

The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club 🍁 Fall 2025



CHERYL McDONALD

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: OPEN

Vice-President: Cheryl McDonald

Secretary: Catherine Cardozo

Treasurer: Marcia Leddy

CONTACTS

Facebook/Gardener's Market:

Lili Ann Metzger

Grants Program: Anita Clevenger

Member Open Gardens: Lee Perrone

Membership: Linda Monroe

Newsletter: Cheryl McDonald

Plant Sales: Risë Ryan

SG&AC Rep: Barbara Lane

Speakers: Lori Ann Asmus

Propagation Advisors: Daisy Mah & LaVille Logan

Website: Weston Monroe

Send questions or comments to:

president.sppc@gmail.com

PERENNIAL POST

December 10 is the due date to submit a garden-related article for the 2026 winter 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 July, August and November) 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

Fall tableau in the WPA Rock Garden. For more information about these fall blooming plants, see page 4.



SPPC October Meeting

Thursday, October 23 • 7 p.m.

*Creating a Dynamic Perennial Garden
with Succulents and Cactus*

Speaker: Kyle Johnson

Kyle Johnson is a geologist by profession whose passion for rocks and minerals significantly influences his garden design. His garden is known for raised mounds combining thoughtfully arranged succulents and perennials that are climate resilient. His love for plants started at a young age, but it wasn't until 2018 after purchasing a home in Sacramento, did the hobby take a new life. As an avid succulent and cacti collector he experiments non-stop with plant material in the garden testing their heat and hardiness limit. He is a "Cramscaper" placing as many plants as he can into the garden. He is partial to aloes, which adds texture and flower impact during the winter season. Kyle is a self-taught generalist plantsman who learns by trial and error.

Mini Plant Sale

Also at our October meeting we will have a mini plant sale. Plants we expect to bring include:

- * Bulbs — Daffodils, starflower, Ithuriel's spear and harlequin flower.
- * Perennials — Cigar plant.
- * California natives — Penstemon, aster, and sage.
- * Herbs — Oregano and thyme.

Our Spring sale in April 2026 will feature many more types of plants.



Ithuriel's spear



Open Garden Day at Confluence Gardens

Saturday, October 11, 2025

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Enter at 1108 Azusa Street
Sacramento CA 95833

Where Community Grows, and Plants are Kin

SPPC member, **Judy Tretheway**, is inviting you to visit *Confluence Gardens*, her South Natomas garden, where more than an acre of medicinal herbs are grown. At this garden, volunteer gardeners plant the seeds of change they want to see in the world—respecting the plants, working together as a community, and sharing the bounty.

Open Garden Day activities include sipping some garden-grown teas, making your own tea blend, harvesting some hops or Roselle, and garbling some herbs. Take the "scratch & sniff" tour to love on all the herbal goodness in your teas and tinctures.

Tours times are 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and Noon. Join at anytime.

To receive Judy's newsletter or to ask questions about the event reach out to judytre@gmail.com.

Save the Date

2025

OCTOBER

SPPC October General Meeting

Thursday, October 23
7 p.m.

*Creating a Dynamic Perennial
Garden with Succulents
and Cactus*

Speaker: Kyle Johnson

Meeting includes:

DAISY'S HALF-DOZEN

Learn about seasonal perennials
along with an informative
handout.

STAN, THE TOOL MAN

"Donate-what-you-wish"
for garden tool, scissor and
kitchen knife sharpening;
container drilling.

TOOLS & TREASURES TABLE

"Donate-what-you-wish"
for gently used,
garden-related items.

REFRESHMENTS

Delicious assortment of
goodies, coffee and tea to
enjoy during our break time.

NOVEMBER

**No SPPC meeting
in November**

Happy Thanksgiving!

DECEMBER

Holiday Potluck

Friday, December 12
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

SHEPARD GARDEN & ARTS CENTER

3330 McKinley Blvd.
Sacramento CA 95816



2026 SAUL WISEMAN GARDENING GRANTS PROGRAM

Help spread the word . . .

