



Sacramento Perennial Plant Club Newsletter

SEPT/OCT 2013

FOUNDED IN 1988 • CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

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SEPTEMBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

Daisy Mah

Tour of WPA Rock Garden and Potluck Picnic

THURSDAY — SEPTEMBER 26, 2013 • 4:30 P.M.

WPA ROCK GARDEN, WILLIAM LAND PARK

We have a change for our September meeting. Instead of meeting at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, we will meet at the WPA Rock Garden at 4:30 p.m. to celebrate Daisy Mah's retirement from the City of Sacramento. Daisy started working for the city in 1980 and since 1986 has worked at William Land Park. We will tour this lovely garden with Daisy. Afterwards we will have a potluck picnic. **PLEASE BRING A SALAD** for the potluck. The club will provide plates, silverware, napkins, water and dessert. Join us for an autumn evening in the garden to thank Daisy for giving Sacramento a garden treasure. We will meet at William Land Park. Exit Sutterville Road off of Interstate 5, go east. Turn left on Land Park Drive, stay to the right just past the zoo. Turn right on 15th Avenue. The garden is next to the amphitheater behind Fairytale Town.

OCTOBER PROGRAM SPEAKER

Cheryl Buckwalter

Landscape Liaisons

Water-Efficient Garden Design

THURSDAY — OCTOBER 24, 2013* • 7:00 P.M.

SHEPARD GARDEN AND ARTS CENTER

As a residential landscape designer, consultant, and educator, Cheryl's company, *Landscape Liaisons*, concentrates on water-efficient and ecologically-responsible landscapes. She is passionate about protecting and caring for our environment, and conserving one of our most precious resources—water. Cheryl demonstrates through her designs, teaching experiences, professional affiliations, and volunteer service a commitment to being a good steward of our environment. The presentation includes how to landscape in harmony with natural conditions, reduce waste, recycle materials, conserve water and energy, use integrated pest management to minimize chemical use, reduce stormwater runoff and create a wildlife habitat.

*Remember there are five Thursdays in October; we meet on the fourth



Calendar

September 9

Deadheading at Dusk
Historic Rose Garden
Sacramento City Cemetery
6:30 p.m.

September 10

SPPC Board Meeting
Cheryl McDonald (916-448-7331)
5 p.m.

September 14

Propagation Class
Historic Rose Garden
Sacramento City Cemetery
10 a.m.

September 26

September Meeting
*Tour of WPA Rock Garden
and Potluck Picnic*
William Land Park
4:30 p.m.

October 5–6

Annual Fall Festival
Benefit for the Shepard Garden
and Arts Center
10 a.m.–4 p.m.

October 8

SPPC Board Meeting
5 p.m.

October 19

What's Blooming
Hamilton Square
Sacramento City Cemetery
10 a.m. (rain cancels)

October 24

October Meeting
Cheryl Buckwalter
Water-Efficient Garden Design
7 p.m.

**UC Davis Arboretum
Fall Plant Sales****October 5**

11 a.m.–1 p.m.

October 20

9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Sales are held at the Arboretum Teaching Nursery, Garrod Drive, UC Davis. Experienced gardeners will be on hand to help you choose the best plants for your garden design and conditions.

President's Message

Saul Wiseman

Come join us.

Because we are meeting in the afternoon in September, rather than in the evening, I'm hoping that we can get a big turn out of members at the special tribute to Daisy Mah. If you have not attended our evening meetings but belong, I suggest you look at the roster and call a member in your area and carpool to William Land Park.

I would like to shake the hand of all the members who do not normally come to the evening meeting. I'm looking forward to sharing this opportunity for us to celebrate the retirement of Daisy and the joy of visiting the WPA Rock Garden.

VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS NEEDED

Annual Fall Festival

SHEPARD GARDEN AND ARTS CENTER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2013

10 A.M. – 4 P.M.



The Annual Fall Festival is the first weekend in October. Please donate plants and garden related items. This is a good time to check around the house for garden items you are no longer using, someone else may have a use for your item. Bring plants with labels with pictures of the plants and items to SG&AC on Friday, October 4th between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. We have a selection of plants ready for fall planting. Many of the flats of perennials have been propagated by club member Emma Ahart. Volunteers are needed to man our tables and to pick-up plants on Friday morning and transport to the center. We also need volunteers to help with the cleanup and packing up of plants on Sunday afternoon. This is a good way to get to know other members of the club and have fun working

November Garden Tour

We'll be touring Pauline and Irvin Faria's Garden (that we visited in the spring) again in November when the Japanese Maples are in color. Date will be announced in the November newsletter.



