years that we need to support small specialty nurseries if we want to have the wonderful and rare plants that make a garden a delight. That was one of the reasons we started the Vendor Sale; we wanted to bring small specialty nurseries and other garden related business to Sacramento and have a fun one-stop shopping day at the Center. Some of the nurseries that have participated are Morningsun Herb Farm, Geraniaceae, Golden Ponds, Golden Gecko, and Mad Man Bamboo Nursery. We also have had a speaker that day. I hope we find one or two members who will chair this event (you will have help from other members who have worked this sale) and get this special day back on our calendar.

# *Perennial Plant Club*

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

The September meeting of the Board of Directors will be at my home here in Auburn on Tuesday, September 13th beginning at 5:00 p.m. After the pot-luck dinner, the Board will discuss three important agenda items: the club's website, the vendor sale, and election of officers.

Currently, we have a website. However, in my opinion, we need to hire someone to design an attractive looking site that will provide information about the club. Plus, we need to hire someone to maintain the site.

Last year we did not have the annual vendor sale. We skipped last year with the intent of having the sale in 2012. Now, we need to decide if we will continue or not. We will need someone to chair or a couple of members to co-chair this event.

Finally, the by-laws call for an election of officers no later than May of 2012. This is my last year of my current two year term as president.

I hope to be able to give members website and vendor sale information at the general September meeting.

### **Board Meetings**

The next Perennial Plant Club Board of Directors meetings will be held September 13th at the home of Saul and Julie Wiseman (530-885-9248), and October 11 at Madeleine Mullins (916-455-7815). 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.



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