



## *Here's the Dirt*

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

*Deb Rooney, President*

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

*Help us celebrate our club's 20th anniversary*

*Attend the Garden Stroll and Plant Sale  
Bring friends and family!*

*Saturday, May 13th*

*9 a.m.—3 p.m.*

*Plant Sale will be held at the RMA Parking Lot*

*Purchase your tickets at the Plant Sale*

*Buy raffle tickets to win fabulous items....*

*Stroll through seven beautiful Rancho Murieta gardens*

*Rain or shine*

*Admission: \$25*

*In addition, a children's activity will be held so kids  
can make a Mothers Day gift!*

*This will be our major fundraiser for the year!*

*Help us continue our Scholarship and Grants program*

*A major event not to be missed!*

## *Plant of the Month: The Lovely Lantana*



We have all seen lively, colorful lantana spilling over retaining walls or large rocks, but the last time you planted a lantana, it lived one season and then bit the dust. What's up with that? Is lantana an annual? Or is it a perennial?

Lantanas are lovely summer flowers, but the downside is finding all that contradictory information all over the Internet.

So which is it — an annual — or a perennial? According to the online blog “Plant Care Today,” the answer is **YES** — which isn't much help. The issue is that this genus includes over 150 species, with many variants and cultivars, making it difficult to know just what you are purchasing.

In the case of lantanas, they are perennials in their native habitat, which is the tropics of Africa and the Americas, but frost may kill them, making them an annual in other regions. However, just like succulents, if your lantana is in a protected location during the winter, or if you cover it with frost cloth on cold nights, it may do well and not be affected by heavy frost.

Lantanas do best in loose, well-drained soil, which could be a problem in our area with our heavy, almost concrete-like soil. Mix loose additives to the soil, or remember that lantana looks quite smashing in a handsome container. Also, it is recommended that gardeners ensure that their lantana is not accessible by children or pets, as this beautiful plant is actually quite toxic.



Just like beach-goers, lantana prefers to live in a sunny location, and may actually develop mildew if it spends too much time in the shade, or during prolonged overcast weather.

Lantanas can fill many needs in the garden. The shrubby lantanas may be used as low-growing hedges or foundation plantings, and the spreading kinds are excellent bank covers, and will even control erosion.

Lantanas come in a variety of bright and beautiful colors that make a lovely pop of tints and hues to delight the home gardener. And better yet — they are relatively inexpensive, so if for whatever reason your lantana decides to die off at the end of the season, you can pick out another when spring rolls around without breaking the bank. Here's to a sprightly, colorful flower that adds its cheerfulness to any garden.

## Sharing a Secret



*Anthurium*

It's very possible that you already know this, but if you don't, put your New York Times crossword puzzle down for a moment and listen up. Did you know that Lowe's in Rancho Cordova has a sale rack at the back of the store, and even if you browse through it quickly and casually, you may come away with incredible bargains?

It always seems to me if they would just water their plants they wouldn't need this sale rack, but never mind — it's for our benefit that they don't. One time they had several kalanchoe plants with a sign that read: "Buy one get two free." What? Okay, so I took three plants to the cash register and drove home happily thinking that I scored by paying for one plant and getting three. When I got home and started to repot them I discovered that they had jammed three kalanchoe plants into one container — so having bought three containers, I actually had nine plants!

Last week I checked out the sales rack and found a Snake Plant and an Anthurium that looked perfect. Each one was marked down twice, meaning that they were \$7 apiece. I snapped up both of them, and when I got home, I realized that I knew nothing about raising anthuriums. That is when I learned a lot from a web site called *planterina.com*. Here is what I learned:

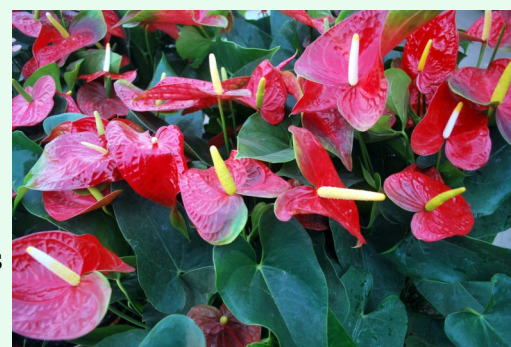
"These beautiful heart-shaped flowers are not flowers at all. What makes these durable, easy-care houseplants so appealing are red, white, pink, or purple waxy leaves called spathes that flare from the base of the fleshy spike where the actual tiny flowers grow.

