



The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club  Mar/Apr 2021

*Join us on Zoom to attend our March and April general meetings.
An e-mail with the Zoom invitation link will be sent to you prior to the meeting.
We start the evening at 6:30 p.m. with "Club Chat Time." The general meeting
starts at 7 p.m. with Club announcements, Daisy's "Half-Dozen"
of currently blooming perennials, then our featured speaker.
The meeting ends at 8 p.m.*

March Speaker

Ed Harper

Meeting the Birds of Your Garden

THURSDAY—MARCH 25, 2021 • 7 PM

Ed Harper was born in Montana where he developed his first interest in birds at the age of six. Over the years Ed's growing passion has seen him become one of the leading birders in the country. Now retired, Ed taught both mathematics and field ornithology over a period of 34 years at American River College. He is a past president of the Sacramento Audubon Society, past board member of the Western Field Ornithologists, and currently serves on the Montana Bird Records Committee. As an accomplished photographer, he has photographed over 800 species of North American Birds and countless other species on seven continents. Ed will talk about birds in our gardens and how we can offer a supportive habitat. Not only is their beauty and song uplifting, but birds can guide us to a better understanding in the stewardship of our land. We need only to listen and observe. A welcoming garden is a way to begin.

April Speaker

Bill Maynard

Overview of the City of Sacramento's Community Garden Program

THURSDAY—APRIL 22, 2021 • 7 PM

Bill Maynard is a Sacramento County Master Gardener and founder of the Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition. He has worked on school, community and library gardens in the Sacramento area and beyond. Bill is the City of Sacramento's Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment Community Garden Coordinator and is past-president and current board member of the American Community Gardening Association—a 44 year-old national non-profit based in Atlanta.

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 and are free and open to the public.

WWW.SACRAMENTOPERENNIALPLANTCLUB.ORG



Sacramento Perennial Plant Club

OFFICERS

President: VACANT

Vice President: JoAnne Payan

Secretary: Jane Thompson

Treasurer: Marcia Leddy

CONTACTS

E-Mail: Kirsten Salomon

Gardener's Market/Facebook:
Lili Ann Metzger

Grant Program: VACANT

Membership: Carol Meininger

Newsletter: Cheryl McDonald

Plant Sales: Beverly Shilling &
Charlene Durant

Propagation Advisers: Daisy Mah &
LaVille Logan

Publicity/Website: Linda Hax

SG&AC Rep: VACANT

Speakers: Noelle Anderson

Tour Coordinator: VACANT

WPA Garden: Daisy Mah

Send questions or comments to:

pres.sppc@gmail.com

BOARD MEETINGS

The next two Zoom board meetings will be held on:

Thursday, March 11—2 p.m.

Thursday, April 8—2 p.m.

To receive an invite link., contact Jane Thompson (artjane7850@sbcglobal.net)

NEWSLETTER

The due date to submit a garden-related article for the **May/June 2021** issue is **April 15**. Please send your article to Cheryl McDonald: (mcdonald4214@sbcglobal.net).

The Perennial Post is published bimonthly except for July and August. Archived newsletters can be viewed on the club's website.



Message from the SPPC Board

Growing Together

By JoAnne Payan

LAST WEEK, I was attending to gardening chores; one being to install a trellis to support a new, fast maturing vine. As I was digging around, getting the proper placement for the trellis, I thought: Whether it's plants, or people, we all could use a little extra support, particularly, these days! While a plant could use a sturdy stake, a vine its trellis, a tree its pole; we plant people rely on our families, colleagues, and friends, even furry ones!

Who does the SPPC rely on for support? It's the board, committee leaders, volunteers, and of utmost importance, all of you, our loyal members. The board wishes to take this opportunity to thank each member for holding on, being willing to shift and support the SPPC through these unique and challenging times.

If any of what we've tried, e.g. Zoom meetings and pop-up sales seems a bit off-kilter, know that we are doing our best to be creative and innovative. We are mindful of learning from what worked and didn't work. Growing together and being supported by this community of amazing gardeners will surely foster the continued success of the SPPC!



ED HARPER

From our March speaker, Ed Harper—

Lesser Goldfinch is a year-round resident of our region and readily comes to seed bearing plants and birdseed feeders. The colorful male has a black cap and is considerably brighter than the duller colored female. Slightly smaller than the related American Goldfinch, it retains more bright coloration during the winter months than its larger cousin. In addition to its lighthearted, wheezy, and canary-like trills, it also can imitate vocalizations of other birds.

