

RIVER VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

A PLACE TO GROW

SEPTEMBER 2018

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 1

HERE'S THE DIRT

Rooting for You

Nancy Clark, President

Why Not Start A Winter Garden?

Most of us are probably looking forward to the typical break from vegetable gardening that we take beginning in September. But as I write this, I'm thinking I might do something different this year. Why not try a little winter gardening?

We are very fortunate to have an agreeable climate here in Northern California, making it easy to grow vegetables year around. Yes, we get a few frosts, but with a little planning, and the use of floating row covers, we can protect the most tender plants.

It's possible to start vegetables from seed indoors, and then harden them off before transplanting them in your beds where they'll mature and keep during cold weather. But if you're like me, I prefer visiting our local nurseries, where I'll have the pleasure of choosing from all of the new plant varieties.

My cucumbers and squash plants are about done, so I'll have some room. Especially given that winter vegetables are more compact. It's also a good idea to plant winter crops closer together to prevent erosion from the occasional hard winter rains, so I can fit more in less space. So what's stopping me from putting in some cool-weather crops like spinach, broccoli, cabbage, peas, or lettuce? Admittedly, it would be fun to feast on greens in the usual off-season.

A row of snap or snow peas will fit nicely in the area once inhabited by my cucumber vines, and if they thrive, they'll provide some nice crunch in winter salads. And in the 2 boxes where my squash plants are, I can plant lettuces and spinach, and, broccoli and cabbage.

My mind is made up. I'm going to stretch the growing season and reap the sweet rewards of winter gardening this year. Maybe you'll see me at one of the local nurseries this fall, checking out the broccoli starts.



*Beautiful Balloon Flower
(Fall Garden Fun)*

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Club News and Events

Don't Wait!

Irene Slavens, VP Membership

Gardenistas! It's time to renew your membership.

Membership is *only* \$25 and you will have access to all the great programs, workshops, and tours planned for our 2018 - 2019 season.

Don't miss out. Get the membership renewal form [here](#).

You can either bring the form to our next meeting on September 25th, or mail it to the RVGC at P.O. Box 711, Rancho Murieta 95683.

Join your friends and gardening compadres and renew now. Don't let us have all the fun without you.

Program: Bill "the Bulb" Baron

Nancy Compton, Programs Chair

Our first speaker for the 2018-2019 garden club year will be Bill Baron, one of the leading commercial growers, hybridizers, and authorities on drought-resistant, animal-proof, easy-to-grow bulbs. His specialty is the warm-climate, fragrant Narcissus, as well as summer and fall blooming fragrant outdoor Amaryllis.

Bill states: "I grow plants that work! My bulbs are ideal for problem soils and other hostile conditions. I am the world's leading authority and hybridizer of Tazetta Narcissus, and I have the most genetically diverse collection in the world."

Bill Welch, otherwise known as Bill "the Bulb" Baron, was captivated by a Chinese Narcissus growing in his back yard as a child, especially when no one knew much about them. He was amazed at their ability to thrive on neglect.

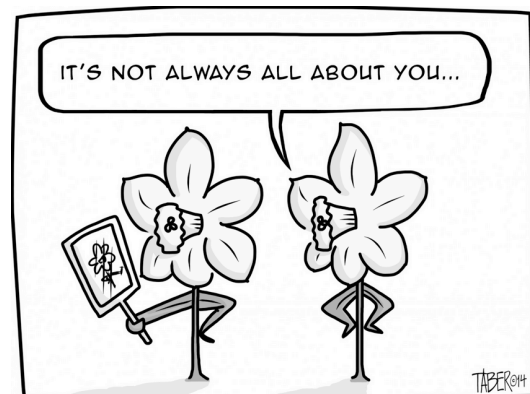
Today, many of Bill's waking moments are spent working in the field digging, growing, picking, and hybridizing Narcissus. Since no one else seemed interested in preserving the old varieties that still exist, Bill has made it his mission in life to collect as many as he can find.

Join us on Tuesday, September 25, as Bill Baron, a world recognized expert, shares his love of growing fragrant, hardy, and beautiful bulbs. He will be bringing many, many bulb varieties which will be for sale at the meeting.

Get a head start with your bulbs this year and learn to grow some of the world's most fragrant, hardy, and beautiful flowers. Your garden will thank you.



