



The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club  May/June 2021

*Join us on Zoom to attend our May and June 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.*

May Speaker

Jan Fetler
Garden Photography

THURSDAY—MAY 27, 2021 • 7 PM

In the early 70's, Jan Fetler bought her first camera. Flowers, both wild and domestic, are her passion to grow and photograph. She thoroughly enjoys helping others see the world through a lens—or phone, and take better pictures as a result. Her photos have been published in Ortho's "Water Gardening" books and, with Chris Wasserman, in "Sacramento County Wildflowers" where her habitat photos and Chris's watercolor paintings help readers find the plant in the wild. In 2011, Jan became a Master Gardener which was the perfect marriage for a plant photographer. Her photos appear annually in the Master Gardener calendar and regularly on their Facebook page and website.

June Speaker

David S. Baker
Compost and Climate

THURSDAY—JUNE 24, 2021 • 7 PM

David is a Sacramento native and founding director of Green Restaurants Alliance Sacramento, a non-profit organization dedicated to growing a regenerative food community. While working in the world of food and wine with the Selland Family of Restaurants, David developed our city's first restaurant composting program in 2011. In 2015, it was retooled as the ReSoil Sacramento community compost network to address food waste and healthy communities at the most local and immediate level. ReSoil works to build healthy soil at community gardens, urban farms and private landscapes with food scraps collected from twenty Farm-to-Fork restaurants and hundreds of Sacramento residents.

WWW.SACRAMENTOPERENNIALPLANTCLUB.ORG





Sacramento Perennial Plant Club

OFFICERS

President: VACANT
Vice President: VACANT
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, May 13—2 p.m.

Thursday, June 10—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 **September/October 2021** issue is **August 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.

ON THE FRONT PAGE

Earth Tones
(dent corn; no color enhancements)
Photo credit: Jan Fetler

Message from the Board

The Board sends its heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers who have kept the Club going strong during a challenging time. Thank you to the members who donated their lovely gardens for our "Pop-Up" sales and those who staffed them and propagated an abundant inventory of plants, to those who orchestrated our Zoom meetings, and to so many working behind the scenes that form the "glue" for the Club.

As we slowly enter the new "normal," the Board is starting to look at how we move forward on a variety of activities. If you would like to offer some ideas or thoughts regarding club activities, please send them to pres.sppc@gmail.com. You will also have an opportunity to make suggestions at a later date.

We'll be taking a break for July and August; returning in September for our monthly meetings. Sit back, relax and enjoy your garden this summer.

City of Sacramento Preservation Committee Seeks a Landscape Historian Commission Member

The Sacramento Preservation Commission is seeking a landscape architect, designer, or landscape historian to serve as the landscape historian member of the Commission. The successful applicant will fill Seat E on the commission. The landscape historian member participates in the review and approval of development projects with historic preservation implications, nominates cultural resources, and participates in making policy recommendations to the City Council that promote the preservation of Sacramento's historic and cultural resources.

For questions, contact **Caru Bowns** (carubowns@gmail.com; 916-712-8550)

To apply, go to <https://boards.cityofsacramento.org/board/2941>

2021 Membership Roster

The 2021 membership roster will be mailed to you. When you receive it, check that your contact information has been listed correctly. If there are any corrections, please call or e-mail **Carol Meininger** (916-765-8390; carolmeininger@gmail.com).

Fall Meeting and Next Newsletter

The next general meeting is Thursday, September 23. The next newsletter will be the September/October issue. If you would like to submit a newsletter article, please send it to **Cheryl McDonald** by August 15 (mcdonald4214@sbcglobal.net).

Spring Plant Sale Success!

In a year where adaptability, flexibility and creativity were the new norm, our members rose to the challenge and found ways to safely, successfully hold our Spring Plant Sale. Thanks to your hard work, we earned a total of \$4,977 dollars for plants sold!

While thanking all of you whole-heartedly, please allow me to recognize a few members who really “saved the day,” for this new version of plant sales:

Our main propagators: **Daisy Mah, LaVille Logan, Patricia Carpenter** and **Tom Kurth**. Our computer wizard/organizer: **Lorraine Van Kekerix**, assisted by **Risë Ryan**. Our wonderful “Pop-Up” hosts **Jeannie & Dale Claypoole**, and **Stan & LaVille Logan** who gave us a home, as well as the Iris Society who welcomed us in.

