

# The Perennial Post

Newsletter of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club ☀ Summer 2026



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## 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.

### 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.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS FOR 2026

September 24

October 22

In addition to interesting speakers, our meetings include:

#### DAISY'S HALF-DOZEN

Daisy Mah, brings her choice of six blooming plants 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.

### ON THE COVER

At the center of this colorful collection of perennials in Cheryl McDonald's front yard, is Uruguayan Firecracker Plant, a hummingbird magnet. The surrounding plants are Burgundy Cordyline, Verbena 'De la Mina', dwarf Kniphofia and Verbena, 'Stormburst'.

## New Term Begins

A big-hearted welcome to our new club president, **Wendy Banks**. For those of you who volunteer at our Gardener's Market, Annual Spring Plant Sale and attend our monthly meetings, Wendy is a familiar face. She is an enthusiastic volunteer, loves our club and wants it to thrive (see her message on page 3). Wendy joins other board officers—**Catherine Cardozo**, our awesome secretary and **Marcia Leddy**, our tireless treasurer for the 2026-28 term. We are so grateful to you all!

Other changes:

- **Lili Metzger** has stepped down from organizing the club's Gardener's Market. Over the years, under her leadership, she guided the Gardener's Market into a professional and very successful event. Thank you so much, Lili! We are grateful to members, **Linda Monroe** and **Terri Sennett** for taking the reins for 2027.
- **The updated roster will be sent out at the end of July.** Beginning next year, the Membership Chair position will become available. This is a great opportunity for someone who is interested in taking on a leadership role and helping to support our members. The incoming Membership Chair will receive mentorship and guidance throughout the first year.
- **Risë Ryan** is cutting back her involvement in the Spring Plant Sale. Her sales and merchandising knowledge created a fun and profitable event. We've learned so much from Risë! **Lorraine Van Kekerix** will continue focusing her expertise on the growers and plant inventory. **Janet Sager** has stepped up to help organize the sale. She and Lorraine are looking for an additional person to assist with organizing.
- **The Shepard Center and the City of Sacramento have entered into a six-month trial lease agreement, which began July 1.** The goal of this agreement is to stabilize the cost of rent for the 25 clubs that call the Shepard Garden & Arts Center their home. There will no longer be a building monitor. Each club is required to designate a couple of members to follow the protocol for opening and closing the building. Room set-up and custodial duties will be handled by a separate cleaning service.



MARIA SCHIFFLER

### IN MEMORIAM Fran Clarke

At our June Potluck, Fran Clarke's dear friend, Pam Bone, shared the sad news that Fran had passed. Fran was a well-respected and long-time member of the Perennial Plant Club.

She passed peacefully, while working in her front yard in the shade of her beloved redwood and strawberry trees, surrounded by the native plants and perennials she so enjoyed and nurtured.

Fran's service will be held on Sunday, August 2 at 2:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Society, 2424 Sierra Blvd., Sacramento.

# Hello from Your New President!



New SPPC President, Wendy Banks, volunteering at our Spring Plant Sale.

I am thrilled to have been chosen for the job of President of the Sacramento Perennial Plant Club. I am truly grateful to have the support of those past presidents that are still with us, but also the esteemed board and our membership.

It is intimidating stepping into the shoes of those who have held this office before me. I admittedly worried that I might not be the best candidate and I fretted that I might make mistakes that would affect all of you. I share these vulnerabilities and fears with all of you in hope that those that are held back from volunteering by these same feelings and insecurities might realize they are not alone.

I'll be blunt, this club needs people to step forward to keep our club and its tax-exempt

status alive. Do not let these feelings stop you from raising your hand, signing your name or reaching out to me, our board or committee chairs to ask how you can help. Do not give into the idea that there is someone more qualified or that someone else will volunteer. If we had enough volunteers, I would not be here pleading with all of you.

It doesn't matter if you don't know how to do the job. I didn't either when I agreed to step forward, but that's the beauty of all the people who have been here for years longer than you. They are here to help you, whether it's to give reassurance, advice or guide you with their wisdom and decades of experience. All you need is willingness, some time and to trust in your fellow members to support you. Let us support you in taking that step and one day you're going to be doing the exact same for the next generation of volunteers.

I'm always available for questions about volunteering or if you'd like to share suggestions or concerns. I'm happy to make the time to speak with you on the phone, email or even to meet for coffee.

Let us move forward into the future together.

**Wendy Banks**

SPPC President

## September General Meeting

**Thursday, September 24, 2026  
7 p.m.**

Shepard Garden & Arts Center  
3330 McKinley Boulevard,  
Sacramento

***River-Friendly Landscaping  
and the City of Sacramento's  
Newly Expanded Plant List***

**Speaker: William Granger**

Water Conservation Coordinator  
for the City of Sacramento



Our speaker for September, William Granger, has been the water conservation coordinator for the city of Sacramento for 13 years. Among other things, he is certified as a qualified water efficient landscaper (QWEL) and has been working in water efficiency jobs throughout the state for 32 years.

