



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

Jayne La Grande, President

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Rooting for You.....by Jayne LaGrand, President

Dear Members:

As we begin to wind down the year, it's time to reflect on the accomplishments of the River Valley Garden Club. Starting with membership, the club has a total of 77 members, of which three are honorary members. Sixty-one members renewed their memberships in 2024-25, and eight new members joined the club.

By the end of June, we will have had eight meetings with speakers on topics of gardening trends, the importance of bees, the art of bonsai, caring for indoor plants, roses, herbs, and monarch butterflies.

The club offered a total of seven field trips to members in 2024-25. Tours included viewing Sandhill Cranes in their winter habitat, Hollandale Nursery for poinsettias, the 77th annual Chrysanthemum show, U.C. Davis Arboretum, the Camellia Show at Murer House, a rose garden tour of Master Rosarians Charlotte Owendyke and Linda Knowles, and Sherwood Gardens and Lotus Bonsai Nursery in Placerville.



Last weekend the RVGC held its Garden Stroll and Plant Sale. The Garden Stroll featured seven beautiful gardens with various features and garden art. This is the club's only fundraiser of the year with proceeds supporting scholarships, community grants, and community projects.

Last month we awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to Michael Woods, a college student attending both Cosumnes River College and American River College. Earlier in the year, we awarded a community grant to Alexander Hoberg in support of his Eagle Scout project at CRES School, and this month we will award a community grant to Sacramento Splash. Finally, the club hosted a Spring Wreath Workshop in March.

At the district level, RVGC participated in two district plant sales held in the Fall and Spring, and provided refreshments for the February meeting, and table decorations for the November meeting.

None of this would have been possible without our club members stepping up to volunteer in a myriad of capacities. Thank you to all who made these events possible and contributed to the continuing success of our club. Many jobs well done!



Cheers!

Jayne La Grande
President
River Valley Garden Club

Plant of the Month: The Brightly Colored Zinnia



How would you like to have never-ending color in your garden? If you love vibrant color, Zinnias are hard to beat. Here are some tips to ensure that your zinnias keep blooming throughout the season.

1. Choose the right varieties.

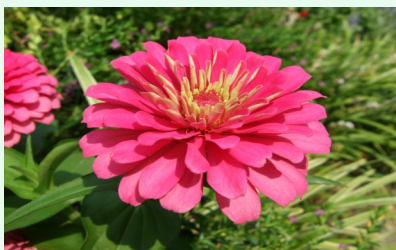
Some zinnias are specifically bred for their prolific blooming habits. Varieties like “Benary’s Giant,” “Cut and Come Again,” and “Zahara,” are known for their robust and continuous blooming.

2. Plant in full sun.

Zinnias are sun-loving plants and they need to have at least 6-8 hours per day. Planting them in full sun ensures they get the energy they need to produce abundant blooms. Avoid shady spots, as this can lead to leggy plants with fewer flowers.

3. Prepare the soil well.

Healthy soil is the foundation of thriving plants. Zinnias prefer well-draining soil that is rich in organic matter. Before planting, work compost or well-rotted manure into the soil. This not only improves fertility, but ensures good drainage, preventing root rot and other diseases. In our area with our clay soil, it might be more reasonable to consider planting your zinnias in a container. Choose a lively color and you can double the impact of brightly colored blooms.



4. Water wisely.

Although zinnias are relatively drought-tolerant once established, they do enjoy regular watering, especially in the early stages of growth. Water deeply, but infrequently to encourage deep root growth. Water the base of the plants, rather than overhead to minimize the risk of fungal disease.

5. Fertilize regularly.

To keep your zinnias blooming profusely, feed them regularly. A balanced water-soluble fertilizer may be applied every 4-6 weeks. A granular slow-release fertilizer may be applied at the beginning of the growing season.

6. Deadhead regularly.

Regular deadheading is the secret to continuous blooming. This simple task encourages the plants to produce more flowers. Pinch off faded blooms regularly and you’ll see a burst of blooms in no time.

Field Trip to Sherwood Gardens and Lotus Bonsai Nursery



Sharon Barton arranged for another wonderful field trip for us . On Saturday, May 17, we traveled to Placerville to visit the Sherwood Demonstration gardens in the morning, and in the afternoon we visited the Lotus Bonsai Nursery.

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden

These gardens provide the public with hands-on, sustainable garden practices. Sixteen individual gardens, including a vegetable garden, a native plant garden, a cottage garden, a rock garden, and a children's garden are offered for public viewing and enjoyment.



