



# The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club  Sept/Oct 2015

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The Sacramento Perennial Plant Club provides educational opportunities for Sacramento area gardeners and horticulturalists to learn about perennials appropriate to our climate and water limitations.

Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month (except July, Aug, Nov and Dec) at 7 pm at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento. Meetings are free and open to the public.

## September Program Speaker

**Ernie Buda**

*All About European Honey Bees*

THURSDAY — SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 • 7:00 PM  
SHEPARD GARDEN AND ARTS CENTER

Nineteen years ago, Ernie Buda retired and became interested in beekeeping. His beekeeping efforts have been modest, with the intent of never growing it past the hobby stage. Nonetheless, he has been harvesting many gallons of honey from his beehives. To offset some of the hobby cost, he sells some of the excess product on an informal 'word of mouth' basis. His chosen beekeeping style is to help the bees do what they do and uses neither chemicals nor organic compounds for treatments of his hives.

Ernie is a past-president of Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association (SABA), during his tenure as president; he oversaw the growth of SABA from forty members to their current membership of well over two hundred members. He also expanded the training program—originally two classes per year to nine a year. In doing so, he has been able to provide beekeeping information to nearly three hundred budding beekeepers. He hopes that his presentation will encourage some of us to take up urban beekeeping.

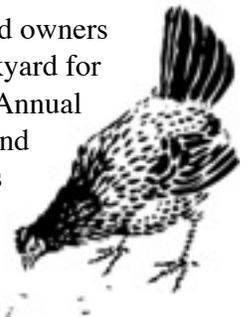
## October Program Speakers

**Brian Fikes and Greg Howes**

*Chickens in the Backyard*

THURSDAY — OCTOBER 22, 2015 • 7:00 PM  
SHEPARD GARDEN AND ARTS CENTER

Brian Fikes and Greg Howes, long time members of our club, and owners of "Two Flew the Coop" have been raising chickens in their backyard for many years. Brian and Greg have been a popular addition to the Annual Vendor Sale, with their one of a kind, whimsical chicken coops and cute chickens. Learn all you need to know about raising chickens in your backyard and having the benefit of fresh eggs in the morning.



[WWW.SACRAMENTOPERENNIALPLANTCLUB.ORG](http://WWW.SACRAMENTOPERENNIALPLANTCLUB.ORG)

# Calendar

**September 9—SPPC Board Meeting**  
Cheryl McDonald (916-524-5943)  
5 p.m.

**September 19—6th Annual Arden Park Garden Tour**  
9 a.m.–1 p.m.  
Starter house at 885 La Sierra Drive, Sacramento. For more information go to: [ardenparkgardenclub.com](http://ardenparkgardenclub.com)

**September 19—Fair Oaks Horticulture Center Open Garden**  
11546 Fair Oaks Blvd.  
9 a.m.–Noon  
Bulbs for fall planting will be for sale.

**September 24—SPPC General Meeting**  
Ernie Buda: *All About European Honey Bees*  
7 p.m.

**September 26-27—Native Plant Sale**  
9 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Shepard Garden and Arts Center

**October 3-4—SPPC Fall Plant Sale**  
10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Shepard Garden and Arts Center

**October 22—SPPC General Meeting**  
Brian Fikes and Greg Howes:  
*Chickens in the Backyard*  
7 p.m.

**There will be no general meeting in November and December.**

## Membership Information

**Membership Roster and Newsletter.**  
Please check that your contact information has been listed correctly in the membership roster. If there are any corrections, or if you want to be removed from the list or you wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail please call **Carol Meininger** (916-967-1018) or send an e-mail to [sacppc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sacppc@sbcglobal.net).



## The Perennial Post

*The Perennial Post* is published bimonthly except for July and August. Contact the editor, Cheryl McDonald, at [mcdonald4214@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mcdonald4214@sbcglobal.net) or call (916-524-5943) with any questions or suggestions. Garden-related articles are welcomed. A color version of this issue of *The Perennial Post* along with archived newsletters can be viewed at: [www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.org](http://www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.org)

# President's Message

Saul Wiseman

In September as president, I usually list my goals in *The Perennial Post* for the upcoming 2015-2016 year. Again, this year I have three goals.