◀ **Lesser Goldfinch feeding on the seeds of Crape Myrtle**

2021 Membership Drive

Dues must be received by **March 31, 2021**, in order for you to be listed in the upcoming membership roster and be sent the newsletter.

Be sure to fill out the membership form completely and include it with your dues. Please consider signing up for one of the many ways you can help the club. The form is on our web site: www.sacramentoperennialplantclub.org

For questions, contact **Carol Meininger** at 916-765-8390 or e-mail: sacppc@sbcglobal.net

Grants Program Update – A Year of Changes

By Jane Thompson

ONE YEAR AGO, none of us could have imagined what impact the Covid-19 pandemic would have on the activities and events of our lives. We have both individually and collectively had to make many adjustments in order to continue gathering. I am very grateful that SPPC has been able to continue meeting by Zoom each month.

Looking back to our last “in-person” general meeting (February 2020), I remember having the pleasure of introducing you to our new Saul Wiseman Grant Award recipients and presenting each with their funding. Everyone was so hopeful and thankful—from Club members wanting to give back to the gardening community, to the Grant recipients who were thrilled to receive that support.

I am happy to report that each of our Grant recipients *was* able to reach their 2020 goals. This, I might add, was achieved only by their sheer efficiency, economy, and diligence!

- The **American River Natural History Association** collaborated with Effie Yeaw Nature Center to implement all phases of the *Monarch Habitat Restoration Project*.
- The **Garden Council at Bret Harte Elementary School** created and planted a *Perennial Pollinator Border Garden*.
- The **Horticulture Instructor & Students at Leo A. Palmiter School** were able to construct and plant a beautiful *Succulent Wall Garden*.

In June 2020, the SPPC Board became aware of the many difficulties of non-profits to both plan and implement any new gardening projects for 2021. It seemed only appropriate for the Board to approve a ‘Temporary Suspension’ of our Grants Program activities. *Let me emphasize the word “temporary” here.*

On another more personal note, in September I stepped down from my role as Grants Committee Chair in order to fulfill my duties as Secretary-elect. This was a tough decision for me as I have truly enjoyed my involvement as Chair for the past five years, and will fondly remember it as an extremely rewarding experience.

Looking forward into 2021-2022, the Board wishes to “Re-Start” our Grants Program and to fill the position of Grants Chair (or possibly Co-Chairs) and to recruit grants committee members. If you are interested in serving on the committee, or taking on this important Chair position (some experience with grants would be helpful), please contact: [JoAnne Payan](#), SPPC Vice President or [Beverly Shilling](#).

Our shared commitment to this program continues to give us a measure of satisfaction and pride, knowing that our Plant Club is having an impact. It is also a wonderful reminder of what a privilege it is to give back to our community and participate in so many worthwhile gardening endeavors.



Project team—Monarch Habitat Restoration Project



Perennial Pollinator Border Garden

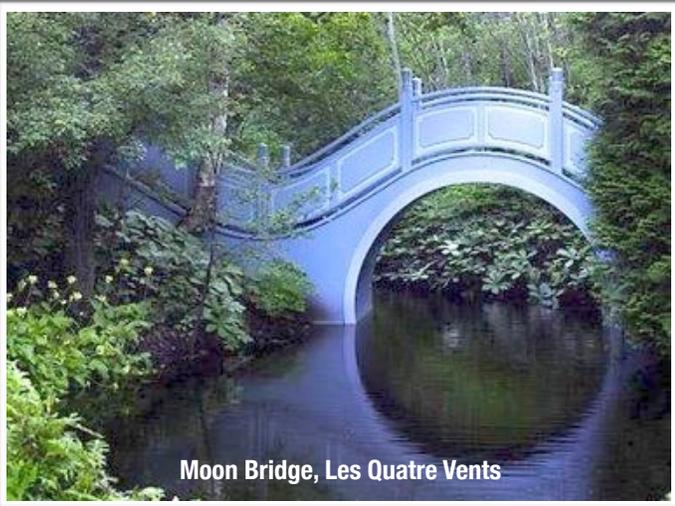


Succulent Wall Garden

A Treasure of Inspiration

By Diana Morris

Stumbling across Prime video, looking for something of interest during these lockdown days, I happened across *The Gardener*, a documentary about Frank Cabot, his garden Les Quatre Vents (The Four Winds) and came upon the establishment of The Garden Conservancy which gave us Open Garden Days. And what a treasure of inspiration—Mr. Cabot, his personal garden and The Garden Conservancy!



