



# Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

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## Rooting for You.....by Deb Rooney, President

Ever since I was in high school I have had my personal anthem, a song for my soul – “It’s a Beautiful Morning,” by the Rascals

I have it on my morning alarm. I play it in the mornings when I walk. I’ve played it on a catamaran in the Caribbean, in Europe, pretty much wherever we go. It’s a wonderful start to any day.

This morning on my walk, it was a beautiful morning— not too hot yet, and my dog was behaving. Rancho Murieta is a beautiful place to live. So many beautifully blooming flowers – roses, hydrangeas, glads, daisies, sunflowers, and crepe myrtles. The maple trees are beautiful, and the oak trees are full of leaves. As I walk, I’m reminded of how much work gardening is. So much to think about, but oh so gratifying.

Rancho Murieta is in growing zone 9, and zone 9 is a tough place in the summer. Zone 9 is considered a year-round planting zone. I suppose that’s true. We do have multiple growing seasons and a variety of plant options to add to our gardens each season.

But I’m constantly reminded that just because it says to plant in full sun on the plant label doesn’t always mean it will survive full sun in our yards. And watering is a challenge – early mornings 6 to 10 a.m. is the best.

There are lots of ways to amend our “yucky” (yes, that’s a gardening term) soil that will add nutrients, provide a healthy habitat for worms, and help retain our precious water. Adding native plants and drought resistant plants to your garden helps save water too. And all that water is just glorious for the weeds – I grow them the best!

Boy, such a lot of work to do in our gardens...but it’s a beautiful morning, and I think I’ll go outside for awhile...and just smile.



*Deb*

*(Editor’s note: The words to “It’s a Beautiful Morning” appear on page 2)*



## *It's a Beautiful Morning – by the Rascals*

It's a beautiful morning, ah  
I think I'll go outside for awhile and smile  
Just take in some clean fresh air, boy  
(Ain't) no sense in staying inside  
If the weather's fine and you got the time  
It's your chance to wake up and plan another brand new day  
(Either way) it's a beautiful morning, ah  
Each bird keeps singing his own song, so long  
I've got to be on my way now  
(Ain't) no fun just hanging around  
I got to cover ground you couldn't keep me down  
It just ain't no good if the sun shines  
When you're still inside (shouldn't hide)  
Still inside (Shouldn't hide)  
Still inside (shouldn't hide)  
Still in– oh, oh, oh-oh-oh



# **Out & About with the River Valley Garden Club**



## **Walking the Gnome Trail**

Here's an outing you'll enjoy. Drive over to Lake Calero. Park on the hill just inside the gate. Then proceed to the Gnome Trail to see if the goats really ate the gnomes last season when they were munching on our weeds in the open areas around the community. Turns out that the goats didn't eat most of them, and they certainly didn't eat our club's gnome, because someone has positioned the River Valley Garden Club's gnome so that it is first in line to greet hikers, bikers, and birdwatchers who walk the trail to get some exercise and enjoy nature.

The wedding party gnomes are still there, although moved higher up on the trail. And there is no shortage of gnomes standing on rocks, peeking out from behind branches, or skulking in the tall grass. It's a delightful destination to take visitors to, as we may very well be the only community in Sacramento County (or the world) with its very own Gnome Trail.

## **Checking Out Joy Salo's Eagle Scout Project**

As you will recall, one of the grants our club awarded last year was to Joy Salo, a Scout in Troop #633 who was working on her Eagle Scout project to install two benches around Lake Calero. After consulting with SOLOS (Save Our Lakes and Open Spaces), Joy decided that a good project for our community would be to create a place of rest for those getting their exercise walking around the lake. Joy was in the fund-raising phase of her project, and it was our pleasure to be able to help her reach her goal. If you come down from the Gnome Trail and walk downhill toward the lake, you will see one of the benches, which is both sturdy and comfortable, and a respite for those who need a break from their morning walk. The second bench is half-way around the lake, and is equally as inviting for those who need a rest from their hike.



## **Planting the Local Bean**

Remember the planters at the Local Bean that our club refurbished a few years ago? After sitting dormant for three years, they have sprung back to life sporting bright yellow zinnias, sprightly columbine, light pink verberna, tiny daisies, and other summer flowers. The planting crew headed up by Berniece Jones met on a breezy Saturday to accomplish the planting. Pictured below right are Joyce Adams, Seema (Local Bean Owner), Genevieve Sullivan, Rosann Stevenson, Nancy Compton, and Berniece Jones. Compliments and positive vibes have been overheard from happy customers who have been enjoying the ambience provided by the flowers.



*Photo far left: Berniece Jones demonstrates that gardeners love to play in the dirt.*

*Photo near left: Genevieve Sullivan completes one of the planters by ensuring that the newly-planted flowers have plenty of water.*



## *The Research is in: Yes! – Gardening Totally Counts as Exercise*

Research confirms that the benefits of gardening go far beyond connecting with nature and creating a beautiful yard. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), gardening absolutely qualifies as exercise. In fact, getting out in the garden for just 30-45 minutes can burn up to 300 calories. And how many of us are out there for many more hours without realizing how quickly the time goes by?

Gardening works all the major muscle groups: legs, buttocks, arms, shoulders, neck, back, and abdomen. Tasks



that use these muscles build strength and burn calories. Add in digging, lifting and dragging bags of mulch, and pushing wheelbarrows full of who knows what all provide strength training similar to weightlifting, which leads to healthier bones and joints.