What's New in William Land Park

By Daisy Mah

Five desert willows, *Chilopsis linearis*, 'Timeless Beauty' donated by our club are settling in a hillside along the east end of the WPA Rock Garden. They are a beautiful living tribute to our former treasurer, the late Judith Waegell. Not



TAIR ZIMMERMAN

Chilopsis linearis, 'Timeless Beauty'

long after its spring planting, one was damaged. Its broken branch was realigned, secured with green tie tape and has made a complete recovery. Appropriately named, this deciduous shrub with showy lavender and burgundy flowers, cranks it out all summer long. Surrounding it is CA native grass *Festuca rubra* 'Molate' and CA fuchsia 'Calistoga' which are attracting the attention of nectar seeking bees and humming-

birds. Among these is the Rufous hummingbird with brown and rusty coloration who are making a pit stop as they migrate southward. Waves of charming, peeping bushtits are plentiful along with resident mourning doves.

After six years or more of battling pennywort, I finally but cautiously claim victory. It had begun an aggressive campaign of running rampant and clambering over and up anything in its wake. Without intervention, the only barrier was the water that surrounds the island in the Boat Pond. Additionally, elderberry seedlings and saplings were dueling for supremacy making passageways impassable. Unlike the pennywort, these were relatively easy to weed out. Armed with wire cutters and loppers, we corrected many of the tripping hazards. Recent additions include eastern dogwoods, sago palms, Gunnera, CA native leopard lilies, Chinese ground orchids and angel fishing rods, *Dierama pulcherrimum*. They are safely surrounded by duck proof cages with a generous layer of wood chips at their feet. We have a humble but sturdy rowboat at our service.



A recently donated sago palm

For the past ten years, lotus and water lilies have been happily growing in the Duck Pond located at the foot of the amphitheater. Attractive wire-domed cages were crafted by a father and son duo which provided a safe haven from

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SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Daisy Mah Tour of the WPA Rock Garden and Potluck Picnic

THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 26, 2013
4:30 P.M.

WPA ROCK GARDEN
WILLIAM LAND PARK
SACRAMENTO

Join us for an autumn evening in the WPA Rock Garden to thank Daisy for giving Sacramento a garden treasure.

Please bring a salad. The club will provide plates, silverware, napkins, water and dessert.



Welcome to the following new members:

Al Featherstone
 Anne Geraghty
 Barbara Kessler
 Dave Rudé
 Flora Spalding

SPPC Board Meeting. The next Perennial Plant Club Board of Directors meeting will be held September 10th at the home of **Cheryl McDonald** (916-448-7331). As always, board meetings are open to all members. Meetings begin at 5 p.m. and start with a potluck dinner—informative and delicious.

There will be no general meeting in November and December.

Upcoming Events at the Fair Oaks Horticulture Center

September 21 Workshop

Learn about incorporating edible trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals into your landscape. Understand worm composting. 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

October 16 Open Garden

Learn about growing cover crops and how they can enrich your garden soil. Get tips for protecting sensitive plants from frost damage. 10 a.m.–1 p.m.



BRIGID PITMAN

A surprise visitor at Madeleine Mullin's home in East Sacramento.

What's New in William Land Park

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marauding waterfowl. But in a few years, the hardy water lilies were overcrowded and worse yet, unattractive. Before I could replant, the old needed



Rehabilitated wire-domed cage for water lilies

to make way for the new. The job of removal seemed impossible especially after a taxing attempt proved fruitless. After some musing, a strategy that enlisted the hungry nature of the marauding waterfowl was implemented. Cages were removed, plants were chopped back and as new growth appeared, they were feasted upon. Recently the desire and resources to

replant resurfaced. Recommended and acquired through Golden Pond Nursery in Loomis were semi-tropical water lilies. Most importantly they won't need dividing since they do not become rootbound. Bill Leddy rehabilitated the cages who, along with spouse and club member, Marcia Leddy, are volunteers. Using borrowed kayaks and our humble rowboat, two more volunteers were recruited to transport and place the water lily cages. Water lily varieties, 'Tina', 'Ruby', and 'Rhonda Kay' were planted and will be thriving during the hot, dog days of summer. They are adorned with delicate, starry flowers in jewel-like shades of purple and deep pink.

During the recent past, worsened by the economic downturn, any desire to make improvements came to an end. Even with volunteers, we could not keep up with additional demands, staff cutbacks and ongoing challenges of park maintenance. But a year and half ago began a miraculous influx of many more volunteers who help meet the challenge of restoring neglected areas and making way for improvements. Presently the WPA Rock Garden is looking its finest and once the weather cools, a major planting spree awaits. Many of these plants were propagated with volunteer help.