Bill Baron



RVGC 2018 - 2019 Speaker Schedule

Nancy Compton, Programs Chair



DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
September 25, 2018	Grow Amazing Bulbs!	Bill "the Bulb" Baron
October 23, 2018	Gifts from the Garden	Jennifer <u>Kahl</u> , The Secret Garden
January 22, 2019	Landscaping Design and Outdoor Living Space	Andrew Rogers, Owner, Rogers Landscaping
February 26, 2019	Garden Photography at its Best	Jan <u>Fetler</u> , Master Gardener and published photographer
March 26, 2019	The Importance of Monarch Butterflies in our World	<u>Eltha Hannum</u> Butterfly Chair, California Garden Clubs, Inc.
April 23, 2019	Garden Myths	Marlene Simon, The Plant Lady
May 28, 2019	Japanese Maples	Greg <u>Gayton</u> , Green Acres Nursery



Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival

Pam McCabe, Tours

The field trip committee is planning a trip to Lodi on Friday, November 2, to experience the annual migration of the Sand Hill Cranes and the 22nd annual Lodi Crane Festival. The cranes descend into the delta wetlands in awe-inspiring numbers with elegant choreography. The abundance of crane habitat nourishes the area's agricultural roots.

This year's schedule and tour registration will be available in early September. Given last year's tour descriptions, the committee is recommending a tour that would include the dramatic crane fly-in with a presentation by a Department of Fish and Wildlife docent. Last year this tour was \$35 and began at 3:55 pm and lasted about 3 hours. Those who choose to participate will carpool to downtown Lodi in the afternoon, then join the tour with bus transportation to the viewing site.

If you would like to participate in this field trip, contact Pam McCabe at pamsaloha@gmail.com. Since many tours sell-out before the festival starts, Pam will purchase tickets when they become available and participants can reimburse her.

Raffle Donations Needed

Vivian Baier, Raffles

This year our raffle will consist of items donated by garden club members. You are invited to bring a raffle item (which doesn't have to be garden related) to our meetings. Let's make it interesting! We all have items that we are tired of but could be a treasure to someone else. Please bring your donation by 6:30 p.m. so there is time to include it in the raffle that evening. If you have any questions, call Vivian Baier at (586)930-2105.

Photography Contest: The Votes are In!

Fran Hawkins, Chair



The 2018 Photo Adventure is almost complete. Our thanks to everyone who participated in this year's adventure. The standard was very high making the judging quite difficult, but after much deliberation (not to mention wine and beer) the judges voted.

Want to find out who was voted best adventurer? Who inspired the judges the most? We encourage you to attend the September meeting, (especially if you participated in the contest) where we will announce the winners.

All winning photos are framed, and the overall and 1st place winners will receive a complimentary 2019 Garden Club calendar where their entries will be showcased.

The [2019 CALENDAR](#) will be on sale at the September and October meetings. All of the entries are included in the calendar, along with the garden club board and general meeting dates.

Come celebrate all the courageous and talented members who joined us in this year's adventure.



Sacramento River Valley District News

Berniece Jones, District Liaison

The next [Sacramento River Valley District](#) (SRVD) Meeting is on October 9th. Doors open at 9 a.m. and the meeting begins at 10 a.m.

Our club is tasked with furnishing three *quality* items for the raffle table. We already have one of our quota, but need two more. If anyone has an unused, *really nice* item that you would like to re-gift, please let me know.

The speaker for this meeting is Barbara Daley from the *Community Area Residents Environment Stability* organization. Her topic is: *What Impact Will the Delta Tunnels Have on You?* Lunch is always served and cost for meeting and lunch is \$10.00

We will carpool as usual from the RMA building at 8 AM. Those wishing to attend please let me know so that I can make lunch reservations. Lunch reservation deadline is October 4th by 5 p.m. Interested? Call Berniece. 916-354-2873



Sacramento River Valley District Fall Sale, October 6 & 7, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Berniece Jones, District Liaison

The annual fall sale for the [Shepard Garden and Arts Center](#) is arriving early this year. SRVD will have a booth again this fall.

Each club is required to donate items to the sale. Please check your gardens to see if there are any plants that can be divided and given to our club for this sale. We are interested in plants, crafts, and any garden art type of items you may have new or want to re-gift. If anyone needs plastic containers to contain your donated plants, I have lots and can get them to you. Since the sale precedes Halloween, seasonal items would be appropriate. I will collect and take items to the sale on Friday Oct. 5th. Please contact me and we can arrange for handoff of donations.

This sale has many vendors with unique crafts, plants, jewelry, antiques, etc. I hope you get a chance to go to Shepard Garden that weekend and stroll through the booths for great bargains.