All of these folks and many, many others pulled this together and made it happen! We cannot thank you enough for your countless hours of work and “can-do” attitudes. Because of you, we can fund our Grants program, have some fun, and share the joy of gardening!

Beverly Shilling



Beverly Shilling and Therese Ruth take a break at our recent Spring Plant Sale.

ANITA CLEVENGER

Important Reminder for Dog Owners

With spring planting underway, remember to check to see if new additions to your garden are toxic to your furry friend. There are many lists that you can search online, including:

[ASPCA](#)

[PetMD](#)

Mosaic Workshop 2021

Monday & Tuesday, May 10-11
(two-day commitment)

9 a.m. (each day)

Stan and LaVille Logan

4510 La Canada Way
Davis, CA 95618

Materials fee: \$10

Bring a sack lunch,
Flavored drinks will be provided.
To reserve one of the six spots,
call **530-902-3852**.

DAY ONE: We will apply various materials and shapes on a form, using thin-set. The forms may be: a bowling ball (supplied), small table top, cylindrical shaped items, small pedestals, or a flat slate on which you may apply a design. Any porous surfaces such as wood or terra cotta should already be sealed. A hard, inflexible surface is needed so the design won't pop off.

For the mosaic pieces, the following materials can be used: ceramic or glass tiles, flattened glass marble shapes or broken crockery. We have some materials which you can use. Mosaic materials can be found at: Michael's, Hobby Lobby, and Walmart. A tile cutter will be available for you to use.

DAY TWO: We will apply grout which fills in spaces and makes a nice surface. Grout also helps to hold the pieces firmly. Grout colors available are a white (or bone), and black. A sealant will be sent home with you to apply a few days later after the grout has cured.

We are really looking forward to doing this again. It is a great deal of fun.

Stan and LaVille Logan

A Neatnik's Dilemma

HAVE you ever paused for a moment when removing the debris from around a plant? That collection of organic matter that covered the ground not only helped to retain soil moisture, but eventually would decompose and release nutrients back into the soil. So as long as the debris didn't harbor disease, the plant would be happier if you left things be. But would you be happier? Probably not, unless you dress up the surroundings with mulch. Even then I have seen examples of mulch covered gardens that I consider downright ugly. Three to four inches of ugly doesn't do a thing for me. On the other hand, I love the effect created by a covering of mini-bark. I used to be able to buy "Pathway Bark" from Garden Time at Lowe's, but now all they have available is "Pathway Groundcover" which more closely resembles sawdust than bark. If you were at Jeannie's for our recent Pop-Up Plant Sale, you might have noticed how great the landscaping appeared, as it was dolled up with a covering of mini-bark. I asked her husband about it and he said he was able to get it at Hasties. He said it was rather expensive, though.

As usual, I have strayed from my original topic—that of the dilemma of whether or not you should clean up around plants in your garden—are you making the plants happier, or making you happier? You can do both, but more often I simply opt for me. Just being selfish, I guess.

Stan, The Blog Man

Dear Stan,

YOUR timely article has struck a chord with many members as we toil away in our spring gardens. Providing the protection our plants require along with satisfying our aesthetic needs, is an ongoing challenge. With a hot, dry summer approaching, the variety of mulch options from members offers plenty of great advice. Thank you to all who shared your experiences.

Cheryl, The Editor

Very interesting Stan! This is a problem even non-neatniks like me face, because we worry about what you all might think! I too liked the pathway bark from Lowe's and didn't know of its departure. Shoot! My favorite top-dressing is cedar bark, as it smells so lovely (but it's pricey). I'd be interested in hearing others ideas.

Beverly Shilling

I loved Stan's post! My yard and garden have a long way to go and I can say at the moment, due to a major home remodel project—may never achieve any level of neatness. I have found peace with that and consider that I'm creating habitat in my lack of neatness.

But I agree; there is nothing quite like the look of a garden all properly dressed with mulch. I envision functioning irrigation hiding underneath. The garden looks complete!