As my career of 33+ years with the city of Sacramento Parks comes to an end (last day is Halloween), there was much worry about the future welfare of the gardens. Jeff Weir who posted the online petition site (now at 660 signatures), along with Dale Claypoole, spouse of club member Jeannie Claypoole, have been working behind the scenes. Armed with concern, wisdom and patience, they have worked tirelessly with Parks management and city council to secure a positive and clear vision for a succession plan. Despite their efforts, there was a chance a solid succession plan and positive actions toward meeting that plan, would not be in place at the time of my retirement. But, as of late August, new developments are leaving us more optimistic. I will share more as these developments solidify.

To be continued . . .

Time for That Herb Garden to Pay You Back for All Your Hard Work

By Rosemary Loveall-Sale
Morningsun Herb Farm

You have all these great big herb plants in the garden, but what can you do with a 6 foot tall rosemary, a 3 foot tall sage, and a lavender plant that seems to keep blooming no matter how much you cut it back? Rather than curse your success at growing these common herbs, put them to use in your pantry, medicine cabinet, and even in your holiday gift giving.



Some of the herbs you may have in abundance in your herb garden this fall include rosemary, sage, oregano, lavender, thyme, lemon balm, lemon verbena, chives, tarragon, mint and basil. First, let's discuss those herbs that will soon be disappearing from your garden.

Tarragon is an herbaceous perennial that dies to the ground in mid-November. There is no point in drying this herb, because most of

the flavor is lost. The flavor of this herb is best kept by steeping it in vinegar or processing it with a bit of olive oil in a food processor or blender and freezing the paste. Chives, which may or may not die to the ground in the winter, should also be preserved using these methods. Lemon balm, lemon verbena, Greek oregano and all the mints will die back during the winter and basil is an annual that will die out completely by the middle of November. These herbs can be preserved by either drying them or freezing them. Start collecting your herbs now by pruning back the foliage by about 1/4 every few weeks.

Sage, rosemary, Italian oregano, winter savory and most culinary thymes will remain evergreen throughout the winter and can be harvested fresh as needed for cooking. Drying some of the evergreen herbs will give you the ability to mix up some delicious dried blends for gift giving or for quick meal preparation.

The easiest method to dry herbs is to cut them into small bunches, band them with a rubber band and hang them out of direct sunlight in a warm dry location. A closet, pantry or garage works well. If the location is dusty, you may want to place a paper bag with some small holes punched in it over the herbs. Most herbs will dry in 3 to 7 days. If you need to dry them more quickly, you can microwave one cup of leaves between layers of paper towels for about 3 minutes. Stir them gently and continue to dry for 20 seconds at a time until they feel brittle. You can store dried herbs in plastic or paper bags for several months; however glass jars stored out of direct sunlight are the best way to preserve dried herbs.

Freezing herbs is another method to preserve their flavor. Freeze leaves for several hours by laying them flat on a cookie sheet and freeze them for several hours before placing them into plastic bags and storing them in the freezer. Alternatively,

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SPPC general meetings feature scrumptious goodies brought in by members. Thanks to Madeleine Mullins for organizing the delicious spread.



Apple Butter Crumb Bars

Marcia Leddy is kindly sharing this recipe which was a popular contribution to the dessert table last fall.

- 1 1/2 cups unbleached flour
(I used 3/4 cup oat flour and 3/4 cup unbleached flour)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 cup firm butter or margarine cut into small pieces
- 1 1/2 cups homemade apple butter or 1 jar (16 oz) apple butter

In a mixing bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, oats, brown sugar and nuts (if desired) until thoroughly blended.

With a pastry blender or two knives, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly and no large particles remain.

In an ungreased 9 x 13 baking dish, evenly spread 1/2 the oat mixture and use a large spoon to press down lightly. Spread apple butter evenly over crumb layer, then sprinkle remaining oat mixture evenly over top. Press down lightly.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool completely in pan on rack.

Cut into bars or squares. Store covered.

Makes 2 to 3 dozen.

Let's Get Composting!

By Roberta Hopkins

Composting is an integral part of gardening, returning plant material to a dark, crumbly, earthy smelling soil amendment. Composting is an increasingly popular garden activity.

There are several reasons to compost: recycling, reducing the use of carbon fuels, and improving the garden soil. Compost improves the water holding capacity of sandy soils, prevents water runoff and soil erosion, decreases the compaction of clay soil, and promotes soil fertility. While compost is a soil amendment and full of nutrients, it is not technically a fertilizer, which has specified amounts of nutrients.

Composting is the breakdown of organic matter primarily by bacteria and fungi. Other organisms participate in the composting process as well—insects, arthropods, and worms.

The compost process requires water, air, and organic matter. Organic matter for the home gardener comes from kitchen, yard and garden waste. Organic matter, for compost purposes, is divided into greens (nitrogen rich materials) and browns (carbon rich materials). One to three parts browns to one part greens is the ratio necessary for compost to happen.

Greens include grass clippings, well composted herbivore manures, flowers, coffee grounds, green leaves, fruit and vegetable waste.

