



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

Pam McCabe, President

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Rooting for You.....by Pam McCabe, President

After attending our May 8th plant sale at the Farmers Market, I headed to Plymouth to shop for daylilies at the Amador Flower Farm. I've saved enough space in a sunny location to add three daylilies.

Prior to my nursery visit, I used the daylily database on the nursery's website. You access the database by clicking on the "shop" header, then selecting "online store." You can search by specific qualities and view color photos of over 1200 varieties.

I wanted daylilies that are evergreen, that rebloom, and are a bold, darker color. I identified four daylilies to check out at the Amador Flower Farm. None were in bloom yet. I was looking for three of the same variety, and some varieties only had a couple in stock. I selected "Collector's Choice." It is described as having a raisin plum *self with gold edge. Its bloom season is early and mid, plus it reblooms. Its foliage is described as evergreen.



The early blooming daylilies will be out in mid-May, and many will be in full bloom when the Amador Flower Farm hosts its Daylily Days June 12-13. Remember, as garden club members we have a 15% discount at the Amador Flower Farm.

I recently read that daylilies are a good plant to hide fading daffodils. I hate waiting for the daffodils' leaves to turn yellow — it looks so unsightly, but necessary to feed the bulb.

Remember last year when some of us purchased the very special Plant America daffodils that are currently only available to garden club members? I planted them in containers so I could move the bulbs. They were very late in blooming, but spectacular.

My daffodils are done blooming and still in the containers. As soon as I get my new daylilies planted, then the ugly fading daffodils will be planted behind them.

**Self is the descriptive word used in the catalog to refer to the petals and sepals of a single color.*



Under the Mighty Oaks... Meeting and presentation at Heringer Winery



Fourteen club members attended the Sacramento River Valley District Meeting and luncheon at the Heringer Winery in Clarksburg

On the warm and lovely day of Tuesday, May 18, fourteen club members drove down the Sacramento River to the little town of Clarksburg and onto the property of Heringer Winery for the final meeting and luncheon of the Sacramento River Valley District for the 2020-2021 year.

Steve Heringer, whose family has owned and farmed the property since the 1800's spoke about his family's history and relationship with the land, and how they have farmed this productive soil for so many years.

Heringer shared with the group that the family previously grew row crops, but switched to grapes many years ago, and is now fully committed to sustainable, responsible growing practices. The family has enhanced its sustainability practices by building a partnership with the Wildlife Case Association of Sacramento that provides habitat for rehabilitated owls.

They are also certified by an agency called Protected Harvest, under which growers are required to maintain high standards and practices defined as environmentally sound, to include responsible pest management, soil and water quality, and social responsibility.

The Heringer Winery is now run by Steve Heringer's sons, one of which obtained an advanced degree in Viticulture, and has cutting-edge knowledge of sustainable growing and marketing practices.

Following a tasty box lunch provided by the Clarksburg Garden Club, attendees wandered through the lovely property, several commenting on its resemblance to a southern mansion minus the kudzu. Wine tasting was available to those who wished to stay and socialize.

Photo below courtesy of Margaret Watson-Hopkins



Plant of the Month...the Spunky, Colorful Nasturtium

As a child, I was often mesmerized by my grandmother's garden, which ran the gamut from sweet-smelling roses to strawberries, and to what she called her Victory Garden.

But it was her brightly colored flowers that grew so easily and prolifically in the moist, warm air of Florida's Gulf Coast that I found especially dazzling. Among my favorite of her flowers was her massive display of tumbling nasturtiums, overflowing in her window boxes, intermingling with her vegetables, and spilling out of pots.



Although not nearly as impressive, I have grown nasturtiums here from time-to-time with mixed results. They may be grown from seed, but I've had more luck this year with a sturdy plant I purchased at the Perennial Plant Society's annual sale.

Nasturtiums are portrayed as easy to grow, even for children. They produce unique greenery, somewhat reminiscent of lily pads. They are showy, grow well in containers, as ground covers, and around vegetables.

