

RIVER VALLEY GARDEN CLUB A PLACE TO GROW

HERE'S THE DIRT - FEBRUARY 2020

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Rooting For You Pam McCabe, Co-president

Last week I received an email from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply announcing the availability of potted fig trees. I started dreaming of a beautiful fig called Tiger Panache – on the outside it is green with yellow "tiger" stripes and the pulp is blood red. I can picture these beauties served stuffed with goat cheese and drizzled with honey or tossed in a salad. I want this tree! If you have the space, plant one. Here are some things to consider.

Native to the Middle East and northwestern Asia, fig trees were first introduced to California by Franciscan missionaries almost 250 years ago. California has the perfect climate for growing fig trees. They require about half the water of more popular nut and fruit trees. Figs flourish with deep watering twice a month. They also appreciate a cooling blanket of mulch. While they prefer full sun, they'll tolerate some afternoon shade. They require little if any additional fertilizer, in fact, too much plant food will cause fig trees to drop their fruit all at once.

Unlike showy almond or peach trees, figs don't dazzle with spring flowers. The fig fruit itself is an inverted flower. Most popular varieties are self-fertile and don't require another tree for pollination.

Fig trees should be trained to stay short and compact for easy harvesting without a ladder. Young trees need four or five years before they produce their real crop. But after that, they'll keep bearing fruit for decades. In the right conditions, some species will produce two crops in a year.

Fig trees are easy to propagate, so if you know someone with a fig tree you can take an 8-10 inch cutting of wood in early spring. Stick it in a pot with potting soil with several inches below the surface and one or two buds above the soil line. Let the cutting grow in the container for a season before transplanting.

Harvesting needs to be timed right. Picked too soon, figs aren't yummy and they won't ripen once removed from the plant. You have to harvest the fruit so you get them when they're just ripe, but before the squirrels and birds get them! You may want to cover the trees with netting to dissuade wildlife.

For more information about the various varieties of figs and how to plant a fig tree Peaceful Valley's website at www.groworganic.com.



What's Not to Love? "Tiger Panache Figs"



District ProjectNancy Compton, District Liaison

San Bruno Mountain Botanical Garden Selected as CGCI President's Project

Each term, the California Garden Clubs, Inc. president selects a garden-related project on which to focus in an effort to restore and/or create public garden spaces for the general public to enjoy. Our current state president, Shane Looper, has chosen the San Bruno Mountain Botanical Garden as her project. This one-and-a half-acre garden, located within the area of the main park entrance to San Bruno Mountain State & County Park in San Mateo County, was created in the 1990s, but only two decades later, has been allowed to go fallow and now exists in name only.

The focus of this restoration project will not be to return the garden to its exact previous layout, but to collaboratively create a new garden that will showcase native plants while adhering to the principals of water conservation. This garden will also create an education center and outdoor classroom to enhance visitors' knowledge of the unique flora of the area.

President Shane chose this project, not only to restore a beautiful area to its full potential, but to provide an opportunity to engage many groups, from schools to neighborhood organizations, garden clubs, and individuals in this community effort. The financial goal of this two-year project is to raise \$20,000 for the propagation of 1,000 plants representing 100 species native to the area, as well as interpretive signs that tell the story of the mountain and its native plants.

Garden clubs and individuals are invited to join in raising the needed funds by making a check payable to CGCI and sending it to CGCI Treasurer, P.O. Box 75, Graton, CA 95444-0075, with President's Project noted on the memo line.

Notes from the Sacramento River Valley District Nancy Compton, District Liaison

Our club is one of seventeen clubs affiliated with the Sacramento River Valley District, which in turn is an affiliate of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. As such, we have the opportunity of hosting a state board meeting, from time to time, and our turn is coming up this fall. Save the dates of August 31-September 3, because there are always interesting lectures and workshops, and you certainly don't need to be on the board to participate (although non-board members will not be allowed to vote). More specific information to follow.

