

# The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club  Fall 2023



DAISY MAH

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



## 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:** VACANT

**Secretary:** Kathy Matsumoto & Linda Monroe

**Treasurer:** Marcia Leddy

### CONTACTS

**Grant Program:** Anita Clevenger

**Membership:** Carol Meininger

**Newsletter/E-Blasts:** Cheryl McDonald

**Plant Sales:** Risë Ryan

**Publicity/Website:** Linda Hax

**SG&AC Rep:** Barbara Lane-Piert

**Speakers:** Noelle Anderson & Terri Young

**Tour Coordinator:** VACANT

**Gardener's Market:** Lili Ann Metzger

**Propagation Advisors:** Daisy Mah & LaVille Logan

Send questions or comments to:  
[pres.sppc@gmail.com](mailto:pres.sppc@gmail.com)

### NEWSLETTER

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

### WHEN & WHERE?

Club meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month (except 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

Variegated oregano, Bidens, foxglove, pelargonium and Zinnia.

Photo: Daisy Mah

## Looking Ahead

**In case you missed it**, our September meeting was packed! Packed with members, guests, and Pat Smith's beautiful and inspiring images of Islamic gardens and architecture. September's "Back-to-School" night was an impressive start to our 2023-24 plant club season.

At this writing, we're gearing up for the Fall Plant Sale at "home" (aka "Shepard Garden & Arts Center"). Next up, is our October meeting, when speaker, Kevin Marini, will share what soil really is and how to enhance it for what you're growing (see article on page 3). Perfect timing since fall is the best time to plant all those plants you bought. After taking November off, we'll gather for a Holiday Potluck Lunch in December.

How do we manage to achieve all these enjoyable events? Well, with lots and lots of volunteers. So, how do we organize these events? Well, with hard-working committees and committee chairs. Okay, but then how do we figure out how all these pieces fit together? Well, with board officers and committee chairs sharing lots of ideas at monthly board meetings. It's a layered approach with board officers providing a solid foundation.

Officers are elected at May meetings, in even numbered years, to a two-year term. Between now and our May 2024 meeting, candidates for president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer will be recruited. The term begins on July 1, 2024. Keep in mind, without a solid layer of leadership, we run the risk of the SPPC collapsing.

Let's make sure this club continues for another 35 years!

*—Cheryl McDonald*

## Gardening Grants

### The 2024 Grant Application is now on our website!

The purpose of the Saul Wiseman Grants is to promote gardening and horticultural activities with an emphasis on education, service, or enhancement to our community. Non-profit groups, community groups and schools within the County of Sacramento are encouraged to apply. We'd like to reach out as widely as possible to diverse and inclusive groups. Please help us spread the word!

To download the 2024 Grants Application, simply go to the SPPC website ([www.sacplants.org/grants](http://www.sacplants.org/grants)) and download the application. Application deadline is January 12, 2024. Funding is awarded in February 2024, just in time for spring planting and gardening activities.



## OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING

### Kevin Marini "Nurturing Healthy Soil"

Thursday, October 26, 2023 • 7 p.m.  
Shepard Garden & Arts Center

In this day and age, the most important thing for home gardeners to grasp is what media ("soil" type) they are using to grow plants and how cultural practices in the garden relate to each type. Container mix, potting soil, soil conditioner, garden soil, raised bed mix, soilless mix, organic compost, and bulk soil are just some of the confusing names of materials that gardeners use. More and more home gardeners are turning away from planting in their native soils and buying soil type products instead. Let's discuss what soil really is, how to enhance it for what you're growing and define the content and uses for all these other types of bagged and bulk products.

Our speaker, Kevin Marini, started growing food in college and upon graduating with a degree in Ethnobotany, he worked for two years building school gardens and educating youth throughout the Oakland Unified School District. This amazing experience led to a commitment to teaching people about growing food and to an overseas adventure, learning to farm in the heart of Tuscany, Italy. Upon returning from Italy, Kevin became the Program Manager for the University of California Placer and Nevada Counties' Master Gardener program and has been for 21 years now. He has trained over two thousand Master Gardener volunteers up and down the state and teaches the public through workshops and speaking engagements. His areas of expertise are plant problem diagnosis, soils, vegetable gardening, composting, fruit trees, and, as a Certified Arborist, pruning and tree care.

## Patricia Carpenter's Seasonal Fall Ramble

November 5, 2023  
9 a.m.–1 p.m.

[Register here](#) for the event.

You are invited to enjoy Patricia's native garden on a typical cool fall day. The garden, a secluded 1-acre wild escape on the slough, is located west of Davis. Started in 2005, it now features about 400 species and cultivars of California native plants. Visit [Patricia's Garden Ambassador profile](#) to learn more about this garden, access a map, view a plant list, and take a virtual tour!

[MIRIDAE MOBILE PLANT NURSERY](#) will be here again.

Highlights:

- Fall color and growth.
- Wildflowers germinating. Fall planting!
- Observe seasonal maintenance, seed collecting, and pest control.

