



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

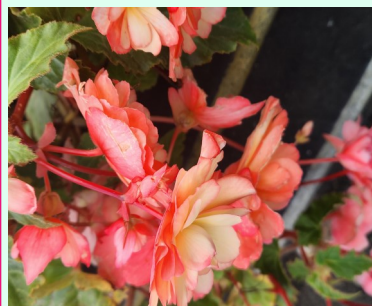
Deb Rooney and Jayne La Grande, Co-Presidents

Nancy Compton, Editor

Rooting for You..... By Nancy Compton, Editor

Hello and welcome to October! This month's "Rooting for You" message will be a bit different, as your editor has given our co-presidents a break from writing this column, and decided instead to share some beautiful floral photos from a recent trip to Scotland.

As you may know, Scotland is a bit chillier than our weather here in growing zone 9b. The joke is that last year, summer was on a Wednesday. The sun seems a bit scarce, but the rainfall is plentiful. Familiar flowers seem much larger there; for example, hydrangeas abound and are the size of dinner plates— big ones!



The lovely begonias to the left grow out of large planter boxes throughout several little harbor towns in the northern islands. The photo to your right shows one of dozens of hanging baskets that appear on railings near harbors, from street lamp poles, and from random shops that have hangers installed for this purpose.

A couple of shopkeepers were asked who maintains these lovely public flowers, and the response was that the people who live in the town take care of them. It was unclear if there was an organized effort, or if people just pitch in randomly.



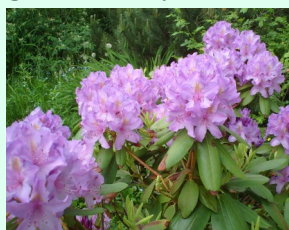
Despite the lack of sun, hardy sunflowers can be seen peeking out from heavy foliage as if looking for a ray of sunlight in the photo to your left. This particular sunflower was seen in Benmore Gardens, a 120 acre botanical garden that also contains a surprising number of redwoods through a program to help save and preserve conifers.

Scottish people are quite polite and enjoy having visitors, so after a morning of wandering through the rather soggy gardens, visitors are offered a slice of cake, and of course, a wee cup of tea.



The photo to your left shows a healthy grove of heather, which abounds throughout the landscape, cascading over the many rocks and rock walls. Blossom colors include white, pale to deep pink, lavender, and purple, and are a welcome splurge of color in the often long, gray days without a speck of sunlight.

In this cool, damp environment, ferns and lichens grow easily from between the rocks, without appearing to have any soil at all.



And oh, my...the rhododendrons were just breathtaking. I am convinced that my ancestors left Scotland not because it wasn't lovely, but because it was just too darn cold.

Nancy

“An Evening with Greg Gayton”

For our Tuesday, October 24 meeting, our speaker will be Greg Gayton, Certified Nursery Professional, who handles community outreach, sales, IT, and marketing for Green Acres Nurseries.

Greg’s many years in the nursery business means that he has a tremendous wealth of knowledge about horticulture and anything related to it. Greg also enjoys speaking with community groups on topics related to horticulture and can answer any questions you may have.

A recently published article about Greg quoted him as saying, “Forget the green thumb; social media can help your garden grow!” This is an interesting twist that we would all like to know about. Join us on October 24 and meet Greg Gayton, and enjoy fellowship with your garden club friends.

Bring your questions and prepare for a lively evening with Greg Gayton.



Four CSU campuses designated as Tree Campus USA Recipients



The Tree Campus USA program, which was created by the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with Toyota Motors North America, is a national program honoring colleges and universities and their leaders for promoting healthy trees and engaging students and staff in the spirit of conservation.

Four campuses in California have been recognized as Tree Campus USA universities: CSU Channel Islands, CSU Northridge, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and CSU Sacramento. These universities have been honored for engaging staff and students in conservation goals and for their effective urban forest management.

To qualify for this program, five standards must be met:

1. Establishment of a Campus Tree Advisory Committee
2. Evidence of a Campus Tree Care Plan
3. Dedicated Annual Expenditures
4. Involvement in an Arbor Day Observance
5. Instituting a Service Learning Project



CSU Sacramento first gained recognition as a Tree Campus USA university in 2012 and has since developed a program called the Bioconversion and Agriculture Collaborative that recycles leaves and fallen trees into compost and mulch to be used throughout the campus. The university is dedicated to reducing its impact on the environment and educates its students, faculty, and staff on sustainable practices as part of its sustainable policy.

*National Garden Club presents:
Environmental School*

The National Garden Clubs, Inc., regularly holds schools to help enhance gardeners' knowledge in the areas of Gardening, Environmental Education, Landscape Design, and Floral Design.

These schools also provide an opportunity to meet and learn from fellow gardeners to enrich and enhance the gardening experience. The Environmental School emphasizes the interrelationships between plants, animals, insects, and people, and provides knowledge on how to maintain and renew an energy efficient and sustainable environment.

The schools are offered through four courses, typically scheduled over four weekends and include nature discovery field trips.

Instructors are university professors or certified specialists working in the field.

Course #1 is scheduled for November 4 and 5, 2023, and will include the following topics:

* **Ecology:** Explore environmental challenges and opportunities for human populations on the impact — either harmful or beneficial. Who pays the cost for an ever-consuming society? Recycle, Repurpose. Reuse.