- Spring Sale: The district's annual Spring Sale will again be held at the Shepard Garden & Art Center the dates are March 14 & 15. Our club has always been a big supporter of this event. You may remember the year we painted gourds like pumpkins and ghosts for the Fall Sale, and bunnies and chickens for the Spring Sale. This is always a wonderful event and an opportunity to purchase quality plants and creative garden art.
- February 18 General Member Meeting: Members of all clubs are invited to attend the three general
 meetings each year; the next one is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18 at the Shepard Garden & Art Center.
 The speaker will be Master Gardener Kimberly Steinmann, a Scientist at the Department of Pesticide
 Regulation in Davis, affectionately known as "The Bug Lady."

If anyone has questions about district events, please contact Nancy Compton at ncompton43@att.net.





RVGC FUNDRAISER – Gardening Gloves

Pam McCabe, Co-president

Our club has embarked on a fundraiser to finance our grants and scholarships. Fundraisers can take a great deal of effort and time for members but this one will require minimal effort while almost doubling our investment. This year the board has agreed to sell gardening gloves. We bought them at a very reasonable price, and are passing the savings along to you for only \$6.00 a pair. These gloves retail at nurseries and hardware stores for up to \$9.00 a pair.

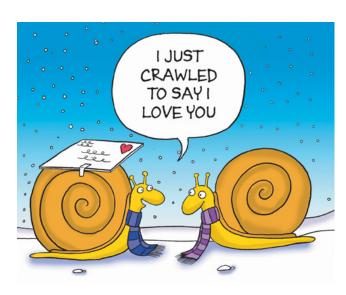
The gloves are called Atlas 370 and are recommended by the Sacramento Master Gardeners. The product testing company, Reviewed, chose the Atlas 370 as the best overall garden gloves for 2020. They are tough and durable without sacrificing comfort and sensitivity. The thin, flexible coating of Nitrile is three times more puncture-resistant than rubber. The Atlas 370s are lightweight, machine-washable and come in bright colors. We have ladies sizes small, medium, and large and men's sizes large and extra large.

Here are a couple online reviews:

- Atlas 370 nitrile gardening gloves are absolutely the Best Gardening Gloves we've ever used, and that's a recommendation from a user with over two decades of experience in horticulture and nursery management.
- Someone in my gardening club recommended these to me 5 years ago. I've never used any other gardening glove other than the ones I use for my roses. They're like a second skin you hardly know you have them on! The rubberized palms and fingertips make it SO easy to work with any plant, even seedlings! This is a MUST HAVE for any gardener.

The gloves will be for sale at each general club meeting or contact Pam McCabe (916) 354-0913 or Donna Hansen (530) 409-3795 to purchase them. Support the club and get some great gardening gloves for yourself and your friends and relatives!







Chris Wasserman, Speaker, February 25, 2020 Berniece Jones, Vice-president, Programs

Spring will be in the air soon and wild flowers will be popping up around Rancho Murieta. For all of us who love to walk our beautiful back woods and lakes, we will be treated to a reminder of the many wildflowers we are privileged to see as we take our morning walks.

At our next meeting, Chris Wassrman, our own member, local expert, and enthusiast on wildflowers, will help us identify the many specimens found locally. As always, our social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with ample time to chat with other members, munch on a cookie, and purchase raffle tickets.

Raffle Donations Needed

Vivian Baier, Raffles

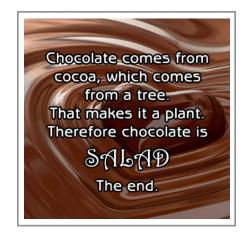
A steady supply of raffle items is needed to ensure the success of the raffle program. So please check your cupboards (or extra Christmas gifts) as we need support from all our members. Should you not know, all the money from the raffles goes to underwrite the club's community projects. You are invited 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 don't bring us the same joy, but could be a treasure to someone else. If you have items to donate, please contact Vivian Baier at (586) 930-2105.



Flowers and speakers and snacks! Oh my! Nancy Miller, Refreshments Chair

Thank you to all who have been contributing to the snacks for our monthly meetings. We've all noticed how delicious and varied they've been. If you would like to share a favorite snack or treat from your garden, contact Nancy (nancy_miller@live.com) or Debra (deverter5@yahoo.com) as there are a couple of opportunities this spring. Many thanks to all for adding to the delight of our monthly get-togethers.