He's coming to speak to our group about the city's newly expanded plant list, which uses information from the water use classification of landscape species (WUCOLS), and often focuses on native species. The list is used as an educational outreach tool, as well as to qualify people for the turf replacement rebate.

It should be a very useful and informative evening, with plenty of time for questions.

# Generosity

Recently, the Perennial Plant Club has been the beneficiary of thoughtful and generous donations:

**Woodlake Garden Club**—\$150 for our grants program

**Pioneer Garden Club**—\$50 for the WPA Rock Garden

## Wayne Martinson

Prior to our April meeting, I learned that our club had a letter stashed away in the office and to please pick it up. At our meeting, the building monitor handed me the envelope.

Later, at home, I opened the envelope and saw a check made out to the Perennial Plant Club for \$500 from the estate of Wayne Martinson.

Wayne was a long-time member of the SPPC and had a deep fondness for our club. He served as club vice-president and SG&AC representative for a number of years. Wayne was multi-talented and a dear, sweet man, loved by many.



## Saul Wiseman Grants Program Supporting 2026 Grant Recipients

### George Washington Carver School of Arts and Sciences “Chili Cook-Off”



A bittersweet evening was spent at George Washington Carver's final "Chili-Cook-Off" on May 14. Due to financial difficulties, the Waldorf-inspired high school will close. This being their last "Cook-Off" they invited outside vendors to make the event as big as possible. In addition to having a booth at the event, we provided them with a succulent arrangement for their silent auction. The students were able to complete their garden project, "Revitalizing Carver's Shakespeare Garden"—a garden space for students and the community to enjoy.

### Elliot Ranch Elementary School “Annual Open School and Garden Event”

Members of our grants committee attended Elliot Ranch Elementary School's "Annual Open School and Garden Event" on May 20. This project engaged 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in weekly hands-on gardening activities over a 12-week period, working in the gardens and completing student journals, recipe cards and garden signage.



# GARDENING BY THE BOOK

Reviewed by Catherine Cardozo

## Color Echoes

by Pamela J. Harper

I always enjoyed looking through this book when I'd visit my mother in Carmel Valley. Tucked among a gazillion other beautiful books on plants and gardens, I'd invariably choose this one, curl up on the couch or lounge chair, and spend many happy hours studying the photographs of plant groupings that illustrate the book's title.

This is easy to do, as the photos comprise more space than the prose, and illustrate the concept of color echoes and what a difference the placement of plants can make in the overall feeling of a garden. It is also a fun and informative read.

Amusing and witty turns of phrase are interspersed throughout. For example, instead of simply saying plants don't always cooperate with your plans, she writes: "Having disappeared from the spot I'd prepared for it with loving care, it turned up again mingled with the violet flower spikes of *Salvia* 'May Night,' looking, I must say, rather smug at having pulled off the perfect color echo."

The book is 220 pages long, not counting the index. She describes in four chapters the idea of understanding and using color when designing or editing one's garden. The book opened my eyes to what can make plant groupings pleasing versus just a hodgepodge of plants.

**Chapter 1** is about the language of color and is the most scientific of the four. She goes into some detail about the Royal Horticultural Society's Horticultural Color Chart—an attempt to chart all colors that are found in plants. She explains that while she had known the "how" of garden color, she hadn't known the "why," and believed that delving into that aspect had broadened her perspective and thus helped her to be more open to experimentation with plants and their placement.

**Chapter 2** is about exploring color echoes, and the artistry involved in designing one's garden based on

that concept. She explains that color echoes can also be created between plants and surrounding tree bark, leaves, or berries, rocks, path material, fences, garden ornaments and even a house's color. She warns that some echoes can be fleeting, lasting only for as long as one or more of the plants are in bloom, or they may change over the course of a season or a year, as plants mature or leaves change color with the seasons.

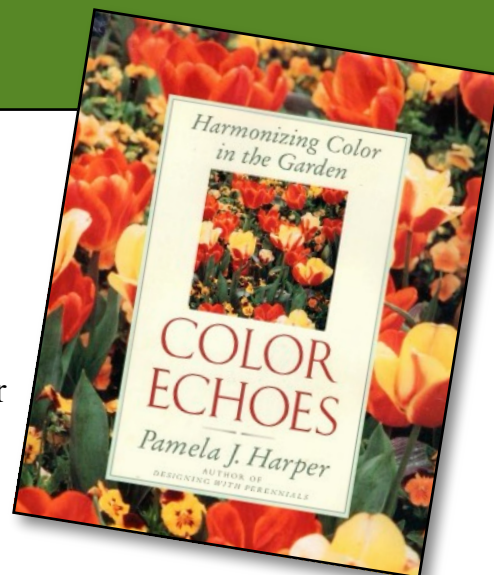
**Chapter 3** is organized by specific color groups, i.e., purples, grays, white and cream, blue, greens, yellow, red, scarlet, orange and golden yellow. This chapter focuses a lot on integrating foliage, whether perennial, shrub or tree, with other plants. She emphasizes that using plants with different textures and/or structures can also contribute to an overall pleasing effect.