Stop by any time between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm RAIN or SHINE for the self-guided garden ramble. Maps available for use onsite.

Optional short orientation and Q&A gathering with Patricia at 10 a.m. and 12 noon. We will meet near the check-in table.

Although masks are optional, please respect distancing and mask wearing of other visitors.

Sturdy shoes advised. No dogs, please. Composting toilet available.

You are welcome to bring a lunch or snack. The non-native garden will be open to view as well.

For location map, use this [link](#).

## Looking for an unexpectedly fascinating garden and park to visit?

**By Caru Bowns**

Consider the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Yes, GR MI!

After reading a NYT article in 2022 about the completion of Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park's newly designed Welcome Center and galleries, my interest was peaked.

The Center is the threshold to redesigned English perennial gardens, a five story conservatory of tropical and desert plants, a children's garden, a Japanese gardens and other destinations carved out of 158 acres of Southern Michigan farm and woodlands. Referred to as a "campus", the gardens and park are designed to be inclusively accessible with wheel chair accessible walks and tram rides.

We lucked out with early overcast weather and it being the first week of school. In seven hours (with a break for lunch at the Garden restaurant), we covered on foot the Welcome Center indoor galleries, the perennial gardens, the Conservatory, the Piazza, and the Sculpture Park. Well worth the travel and visit!

(In May, Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park was recognized by USA Today readers as one of the nation's 10 top sculpture parks.)



# Stan, The Blog Man



## Sad Plant

The photo above is that of a yellow Abutilon. Recently, it was a beautiful plant. In fact, it is the mother plant for cuttings. Well, LaVille butchered it—but for good reason. You see, I had been watching this plant and was wondering why the soil surface was always damp. I stopped watering it, but the soil never dried out. When I finally decided to check the drainage hole, I found it completely blocked by a root that had gone through and into the ground below. It was this root that was supplying needed water for the plant. We figured that the roots remaining in the pot would be in really poor condition because a tremendous amount of water drained out. So LaVille removed most of the foliage to balance the loss of roots.

My suggestion to you is that you not place pots directly on soil. In time, roots will possibly grow through the drainage hole and eventually plug it. You can see in the photo that the pot is now resting on a tile. By the way, if you need tiles, I have some you can have.

**Stan, The Tile-Um-All Man**

## Blue Zones

Now here is a blog that is worth reading. LaVille and I recently watched “Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones” on Netflix. Blue Zones are areas of the world where people live much longer than average. If you watch the episodes, I think you will see how you could create your own personal Blue Zone. Plant clubs provide opportunities for you to interact in a social environment. For instance, you should see how the volunteers working at the Rock Garden are interacting. Sure they spend a lot of time every Thursday morning improving the garden, but at the same time they are conversing at the same time about all kinds of subjects. Social interaction and light physical work have been identified as important factors that lead to a longer life span.

So, I encourage you to take advantage of the different opportunities that the club provides for you to interact with others—get involved. How about joining another club that meets at the Shepard? I continue to be impressed with how happy people are that are involved with the Shepard. And being happy is another key to long life.

**Stan, The Happier Man**



Speaking of being happy—we just adopted two sibling kittens. What a joy they bring to our home! We strongly recommend this pursuit.



## A Safer Spray

Here is an herbicide that is safe to use in your garden—vinegar. Now, table vinegar won't work. It has a concentration of 4-5%. You need to buy 30% vinegar which you will find at Home Depot or Lowes. The thing is, you can reduce the percentage to 20% and it will still be very effective. Dilute the 30% by adding 1 part water to 2 parts vinegar and you will get 20%. Susan, another Rock Garden volunteer, and I have been testing vinegar spray at the Garden and have found it to be deadly on everything but Bermuda grass. You will find that one application will kill weeds in a very short period of time. For more detailed information, check out this University of Maryland Extension [web page](#).



**Stan, The Spraying Man**

For more of Stan's blogs, visit our website ([www.sacplants.org/blogs](http://www.sacplants.org/blogs)). Blogs are subject indexed.

# Propagation: Thoughts on Seeds and Cuttings

By Daisy Mah



**Some seeds**, such as those collected in the wilds, are often more difficult as they are adapted to very exact specifications. Over time, if the plant is cultivated and its seed collected and sown, some of the offspring will be more adapted and vigorous to specific conditions while those less “fit” are less likely to survive. Some seeds take a year or longer to germinate, patience is a must.

After the seeds are sown or cuttings stuck in perlite, it is vital that they be placed where they are protected from cold or intense sun. They can be outside, but in a protected area with some afternoon shade until they are germinated or in the case of cuttings, rooted. It is important to give seedlings more light as they get stronger or they will be lanky, leggy and not healthy. I often times keep the open mesh flats over them to keep pests away and also to provide some shade. Sometimes there is a conflict in that they might need protection from marauding dogs, cats and squirrels, but could use more sun. It is a dilemma that I often am confronted with during the drab, overcast days of winter. It is critical to keep the moisture level even. In the summer, that could mean a daily thorough drench and in the winter, a sprinkle here and there.

