

The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club 🌿 Winter 2023





Sacramento Perennial Plant Club

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

OFFICERS

President: Cheryl McDonald
Vice-President: Linda Hax
Secretary: VACANT
Treasurer: Marcia Leddy

CONTACTS

E-Mail: Kirsten Salomon
Grant Program: Anita Clevenger
Membership: Carol Meininger
Newsletter: Cheryl McDonald
Plant Sales: Risë Ryan
Publicity/Website: Linda Hax
SG&AC Rep: Barbara Lane-Piert
Speakers: Noelle Anderson & Terri Young
Tour Coordinator: Beverly Shilling
Gardener's Market: Lili Ann Metzger
Propagation Advisors: Daisy Mah & LaVille Logan

Send questions or comments to:
pres.sppc@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER

March 10 is the due date to submit a garden-related article for the spring issue of *The Perennial Post*. Please send your article to Cheryl McDonald: (mcdonald4214@sbcglobal.net).

WHEN & WHERE?

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

ON THE COVER

Winter blooming plants (see page 7 for more information).
Photos: Risë Ryan and Cheryl McDonald

Planning Ahead

THE roses in my backyard need pruning and the yard needs attention, but it's cold and rainy and I just want to stay inside. Hibernation mode is hard to resist!

In a few weeks, club activities will kick into high gear. A full schedule of monthly speakers, the 2023 membership drive, new grant recipients, our 18th Annual Gardener's Market, spring and fall plant sales, garden tours, updated website and more, will pull us out of this winter slumber. Lots of volunteers, the backbone of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club, will be needed. Helping out is a great way to learn more about perennials and a fun way to make new friends.

Speaking of volunteers, thank you to all of the this issue's contributors. Be sure to read Patricia Carpenter's account of monitoring five years of water usage (her "verge experiment") and Barbara Lane-Piert's reflections as she views her winter garden from a new vantage point.

—Cheryl McDonald

Let's Make the Spring Plant Sale Successful!

Friday & Saturday, April 14-15

The Plant Sale team is excited to let you know about our upcoming plant sale. We continue to take advantage of new opportunities to promote gardening and expand our Sacramento area outreach. This spring we are holding our sale in conjunction with the Natomas Garden and Art Club (NGAC). NGAC's goal is to promote gardening and the arts in the Natomas area (natomasgac.org/). Of course we will welcome gardeners, shoppers and art aficionados from anywhere!

The Natomas pop-up sale will occur in former Mayor Heather Fargo's driveway and yard. We will be providing and selling plants and the NGAC is exploring options for an art exhibit, music, kids garden projects, tours of a historic water tower, and snacks and drinks by Amie Tokuhama (current NGAC president and former Shepard Center Sale caterer). We'll have more details on activities in the spring 2023 newsletter.

Our propagators are growing a wide variety of ornamental plants and vegetables for the sale. Help is needed with a number of sale preparation jobs that don't require growing plants:

- **Do you have good handwriting?** We need labels for each of the 1500-2000 pots for sale. We will supply blank labels, an example label, plant names and number of labels needed for each plant.
- **On occasion, could you help a propagator with chores? Or help transport plants to and from the sale?** This could include organizing plants or moving plants in the propagators yard to get maximum plant growth, putting labels in pots, cleaning plant pots and putting pricing labels in pots, and transporting plants to and from the sale.
- **Would you loan** a six-foot long table and/or transport it to and from the sale?

If you can help with preparation, please contact our Plant Sale Organizer, **Risë Ryan** (riseryan7987@gmail.com) or call her at 610-331-1610.

2023 Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center,
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento CA 95816.

Meetings are free and open to the public.

JANUARY

Dave Tamayo

Perennials for Pollinators and Water Conservation

THURSDAY–JANUARY 26, 2023 • 7 PM

Dave Tamayo is a member of the SMUD Board of Directors, representing most of south Sacramento. He recently retired from a 30 year career as an environmental scientist for Sacramento County, where he specialized in water quality, as well as state and federal pesticide and pest management policy. He was a founding member of the River Friendly landscaping program, which promotes environmentally beneficial landscaping in our region. Dave is a beekeeper, and is in the process of converting his garden to mostly California natives.