These indoor plants are epiphytes, a type of air plant that comes from warm, tropical regions where they either grow on the surface of other plants, or in rich organic humus. Therefore, as a houseplant, the anthurium is extremely durable and requires little care. Simply re-pot with a peat moss or a coco coir-based soil mixture, provide bright, indirect sunlight and allow the soil to partially dry out between watering. For more robust, repeated "flowering," allow your anthurium to rest for six weeks with little water during the winter at approximately 60 degrees F. (I'm not sure where 60 degrees Fahrenheit is....certainly not in my house, maybe the garage? A shed?)

**Light:** Flowering anthurium needs bright, indirect light (direct sunlight will scorch the leaves and flowers). Low light will slow growth, dull the color, and produce fewer, smaller "flowers." Place your anthuriums in a setting where they will receive at least six hours of bright indirect sunlight each day.

**Water:** Water thoroughly when the few inches of the soil becomes dry to the touch, stopping when water starts draining from the drain holes. Avoid over-watering. The more light and warmth that your anthurium gets, the more water it will need, so check the soil for dryness every few days.

**Soil:** Anthuriums are epiphytes, meaning they do not necessarily need soil to grow. They use the moisture from the air and nutrients from their host (usually a tree or surrounding dead plant material.) Their potting soil should contain more drainage materials (compared to soils for most indoor plants), such as wood chips, perlite, coarse sand, or pumice, to allow the water to drain quickly. Most bagged soil-less potting soil made for indoor plants will work fine, but remember that you must let the soil dry out completely before watering again. You can add cactus potting soil mix to your potting soil to help the water drain.



The next time you're at a garden center, check the back of the house. You will find your own special bargains. Have fun!

## State Convention Announced



The California Garden Clubs, Inc. has announced its annual convention, which will be held this year June 5-June 9, 2023 at the Palm Garden Hotel in Thousand Oaks. If you have never attended this state convention, it is a wonderful way to meet and talk with fellow gardeners from throughout the state. Here are some of this year's highlights:

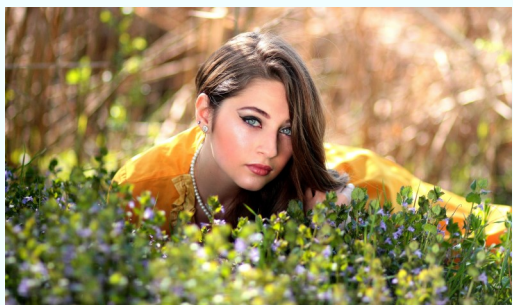
- ◆ Monday, June 5: Bus tour to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Air Force One, Blue Star Memorial Marker, and their special exhibit (audio bus tour included)
- ◆ Tuesday, June 6: Lunch program: Jorge Ochoa will present "A Passion for Passion Vines."
- ◆ Tuesday, June 6: Workshop: Parliamentary Procedure
- ◆ Tuesday, June 6: Dinner and Awards Banquet
- ◆ Wednesday, June 7: Lunch program: Amy Darvish will present "Tips of the Trade"
- ◆ Wednesday, June 7: Dinner program: Shelley Sparks will present "Bring the Magic of a Chinese Garden Home"
- ◆ Thursday, June 8: Workshop: "Leadership is Fun"
- ◆ Thursday, June 8: Workshop: "Mini Succulent Gardens"
- ◆ Thursday, June 8: Workshop: Kokodamas
- ◆ Thursday, June 8: Dinner program: Installation of 2023-2025 CGCI Officers

In between all the workshops and interesting speakers will be meetings at which the business of the organization will be conducted. Air fare to Burbank is only \$99 right now, so if you think you might be interested, now is the time to check it out. Google: California Garden Clubs, Inc. for the forms and information.