Club Events and Opportunities

Wine Glass Decorating, February 22, 2020 Debbie Kolmodin, Workshops

We have a fun workshop coming up on February 22! If you haven't signed up please consider doing so to share in the fun! Mimosas and light snacks will be served. Class fee of \$30 (CASH ONLY) is due by February 13. Please contact Debbie Kolmodin to sign up at cagodmother60@gmail.com





Terra Cotta Birdbath, March 22, 2020 Debbie Kolmodin, Workshops

Save the date for this terrific project. Create your own Terra Cotta Birdbath embellished w/silk flowers, birds, bees, and butterflies.

Instructor: Stephanie Loera from The Lacy Sunflower

Date: Saturday March 21

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: RMA building front area

Cost: \$30.00 RVGC members; \$35.00 non members

Class fee includes all materials. We will be painting the pot and saucer then gluing all the embellishments onto the pot to create this fetching birdbath! You will also receive a ticket for a chance to win a gift basket provided by our instructor Stephanie of The Lacy Sunflower to be drawn at the end of the class!



Floating Plant Arrangement, April 15, 2020 Debbie Kolmodin, Workshops

Instructor: Sue Golden

Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Golden Pond, 3275 Sierra College Blvd., Loomis

Project: Floating Plant Arrangement

Cost: \$25.00 RVGC club member; \$30.00 non member. NOTE: Class is

limited to 14 people

Transportation: Meet at RMA parking lot at 8:45AM. Those that are able to drive and take passengers please let Debbie know. We will carpool.

Bring clippers and wear comfy clothes. Dress for cooler weather as this will be in a garage or outdoor workshop area. The class fee includes one floating planter made by Sue Golden ready to create a water plant arrangement. All plants and planting materials are also included.

Lunch is at 1:30 at High Hand Cafe following the workshop. Reservations have been made for 14 people.







Life Without Them

Jamie Fox, Newsletterer

Hummingbirds, perching birds, flying foxes, fruit bats, possums, lemurs, and even the lizard that sells insurance, do it. Pollen wasps, ants, flies, bee flies, hover flies, mosquitoes, lepidopterans, butterflies, moths, and flower beetles do it also.

Know where I'm going with this?

Studies project that up to 200,000 different species could play roles in pollinating the 300,000+ types of flowering plants worldwide. Most plants require the assistance of pollinators to produce seeds and fruit. About 80% of all flowering plants, and over *three-quarters* of the food crop plants that feed humankind rely on pollinators of some type, insects being the most common type. HOWEVER. The secret bond of partnership that most people don't know about is that *neither plant nor pollinator populations can exist in isolation*. Should one disappear, the other is one generation away from disaster. And that disaster will come crashing down on our pointed little heads, for without the pollinators, we don't eat.

We have been reading about this conundrum for years, thus I don't want to belabor the point. But hopefully, I can encourage you to help out. How, you ask?

Feed them.

As you start to muse on your spring and summer gardens, perhaps you can incorporate a buffet for the pollinators. If you don't know where to start, the <u>Proven Winners website</u> has a handy list of the top <u>ten annuals</u>, <u>perennials</u>, and <u>flowering shrubs</u> which feed a range of pollinators. Thirty plants are there for your gardening delight with complete descriptions of how the plants will grow, who they will feed, their size, and zone.

In addition, if you are not convinced of the importance of the pollinators, <u>WATCH THIS</u>. This little clip is an intimate view of the amazing inner world of the pollinators. <u>This extraordinary footage</u> is from Louis Schwartzberg, a cinematographer and director who captures breathtaking images that celebrate life and its intricacies. The footage is taken from his film titled *Wings of Life*. If it isn't some of the most of the amazing footage you have ever seen, well, as my mother used to say, "then I don't know what." All you have to do is click a blue link in this paragraph and prepare to be astonished. It's less than five minutes. After that? Plant a buffet.

Mother Nature sends you Valentine's Day greetings all year long. Will you be her Valentine?







Founded in 2003, the RVGC is a member of California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI) and, National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC), and qualifies as a 501c3 nonprofit organization.