FEBRUARY

Saul Wiseman Grants Committee

Introduction of the 2023 Saul Wiseman Grants Awardees

THURSDAY–FEBRUARY 23, 2023 • 7 PM

Since 2015, the Saul Wiseman Grants Program brings us in contact with a host of remarkable people actively engaged in providing greater access to healthy soil and open spaces, increasing the supply of food for the hungry in our community, or creating places of beauty in our neighborhoods. Many are talented educators dedicated to making all manner of gardening experiences available in our school and public places. Our February meeting will focus on celebrating the 2023 Saul Wiseman Grants awardees.

MARCH

18th Annual Gardener's Market

SATURDAY–MARCH 18, 2023 • 9 AM – 4 PM

The Gardener's Market takes the place of our March meeting.



Marlene Simon, "The Plant Lady," will speak at noon.

This annual one-day gardening event showcases some of our favorite specialty nurseries and garden artisans from the greater Sacramento region. The educational component of the event features our popular "What's Blooming" display and presentations from local horticultural experts. Food and refreshments will be available for sale. Hourly drawings for garden items donated by the nurseries and artisans will be held. Must be present to win. Event updates and request for volunteers will arrive in our monthly e-blasts.

APRIL

Anne Fenkner

More than Nice: Our Tree Rx

THURSDAY–APRIL 27, 2023

MAY

Tora Rocha

Fostering Appreciation of Our Local Ecosystems

THURSDAY–MAY 25, 2023

JUNE

**Ask and Share—
Member Chat Time**

THURSDAY–JUNE 22, 2023

SEPTEMBER

Kevin Marini

The Benefits of Composting

THURSDAY–SEPTEMBER 28, 2023

OCTOBER

Pat Smith

Mughal Gardens on Two Continents

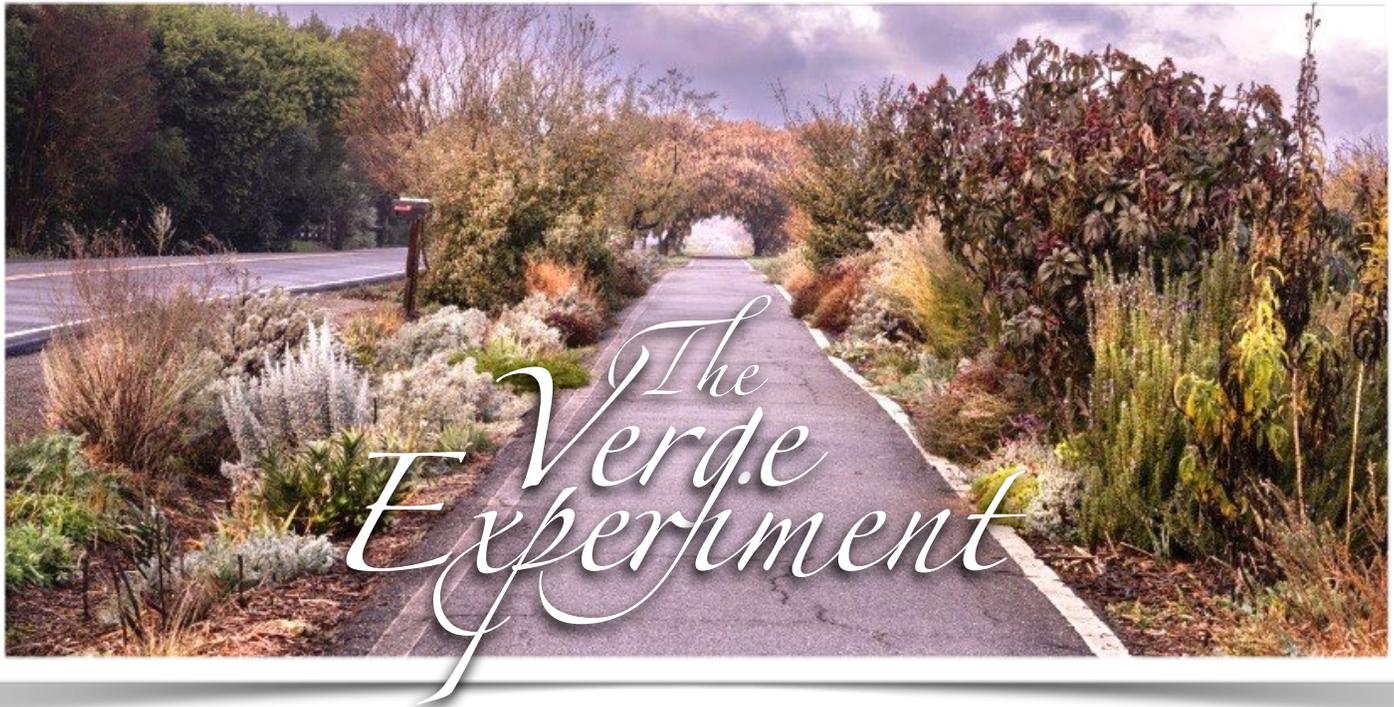
THURSDAY–OCTOBER 26, 2023

2023

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Dues must be received by **March 31, 2023**, in order for you to be listed in the upcoming membership roster, receive the club's monthly e-blasts and the quarterly newsletter. Please fill out the membership form completely and include it with your dues.

For questions, contact **Carol Meiningner** (916-765-8390; cmeiningner13@gmail.com).



BETH SAVIDGE

Five Years of Monitoring Water Usage of Drought-Tolerant Plants

by Patricia Carpenter

THE plantings along the bike path in front of our house are drought-tolerant. I wondered just how little they could be watered—especially since there is no water access across the road. Rain water collects in the ditches for established plant roots to tap into during the summer.