Berniece Jones, 7465 Colbert Drive, 916-354-2873

Nursery Discount Program

Debbie Kolmodin, Chair

Just a friendly reminder to make sure you take your RVGC discount card when you head out to pick up plants for your winter garden. There are ELEVEN fabulous nurseries waiting to give us a discount.

Our website has a [list](#) of all the places you can shop for plants and flowers to receive a discount. You could print out the list and keep it in the car to help you plan your plant buying trip. If you don't yet possess your club discount card, when you arrive for the September meeting, check the back of your name badge for the card. Badges are always located at the greeter's table. If you have misplaced your card and need a new one, it can also be obtained at the greeter's table. [Get the complete discount list here.](#)



The Balloon Flower: Fun in the Garden

Jamie Fox, Newsletterer

This is a fun (and hardy) plant to grow. Native to the Russian Far East, China, Japan, and Korea, the Balloon Flower (*Platycodon Grandiflorus*) has become a garden sensation in the US.

A member of the Campanulaceae family, which includes bellflower and lobelia, its common name derives from its eye-catching hot-air balloon shaped flower buds.

The balloon flower provides a burst of welcome color anywhere in the garden. An easy-care perennial, the balloon flower is *deer resistant* and an excellent plant for a border garden. It establishes a sturdy root system, and seeds dropped at season's end have every chance of successful germination the following spring.

The balloon flower develops quantities of dark blue (a rare treat in nature), pink, or white flowers. The buds poof out first into a round balloon shape and then burst open into starry blossoms. It's a great choice for gardening with children because it's easy to grow, comes back year after year, and the inflated buds never cease to delight.

Really easy to grow from seeds, the plants can reach two feet tall and thrive in any sunny or partially sunny location. It likes loamy, moderately moist, but well drained soil. That said, I have a balloon flower growing in a pot on my deck (for *years*, poor thing) and that plant is VERY forgiving. Mine desperately needs to be replanted, and in the hot summer it has gotten a *wee bit fried* from excessive sun, yet it keeps on giving me balloons.

Deadheading spent flowers will prolong their bloom time, but be careful not to cut the stems themselves because new buds form on the existing stem. Balloon flowers can tolerate moderate drought conditions, but if the soil dries out completely, you will need to give the plants a good soaking. The plant dies off in the winter, yet happily reappears in the spring.

Not only is the balloon flower a fun plant to grow, you can also eat it!

In Korea the plant and its root are referred to as *Doraji*. Whether dried or fresh, Doraji is a popular ingredient in salads and traditional Korean cuisine. Should you want to sacrifice your balloon flower plant to the dinner table, make sure you soak and wash the root (a lot) and rub it with coarse sea salt which gets rid of the bitter taste.

Better yet, keep your beautiful balloon plant and buy the *doraji* ready made. You would miss those stunning blue flowers catching the light in your garden.



Doraji



DID YOU KNOW?

Dragonflies can fly up to 20 miles per hour!

They also hover and fly backwards. These insect-devouring hunters should be a welcome sight in any garden, consuming gnats, midges, beetles, moths, and mosquitoes. More than 400 dragonfly and damselfly species inhabit North America, they found.

Planting just 3 shade trees around your home can save between \$100 and \$250 per year in energy costs. Best choices for aiding inside temperatures are deciduous trees, which shade the house from the sun in summer, but allow the sun to penetrate during winter. Evergreens are a good choice for blocking cold northern winds.

Figs were the first domesticated crop in the Near East about 11,400 years ago! Archaeologists found carbonized figs in a village north of ancient Jericho, and compared the fruits to modern specimens. Through this comparison, they determined that the fruits had been intentionally propagated.

Don't Miss These Great Annual Plant Sales and Events

Once again, [The Secret Garden](#) in Elk Grove is having its annual Autumn Garden Faire & Plant Sale, September 15 & 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

To learn more about this festive event, click [here](#) to view what the Secret Garden has to offer.



The Art Market is returning for its second year to the Sacramento Valley Chapter's California [Native Plant Society sale](#) this September 22 & 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The market is a showcase of locally-created art and premium hand-crafted goods. Held at the Shepard Garden & Arts Center, this is your chance to scoop up native plants AND art.

Don't forget to head up the road to [Amador Flower Farm's Fall Fun Days](#), September 29 & 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visit the farm animals, take a free tram ride tour of the farm, and venture through the hay bale maze, pumpkin patch, and cornfield maze.

The pumpkin patch and corn maze are open daily 9-4 through October 31, with tram rides on the weekends. It's all FREE!