Moon Bridge, Les Quatre Vents

Francis Higginson Cabot (1925-2011) was fortunate to be born into the well-known, wealthy, longtime philanthropic Cabot family. He used his wealth to establish Les Quatre Vents, an amazing, beautiful, awesome garden on 20 acres in Canada. He had the luxury of visiting great gardens in Europe, England, Japan and more, all were inspirations for him of which he remarked he “stole” ideas from all over the world and brought them home to incorporate into Les Quatre Vents.

Frank Cabot had the ability to visualize what a garden could be and proceeded to use his creative talents to the fullest at Les Quatre Vents. The documentary is full of lush and beautiful garden rooms with outstanding photography and emotional, inspiring insights from Cabot himself. His personal philosophy shines through each segment as he explains his influence and thought process for each room. He saw the garden as

illuminating the spirit, “you connect on a different level,” not just physical but metaphysical in that “the senses are the gateway to the soul.”

In 1988, Frank Cabot and his wife Anne visited the Ruth Bancroft garden in Walnut Creek. Mrs. Bancroft mentioned that her family was not interested in the garden and there were no plans for it after she died. This peaked their interest and Anne asked Frank about starting a garden conservancy. Thus, in 1989, the seeds were planted for what is now The Garden Conservancy.

The Garden Conservancy

The Garden Conservancy’s mission is “to preserve, share, and celebrate America’s gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public.” This is done through the Conservancy’s partnership with garden owners, gardeners, communities, horticulturists, garden designers, and historians. They do not own or manage any gardens but do help restore, rescue and rehabilitate private and public gardens with all matter of preservation.

To date they have helped restore more than 100 North American gardens. Peruse their website, The Garden Conservancy, for more information on

their current virtual programs, there are plenty from which to choose. Our past SPPC president, **Lorraine**

Van Kekerix, adds she has “attended” recent virtual events and “found the one-hour events very interesting. They allow you to ‘see’ gardens that have been on the Open Days garden visits outside of California and hear many authors in person.”

The Conservancy also has a noteworthy newsletter, available online, featuring many of their current projects.

• **Local gardens preserved by The Garden Conservancy:**
• **The Gardens at Alcatraz**
• **Ruth Bancroft Garden, Walnut Creek**
• **Cohen Bray House & Garden, Oakland**
• **Hakone, Saratoga**
• **Harland Hand Memorial Garden, El Cerrito**
• **Marin Art & Garden Center, Ross**
• **Oakland Museum of California, Oakland**

Tool-of-the-Month

A Burning Desire

Well, the tool of this month is not for everyone.

It is the propane torch. If the height of your weeds rivals that of your cultivated plants, this is not a tool for you. If your favorite weeding tool is a scythe, this is not a tool for you. No, this is a tool limited to the OCD afflicted. The propane torch is also generally best suited for urbanites. Do you have small weeds growing in the joints of your sidewalk? Perhaps weeds have found the cracks in the driveway. Are pavers a part of your landscape? Do the weeds love your gravel paths?

I can hear you saying, “Ever hear of Round-Up?”

Well, does Round-Up kill weed seeds? No. There is a particular thrill in hearing the popping of weed seeds as you apply the flame of your torch. I also don’t like to wait days to enjoy the sight of a defeated foe. This tool meets the high standards of an immediate reward society.

So what is a propane torch? It is simply a nozzle that screws onto a tank of propane. You can buy a nozzle for less than \$15. But I want you to spend more. The extra cost will allow you to turn the flame on and off with the mere push and release of a button. This is an important

_____ safety feature in that the flame is not burning when you are not using it. You are able to move all over your garden (or neighborhood) and use a flame only when needed. This lets you use very little gas to eliminate thousands of weeds. I have been using the same tank of gas for 10 years.

I finally stopped buying propane tanks at garage sales—the count stands at 9 tanks. Home Depot carries the Bernzomatic Trigger Start Torch Head and Ace Hardware has its own Ace Torch Head.