California Natives Section

In January 2018, I planted the California natives section with three shrubs to see what might happen when a guerrilla gardener encroaches on public land. No one seemed to care and they thrived. The next couple winters, 50 more species of very low water native plants were added and each was hand watered well when planted. Water was hauled across the road. Generally, a new gallon-sized plant likes a wood chip mulching and about five gallons of water on their first drench.

The spring blooms have been amazing! During the summers I didn't have to worry about the annuals and bulbs that die back, except chopping them down. We always try to just stomp or chop debris onto the soil as mulch. But I did monitor the other plants for summer stress and hand watered some a couple times to encourage establishment. Surprisingly, most of the perennial plants did not need summer water. Some looked horrible at times but were alive, and the next rains brought them back to life. My experiment on the verge seemed to be successful!

But this past summer was different—it was really hot with about 44 days over 100 degrees and temperature records broken. The area is open and sunny and often battered by dry winds. Should I water? Again, I decided not to, except to hand water six still establishing shrubs. To become established most drought tolerant shrubs need help for two to three summers and most perennials for one to two summers. If we have normal winter rainfall, established plants should then



PHOTOS: BETH SAVIDGE

NATIVE PLANTS (TOP TO BOTTOM): *Fallugia paradoxa*, Apache Plume; *Callitandra californica*, Baja Fairy Duster; *Lupinus succulentus* and *L. microcarpus* var. *densiflorus*, Lupine with *Eschscholzia californica*, California Poppy.

TOP PHOTO: Looking west, part of the verge in winter, December 2022.

be fine without additional water during the following summer. Although some plants might look really unhappy, we had numerous summer blooms on the verge—Apache plume, goldenrod, California fuchsia, Baja fairy duster, summer lupine, desert willow, bladder pod, even some California poppies.

Drought-Tolerant Plants from Around the World Section

Encouraged by the native section, I started looking at the area in front of my neighbor’s house. When the pandemic March 2020 lockdown came, I decided the best therapy was to start digging! Lucky for me the family of five very capable helpers jumped right in to dig out all the two foot tall weeds. Soon, another 120 feet of verge was ready for plants.