The Lotus Bonsai Nursery and Gardens

This five-acre site has been growing, creating, and caring for Bonsai since 1969, and is a full-service Bonsai nursery.

When our club hosted Roger Steel of the American Bonsai Society in January, there was a great deal of interest in the creating and caring of these beautiful living art forms.

The ultimate goal of growing a Bonsai is to create a miniaturized, but realistic representation of nature in the form of a tree. Being in a bonsai garden was magical.

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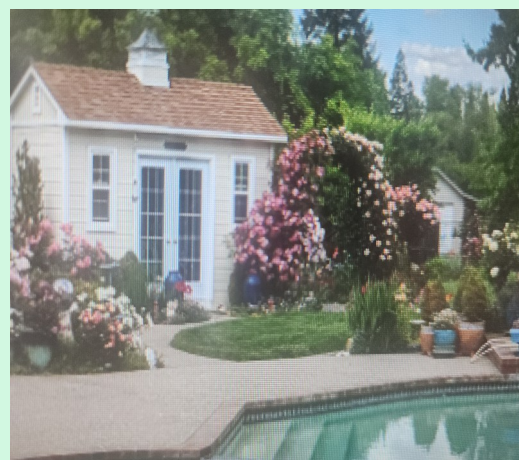
Master Rosarians Present at April Meeting



Rose experts Charlotte Owendyk and Linda Knowles

Charlotte Owendyk and Linda Knowles love roses so much that between them they have over 700 roses. That's 700! Their gardens have been featured in horticultural magazines, and Linda's garden entrance that includes a rustic archway has even been on one of the magazine covers.

Their approach to growing and maintaining roses is to use only organic products that work in tandem with nature to provide a safe environment for birds, butterflies, and insects. As an added bonus, members were invited to visit their rose gardens. The tour of their gardens was truly breathtaking. Please enjoy the photographs below that were taken at the Owendyk and Knowles gardens.



A Note of Thanks from Joy Salo



Joy Salo

You will recall that just about two years ago the club awarded a grant to Joy Salo who was working on her Eagle Scout project by installing a bench at Lake Calero to provide a place for people to sit and rest while out walking around the lake.

We just received a really nice announcement of her graduation from Sac State that included the lovely photo to your left. Her message is written below.

“I’m excited to share that I’ve graduated from Sacramento State University with a B.A. in Design Studies with honors, magna cum laude, and a year ahead of schedule. I was also proud to earn a place on the Dean’s List throughout my time there. This summer, I will be working as the Handicraft Director at Camp Wolfeboro in the Stanislaus National Forest. After that, I’ll be returning to Sacramento to start a digital design internship with the Superior Court of California, as I continue working toward a career in UI/UX Design.”

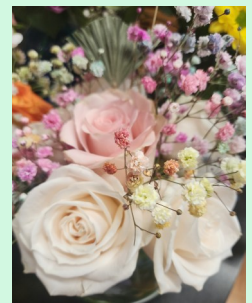
Garden Stroll and Plant Sale a Huge Success!

It takes many hands and lots of hard work to put on an ambitious program like this year’s Garden Stroll and Plant Sale Extravaganza. The committee is deeply grateful for all those who contributed toward its success — whether by donating, planting, hostessing, or spreading the word — you are all truly appreciated.

Seven lovely gardens were on display for the Stroll. Visitors and members alike raved about the beautiful gardens, each of which had distinctly different attributes, but collectively provided an enjoyable experience for all.

The plant sale was equally successful, due in no small part to the many and varied donations of gorgeous pots and healthy plants, stunning and creative floral design pieces from our floral design team, truly great raffle prizes, a silent auction that included a two-night stay at the Murieta Inn and Spa, and a fun and funky variety of garden art pieces.

The club earned nearly \$7,000 which will go toward our Scholarship and Grants program, as well as helping to fund community projects. Please enjoy the photos below.



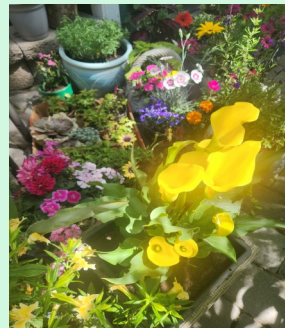
Roses in one of the spectacular floral designs



Shoppers making their plant selections



Kids at the Children’s Activity table



Aerial view of some of the beautiful plants and flowers



Karen Bengard, morning cashier; Donna Hansen and Peggy DeMello in the background