First, I hope we can increase our membership by having new members become involved in our many activities. Our new members can take advantage of the many benefits and activities the club offers. These include the seven general meetings, the bimonthly *Perennial Post* and website, the various plant sales including our Vendor Sale, tours of gardens and specialty nurseries, our community outreach—Hamilton Square Garden in the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, WPA Rock Garden at Land Park, and our Grants Program. Most important, new members meet new gardening friends.

Second, I hope we can establish a propagation program. We have a number of members who are interested in growing plants from seeds, cuttings, or bulbs. The propagation group could share plants with members. To help encourage the program, I'm planning on the guest speaker at our Vendor Sale in March to be Carolyn Singer, author and teacher of plant propagation.

Finally, according to the by-laws, the election for officers of the club will be in 2016. This includes president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. I have been president for a number of years. However, I do not plan on continuing as president beyond 2016.

New members, new propagation program, and new president.

## Fall Plant Sale Coming in October

Mark your calendars now for the first weekend in October! It will be a great opportunity to buy your new fall plantings to add to your garden. You might even find a few plants for your holiday gift giving.

If you are 'digging and dividing' your garden successes to donate to the sale, remember to have them potted by mid-September. Please label them with name, sun/or shade, and a picture is helpful too.

Bring all plants to SG&AC on Friday, October 2, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Volunteers are needed to man our tables on Saturday, October 3 and Sunday, October 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. We also need a 'clean & pack-up' crew on Sunday afternoon. Please sign up at our September 24th general meeting. This is a great way to connect with other plant club members and have fun working side-by-side at the sale.



## SPPC Grants Program Announcement

Due to a highly successful first year, our Grants Program will continue for another year. Applications are available on the SPPC website beginning September 30, 2015. Deadline for applications is January 15, 2016.

"The purpose of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Grant is to promote gardening within the County of Sacramento. Non-profit groups with gardening-related activities may apply. Three (3) grants in the amount of up to \$500 will be awarded annually."

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# Lovely Tour of the Gardens of Alcatraz

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by Noelle Anderson

Bright sunshine, crashing waves, screeching seagulls and egrets, chilly winds, and the rough forbidding walls of the abandoned concrete prison buildings looming above—this is the setting of the gardens of Alcatraz, which have been built on terraces around the lower parts of the island. The gardens were first developed in the 1800's, when the island was a military fort. Later the families of the prison staff, and even some prisoners, cared for them. Today they are maintained by a partnership between the Garden Conservancy, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and the National Park Service.

In early June, 38 of us PPC folks made our way there for a docent-led tour of the gardens. The weather was windy and almost cold, but the flowers were spectacular. We saw unusual colors of poppies, roses, pelargoniums, the stately tall blue echiums, aeoniums and agaves much larger than we grow here, and many more gorgeous flowers. Our volunteer docent was knowledgeable about the military and prison history and of course, about the kinds of plants. We even got to see their elaborate composting system while a volunteer explained how it works.

Some of us drove to San Francisco but most of us took the Vallejo ferry across the bay. It was a long day but well worth it.

To plan your own visit and learn more about the gardens, go to <http://www.alcatrazgardens.org/>



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## Organizing a Garden Tour

Many thanks to **Noelle Anderson** for initiating and organizing this successful tour.

Are there other garden tour ideas floating around amongst Perennial Plant Club members? Taking part in garden tours is a favorite benefit of being a member of the club.

In addition to going out-of-town, tours can take many forms, such as:

- walks through neighborhoods for lawn-free design ideas;
- open gardens to share recent landscape renovations;
- family-friendly backyards; or
- urban farms

Tours are so much fun and greatly appreciated by members. If you would like to organize a tour, please contact a member of the board with your idea and he or she will help you publicize it.

Photos by Charlene Durant.

# Garden Greetings from Sally and Shelly Berlant

by Cheryl McDonald



Winding your way amongst numerous trees, you are soon greeted by cheerful colors radiating from the front porch. A charming, “Scatter Joy” sign by the front door, is a clue to what lies ahead at the home of Sally and Shelly Berlant. This loving couple fill their lives with the joy of nurturing family, friends and, most definitely, their countless plants.