Have you ever driven by a yard to see mulch pushed up against tree trunks? Piled up like Hawaiian Shave Ice? I try to keep driving and tell myself this is a mistake that the homeowner will soon correct. It wouldn't be prudent for me to return (in the dark, wearing a headlamp) to shovel it from the trunk. But I'm still tempted. That's when mulch goes too far!

Kathy Moore

I'm probably the wrong one to ask, since I live in a condo now. However, I have a large area with a couple overgrown mock orange "trees," some perennials and *lots of violets*. The violets seek you out in Campus Commons and I've been told you can never get rid of them. Since this is a rental, I've decided to make the best of it and live with them. They do make a pretty ground cover in the spring and summer and die off in the winter. My neatnik dilemma is that I don't like all the "tree" leaves that yellow and fall all over the green violets. Very untidy! I sweep them off the patio and use my battery-powered blower to round up others. The patio looks beautiful from my kitchen window or garden bench, even though many leaves still remain, hidden from my sight, decomposing in the violets. The slugs seek out the dying leaves and then I seek out the slugs and dispatch them to slug heaven several times a week.

Barbara Beddow

A Neatnik's Dilemma

I use shredded cedar. It stays in place, repels insects naturally and looks clean and neat. Make sure to keep it back from the crown of the plant.

Carol Meininger

I always opt for removing debris. It's the only way to discourage snails, slugs, bugs and diseases. However, in my full-sun area, I apply a 1"-2" cover of small natural redwood chips. Hard to track this down—sometimes at Green Acres or Plant Foundry. Bagged chips/mulch is expensive, but worth it to retain moisture in the soil and suppress the weeds.

Jane Thompson

Mulch . . . I think it depends on your goals, priorities, and the “look” you are after. I don't have wonderful soil like some. Hard clay (former rice field) landscaped 5 1/2 years ago. My goal was to keep adding organic matter to the clay soil. My dear hubbie does not garden, so I am limited to what my two hands and hired help can accomplish.

My interests, ideas and gardening passion far exceed my implementation time and energy. For the first few years, my landscape help carefully collected and disposed of the fall leaf drop and the beds looked neat.

I saved a little for composting. Then I realized that I was throwing away Mother Nature's FREE mulch, plus paying for the labor to do that! For the last two winters, I have left fallen leaves in place. They will be a base for whatever I manage to get in to add. I need organic material that is going to break down and contribute to the soil web faster than bark. Soil expert, Steve Zien recommends earthworm castings, but very expensive.

The unanticipated bonus is that I credit my "natural" mulch with my landscape now being an active hub of little bird nesting and activity. Our backyard is filled with birdsong and their constant activity. I see the birds frequently on the ground collecting insects, seeds, nesting materials? I now tiptoe around my patios and yard trying not to disturb them. Is this ridiculous or what?

So I guess I have a “Split Personality Yard” — formal central bones and hardscape surrounded by outer beds heading more toward dense floral/foiar chaos and beauty. Messy but happy—the plants, the birds, and Delores.

Delores McKinnon

I think it is possible to achieve BOTH, assuming you source a verifiable organic mulch. Hasties is the only one I have found here—DEFINITELY not the big box stores/bags as they contain “non-toxic” colorants or mixed matter and as well, the free mulch from SMUD is a brilliant idea were it not for the fact that who knows where it all comes from. I prefer the organic shredded cedar from Hasties (\$46/cubic yd.)—NOT GORILLA HAIR—because even after one year there is decomposition and lovely mycorrhizal fungi beneath. The Mini Pebble Beach bark (douglas fir) is also beautiful (\$61.50/cubic yd.) if it is in low traffic areas. Does not decompose as quickly.

For sure, I fear Stan viewing my fully mulch covered yard and qualifying in the UGLY category. Anyway, my plants are at peace with it and so am I.

Risë Ryan

Well . . . I don't know how it fits in with Stan's really great article about Mulch Advice, but check me off in the “neat-nik” column! I admit to vacillating between letting things “go” but if it looks like a weed, acts like a weed, grows like a weed, I can't help but want to pluck it and send it on its merry way to the green waste bin! Same goes from stray leaves; uugh they just look so unsightly! Also, for my patch of earth, I am a big proponent of bark-type mulch and love the way it a) keeps the weeds in check (mostly) and b) makes the bushes and plants “pop” against the beautiful redwood (though none of that black of red-dyed or rock-like stuff for me)!