We planted about 20 California native plants, but then I decided to expand the experiment and to focus on very low water plants from around the world. To the horror of my neighbors, I hoicked them and we planted about 100 plants, many from Mediterranean climates. Most of the plants and bulbs were dug from my yard. However, planting this kind of garden should start in the winter to take advantage of the rains, not April when the temperatures are rising.

My neighbor offered a faucet and hose that we could stretch across the road at daybreak on Sunday mornings. Hand watering plants with a hose for an hour or so isn’t really much water, but way easier than hauling it. That first summer I enjoyed the sunrise 10 times. I had to stop in early August when the full tomato trucks started going by. They are rough on hoses! The next winter more plants/bulbs and a few annuals were added with seven sunrise waterings the following May through July. Most plants were now well-established so I wasn’t going to water this past summer but I wimped out and watered twice, the first in late July—a whole year since the previous watering. The summer show stoppers are the castor beans, perennial sunflowers, Texas ranger, Russian sage, and Mexican petunias. After our unexpected mid-September rain of four inches, the summer stressed plants came to life and fall blooming bulbs of rain lily, spider lily, and autumn daffodil started blooming.



PATRICIA CARPENTER

About a year ago we had a close call. A person hired to spray the county roadside weeds was just starting when a neighbor noticed and stopped him. For some reason he couldn’t see that my plantings were not weeds, saying only “my job is to spray.” It was time for action and I finally found the person I needed at the county office. Four months and \$400 later, we installed county provided signs that might or might not help, as they are not libel for accidental sprayings.

I know this section is another success due to all the cyclists, runners and walkers who stop to thank me or let me know how much they enjoy it. I already have my list of plants to add in both sections this winter! And in case you are wondering, the “verge” is adopted from my stay in New Zealand where—you guessed it—I planted the city owned verge strip by the road and it was lovely.



PHOTOS: BETH SAVIDGE

DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS (TOP TO BOTTOM): *Ricinus communis*, Castor Bean; *Ruellia brittoniana*, Mexican Petunia; *Lycoris radiata*, Red Spider Lily; *Sternbergia lutea*, Autumn Daffodil.



GERHARD BOCK

Patricia Carpenter surrounded by *Helianthus maximiliani*, Perennial Sunflower.



TALIA NEAL-PIERT

Winter Reflections

A View of the Garden

by Barbara Lane-Piert

AN INVITATION TO A “WONDER OF THE WORLD” arrived this past November. Camping (glamping) in the Grand Canyon? With trepidation, the dust was blown off the camper van, and the road trip began. On the road again after four years of rest, the van behaved. The Mohave, with Joshua trees, the tumbleweed just beginning to tumble and THEN the sight I had long wanted to see: the breathtaking view of the Grand Canyon. Cold, a few snowflakes and very few tourists— it was truly a sight to see. After a couple of days it was time to make our way home BUT I had another thought in mind. Considering a view of “the meteor crater,” we found it was closed due to wind. My thoughts wandered to another place I longed to see, the place where the central vortex of the world resides: SEDONA. It took persuasion but I managed. Down the mountain we went to see a place that has stolen my heart. My Shangri-La. Those red rocks, the bluest sky, the mountains, the pines. I shall be back Sedona.

Now, as I write this, winter has arrived. I have arranged my desk so I look into the garden space. Happily, it helps me plan. My first order for seeds was emailed and my “White” garden begins. Plans never stop. Always another day and another garden adventure. The wind is blowing, the leaves falling, and birds are passing. It is time to fill the bird feeders (the squirrels are on watch duty). My cats are looking hopeful.

My wonderful neighbors of 25 years decided to spray the honeysuckle that was on the fence for 40-plus years and now we see each other in our skivvies. They didn't realize that a chain link fence divided us because the honeysuckle covered it. Will it come back? Doubtful but I am hopeful. Worried that my wonderful David Austin rose (Jude the Obscure) and one of my favorite abutilons will continue or bite the dust. Onward.....