Their home, built in 1954, sits on a large corner lot. As you enter the backyard, you see Shelly’s love of gardening combined with Sally’s passion for art that creates a rich palette of shapes and colors. This joyful tapestry becomes a visual narrative of their 44 years



together. A variety of plants such as, eucomis, fruit trees, roses and begonias line the pathway leading across the backyard. Whimsical sculptures and well-placed benches carry the eye to the rose arbor that defines the entrance to the vegetable garden. The enchanting greenhouse is the next structure you see.

The Berlants rebuilt what was once a “lean-to” greenhouse attached to the house into a stand-alone, solid building. Once you open the entrance door—which is a large, stained glass depiction of orchids—you’ll step into, what feels like, a tropical forest surrounded by exquisite orchids and begonias. Soothing sounds emanate from a tall, narrow fountain. Above, you’ll see orchids



hung at a slant to allow water to drain away from the crown; one of many great tips from Shelly.



Sally and Shelly are gifted storytellers and spending time with them is so fun and delightful. You’ll have an opportunity to enjoy their stories, knowledge and passions at the upcoming **6th Annual Arden Park Garden Tour on Saturday, September 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Their garden will be one of seven that are on the tour. For more information, go to [ardenparkgardenclub.com](http://ardenparkgardenclub.com)

*Note: If you would like to know more about Sally and Shelly, they were the focus of a “Meet the Members” column in the March/April 2012 SPPC newsletter which is archived on the SPPC web site.*

Photos by Beverly Shilling.

# Daisy's Picks

## Award of Excellence Given to Historic Rose Garden

The Sacramento Historic Rose Garden received the World Federation of Rose Societies' Award of Garden Excellence during their 17th International Conference in Lyon, France. Over 600 delegates from thirty-nine member societies from around the world were in attendance. Curator and Perennial Plant Club member, **Anita Clevenger**, was on hand to accept the honor. The garden was recognized for its volunteers' efforts to preserve historic roses and to educate the public about them. It is located in the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery at 10th and Broadway in downtown Sacramento. The garden preserves over 500 heritage and species roses in the oldest municipal cemetery west of the Mississippi, a recent addition to the National Registry of Historic Districts. Kudos to the garden's volunteers, including many members of the Perennial Plant Club! More information about the garden and its activities is at [www.cemeteryrose.org](http://www.cemeteryrose.org).



### Upcoming Events at the Historic Rose Garden and Hamilton Square

#### **Rose Propagation Workshop**

**September 12—10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Attendees will learn to select, prepare and stick cuttings, and will have the opportunity to take some home.

#### **What's Blooming Tour**

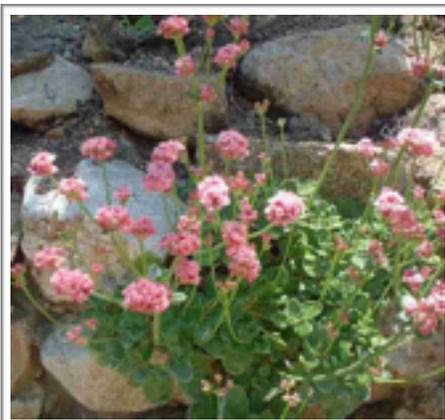
**October 17—Starts at 10 a.m.**

Hamilton Square volunteer and Perennial Plant club member, Leslie Hurlburt, will lead the tour.



CHERYL MCDONALD

*Epilobium septentrionalis* 'Mattole Select' makes a low growing mat of silvery gray leaves at 8" x 3'. It belongs to the evening primrose family (*Onagraceae*) and native to northern California coast ranges. It is useful planted along the edges of the flower bed where it can tolerate less than average water conditions with full sun to part shade. Unlike some other types of California fuchsias, this one could not be accused of being invasive. It's orange-red flowers are a nectar and pollen magnet for hummingbirds and pollinating bees.



JAS PILTAS NURSERY ([jasplants.com](http://jasplants.com))

*Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens* is a favorite late season bloomer, pretty in pink from shades of pale to reddish hues. The low growing spoon-shaped leaves are backed in gray with green on top. The branching flowering stems gracefully display pink pom-pom flowers attracting butterflies and native bees. They are members of the polygonum family (*Polygonaceae*). Though native to islands off the coast of southern California, they seem to adapt well to inland valley conditions with low water, good drainage and full sun to light shade.



