

## *Here's the Dirt*

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

Jayne LaGrande President

Nancy Compton, Editor

### *Rooting for You.....by Jayne LaGrande, President*

This is my first letter as President of this productive and dedicated group of people that make up the RVGC. Over the past year I have had the opportunity to serve as co-president under the leadership of President Deb Rooney who has provided many hours of guidance and opportunities to learn this new role. I am grateful to Deb for all her contributions and time.

I am excited to begin working with the 2024-25 Board of Directors to set goals and obtain feedback from them and you about the club. I've observed they are all an industrious, talented group of individuals with a passion for making this club successful. Many members will remain in their roles, while some will exit, and others will rotate to new positions. I am fortunate to have their experience and support going forward.

In addition to the existing board members, I would like to welcome Linda von Merveldt who will undertake the role of V.P. of Membership. Speaking of membership, it's time to renew our dues for



2024-25. As you know, dues are \$25 per year payable by October 1st to be listed in the annual RVGC membership directory and receive California Garden Club, Inc. (CGCI) benefits. We will have a table at the September meeting where you can renew your membership.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not share a bit of information so you can get to know me. I have been a resident of Rancho Murieta since 1992 making the commute down Jackson Road for work and volunteer activities. I am soon to be retired from UC Davis Health after 20 years of managing dementia diagnostic and research clinics, educational programs, and special projects in Sacramento and the East Bay. Prior to that I held other career positions across various professions. I graduated with an MBA in Marketing and Finance from U.C. Davis Graduate School of Management in 1998. I enjoy gardening, yoga and fitness, friendship, and learning new things.

I look forward to seeing and greeting you at the meetings and club events this year.

*Sincerely,*

*Jayne LaGrande, President*

## Margaret Watson-Hopkins a National Winner!



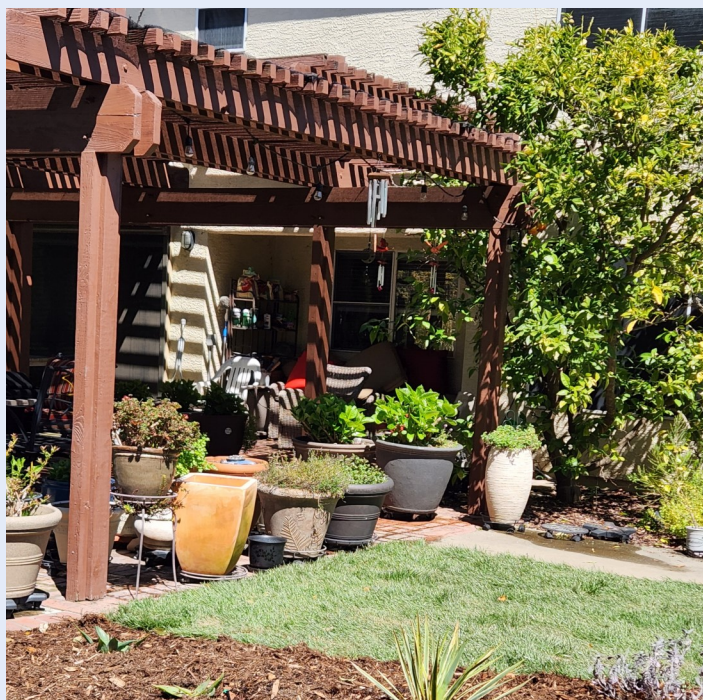
Margaret Watson-Hopkins — award winner at both the state and national levels

When the state level awards were announced at the annual convention of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI) in June, Margaret Watson-Hopkins learned that the Awards Committee had selected her to receive **First Place** in the **Container Grown Vegetable** category, which earned her a nice check and a certificate of award., as well as an enormous sense of satisfaction.

More recently, president Jayne LaGrande was browsing through the CGCI Facebook page when she came across a congratulatory announcement for Margaret proclaiming that she had won in the same category at the national level. Wow! We have a national winner in our midst!

You may recall that Margaret's garden was one of six included in our First Annual Garden Stroll in 2023. Her garden was featured because of her extensive use of large, handsome containers — a smart choice for those preferring to garden without the constant need to bend down and get back up again during the gardening process.

Margaret's amazing array of gorgeous containers are used for growing not only vegetables and herbs, but glorious hydrangeas and other flowering specimens. To add visual interest to her backyard, Margaret hired Laura Halpenny, the River Valley Garden Club scholarship winner in 2020 who many of us have used to design or redesign our landscapes. Laura's design includes meandering pathways and low-maintenance plants, both of which add charm and functionality to Margaret's yard.



Margaret truly enjoys her back yard, where she can have her coffee and the New York Times crossword puzzle in the morning, and relax in the evening with a lovely glass of wine.