A favorite of pollinators, like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, their delightful fragrance makes them a good candidate for cut flowers as well. One unique feature of the nasturtium is that it is edible — the leaves, flowers, and even the seedpods have a peppery, almost mustardy taste.

Nasturtium seeds may be sown directly in the soil, and its tiny leaves will appear in 7-10 days, which is why they are a good plant for children who are just starting their gardening journey. Cutting off dead or fading flowers will prolong their bloom. They grow well in quickly-draining soil, but best in sandy soil, which in our area means the soil should be amended heavily, or better yet, plant in a container so you have control over the soil content.

Though you typically won't see recipes in this publication, I'd like to share a salad recipe that is easy, pretty, and tasty. It's called Nasturtium & Shrimp Salad. Served with crusty bread and a sparkling wine, it makes a nice meal on a hot day. Here are the ingredients:

- ◆ 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ◆ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ◆ Salt & pepper to taste
- ◆ 1 cup peeled, deveined, cooked shrimp, coarsely chopped
- ◆ 1 tablespoon chopped scallions
- ◆ 1 small tomato coarsely chopped
- ◆ 1/2 avocado — pitted, peeled & cubed
- ◆ 1 tablespoons chopped fresh nasturtium leaves
- ◆ Lettuce leaves
- ◆ Nasturtium blossoms for garnish

Pour lemon juice into a small bowl. Whisk in the olive oil and season with salt & pepper. Add shrimp and scallions and toss lightly. Let stand for 15 minutes. Mound the mixture on lettuce leaves and garnish with nasturtium blossoms.

Enjoy!



Next Farmers Market – Saturday, June 12



At our first Farmers Market outing for 2021, which was Saturday, May 8, the photo on the left is what our tables looked like when we started. Within one hour, they looked more like this:

And remember...this was even before the official start of the Farmers Market season; however to our advantage, it was also one day before Mothers Day.



Another reason our sales were so brisk and successful is because of the generosity of our members who donated vegetable plants, violets, succulents, interesting grasses, floral arrangements, garden art, and all manner of garden-related paraphernalia like grow-bags and hand tools. We also had gloves and seeds.

And finally, we are eternally grateful for the continued support of our club's Farmers Market sales by Green Acres and Big Oak nurseries, both of which donated beautiful flowers and plants. Many, many thanks to all.

Again this year, we will be at the Farmers Market on the second Saturday of each month, which means that our next appearance will be on **Saturday, June 12**. We have already received several wonderful donations. Look for *Aloe bellatula* plants donated by Julie Davis, as well as garden art, donated by Pam McCabe because these items wouldn't fit in her new, smaller garden. Pam's donations feature a large metal giraffe with a secret compartment under the tail in the event that you would like to add a candle to the giraffe so he may be seen at night. Look for miniature succulent gardens as well.



Aloe bellatula

If you have items to donate, please bring them to the Farmers Market on June 12 between 7:15 and 7:45 a.m. Our customers will be waiting and looking for good-quality plants and garden-related items.

After Saturday, June 12, the next Farmers Market dates will be:



Miniature succulent gardens May!

- ◆ **Saturday, July 10**
- ◆ **Saturday, August 14**
- ◆ **Saturday, September 11**
- ◆ **Saturday, October 9**

Thanks to the concerted effort of our club and our community — we made a profit of over **\$1200** at the Farmers Market in



Tall, stately metal giraffe. Available with or without the sun bonnet.



We never missed a beat..... RVGC had a full year despite the pandemic

While many clubs put 2020 on hold, or relied solely on Zoom meetings, the creativity and flexibility of the River Valley Garden Club ensured a full year of programs, activities, fund-raising, scholarships and grants, and even tours.

Programs:

- ◆ **September:** Tour of four members' gardens using pandemic protocols. Members were asked to RSVP to be put in groups, greeters assisted with parking and crowd control, and a program describing each garden was produced. We even provided a "comfort station" complete with snacks and rest rooms.
- ◆ **October:** Also held outdoors. The topic was "Propagation," and as the HOA did not allow nonfamily groups of more than ten, members were asked to RSVP and were put in groups to meet in small clusters at a neighborhood park. Three stations were set up, and presenters provided their demonstration, after which they packed up their materials and supplies, and then went on to the next station, so that members did not need to move. Irene Slavens demonstrated how to propagate roses; Pam McCabe showed how to propagate geraniums; and Nancy Compton demonstrated the process for propagating succulents.