The Saul Wiseman Grants Program promotes gardening and horticultural activities with an emphasis on education and service to our diverse community. Non-profit groups, community groups and schools within the County of Sacramento and the City of West Sacramento are eligible to apply.

- * Applicants may request up to \$1200.
- * Smaller projects are encouraged.
- * Partial grants may be awarded.
- * Funds are awarded in February, just in time for spring planting and gardening activities.
- * Electronic applications must be RECEIVED NO LATER than **January 16, 2026**.
- * Grants contact:
grants.sppc@gmail.com

The 2026 grant application is available on our web site:
sacplants.org/grants



Late Season Display in the WPA Rock Garden

by Daisy Mah

Sulphur cosmos—*Cosmos sulphureus*, can grow up to 7', but in the Sacramento area, 4'-5' is thankfully more common. Plants offered at nurseries and seed packets have been developed to grow to about 2'. The tall, unadulterated version is passed along by fellow gardeners which is how I acquire my seed. A native to Mexico and Central America, this Cosmos is most available in orange, yellow, but also red and now blush. Though adaptable, it grows best in sun, with good drainage and moderate water. Since the Pre-Columbian era, it has been used as a natural dye. In 1996, the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council declared it invasive. Their flowers supports bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. From Greek *kosmos*, beautiful, and *sulphureus*, yellow.

Mexican bush sage—If you go back to the 1980s, the Mexican bush sage, *Salvia leucantha* was rarely offered at nurseries and was vulnerable to frost damage. With origins in subtropical forests of central and eastern Mexico, it grows in sun although it prefers some protection from the hotter part of the day along with moderate water. It is cut to the ground in late winter after frost season has passed, grows to 6-7' but can be kept smaller with routine trimming. Poor air circulation, overwatering and crowding can lead to disease and pest problems. Dramatic, velvety white flowers and purple bracts attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. The latest is an all-white selection. From Latin *salvus*, safe referring to its medicinal properties, Greek *leucos*, white and *anthos*, flower.

Amaranth—Without fail, the amaranth cloaked in red with a feathery texture, makes an annual late season appearance in the WPA Rock Garden. It started 20 plus years ago with a few seedlings from the late Barbara Worl, bibliophile, eclectic gardener, photographer and rosarian of old roses based in the San Francisco peninsula. Cultivated some 800 years ago by the Aztecs, it is now grown in many parts of the world. Besides an ornamental, some strains of *Amaranthus sp.* are grown as a summer substitute for spinach, are offered at farmers' markets and Asian grocery stores. Seeds are available at health food stores as a source of protein, calcium and amino acids. It thrives in heat, tolerates drought and supports birds and pollinators. However, in parts of the US and Canada, it is considered an agricultural pest. Genus is derived from Greek *arantos* meaning immortal.

Special Guest is Set Free

By Daisy Mah

Although volunteers weeded and deadheaded, it wasn't just another Thursday at the WPA Rock Garden. We were expecting a special guest—a male, Red-shouldered Hawk to be released near, where in April, it had fallen from its nest. “No. 27” was nurtured to health by Breanna Martinico and colleagues from the UC Davis, California Raptor Center (CRC), and given the life skills needed to be wild. An open stretch of lawn dotted with trees was chosen for a safe, unobstructed “flyway” but first, a pair of Cooper’s Hawks spotted by trained eyes needed to pass.

Once safe to travel, a towel blocking the light to keep him calm and quiet, was removed from the carrier. Carrier was unlatched, bird bounced out, took a moment to extend his wings and tail feathers (a stylish black and white display), hovered close to the ground, then cried out and flew off to happy applause. He soared, perched momentarily, then continued to soar further and higher. The whereabouts of “No. 27” will be tracked by CRC to further the understanding of these raptors. In true Rock Garden fashion, the occasion was celebrated with dessert—*Birdseed Cookies*.