Now there are limitations to weeding with a propane torch. You cannot burn weeds growing near flammable material such as dead leaves, bark, fences, and spreader boards in concrete slabs. You cannot burn a weed growing next to a drip tube or soaker hose.

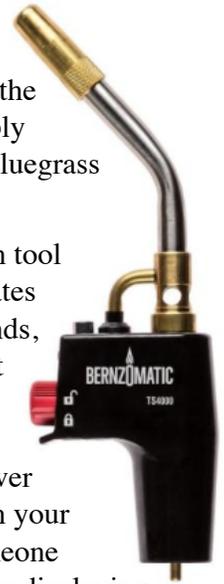
I do have to warn you of a potential danger.

When you come to enjoy using this tool to the extent that your yard is devoid of weeds, you may find yourself searching for weeds in the sidewalks and driveways of your neighbors. If you suddenly look up

and realize you’re lost, fear not. Like the proverbial trail of bread crumbs, simply follow the path of blackened annual bluegrass and spurge back to your house.

In summary: What makes this garden tool so special? The propane torch eliminates weeds and viable weed seeds in seconds, particularly when the substrate cannot be penetrated by a conventional weeder. It is an environmentally friendly treatment. You are able to cover a lot of garden area without getting on your hands and knees. It’s strange that someone hasn’t developed a specialized rack for displaying this efficient weed killing weapon for the rear windows of gardeners’ pickups.

Happy burning,
Stan, The Tool Man



For more of Stan's tool and garden tips, check out the "Blog" section on our web site.

Plant Sales Are Coming! *Member Propagated Plants Needed*

A Shortcut to Propagation

By LaVille Logan

Propagating can be a complicated process, but when just starting, try this instead:

- Walk around your yard and look for plants that might be good prospects.
- Take a cutting of 4 to 6 inches, strip the bottom two sets of leaves and put it in water to root. You can also place the cutting in potting mix.
- Use rooting hormone to increase the chance of success.
- Trim off large leaves to cut down on transpiration.
- Cover your cuttings with a ZipLoc bag and keep them in a humid environment.
- Keep your cuttings out of direct sunlight.

There are also many online resources:

- Search “How to propagate (your plant?)” PlantNet, a free phone app, helps to identify the plant.
- Choose one of the links from a similar plant zone.

If you have a question, please call me and I’ll help—
LaVille (530-902-3853).

Gardening “Best Practices”

Sticks & Flags

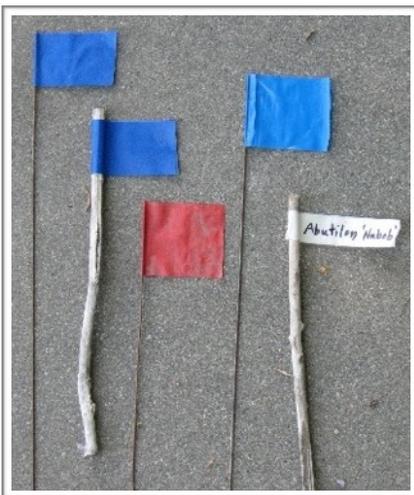
By Patricia Carpenter

M

ANY gardening books and articles often list essential tools that every gardener needs. It’s a good bet that *sticks* and *flags* don’t appear on these lists, but they should! Maybe these aren’t as important as your digging fork or pruning shears but they have so many uses that make the gardener’s life a little easier.



A collection of sticks—prunings from a peach tree, broken stakes, collected sticks, bamboo/stakes from purchased plants.



Examples of flags—homemade flags using blue masking tape (with wire and stick), two purchased plastic flags (red and blue), masking tape on a stick.