JoAnne Payan

Our garden looks sort of neat most of the time because we use homemade pure oak-leaf mulch for special plants that we want to encourage. Everything is covered by Pebble Beach Bark from Hasties, probably the same that Jeannie Claypoole has. It is expensive, but it doesn't wash away or bleach out or clog up drains, and they deliver. I do clean up debris like dead daylily leaves, pull any weeds that manage to get through the mulch and bark, and deadhead dead blossoms. We hope we are pleasing ourselves as well as the plants in our garden.

Peggy Kennedy

For mulch and nutrients, I use Carol's horse manure. It is completely composted, small and doesn't smell. Plus, you cannot beat the price. She delivers and unloads, \$65 a pickup load (916-291-9831).

Maryann Crawford

A Neatnik's Dilemma

In the past we purchased medium-sized bark mulch (redwood I think) from Cascade Rock, located on Kiefer Blvd. off Florin-Perkins Rd. A few years ago they offered free delivery on 5 yards of mulch. I've purchased large bags of medium and small bark mulch from local nurseries for filling in smaller areas.

During autumn, after removing the fallen sycamore leaves, I like to let the remaining leaves decompose on top of the bark mulch around plants. I leave these leaves over the winter for some frost protection and to feed the soil. I also use spent coffee grounds under azaleas, camellias, hydrangea and blueberry bushes year-round.

The messes I find usually occur after critters come out at night and root around in the mulch looking for grubs or other protein snacks!

Marcia Leddy

Throughout the year and especially in the autumn and early winter all the debris from the garden goes into the compost bins. In February, I start spreading compost on all the beds, using compost from the bins and compost I purchase. For the last few years I have been ordering Carol Jones's composted horse manure. It is weed-free and the plants love it. All the beds are clean and neat and then "Autumn in March" comes. We have large Camphor trees that drop their leaves and other debris, starting in March. We clean up the debris and fill up many green cans with leaves but I still have a covering of leaf mulch in the flower beds. I work with what I have—free mulch which I don't have to haul, which provides cool soil, and happy plants. And I don't have SNAILS.

Janice Sutherland

I do a lot of composting. I include vegetable scraps, plant trimmings, organic manure, and lots and lots of leaves. When this stuff is more or less ready (sometimes it's kind of lumpy), I put it on the ground around my plants, two-three inches deep. I do this after I've done the weeding in the spring. I think it looks nice and it keeps the ground cooler, covers up the ugly drip system, holds in some moisture (I hope) and slowly nurtures the plants. By the next spring it is almost completely gone, so I do it again.

Noelle Anderson

I believe in a neatish garden—free of weeds for sure. And I definitely believe in mulch! It helps improve soil structure, add nutrients, looks nice, conserves moisture and so much more. My preferred mulches are plant debris, home-made compost, purchased humus/compost from Smith Trucking or wood chips from tree companies. But my garden is two acres and often I have to find ways to just make my life easier.

In our California native acre, nothing leaves the garden as we try to mimic nature. Everything is just tossed under the mother plant or chopped up a bit. Bad weeds are tossed in one of three pathways where we walk often. We can easily observe if they start to grow and deal with them (spray, pull or stirrup hoe). We do mulch with wood chips from tree companies but now less and less since we have lots of plant material. We also sometimes just stomp plants. OK, I will confess, if something just looks really awful to us—we might dump wood chips on top of the dead plant material—but this is NOT often.

In our main acre garden, dense planting is a type of mulch I use a good part of the year to protect the soil. But eventually I do have to clean up, usually twice a year. To save lots of work, debris is also cut and left under plants or stomped and maybe covered.

Patricia Carpenter

I clean up under and around my roses and then add compost and small natural colored bark. I do not have a front lawn but a drought tolerant grouping of materials. I do not rake leaves in the fall and add mulch in the spring. My world is full of nature and less interference from humans. Excessive neatness makes me nervous.

Tom Kurth

I admit that I like a neat and tidy garden.

