



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

Jayne LaGrande, President

Nancy Compton, Editor

Rooting for You.....Jayne LaGrande, President

Plant Sale Extravaganza!!!

- ◆ Plants to enhance your garden or give as gifts!
- ◆ A Master Gardener all day to answer your garden questions
 - ◆ Interesting, unique garden art
- ◆ Flowers, herbs, veggies, succulents, lots of garden art
 - ◆ A children's activity table
 - ◆ Raffles
- ◆ New this year: Floral Design demonstrations at 9:30, 10:30, and 11:30 a.m.

How you can help:

Bring an item to contribute to the garden cart, which is one of the raffle items...like garden gloves, hose, fertilizer, a sun hat, a watering can, hand tools, a bird house, wind chimes, etc. The cart will be at the next meeting and we'd love to fill it right up!

We're still taking donations, like plants, garden art, pots to use in planting the items for sale. Contact Peggy DeMello at pdemello22@gmail.com or Nancy Compton at ncompton43@att.net. We will pick up your donated items.



Enjoy these photos from prior years' Plant Sales!



Children's Activity Table - Making Mothers Day gifts



Jan Mathews and Mo Young



Debbie Kolmodin and Donna Han-



April Speaker — Mary Jane Sutliff



Nature-lover Mary Jane Sutliff

Mary Jane Sutliff is a Sacramento County Master Gardener who totally replaced her front and sizable back yard with California native plants, joined by bird feeders, water features, bridges, and unobtrusive garden art. A lover of nature, she spends countless hours outdoors working in and enjoying her garden. Her spring garden is dominated by bulbs that peek up through the soil in early spring to announce that spring is here.

If, like Mary Jane, you are captivated by nature, come and learn some new science. This presentation, entitled, “Gardening in the Sunshine,” will focus on uncomplicated solutions for choosing, growing, and caring for plants and germinating seeds. Through extensive research and application, she has synthesized some methods for success in the garden.

Mary Jane is a teacher, an attorney, a member of the California Native Plant Society, and a Master Gardener. She is a member of the Arden Park Garden Club and the Sacramento River Valley District of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. She has also worked at Talini’s Nursery in East Sacramento.



Tomatoes and Marigolds — the best of friends.....

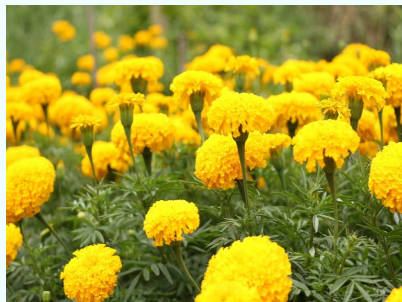


A healthy tomato plant

Have you ever wondered why you see tomatoes and marigolds planted in the same garden bed? Do marigolds really help tomatoes grow?

According to a recent article in an online plant site called “The Spruce,” marigolds are often planted near tomatoes because they actually help tomatoes grow, as they are good at repelling garden pests and suppressing harmful nematodes in the soil. And, their flowers attract pollinators, boosting tomato production.

Marigolds may be planted one to two feet away from tomato plants along the border of a raised bed. Not only do they help with the health of tomatoes, their bright and vibrant colors of orange and yellow bring a cheery look to the garden.



Bright and cheery marigolds.

Another plus with planting marigolds near your tomato plants is that marigolds help deter pests like aphids and whiteflies. Why? Because many garden pests are repelled by their scent. In fact, marigolds have such a strong scent that many animals are repelled by their aroma, and thus will bypass tomatoes that they otherwise might eat for an afternoon snack.

Just like best friends, tomatoes and marigolds like hanging out together, helping our vegetables gardens grow tasty tomatoes.



RIVER VALLEY GARDEN CLUB
Field Trip to Wilton



Welcome to the Farm & Ranch!

Join us on **May 30 at 10:30 a.m.** in Wilton as club member Irene Slavens welcomes us for a tour of her ranch.

We'll visit her rose garden, peruse the raised-bed vegetable gardens, meet the chickens, and see her horses — with luck, we may even be introduced to a brand-new foal.

..... **Saturday, May 30**

• 10:30 — 1:00 •

12841 Leo Lane

(right, 1.3 miles off Dillard)



.....
Bring your lunch • Guests welcome

De-Mystifying Fertilizer



Organic or synthetic? Fall or spring? And what are those numbers anyway? A recent article that came in an email from the **Secret Garden in Elk Grove** described the fertilizing process and made it seem less mysterious. This article is based on that email, with permission from Jennifer Kahl, owner of the Secret Garden.

So here it is spring, and gardeners everywhere are wondering about fertilizing. Which to use becomes a fully loaded question, so here is some information and you can draw your own conclusions.

Jennifer recommends organic over synthetic, because using organic fertilizers is like feeding an athlete a good diet and promoting a proper workout regimen. Synthetic fertilizers are a little like giving that same athlete steroids, which will certainly enhance performance, but is it healthy in the long run?

When a plant is pushed to grow too fast with synthetic fertilizers, you run the risk of the plant actually becoming weaker. Cell walls become thinner as they are stretched too rapidly, and the plant can become more susceptible to pests. This can then introduce a vicious cycle of applying fertilizers and pesticides, and all the while introducing chemicals into the soil which leaves it damaged and barren. Unhealthy soil gives you unhealthy plants, so you are back to fertilizing again. Organic fertilizers are not harmful to worms or beneficial fungi in the soil. By using organic materials, you are ensuring that the soil has what it needs to be healthy, and healthy soil gives you healthy plants.



Fertilizing should only occur when plants are actively growing. Fertilizing when plants are dormant can cause plant damage. In our climate, many outdoor plants actually go dormant in our summer heat. Some plants actively grow in the winter months, so fertilizing is not just a spring thing, and not all plants should be fertilized at the same time.

Okay — now about those numbers: The three numbers on the fertilizer packaging represent the NPK ratio: Nitrogen-Phosphorous-Potassium.

- ◆ Nitrogen for new growth,
- ◆ Phosphorous for root growth and
- ◆ Potassium for overall plant growth.



An easy way to remember which element helps which area of growth is “Up, Down, and All-around.” For example, Cactus Juice Fertilizer is 1-7-6 which means it focuses on root development and overall plant growth.

Dr. Earth All Purpose fertilizer is slow-release, granular fertilizer, with the numbers 4-4-4, which means it helps in all three categories.

The Sesame Street character Kermit the Frog reminds us that it's not easy being green, but with a little lesson in fertilizing, perhaps we can ensure healthy plants and healthy soil which will keep our gardens green.