- ◆ **Plants—Biodiversity:** Evolution, extinction, genetic variation, diversity, value and role of every species in the ecosystem.
- ◆ **Environmental Science:** Non-renewable vs. renewable RESOURCES. Pollution, consumption, technology and economic factors effect on renewable, non-renewable, and perpetual resources. Conserve wasted energy and avoid loss from “vampire power.” Can better management achieve sustainability?
- ◆ **Environmental Issues:** Is the earth finite? Does the Earth have a carrying capacity? What is the “Tragedy of the Commons?” Understand the beneficial and harmful impacts that humans have on the environment. What are the problems in managing and disposing of solid waste?
- ◆ **Backyard Wildlife Habitat:** Create wildlife habitat at home, school, public, and commercial settings that use energy conservation, pest reduction, and soil health without recreation and esthetic quality. Plan home landscapes to benefit and protect wildlife using planting practices, providing food, water, nesting, and protection.
- ◆ **Networking and Outreach:** Learn how to influence industry, government, and people to pursue beneficial goals for life on earth.
- ◆ **Historic Actions and Leaders:** Study the far-reaching impact on the environment by human action.
- ◆ **Sustainability:** More than reducing, recycling, conservation, and prevention, know what is necessary to reduce the ecological footprint.



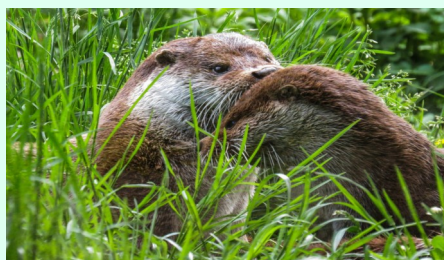
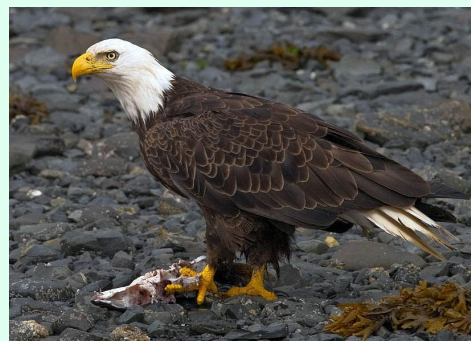
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Environmental School (continued from previous page....)

***Course #2** is offered the weekend of **January 6 and 7, 2024** and will focus on land ecology, plants and agriculture, source reduction of pollutants and toxins, coastal zone management, environmental science resources, misunderstood wildlife animals, and earth stewardship: gardening with nature.

Course #3 will be offered the weekend of **February 3 and 4, 2024**, with a focus on plants and the rain forest, environmental ethics, indoor and outdoor pollution, endangered plants and wildlife, initiating educational programs, and educational material sources.

Course #4 will be offered the weekend of **March 12 and 13, 2024**, with a focus on water ecology, aquatic plants, wetlands, environmental sustainability, and environmental awareness.



So how can you enroll in this comprehensive program? First of all, the cost of each course is \$90 and you may enroll in each separately (as opposed to having to enroll in all four at once). All courses will be held at the Stanislaus Ag Center in Modesto. This program is sponsored by the Ceres Garden Club in the Valley Lode District. For further information you may contact Berni Hendrix, Local Schools Chair at (209) 402-2351. You may also email Berni at [schools vld@gmail.com](mailto:schoolsvld@gmail.com).

If you wish to talk with someone who has gone through the program and become a Certified Environmental Consultant, you may contact Nancy Compton at ncompton43@att.net or via cell phone at (916) 600-1992.

What Makes Gardeners So Happy?

One reason gardeners are happy is the soil bacterium, mycobacterium vaccae. These microscopic bacteria enter our bodies when we touch the soil. The bacteria triggers serotonin and dopamine production, both of which are chemicals that produce a feeling of happiness.

If we spend enough time playing in the dirt, then we may be in danger of becoming a Crazy Plant Lady. And you know you are a Crazy Plant Lady when watering is a hobby and you cannot resist a cute pot, even though you may already have dozens. You may be a Crazy Plant Lady if you find yourself pinching off damaged or dry leaves at nurseries and big box garden centers, or at a friend's home during a garden party. There seems to be no cure, so just enjoy.



Places to go...things to do.....

◆ **Arden Park Garden Club's Fall Festival!**

Pumpkin Patch....Photobooth...Food Trucks....Wine/Beer Garden...Craft Vendors...and of course a Plant Sale...all will be featured at the Fall Festival sponsored by the Arden Park Garden Club on **Saturday, October 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

The Plant Sale will feature plants and trees grown by the Arden Park Garden Club members. And don't forget to buy some tickets for a chance to win one of the beautiful gift baskets or prizes!

In addition to all the above, the event will feature carnival games, a bounce house, and even a petting zoo. It's all there — a complete day of fun, prizes, animals, food, and, of course, plants.

The address is 1000 La Sierra Drive, Sacramento — right near the corner of Watt Avenue and Fair Oaks Boulevard. The Arden Park Club invites all gardeners and friends to come and celebrate autumn!



◆ **Sacramento River Valley District Meeting — Tuesday, November 15**

Now that we are once again an integral part of the Sacramento River Valley District, we need to attend events and support district meetings and activities.

The November 15 district meeting, which will be held at the Shepard Garden & Art Center in McKinley Park, Sacramento, will be especially enriching, as Jennifer Jewell, host of the national award-winning podcast "**Cultivating Place: Conversations on Natural History and the Human Impulse to Garden.**" will be the guest speaker.



Jennifer is nationally known as a beloved radio personality, a keynote speaker, and the author of two books: "*The Earth is in Her Hands — 75 Extraordinary Women at Work in the World of Plants,*" and "*Under the Western Skies: Visionary Gardens from the Rockies to the Pacific.*"

Jennifer's mission is to explore and celebrate a deeper connection to the world around us through the cultivation of our gardens. She achieves this mission through her writing, photographs, exhibits, and advocacy for gardens and natural history. Jennifer is an extraordinary speaker and this is a not-to-be-missed opportunity. In addition, the district will have a plant sale, a raffle table, and lunch prepared by the Pioneer Garden Club will be served. Stay tuned for further details.