Pam McCabe discussing propagation of geraniums

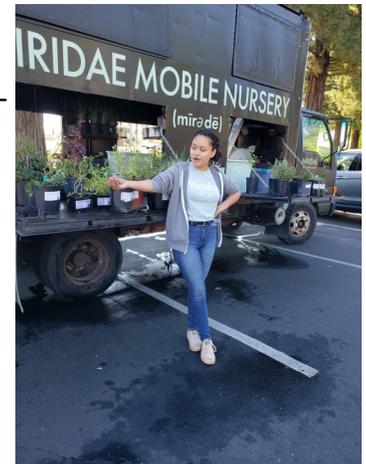
RVGC does not schedule programs in November or December due to the holidays.

The first three months of 2021 were Zoom meetings:

- ◆ **January:** Jan Fetler, Master Gardener and former club member provided a presentation on, "The Importance of Honey Bees."
- ◆ **February:** "Building Resilient Gardens" was presented by Master Gardener Karrie Reid.
- ◆ **March:** Native gardener Elizabeth Seagull provided a program entitled, "Plant America, Plant Native : How to Build a National Park in Your Own Back Yard," which focused on the importance of native plants in the ecosystem.

By April we could meet outside again, and we led with a unique program:

- ◆ **April:** The Miridae Mobile Plant Truck came to the plaza. Two presenters talked about native plants, after which members were able to purchase native plants from an actual plant truck.
- ◆ **May:** A tour of Irene Slavens' amazing vegetable garden in Wilton.
- ◆ **June:** Kokedama demonstration, installation of officers for 2021-2022, and end-of-year celebration and luncheon.



Brenda of Miridae Mobile

Tours:

- ◆ Hike on the Gnome Trail in small groups with social distancing
- ◆ Trip to Vannetta Winery in small groups, also with social distancing
- ◆ Trip to Hollandale Nursery in Lodi to view their enormous selection of poinsettias and learn about their operation
- ◆ Local hike to see the Bald Eagle, and it was successful — as there was a sighting.
- ◆ Trip to the Worm Whisperer
- ◆ Signoretti Hop Farm—tour and presentation
- ◆ Horton's Iris Farm — Loomis

Right: One group of Gnome Trail hikers at the Wedding Party area



(continued on next page.....)

We Never Missed a Beat.....continued from page 5

Community Service: On Veterans Day, 2020, we installed and dedicated a Blue Star Memorial Marker honoring our community's veterans. This involved Troop #633 that presented the colors; a local music teacher who played patriotic music on the trumpet; a presentation from veteran Jack Seigal; greetings from Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc., Director Robin Pokorski; Greetings from California Garden Clubs, Inc., President Shane Looper; a history of the Blue Star Marker provided by Pam McCabe; and a laying of a floral bouquet created by Community Service Chair Debbie Kolmodin.



Scoutmaster and Boy Scout from Troop #633

Scholarship Awards:

Two scholarships of \$1000 each were awarded:

- ◆ **Kathy Truong:** Earned a certificate in Sustainable Landscape Design, and is looking forward to obtaining a degree in Horticulture. Kathy has a passion for volunteering for several nonprofit organizations within the community.
- ◆ **Christian Nielsen:** Attending CSUS and working toward a degree in Horticulture. Christian's ultimate career goal is to work for the State of California in the field of Conservation.



*Scholarship winner
Kathy Truong*

Grant Awards:

Two awards of \$500 each:

- ◆ **Murieta Trail Stewardship:** An all-volunteer organization that has created and maintains the trails in our community to preserve great trail experiences for hikers, walkers, bird watchers, mountain bikers, trail runners, equestrians, and all those who enjoy the outdoors.
- ◆ **Mountain Creek Middle School:** A middle school with a thriving garden and an instructional program that includes learning about sustainable agriculture and healthy choices for both cooking and eating. This school garden was awarded First Place by the California Garden Clubs, Inc.