Birdseed Cookies*

- 1 large egg
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter (or substitute vegan butter), softened and quartered
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup unbleached all-purpose flour (or substitute gluten free flour)
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup golden raisins
- 2 tablespoons millet

Directions

15 minutes before baking, place rack in center of oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Lightly butter cookie sheet or line with parchment paper.

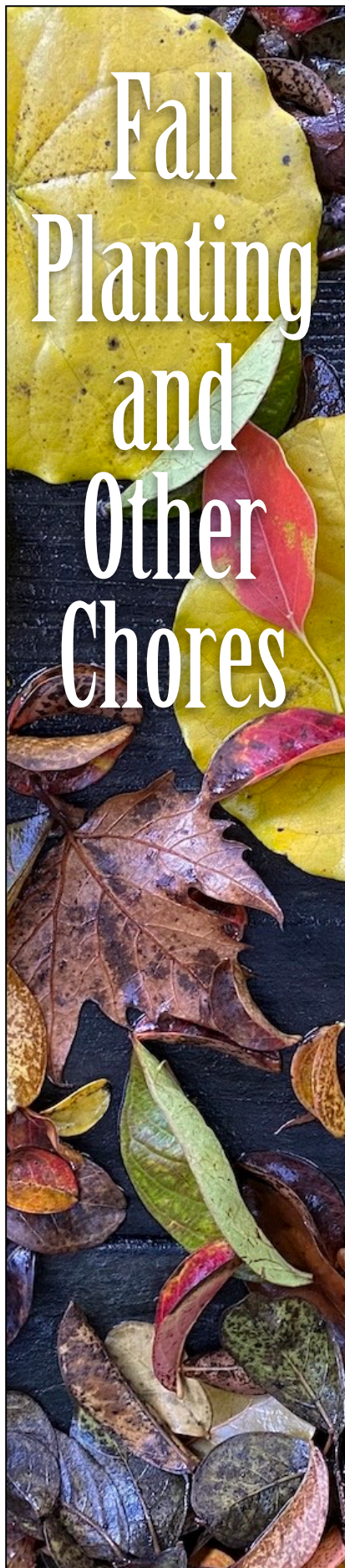
Mix egg, both sugars, butter, maple syrup, vanilla, baking soda and salt for 30 seconds in food processor or mixer. Pause to scrape down the sides of mixing bowl. Spoon flour onto batter in circle, then add oats, raisins and millet. Mix to combine but don't over mix.

Drop batter by tablespoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheets, spacing cookies 2 inches apart. Bake until golden brown, 10-15 minutes. Let cool for 1 minute on baking sheet, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Makes about 28, 3-inch cookies.

*aka Oatmeal Millet Cookies
from *Fast and Flavorful*, Vol. 2
by Abby Mandel





Here are a few fall gardening plans and chores from members:

LORRAINE VAN KEKERIX

Fall is the best time for planting most perennial plants. The soil is warm and the days are getting shorter so there are fewer hours of intense sunshine. With irrigation, the perennial root system will get as large as possible before it heats up next summer. A large root system will help the plants take up more nutrients and water to survive our hot summers.

It's also a great time to seed annual wildflowers so they can germinate and grow during the rainy season.

This year my planting plans are different. My teenage, indoor cats just got a catio. It's a structure that lets them enjoy the outdoors while they and the birds stay safe. They are thrilled and spending 12 hours a day enjoying the outdoors!

I have been researching plants that are not toxic to cats and can handle the harsh conditions around the catio. Very little sunshine in the winter, sun almost all day in mid summer. I'm adding a large raised bed nearby with drought tolerant perennials that attract pollinators. The cats will have plenty of pollinator "action" and colors to enjoy.

CATHERINE CARDOZO

Once the temperatures remain below 90(!), my biggest fall project will be to dig out my yarrow bed that's been taken over by Bermuda grass (BG). Ugh. Once I (hopefully) get out ALL of the BG, I'll replant any of the yarrow plants I'm able to save. I've been itching to do it all summer, but as a fellow plant club member pointed out, the yarrow plants I'd save would probably be too stressed by the summer heat to survive, so it was best to wait.