CHERYL MCDONALD

*Sedum telephium* 'Matrona', a succulent and member of the stonecrop family (*Crassulaceae*) provides a showy and welcome display when the garden suffers from the summer time blues. The species inhabits a wide range from eastern Europe through Japan. It likes some water through the summer and late afternoon shade to look its best. Large leaves are bluish green with reddish stems. The pale pink flowers that grow up to 3' turn reddish in maturity and are irresistible to butterflies and bees.

# BLOOMS FROM THE TOMBS

by Sharon Patrician

While not in full glorious bloom now, *Penstemon heterophyllus* x 'Margarita BOP' was our stand-out perennial this spring. We planted three plants in the fall of 2013 and they performed as we expected. Imagine our delight this spring when we realized it had reseeded with a vengeance!

We have grown this plant several times and while a good bloomer, it never lived very long. Our only explanation for the abundance of seedlings (which have matured into large plants) is this plot was amended with compost in 2013 after we removed all the grass. The soil is exceedingly rich and species *Penstemon* don't care for such "caloric" intake. However, this is a hybrid and has performed like a garden plant and not a wildling. All the plants we put into this plot have thrived, some to excess.



'Margarita BOP' has sky blue flowers which fade to pink and purple. It has a long bloom period in the spring and we even have some blossoms popping up this summer. This California native

tolerates a wide range of zones and holds up to frost. It is a fairly short grower and spreads as an acceptable ground cover.

Because we have plots with surrounds, we can keep track of unwanted seedlings. Time will tell about whether it will survive more than two or three years, but the plant is so lovely we plan to always have it somewhere in Hamilton Square.

We are expanding our collection of salvias and penstemons and invite you to visit Hamilton Square this coming spring to enjoy the color and form.

# Book Review

by Debbie Rogenmoser

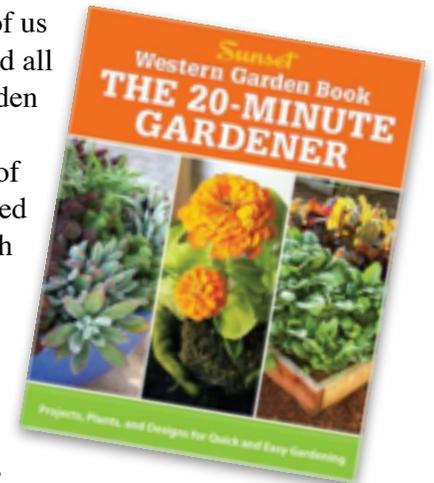
## Sunset Western Garden Book: The 20-Minute Gardener

ed. Kathleen Norris Brenzel,  
Time Home Entertainment, Inc.; NY, 2013.

This book is for those of us who don't want to spend all our free time in the garden but still want a good looking garden! Much of the information presented here is very basic—such as starting your garden with an easy care design, picking easy to care for plants, or hints for starting seeds.

There are also hints for using fabrics, color, and objects to add pop and style to your garden. Projects range from building a compost pile to building a dry stream bed; planting a pollinator garden to planting a low water lawn. And every idea, hint, or project includes photos.

The second half of the book is taken up with plant suggestions for your garden. These easy to care for plants are organized by type of plant; perennials, annuals, grasses, ferns, bulbs, shrubs, succulents, edibles and perennial herbs. Each suggestion includes a beautiful large photograph, description, water/sun needs, and a 'how to grow' section. And finally, the book ends with a description of the West's climate zones and a regional gardening calendar with tips on what to plant, feed, and tend/maintain each month. This book won't replace *The New Sunset Western Garden Book*, but I do like the more limited plants suggestions for the garden. Sometimes I am exhausted trying to find a plant using the 'bigger book' and I can see where this one will come in handy. It will also make a nice gift for any gardener. I give this book a green thumbs up!



# Time to Plant Bulbs for Next Year's Blooms

Choose plump, firm bulbs that feel heavy for their size. Avoid soft or shriveled bulbs.