Fundraising:

- ◆ **Farmers Market:** RVGC had a booth at the local Farmers Market every Second Saturday from May through October. Club members, local nurseries, and community members donated seedlings, plants, annuals, garden art, bird houses, and all manner of garden-related items toward this effort which was enormously successful and allowed us to fully fund our scholarship and grants programs.

Ongoing publicity:

- ◆ **River Valley Times:** Regular articles highlighting club activities, many thanks to reporter Gail Bullen;
- ◆ **Rancho Murieta Magazine:** Monthly column in this local magazine called, "In the Garden," featuring plants and flowers that grow well in our region;
- ◆ **Our New Facebook Page!** That's right! We now have a presence on Facebook with a lively page and a growing following of gardeners and even wanna-be gardeners.



*Scholarship Winner
Christian Nielsen*

New Members:— Ten new members this year!

All of this was accomplished during a year with strict health and safety regulations, as well as limited availability of meeting space and presenters.

Good job — RVGC members! It couldn't have been done without your support, your flexibility, your creativity, and your patience. I think we could justifiably say **RVGC Rocks!**

A morning at the Farm....

Question: What do you get when you mix roses, horses, and vegetables?

Answer: Irene Slavens' bit of heaven in Wilton.

The weather couldn't have been more beautiful for the RVGC's visit to Irene Slavens' lovely farm in Wilton when over twenty club members gathered to tour the garden, pet the friendly horses, and smell the roses.

After living and working in the Bay Area, Irene and her husband moved Wilton and purchased five acres on which to develop their farm. This entailed lots of rototilling, adding soil, and a massive effort at weed-pulling, but the result is most satisfying. Irene says that the sense of satisfaction of eating your own home-grown vegetables is not only tasty, but good for the soul.



Irene leading a tour of her amazing garden



Roses and horses

This year Irene's husband planted watermelons and cantaloupes, making little greenhouses out of plastic juice bottles with the bottoms cut off. This seemed to work well, and the melons are now thriving.

At a brief business meeting just prior to the farm tour, the following members were elected to the River Valley Garden Club's board of rectors for the 2021-2022 year:

President:

Co-Vice President/Programs:

Co-Vice President/Programs:

Vice President/Membership:

Treasurer:

Deb Rooney

Michele Blomberg

Nancy Compton

Jan Mathews

Karen Bengard

These officers will be installed at the End-of-Year Luncheon/Party to be held on Tuesday, June 22nd.



*The horses love carrots
(It seems that they love Irene as well)*



Over twenty members joined in the tour of Irene's farm



One stunning variety of roses at Irene's farm



RVGC Earns Several Statewide Awards

At the Annual Convention of the California Garden Clubs, Inc., the River Valley Garden Club picked up seven statewide awards for recognition of excellence. This is a major accomplishment, considering that this statewide organization has 19,568 members, 239 clubs, and 43 associate plant societies.

Here is a listing of our awards:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| ◆ 1st place — Community Impact Award | \$150 |
| ◆ 1st place — Blue Star Memorial Site Beautification | \$50 |
| ◆ 2nd place— Achievement for a Single Event | \$25 |
| ◆ 2nd place — Club Program | \$20 |
| ◆ 2nd place — Club Touring | \$15 |

In addition, we earned a **Sweepstakes** award for winning the most awards in our category, which is based on club size. And — we earned a **Blue Ribbon Club** status, which is based on several factors, including how many programs and activities are provided, how many members serve on district and state boards, contributions to state projects (like Penny Pines) and similar criteria.

As a matter of explanation, the Community Impact Award was for the Blue Star Marker we installed and dedicated; the Blue Star Memorial Site Beautification was for the plantings around the memorial marker; the Achievement for a Single Event was for our Farmers Market project which, although it was stretched over six months, was considered one project or event. The club programs and tours are self explanatory.