A *stick* can be anything—a handful of 12" sticks collected on a walk, some branches from your fruit tree pruning, or a substantial pole that can be substituted for the stakes found in garden centers and nurseries. A *flag* could be the fancy and colorful plastic ones attached to metal wire that are easily purchased, to just a wooden stick with a flag of common masking tape attached. So why in the world would you want a collection of sticks and flags? Basically, sticks blend in with the landscape and colorful flags stand out from all the plants. They both have merits. Here are some of the numerous uses of sticks and flags:

STICKS

A bundle of small to medium sticks can be used to protect a small plant or emerging seedlings from someone’s feet or a digging cat. A few sticks around a plant will alert you to notice something important. Taller, sturdier sticks might redirect a child or dog to walk around a newly planted and fragile pepper or basil plant. A forked stick is useful for temporarily propping a blooming stem that has fallen into the path. Multi-branched prunings from both fruit and ornamental deciduous trees are great for support. Bush peas benefit from a row of branched sticks to keep them upright. A few branched sticks around eggplants and peppers keep the plants upright when the heavy fruits start to form. Bigger sticks can turn into trellis teepees, stakes and even be lashed into protective fences and gates. Sticks are incredibly useful, are mostly free and they blend in so well with the plants.

FLAGS

Now, if you really need to draw attention to something, a colorful flag is the answer. The purchased plastic flags aren’t environmentally friendly, but they do come in many colors and sure are convenient. They are usually sold in bundles of 100 but are often sold individually as well. Eventually the plastic starts to disintegrate and/or rip but the metal wire lasts a long, long time. A metal wire without a flag is difficult to see and is dangerous—it should be quickly removed from the garden. But don’t toss it out! The plastic can be removed and a new flag made with colorful duct (ugh, plastic again) or masking tape. Metal wire is often easier to push into the ground than

Sticks & Flags (continued)

a wooden stick. However, flags made with masking tape on recycled sticks can just be tossed into the compost pile when they finally fall apart or rip.

Plants that have been newly planted but aren't yet established may need a little extra attention and water for a while. A blue flag might just help to remind the gardener or might signify an irrigation problem that needs to be fixed. Some gardeners use bright red flags for problems! If you have found some Bermuda grass or bindweed invading a flower bed, a red flag will remind you to keep an eye on the problem until it is solved. It is easy to write on flags with permanent marking pens. What if you have decided on a certain plant for an area but can't yet find the plant? A masking tape flag with the name of the plant you are looking for written on it will remind you to keep looking. White flags stand out the least in the garden and why some gardeners prefer them over the bright colors.



A blue flag is marking a new plant that needs extra water.



An eggplant with sticks all around. These sticks will help support the plant when it is heavy with big purple eggplants.



Now that many pots have the plant tag glued to the pot, it is necessary to either cut this tag off and attach it to a stake or make another type of tag to identify the plant. The stick is holding the pot in place until a new tag is made.

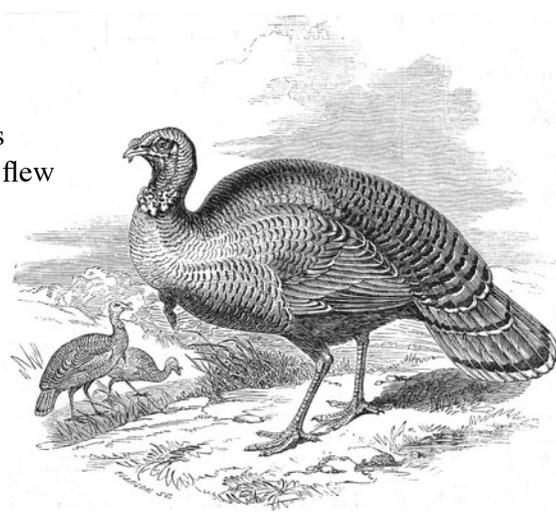


A fence made of used grape stakes wired together with tie wire. Saved sticks also make an interesting and inexpensive fence.

I OFTEN TELL THIS STORY . . .

Many years ago, I used **lots** of sticks and flags when planting numerous bulbs, seeds and plugs in my native valley grassland. About 20 turkeys flew over the fence into the newly planted area! But then, to my surprise, they made unhappy turkey noises and flew out, never to return. Who knew that sticks and flags around new plants are a great turkey deterrent? Ten years later a friend told me why—they don't like anything touching their wattle.

So, start a stash of sticks of all sizes and shapes—also a collection of flags of many colors.





The Perennial Post

SPPC Newsletter
2743 San Luis Court
Sacramento, CA 95818



Inside this issue ...

**Speakers for
March & April**

Grants Program Update

A Treasure of Inspiration

Tool-of-the-Month

**A Shortcut to
Propagation**

Sticks & Flags



Dragon's delight

CHERYL McDONALD