## Local Food Writer, Master Gardener, and Rosarian First Speaker for the 2024-25 Garden Club Year



Award winning garden writer Debbie Arrington

Debbie Arrington, co-creator of the daily blog **Sacramento Digs Gardening**, will be our speaker when we return to our regular meeting schedule in September. Debbie is an award-winning garden and food writer who worked for twenty years for the Sacramento Bee. Currently she serves as publications editor for News & Review Publications.

In addition to all of the above, Debbie is a long-time member of the Sacramento Rose Society where she has served as president, and is currently a consulting rosarian. She has won numerous awards for her beautiful roses.

In 2018, Debbie won the Garden Writers Association Silver Award for best article in a large circulation newspaper, and she has won several national awards for garden communications.

Debbie's topic will be "Gardening Trends for 2025." She believes there's never been a better time to be a gardener, and that enthusiasm for gardening is growing nationwide, but especially in California where we have mild weather and can grow a multitude of fruits, vegetables, and flowers. Debbie's presentation promises to be interesting and entertaining. This would be a great time to bring a guest to a meeting to introduce him or her to our club. The date for our first meeting will be **Tuesday, September 24 at 7 p.m.** in the Community Room at the RMA building. Dates for subsequent meetings are listed below.

### Meeting Dates for Garden Club Year 2024-2025

- ♦ September 24, 2024
- ♦ October 22, 2024
- ♦ January 28, 2025
- ♦ February 25, 2025
- ♦ March 25, 2025
- ♦ April 22, 2025
- ♦ May 27, 2025
- ♦ June 24, 2025
- ♦ All meeting dates are Tuesdays and the time is 7 p.m. (6:30 p.m. for social hour.)

♦ *Just look at the fun meetings and activities we have had!*



## Attracting Hummingbirds to your Gardens



Hummingbird

Everyone loves hummingbirds — gardeners and nongardeners alike. One way to attract hummingbirds to our gardens is to hang a feeder outside and then watch them gather as they enjoy the faux nectar. A better way to attract them is to plant flowers that provide real nectar.

Hummingbirds are our tiniest of birds, usually measuring no more than three inches long. Their primary food sources are nectar, pollen, and tree sap.

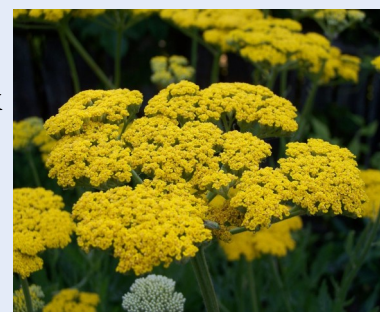


Salvia

Creating a garden of interest to hummingbirds means planting brightly colored flowers that offer tasty nectar to these tiny friends. At this point in the summer, building a hummingbird garden may be a planning project for next spring, but this is a good time to assess your garden needs and perhaps make plans for the future. Shown below are flowers to include in your hummingbird garden.

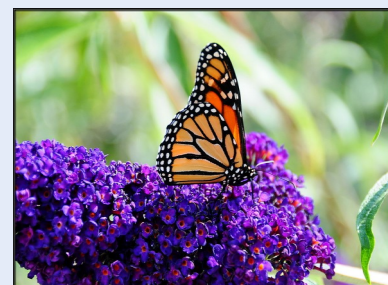
**Salvia.** This is one of the hummingbird's favorite flowers. Salvia is also pleasing to gardeners, as it comes in colors ranging from blue and purple, pink to mauve, and sometimes shades of salmon. A bonus is that they do very well in our growing zone (9b), as they thrive even in dry soil and baking hot sun.

**Yarrow.** Another brightly colored addition to any garden, yarrow comes in white, yellow, pink, coral, and a dusty orange. A bonus of growing yarrow is that it blooms in early summer and can last until mid-fall, depending on variety and species. Although it prefers well-drained, average soil, it has learned to be okay with our clay soil.



Yarrow

**Butterfly bush.** True to its name hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to this colorful species, which provides thick bunches of flowers that come in bluish-purple and pink shades, and blossoms repeatedly from midsummer to fall. Butterfly bushes do well in full sunlight and are fairly drought-tolerant, although they should be well watered in the early growing stages.



Monarch enjoying a butterfly bush

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### Invitation to a Tours and Field Trip Meeting



Sharon Barton, our long-time Tour Captain, is inviting interested members to attend a planning meeting for 2024-2025 trips. The meeting will be held at Sharon's home — **15104 Reynosa Drive on Monday, August 19th at 10:30 a.m.** If you cannot attend but have suggestions, you may send them via email to [golfbum4@sbcglobal.net](mailto:golfbum4@sbcglobal.net) or call Sharon at 510-367-0552.