Despite the challenges related to the pandemic, which included lack of available meeting space and inability to have live presentations at our meetings, we managed to be highly creative and flexible, ultimately providing top quality programs and events for our members.

And to all our members — a **Big Thank You** for your participation, without which these awards — and the great year they represent — would not have been possible.



*A hearty welcome to our new members!
They are:*

- * *La Trelle Medlong*
- * *David Walters*
- * *Nicole Colyer*

We look forward to meeting each of you and having you join us for our many interesting programs and activities!



Tour of Angel Wing Farms

How many times have we driven past the Angel Wing Farm without ever realizing what a treasure this farm is — or that it even exists? According to the highly enthusiastic and energetic Farm Manager Sherrie Hart, the farm was created to serve the Gate Restaurant at the Murieta Inn & Spa. All fruits, herbs, and veggies are used at the restaurant to ensure that their menu items are farm-fresh and healthy.

The farm is just a stone's throw from Rancho Murieta. Going west on Jackson Highway, take the driveway just west of the large pond, which is west of the Equestrian Center. You will see the all-glass greenhouse which is the first building to the right.



A view of the all-glass greenhouse



The ever-exuberant Sherrie Hart



A view of some raised beds

Sherrie's vision for the farm extends into the future and into the community, where she hopes to form partnerships with the school and with community groups. She sees education as a major focus, as so many people, especially children, have no idea where their food comes from, or even how it is grown.

Eventually the olive trees will be used to make olive oil, and the grapes will be used to make wine. Right now, Sherrie is conducting experiments to determine which way of growing specific crops will result in the highest yield. In fact, she and her son, Maceo, own and work two other farms in the North Sacramento/Antelope area, and they often have friendly competitions. For example, right now they are growing potatoes which are laying in bins. Is it best to cover the potatoes? Or is it better to let some light into the tray? They'll soon find out. Sherrie is also a plant rescuer. The greenhouse currently has over two dozen thriving poinsettia plants that she salvaged after the hotel tossed them following the Christmas holidays. Our club has been invited to return as the farm develops.



Raised bed with veggies



Several members brought a picnic lunch



Experimental tray of potatoes

Coming Up.....

* **End-of-Year Party — Tuesday, June 22**

Meet at Stonehouse Park at 10:30 a.m.

Theme: “Emerging from Covid”

Open to RVGC members and their spouse/significant other

Festivities include:

- * A kokedama demonstration
- * Installation of officers
- * Pot luck luncheon

Attendees are asked to bring the following:

- * A smile
- * An appetizer or salad to share (with serving utensil)
large enough to serve 10-12 people
- * Your own drink (may be an adult beverage)
- * A chair

RSVP by June 18th to Ruth at lechelermoore@gmail.com



****Note: This will be our last function of the year (we operate on a fiscal year — July 1 to June 30.) Our first meeting of the 2021-2022 year will be held on the fourth Tuesday of September — September 28.***

Also, this will be your last newsletter until August 2021, as we do not publish a newsletter in July.

Free Summer Workshop Series....

Get more out of gardening (and get answers, too) during a summer series of educational workshops hosted by the new Orangevale Farm and Garden Club..

This club actually started as a Facebook group, which already has more than 300 members. At **9 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month**, the club will host a one-hour workshop at the Grange, located at **5807 Walnut Avenue in Orangevale**. **Everyone is welcome to these in-person events, and admission is free.**

We missed the first workshop, which featured our friend and Sacramento’s Bug Man Baldo Villegas, who spoke on Saturday, June 5. But there are two more sessions:

Saturday, July 3 — Justin Eubank of ACE Hardware will present “ACEing Your Way through Drip Irrigation.” This will focus on converting a landscape to drip irrigation, an important water-saving method, especially during a drought year.

Saturday, August 7 — Environmental educator Julie Barbour will explain, “When Plants Harmonize with the Soil.” An expert in integrated pest management, Barbour will discuss how plants and soil work together. When that important relationship is healthy, so are the plants.

Have a wonderful