When making cuttings, keep track of the direction of the stem as they should be placed in the perlite with the lower part in the soil. When there are no leaves to guide you, it is sometimes trickier. The stems usually taper from the base, but not always. The noses also create a small crease across the stem with the bud facing up. I usually line up the cuttings in the proper direction before sticking them in the soil medium.

Finally, based on results without much use of fertilizers, the plants are small and have less growth. I prefer to use organic fertilizer such as kelp or fish meal. If the plants are not grown to look lush and salable, they can survive without it if they are planted as soon as they are developed.

## Tips for Growing from Seed

### Seed storage

Keep dry and cool

### Seed depth

Smaller seeds—surface sow (don't cover)

General rule of thumb, bury large seeds shallowly, not more than ¼"

### Hard protective seed coating

Soak in boiling water, smoke-infused papers are useful for seeds that germinate in aftermath of a fire

### Germination

Plant seed according to temperatures recommended on seed packets. Many seeds germinate at 70°-75°, while some need a winter chilling

Place newly sown seeds in shade, out of the hot sun

Once germination takes place, introduce more light.

Transplant to larger accommodations once it develops true leaves during warm season—best when cool (morning or dusk)

CA native annuals germinate through the fall/winter

### Soil

EB Stone Seed Starter mix

Horticultural perlite—Sunshine 4 Aggregate Mix

### Soil moisture

Slightly damp soil—dry soil repels water

Use a water wand with a rose to gently sprinkle

### Tools

Best transplanting tool—dinner fork

Clean 4" pots, no more than two types of seeds planted in furrows

Labeling is critical. Hydroponics store offer thin, 4" labels for propagating. Nurseries tend to offer bigger, thicker, more expensive labels for garden use.

## Daisy's Favorite Seed Companies

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds

Johnny's Selected Seeds

Botanical Interest

Renee's Garden Seeds

J.L. Hudson, Seedsman

Seedhunt

John Scheepers Kitchen

Garden Seeds

# Seed Libraries

by Diana Morris

## What is a seed library?

In general, seed libraries are repositories for local gardeners to share herb, ornamental, and edible seeds housed in local libraries. The old physical card catalogues can be repurposed to hold alphabetized, labeled, packaged seeds.

## Why have a seed library?

Reasons vary from library to library and area to area, urban, rural, city—all have different goals but generally organizers aim to expand access to crops and educate the public about the many aspects of gardening. Other objectives include creating locally adapted seed varieties, developing a network of seed savers, respond proactively to climate change or loss due to GMOs and preserve genetic diversity, save money, and reduce our carbon footprint. Some of the benefits of local seed libraries are: encourage reading, lifelong learning, meet basic needs of patrons and the community at large, and increase library use. Additional goals are access to fresh produce, teaching self-sufficient skills, create opportunities for physical health and education.

## Who maintains the seed library?

Librarians, master gardeners, garden clubs, non-profits, school groups, and caring gardeners. Supporters schedule workshops and talks to educate and expand gardening knowledge among participants.

## How do seed libraries work?

Most seed libraries have similar rules and requirements but may vary from local library to local library. Most libraries specify non-GMO seeds and some promote heritage seeds. But generally gardeners “borrow” seeds and promise to let some portion of the plants go to seed at harvest time and return these seeds to the library for next year’s crops.

The possibilities are endless as all gardeners can relate. Some groups form community gardens near the library, children’s sensory gardens, grow plants specific to needs—a pizza garden with basil, garlic, tomatoes, and more.



In our Sacramento area the following libraries offer seed cataloguing:

**Colonial Heights** (pictured at left)  
4799 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento

**Marian O. Lawrence**  
1000 Caroline Ave., Galt

**Rio Linda**  
6724 6th St., Rio Linda

**Robbie Waters Pocket-Greenhaven**  
7335 Gloria Drive, Sacramento

**Southgate**  
6132 66th Ave., Sacramento

For more information, visit the [Seed Libraries](#) page on the Sacramento Public Library website.

# Save the Date

## OCTOBER

### SPPC Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, October 7

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sunday, October 8

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Shepard Garden & Arts Center

### October General Meeting

Thursday, October 26

7 p.m.

Kevin Marini

*Nurturing Healthy Soil*

(see page 3 for details)

Shepard Garden & Arts Center

## NOVEMBER

### Patricia Carpenter’s Fall Ramble

Sunday, November 5

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

(see page 3 for details)

**No SPPC meeting  
in November**

*Happy Thanksgiving!*

## DECEMBER

### Holiday Potluck

Friday, December 15

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Shepard Garden & Arts Center

## JANUARY

**2024 Saul Wiseman Grants  
Application—  
due January 12, 2024**



## The Perennial Post

SPPC Newsletter  
2743 San Luis Court  
Sacramento, CA 95818

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**Save the Date**



*Acer japonicum 'Dancing Peacock'*

DAISY MAH