But we do so much more than this. Besides the aerobic benefits that come with moving our bodies, we improve our flexibility by digging, weeding, trimming, raking, and tilling. Gardening also builds endurance — an attribute that we are all too familiar with when we spend endless hours trying to dig out, pull out, spray out, or pour hot water on the strongest substance known to mankind: crabgrass.

Caution: beware of feeling so smug about the exercise you're getting that you forget there could be a downside if you neglect to stop and change activity every 15-20 minutes. Or if you forget to hydrate every 15-20 minutes. Or if you are wearing flip-flops on an uneven surface, or standing on a flimsy ladder, or navigating the pavement while forgetting that you didn't roll up and put away your hose. All of these factors could lead to unpleasant results.

One interesting piece of research suggests that plants make us feel safe, calm, and relaxed. That sounds very pleasant, but I recall on more than one occasion when I thought I would relax on my chaise lounge with a lovely glass of lemonade and a good book, only to glance sideways and notice a giant weed climbing its way up my sago palm. This is not relaxing. At this point I just need to convince myself that I can tackle it another day, which will count for another garden workout and another day of exercise.

It's so much better than going to a smelly gym.



# *Christmas in July: A Foothill Garden Club Fundraiser*

The Foothill Garden Club will be holding a fundraiser to support their community projects, including the Pioneer Youth Garden and their High School Scholarship program.



**When?**      *Saturday, July 29*  
**Where?**     *Main Street in Plymouth*  
**What time?** *9 a.m. to 7 p.m.*



For sale will be all kinds of unique and beautiful Christmas ornaments, garlands, decorations, Christmas China, lights, Santas, ribbons — everything Christmas!

Come and browse the tables before, during, or after the Amador County Fair (we will be only a few blocks away). **GREAT PRICES! GREAT DEALS! Remember — only 150 days 'till Christmas!!**

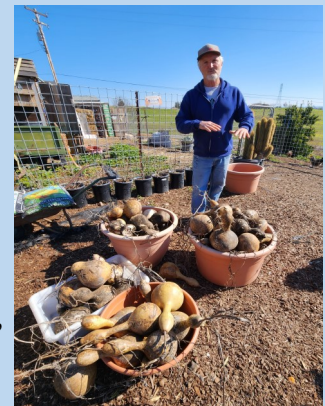
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## ***A Blue Ribbon Club and Two First Place Ribbons!***



At the state convention of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. held this year in Thousand Oaks, the River Valley Garden Club was once again designated as a **Blue Ribbon Achievement Club!** This honor is bestowed upon clubs based on a hefty list of criteria that includes club activities, publications, member involvement in district and state level activities, community service, scholarships, quality of programming, to name just a few.

We also took first place in the **Club Touring** category, which we have won for many years in a row, thanks to Sharon Barton and her team of planners. Just think of all the places we have been this past year!



*Tour of Chris Strutz' Ranch*



*Donna Boyd and Judith Embree propagating lavender*

Another first place for our club was in the **Club Workshop** category. We won for the workshop we had at the **Wilton Family Lavender Farm** in the fall when we learned how to propagate lavender. Our state organization thought it was so outstanding that they even put it on their Facebook page. What an honor!

Many thanks to you, our members, for taking part in these activities.



*We always pack our trunks full when we visit the Hollandale Farm in Lodi*



*Touring the Wilton Family Lavender Farm brought out lots of members!*

## Harvest Day – Saturday, August 5

Sharon has already announced our first field trip for the 2023-24 garden club year — a visit to the UC Master Gardeners Fair Oaks Horticultural Center to take part in the Harvest Day festival.

This annual event features well-known speakers, demonstrations, vendors, samples, and food trucks, as well as an opportunity to stroll through the gardens and obtain advice from Master Gardeners.

This year's lineup of speakers includes **Fred Hoffman**, better known locally as Farmer Fred, who produces and hosts the podcast, "Garden Basics with Farmer Fred." He often co-presents with **Debbie Flower**, who has worked in many aspects of horticulture including 25 years as a horticulture professor at several area community colleges. Their talk begins at 8:30 a.m. and will address the topic, "**Tips for Saving Time, Money, and Water in the Garden.**"

At 9:45, **Angela Laws, Ph.D.**, who is an Endangered Species Conservation Biologist, will speak on the topic, "**Habitat Gardening for Pollinators in a Changing World.**" Dr. Laws is working on habitat restoration for pollinators and monarch butterflies in the Central Valley. Her role in the Xerces Society involves incorporating climate resiliency into pollinator restoration projects.

At 11 a.m., the speaker will be **Pam Bone**, Landscape Horticulturist and Lifetime Master Gardener who will be speaking on the topic: "**Home Reforestation: Establishment of Landscape Trees.**" In her presentation, she will discuss what to look for in new trees and the best ways to care for them to establish a healthy, beautiful tree for years to come. Pam believes that trees are a long-term investment that provide significant benefits for our mental and physical health, the value of our homes and neighborhoods, and they help conserve energy as well.

Pam has been an Urban Horticulture & Urban Forestry Farm Advisor and was the first program coordinator for the UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento County.

This is a powerful lineup of speakers not to be missed. Wandering through the gardens is always a treat — seeing composting demonstrations, pruning demonstrations, interacting with Master Gardeners, having your garden questions answered, and sometimes tasting a variety of tomatoes or peaches — all an invaluable learning opportunity.

Sharon will let us know where and what time to meet, but please, add this event to your calendar and I guarantee you will not be sorry. Besides, Sharon always finds us a great place to do lunch!