## Are you guilty of procrastiplanting?

If you are a true gardener, and one who gardens with passion, then it's good bet that you have been engaged in **procrastiplanting** — probably more than once. If you are unfamiliar with this word, which I must confess I was before reading a recent article, then it's a new word for your vocabulary, and you can use it at places like garden club luncheons, garden club meetings, garden club teas, garden club tours, garden club conventions, and any time you are around gardeners. Here is the definition:

**Procrastiplanting is when you have a million things to do, but ignore all of them and tend to your plants instead.**



Yep ...it's me...and I'm in the garden...



## A New Ruling Gives Hope



This information just came in from the California Native Plant Society (CNPS): A Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, Mitchell Beckloff, has ordered L.A. County to set aside its approval of Tejon Ranchcorp's Centennial development, a proposed housing project that would bring 57,000 residents to the fire-prone outskirts of the county.

“As one of the last remaining native grasslands in California, Centennial is also one of those rare places where extensive colorful shows of wildflowers still remain”, said Nick Jensen, Conservation Program Director at CNPS. “Today California has more plant species at risk of extinction than any other state in the U.S. We must protect the state's strong environmental laws to keep sensitive habitats intact.”



## Scholarship Committee Announces Winners

Scholarship Committee Chair Berniece Jones Announced the three winners of the club's scholarships for 2022-2023, each of whom were awarded \$500 to assist them financially with attaining their Horticulture degrees.

Let's meet these inspiring students:

**Jason Boves** is a student at American River College pursuing an A.S. Degree. After achieving this goal, he is passionate about using his knowledge to help educate others about the importance



Jason Boves, American River College

Scholarship committee members with scholarship winners: (L to R) Cathy Critz, Berniece Jones, Daisy Carter, Alyssa Serpa, Jason Boves, Margaret Watson-Hopkins (Committee member Eileen Shepard not pictured)

of plants, and to do his part in creating a more sustainable path for our collective existence in the natural world.

Last semester Jason received a scholarship that helped him become a ReScape Qualified Professional in Landscape Maintenance through ReScape California. He is presently employed at the Plant Foundry.

In speaking of his future, Jason plans to work in the field of horticulture with emphasis placed on regenerative practices utilizing sustainable permaculture. (continued on following page....)

**Scholarship Committee Announces Winners  
(continued from previous page)**



Daisy Carter, Cosumnes River College

After completing her A.S. Degree at American River College, **Daisy Carter** plans to transfer to U.C. Davis and pursue a degree in Plant Science, a newly designated degree which combines both Horticulture and Urban Forestry. Daisy would like to continue her education to obtain both a Masters Degree and a Ph.D. in Plant Science. Daisy said she loves to teach, and may even consider becoming a university professor in the field of Horticulture and/or Plant Science.

Daisy has worked in the Community Education division at Soil Born Farms. Her supervisor wrote her a letter of recommendation, stating, “Daisy stands out for her positive attitude, willingness to try hard tasks, and dedication to learning about plants, the environment, and the community. Her spirit, good nature, and drive will take her far in all her endeavors.”

**Alyssa Serpa**, pictured third from the right in the group photo on the previous page, plans to transfer to Fresno State after completing her A.S Degree at Cosumnes River College. Her career goal is to become an Agriculture teacher at the high school level. Dave Andrews, her Horticulture Professor at Cosumnes wrote in a letter of recommendation, “Alyssa is one of the top students in the Agriculture/Horticulture program, consistently performing at a high level in all of the courses she has taken. She is a highly motivated student, and always demonstrates her love of learning.”

Professor Andrews further stated, “I believe that Alyssa will be a wonderful addition to the California Agriculture teaching profession.”

Many thanks to the Scholarship committee for reading the applications and selecting these highly qualified students to receive the RVGC scholarships for 2022-23.



**Begonias the Focus of our May 23 Meeting.....**

At our meeting on Tuesday, May 23, our speaker will be Paul Tsampsis of the Sacramento Begonia Society who will introduce us to the wonderful world of begonias. This prolific plant is a genus of about 1300 species of annuals, perennials, shrubs, and clumbers. They are characterized by their fleshy stems and are mostly grown for their showy flowers and colorful leaves.

Join us as we learn about this lovely plant that can add beauty and versatility to our gardens.