We converted our front yard to no lawn/low water landscape a few years ago which includes a number of barberry bushes and fringe bushes which like to catch what seems like all of my neighbors' leaves underneath them. These leaves were doing no harm—you can't see them under the bushes most of the year, but I was determined to rake them out several times a year (not an easy task with those thorny barberry bushes!) until I finally realized these leaves were a perfect layer of mulch for my bushes! My bushes are happier now and so am I! I'm learning!

Amanda Hall

A Toast to the Camellia

by Daisy Mah

In 1852, Colonel James L.L.F. Warren received a much-anticipated package of Camellia cuttings. Despite being available since the 18th C. on the American East Coast, they were shipped from Japan at a time when her borders remained closed to the West. Yes, it was possible because an underground network of plant aficionados are not deterred by borders or politics. Coined the “Japan Rose,” it had become a favorite of high Society Europe and its image embellished wallpaper, porcelain and paintings.

Seeking his fortune, Col. James Warren, a Bostonian came West during the Gold Rush soon to discover panning for gold was not his cup of tea. Instead he pivoted to running stores specializing in seeds, agricultural supplies and implements, one located on Front and J Streets in Old Sacramento. Farmers and ranchers were encouraged to put up displays, which ultimately became the California State Fair. His many contributions including the debut of the Camellia to the West earned him the title “Father of California Agriculture.”

In Sacramento the popularity of the Camellia has ebbed and waned. Despite current gardens trending towards CA natives and drought tolerant, the Camellia continues to have lasting appeal. During this season, many can be seen blooming in treed neighborhoods and available at plant nurseries. Bearing shiny evergreen leaves, showy blooms in a range of colors including yellow and tolerance of hedging are an easy sell. In the 40s, community leaders and the influential women of the “Tuesday Club” helped to keep interest high and proclaimed Sacramento the “Camellia Capital” but more recently the “Camellia City.” Sacramento shares this moniker with other cities, many located in the Deep South where the Camellia happily thrives in the heat and humidity.

Since 1943, the Camellia Society of Sacramento began exhibiting flowers at the Memorial Auditorium, the first in the nation. During Camellia Week 1950, residents were encouraged to plant 50,000 plants at \$1.50 a pop. Beginning in 1944, a Children’s Parade brought in marching school bands from throughout the region.

Additionally there was a Queen Contest, Camellia Ball and the iconic Camellia flower Show. In its pinnacle in 1986, festivities included a golf tournament, sailboat races, folk dancing, art and photo exhibits, a ballet, a 24-hour, 100 mile foot race and to round it out, a choral concert. All that remains is the Camellia Show however; it’s been temporarily sidelined by COVID-19. It will return to a new venue, the Elk’s Lodge on Riverside Boulevard.

There are 250 known species of Camellias, native to Asia and despite being 20,000 hybrid varieties, new varieties continue to be developed. Universally popular and the one most commonly grown here is *Camellia japonica*. A native to Japan, it grows in dappled conditions on wooded hillsides. Known as “Tsubaki,” it is revered for its association to Shinto and commonly used in temple planting. They prefer well-drained soils, regular watering during the dry season and shade in the heat of day. Intolerant of alkalinity, fertilize with an acid plant food soon after it finishes blooming. Sparing the shear, they can grow to 30 feet or more but it might take a century. With the exception of petal blight virus, it suffers few problems. Afflicted flowers will turn brown on the plant and if plant debris is not fastidiously raked, will re-infect the plant. Unfortunately it is a widespread condition in Midtown, Sacramento.

Sasanqua camellias can be seen blooming from September through December. A native to southern Japan, it tolerates sun to light shade, grows up to 16 feet but can be kept lower. Opposed to *C. japonica*, it is more diminutive in stature; smaller leaves, more delicate blossoms and occasionally fragrant.

And to those who enjoy a cup of tea, its leaves are harvested from *Camellia sinensis*. Its medicinal property, caffeine was first appreciated in China where practice of drinking tea dates back to 2737 BC. It has become the centerpiece of a tea culture in present day Asia and a universally popular beverage. Depending on the processing method, the leave’s distinctive flavors include white, green, black, oolong. Not surprising there are as many as 1,000 distinct strains of tea to satisfy the discriminating tastes of the tea connoisseur.



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SPPC Newsletter
2743 San Luis Court
Sacramento, CA 95818



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Spring blooms in the WPA Rock Garden

CHERYL McDONALD