Smaller projects will be to transplant some potted plants into the ground, and taking out the spent summer vegetable plants like tomatoes from my raised beds, and then adding more compost, etc. to prepare the beds for winter crops, like garlic, beets, lettuce, and snow peas...

I usually wait until January for rose pruning, and February-March for my other perennials.

BARBARA LANE

FALL PLANS? I really didn't have any (I thought) other than the usual chore of trying to contain all the overgrown plants and doing a little 'trimming' but then I remembered: In June I ordered hardy cyclamen for the 'white garden' and giant Allium for hiding amidst the roses in the front garden. Now I have taken a look at my order and found I ordered in July also. Tree Lily bulbs and more Allium. What was I thinking? Just checked the delivery mail date (Early October) so I guess I will be busy planting bulbs and plants. (Last year I said: "no more bulbs"). What happened? Did those darn catalogues hypnotize me? I just noticed some seed packets...sweet peas. Do I plant those in fall? Maybe I do. A veg patch in huge baskets (no bending) lined with grow bags... potatoes (spring planting) peas and maybe a couple of other winter veg. We shall see. I was going to cut back my massive abutilons but remembered that frost will do the job for me (if we have frost this winter) so that is on the 'back burner'. Now for my coffee and dreams of finding a way to plant those darn bulbs without bending over too much.

CHERYL MCDONALD

There's an old adage about tending plants that I say over and over to myself when my patience is wearing thin:

The first year they sleep,
the second year they creep,
the third year they leap.

Finally, the plants in my still fairly new, front yard landscaping, designed and installed in 2022, have leapt! I now see where I can add more plants—a few more “Lowfast” cotoneasters, swapping out Watsonia bulbs for a tall, burgundy-colored Cordyline and transplanting some daylilies here and there.

The backyard is another story, it's a bit of a remodeling project. I don't know what will turn up once I start digging. Leaky drip irrigation, anyone? Lots of clean-up, plant additions, plant removals, and dividing daylilies.

What I'm most looking forward to this fall, is the return of the sandhill cranes and hearing their magnificent sound overhead while my hands are busy working in the soil.

RISÉ RYAN

Instead of laboring over the almost 600 plants she grew last year for the SPPC, ones that would have to all be timed perfectly and groomed for a two-day presentation, **Emma Ahart**, is instead able to focus on tending her own vegetable garden. In addition to this, there are three other gardens around her area that she has planted and cared for.

As of this date, she has started:

Broccoli: Eight varieties (from 57 days to 100 days to maturity)

Cauliflower: Five varieties (from 50 days to 130 days to maturity)

Cabbage: Seven varieties (from 69 days to 96 days to maturity)

Also planted in the beds are Chinese cabbage and kale. Currently, lettuce and bok choy are germinating to be planted later. There will be one more successive planting.

The goal is to have a staggered harvest that can extend the season, even with the uncertainties of the weather. Some of the varieties tolerate heat better, but if it remains too hot, they may not sweeten properly. If it gets too cold too early, they may freeze. But by staggering germination, planting times and varieties, she maximizes the opportunity to share an abundant harvest with many.

The soil is amended with cow paddies from her brother's farm, steer manure and 15-15-15 slow release fertilizer. Drip lines are buried alongside each row so that even in the 99 degree heat we recently had, they can remain healthy and protected. In the three weeks since the first planting, as shown in the photos, the plants have more than tripled in size from their initial six-pack.

All germination, potting, planting dates and mapped out beds are precisely documented in her yearly notes to ensure crop rotation and to monitor the success of the numerous varieties. We are so fortunate to have her experience to model gardening success. Thank you Emma!



Daylily, now divided and planted



Planted beds



Six-pack seedlings



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2743 San Luis Court
Sacramento, CA 95818

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