Pocket gophers, chipmunks, ground squirrels and mice relish many bulbs (tulips are favorites). Fortunately, they avoid daffodils and other narcissus because of their bitter taste. The best ways to avoid damage include planting bulbs in raised beds, in wire baskets sunk in the ground or in pots or other containers.

Chill crocus, tulips and hyacinths in a paper bag in the refrigerator crisper section for at least six weeks before planting to insure strong stems and blooms. Label the bag. Do not store near apples or other fruit (they give off ethylene gas which can destroy flowers inside the bulbs).



Name	Type	Planting Time	Planting Depth (in inches)	Spacing (in inches)	Bloom Time**	Comments
Allium	bulb	Sept-Nov	As deep as bulb height or width, whichever is greater	small: 4-6 large: 8-12	s, su	Lift and divide only after clumps become crowded.
Anemone	tuber	Sept-Dec	1-2	6-8	s, su, f	Plant in full sun. Plant tubers scarred side up.
Babiana	corm	Nov	4	3	s	Naturalize if soil is well drained and relatively warm.
Calla (white)	rhizome	Oct-Apr	4-6	12-24	s, su	Needs year-round moisture. Grow in light shade.
Calla (dwarf colored)	rhizome	Oct-Apr	2	8-12	s, su	Plant with "eyes" up. Withhold water in late summer or early fall to encourage dormancy. Grow in light shade.
Crocus	corm	Sept-Oct	2-4	4	w, s	Won't naturalize where winters are warm. Pre-chill as for tulips.
Daffodil/ Narcissus	bulb	Sept-Dec	small: 3-4 medium: 4-5 large: 5-6	small: 2-3 large: 6-8	w, s	In pots, set bulb with tip just below soil surface.
Freesia	corm	Sept-Nov	2	2-3	s	Plant the corms with pointed ends up. Naturalize well.
Hippeastrum (giant amaryllis)	bulb	Oct-Feb	Upper half of bulb above soil surface (in pots)	2 (from pot edge to bulb)	s	Usually grown in pots. Water and feed regularly all summer until leaves turn yellow; withhold water and let plant dry out.
Hyacinth	bulb	Nov-Dec	6 * (see below)	4-6	s	Pre-chill in refrigerator for at least six weeks (buy in September-October).
Iris-bearded	rhizome	Sept-Oct	Top just below soil surface	12-24	s	Some reblooming (spring and fall) varieties becoming available.
Iris-Dutch	bulb	Sept-Dec	4	3-4	s	Naturalizes well.
Lily	bulb	Sept-Oct	small: 2-3 medium: 3-4 large: 4-6	12	su, f	Many species and hybrids available with variable bloom times. Except for dry-summer natives, provide moisture all year.
Muscari	bulb	Sept-Oct	2-3	3	s	Known as grape hyacinth. Naturalizes well.
Ranunculus	tuber	Sept-Dec	1-2	4-5; 6-8 (in pots)	s	Soak tubers in water for 45 minutes before planting. Plant with "prongs" down.
Scilla	bulb	Sept-Oct	2-4	4-6	s	Leave for several years before lifting and dividing.
Sparaxis	corm	Sept-Oct	2-3	2-4	s	Long bloom period in early spring.
Tritonia	corm	Sept-Oct	2-3	2-4	s	Naturalizes well. Needs regular watering until flowers fade.
Tulip	bulb	Nov-Dec	6-8 * (see below)	4-8	s	Pre-chill in refrigerator for at least six weeks (buy in September-October).
Watsonia	corm	Sept-Oct	4	6	s, su	Corms can be left undisturbed for many years.
Zephyranthes	bulb	Anytime	1-2	3	su, f	May rebloom if kept alternately wet and dry. Best to plant September-October.

\* In pots, plant with top of the bulb just above the soil surface

\*\* Approximate bloom time: s=spring; su=summer; f=fall; w=winter

Used with permission from UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County; [http://ucanr.edu/sites/sacmg/Sacramento\\_Bulb\\_Planting\\_Schedule/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/sacmg/Sacramento_Bulb_Planting_Schedule/)



## The Perennial Post

SPPC Newsletter  
2743 San Luis Court  
Sacramento, CA 95818



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*View from the gardens of Alcatraz*

ROSE HOSKINSON