Almost everyone in my neighborhood is taking Global Warming seriously. They now have a reason to stop caring for their garden space. Front gardens of gravel, cacti, and burnt grass are taking the place of plants and grass. Although GW is a real threat there is another side to that coin. Our trees, our plants, and even our grass allows us to see yet another day without coughing and spluttering as our lungs struggle for healthy air. Sadly, there is not an overnight solution to GW but I am hopeful. I shall stick to my plans of trees, plants, and a little grassy spot until downsizing comes around (unlikely).

Our plant sales have been so successful that there are still many that have like minds and they continue to buy and plant. I really must try to propagate. I would say I don't have time but that would be a fib. I can be lazy about things in the garden that I don't want to do. Guilt may kick in as I find yet another reason not to try. I do, however, keep Green Acres, Annie's Annuals, etc. successful in their endeavors. My email is packed with seed and plant companies begging for my orders, and sometimes they succeed. Roses being my passion, I have to be very selective or soon we will have to fight our way through this jungle of mine. This year I have added OGR's to my list of loves (Old Garden Roses). My real passion is English roses by the late U.K. hybridizer, David Austin (RIP). Plants, other than roses, that are now favorites include abutilons, liriopie and acanthus (all the variegated ones). Next year a change may come my way. We shall see.

Enjoy your garden plans, try some propagation, and take time to smell the roses.... *Barbara*



Color in the Winter Garden



Grevillea lanigera

From Risë Ryan—

The plant on the left is called Grevillea lanigera (Woolly grevillea) and is low growing with sweet dusty pink clusters of flowers that bloom from winter to late spring. This grevillea can be grown from seed or from cuttings. It's hardy in a range of climate and soil conditions. Also drought and frost hardy but prefers a sunny position in the garden.

The plant below is called Banksia ericifolia. It sends up slim spires in a flashy gradation of autumn orange shades. As it matures, it grows fatter and deeper in color. These can be clipped and used as "pinecones" the following year.

I love these Australian plants for their ability to adapt to the heat, sun and lack of water in our summers; and then have the unexpected, explosive and distinctive color shades as fall sets in. Their soft branches brush your feet and arms as they grace my pathway to the front door.



Banksia ericifolia

From Cheryl McDonald—

Last winter, I took this photo of Carex testacea at the WPA Rock Garden. The orange, rusty color was a bright spot amongst the surrounding green foliage. I have one of these sedges nestled in a group of 'Elijah Blue' fescue in my back yard. The combination of orange blades with the icy blue tufts of fescue is quite eye-catching.

Camellia sasanqua, 'Yuletide' is a new addition to my garden. What a welcoming sight to see the combination of red petals with a bright, yellow center along our driveway during these gray winter days. The sasanqua camellias tolerate sun and drier soils. Blooms began in early fall and, hopefully, will continue until February.



Carex testacea



Camellia sasanqua

18th ANNUAL GARDENER'S MARKET

GROW LOCAL | SHOP LOCAL

**SATURDAY
MARCH 18, 2023
9 AM – 3 PM**

SHEPARD GARDEN & ARTS CENTER
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

We have a great lineup of returning favorite and new vendors bringing in some unusual plants and garden treasures. The proceeds of this event help fund the club's Grants Program, monthly speakers and community gardening projects.

If you use social media please post the event information and share with your friends.

NOON SPEAKER

Marlene Simon,
"The Plant Lady"
Horticulturalist
UC Davis Botanical Conservatory

MORNING SPEAKERS

Jesa David
Recycling Programs for Homeowners
JoEllen Arnold
Caring for Our Local Bats

Many volunteers are needed!

Watch your email for updates and volunteer sign-ups.

For questions, contact Lili Metzger:
lmetzger@wavecable.com;

Reminder: The Gardener's Market takes the place of our March meeting.



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SPPC Newsletter
2743 San Luis Court
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