Browns include dry leaves, eggshells, straw, wood shavings, woody prunings, shredded newspaper (no glossies), and shredded cardboard.

Compost pile “no-nos” are meat, fish, poultry, bones, dairy products, grease or oil, invasive weeds, diseased plants, pet waste, sawdust from treated wood, and BBQ or fireplace ash.

Compost, for most backyard gardeners, is kept in a bin with lots of air holes, and roughly 3' x 3' x 3'. There are any number of bin choices available, ranging in cost and ease of use. If a bin doesn't lift off the pile, a side that opens is necessary for turning. Concrete blocks, wood pallets, hardware cloth,

welded wire fencing or scrap wood are all suitable for creating a bin. Three bins are ideal.

Collect materials, without watering them, until you have a pile 3' x 3' x 3'. To get the pile started, chop the materials into pieces, mixing greens and browns at a volume ratio of 1:1-3. Moisten the pile, as you turn it, using a nozzle set on the shower setting. Keeping the pile as moist as a wrung out sponge is the goal—the sides of the pile will dry out so turning it moistens all the materials. The frequency of turning, along with the correct balance of greens and browns, and the moisture content determine how quickly the materials compost. Turning the pile weekly will generally yield compost in 2–3 months.

Keeping the pile as moist as a wrung out sponge is the goal—the sides of the pile will dry out so turning it moistens all the materials.

Because the compost process is driven by bacteria and fungi, nurturing these decomposers is essential! They need carbon and nitrogen as a food source, water to move and for life functions, and air to breathe. If their life requirements aren't met, nothing happens. If they are well fed, with added water and air, the pile cooks, and decomposition happens. Piles will get warm, from 100–160 degrees, due to bacterial metabolism, and a warm pile is a good sign! Piles are always warmer in the center.

Pile problems include “nothing is happening” (too dry, too wet, too many browns), smells bad (too many food scraps or grass clippings, too wet, or compacted), an ammonia odor (too many greens), and pests. Turning the pile, watering it as you turn, and having the right balance of greens and

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Roberta Hopkins has been a UC Master Gardener since 2002. She became a member of the SPPC earlier this year.

Let's Get Composting!

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browns correct most pile problems. Bury food scraps 6"–12" deep in the pile. Use hardware cloth to line the bin and use a weighted lid to keep rodents out, should they become a problem. Ants visit when the pile is too dry. There will be many critters in the pile as the decomposition progresses—centipedes, millipedes, sowbugs, spiders, earwigs, etc. They are part of the process and necessary.

A few tips:

- Wear gloves, close-toed shoes, and a mask if the pile is dry
- Bury food scraps
- Save those leaves in the fall in large plastic bags so you will have browns in the summer
- Three bins allows you to have a cooking pile, a finishing pile, and a collecting pile

The Fair Oaks Horticulture Center in Fair Oaks Park, 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. is the UC Master Gardener demonstration garden. We have many compost bins on site, as well as active composting. On Saturday, September 21 there will be composting workshops from 8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Bring your questions and join us!

Time for That Herb Garden to Pay You Back

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place leaves in a food processor and process with just enough oil to form a thick paste, store in small containers.

Everyone is familiar with basil pesto, but how many have tried pesto made with sage, rosemary, mint, chives or oregano? These are great alternatives for winter cooking, and a great way to use herbs you are less familiar with. The recipe is simple.

A Simple Herb Pesto

- 1/2 cup fresh herb leaves (sage, rosemary, chives, tarragon, etc)
- 1 1/2 cups fresh parsley leaves
- 1/2 cups pine nuts or walnuts
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese

Combine herbs, parsley, garlic, cheese and nuts in a food processor and process to mix. With machine running, slowly add the olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper and process to the desired consistency. Makes about 1 cup of pesto.

Blooms from the Tombs

by Sharon Patrician

Hamilton Square

Justicia brandegeana, or Shrimp Plant, is a star in the Hamilton Square Perennial Garden. While said to be hardy only in Zone 12 and above, it has thrived for over 13 years exposed to wind and sun in our Zone 9. There is some moderation from a nearby Crape Myrtle tree and other plantings.

Once a year, I prune it back by half and it comes back in early summer with coppery bronze bracts and abundant leaves. It appears to thrive on indifferent watering, although the plot is plumbed with a bubbler so it may get more water than known. The bracts stay on the plant until late fall, making it one of the most reliable bloomers in the garden.

Hummingbirds covet the tiny flowers hidden in the bracts, as well as honeybees. It is a handsome specimen in the garden and never fails to elicit visitor admiration. I saw this plant in a patio in Southern Spain in 2011, so it can be grown in ground or pots.





SPPC Newsletter
Cheryl McDonald
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WPA Rock Garden, William Land Park

BILL LEDDY