**Chapter 4** focuses on two specific echoes borders she created in her garden over time, "in intentional pursuance of the echoes theme." She describes how "they developed, starting with what inspired them and ending with recent or intended changes."

I believe this book would be appreciated by a wide audience, from experienced gardeners to beginners, and gardeners like me who like to try different plants just because they like the look of them. It's a good book to read whether one is designing or re-designing one's garden, making a new bed, or incorporating new plants into an existing bed or garden.

Note: Sadly, I just discovered that Ms. Harper passed away on July 14, 2023.

[www.juniperlevelbotanicgarden.org/another-giant-says-goodbye/](http://www.juniperlevelbotanicgarden.org/another-giant-says-goodbye/)





## Garden Musings

# A Year of a Gardener's Dream ... so far ...

By Barbara Lane

**I** am watching the squirrels chomping away at our Asian pears ... How dare they? Never mind, this gardener is so happy with this gardening year that I will forgive all wildlife (even the black widow spider that liked the look of the freckles on my arm}

This year, so far, has been wonderful. No hard freeze, a cool, rainy spring, and a warm but not hot early summer. Gardeners have had so many decisions to make. What shall we give away to a new home? Add to the compost heap? Review our catalogue choices? Visit the garden center?... phew! I really must remember to learn more about propagation. My seeds don't listen to me, and even the plants struggle. The weeds are having a great time. (Hmm, maybe I can convince non-gardeners that they are really 'natives'). My credit card is beginning to bend... (Groceries and garden supplies?) ... I must remember that I shall have to pay that darn card one day...

**Roses are usually at the top of my list to order.**

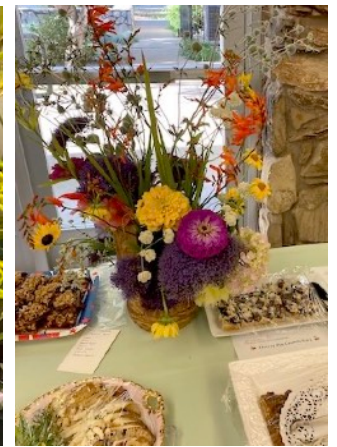
I love the English roses by the hybridizer David Austin of the U.K. I am disappointed by the newer ones. I highly recommend one newer rose: 'Gabriel Oak'. She is superb in my garden pot. An older rose (much older) by DA, 'Gertrude Jekyll', was ordered and I love it. For years, I delayed for fear of the 'dreaded' fungal disease that she supposedly has. I took a chance, and in my garden is disease-free. Onward to my other loves... like soooo many of my garden friends, I have discovered succulents and cacti. They are perfect for our hot but humid free climate. I tend to 'pack them in'. I just borrowed a book from the library about them, and it was so easy peasy with wonderful pictures. I already had books on that topic, but this was a special one. On to Amazon I went and ordered, and away to

the thrift shop or garden clubs went the older ones. My lilies grew as tall as a small tree and lasted in the garden for such a long time. I shall order a few more. I have never been a successful veggie gardener and always struggled until this year. Against my better judgment, I saw, in a very low-cost grocery store, tomato and pepper plants. I had good intentions of buying from our sale but something called 'rain' got in the way. My tomatoes have been the best, the very best, that I have ever had... I have heard that great things come in small packages, and this year, my tiny veggie plants are amazing. Short, fat, and tasty. Darn, I didn't keep the names. I have been wondering about the soil I have used. The only soil I had was beneficial for 'roses'. Perhaps tomatoes love that soil too. I believe tomatoes and roses are related. Correct me if I am wrong.

**I just looked at my phone and noticed the temps are going to rise considerably.** I better end this rant and get the air conditioner on. The mozzies\* are out, and my darn spray just isn't doing its job. I won't complain, or try not to. Our pals over the pond have really been suffering. I bet the air conditioning companies are happy campers as people rush to have air added to their homes. I fear global warming is not a myth. People 'in charge' better listen.

**Enjoy the rest of your summer, stay hydrated, cool and happy.** I think I will take a trip to my favorite small gardens by Lake Merritt. A great escape. Perhaps there is room in my favorite hostels by our beautiful ocean fronts. There are great garden centers down there too... See you all at our next garden club meeting... I can't wait..... Barbara.

\*Sorry... still have British sayings: mosquitoes....



# June Salad Potluck

June 25, 2026





## The Perennial Post

SPPC Newsletter  
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Sacramento, CA 95818

### Inside this issue ...

New Term Begins

Hello from Your  
New President

Who Does What?

Generosity

Supporting 2026 Grant  
Recipients

Gardening by the Book

A Year of a Gardener's  
Dream ... So Far

Potluck Photos



*Helianthus annuus 'Chocolate Cherry'*

CHERYL McDONALD