



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

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Rooting for You.....by Deb Rooney, Co-President

It takes a village.....and what a village we have as a club!

It's hard to believe I've been your President for the past three years! It's time to pass the baton — and over the past few weeks I've been reflecting on my time with you as President. Lots to think about — so many good memories, so many new friends, so much accomplished for this community, and so much fun!

We have accomplished a lot in the past three years. We've given out \$8,000 in scholarships, \$6500 in grants to local community groups, celebrated our 20th anniversary as a club, started our Garden Stroll tradition, and earned more money in one plant sale than we thought possible.



20th Anniversary Display

We actively supported our Garden Club District(s) and brought the Cosumnes River Elementary School garden back to life. We've been on countless unique field trips and tours, started a trekkers group (stay tuned for more hikes coming soon), bought more poinsettias than you can imagine, learned more interesting tidbits about owls, bats, flowers, plants, and trees than I could have thought possible, all while making new friends along the way. WOW — THANK YOU for all your hard work and support!



Showing off poinsettias!

To the board — THANK YOU. You are the best! You make board meetings fun, lots of laughter and chat while being productive and focused on our mission. You each take so much responsibility for your positions; you're always thinking of our membership and what they might need or want. You always think about what's best for the club, and for that I am eternally grateful. You made my job easy!



Trip to Wilton Family Lavender Farm

To our members, thank you for supporting this club with your membership. The uniqueness of this club is that as a member, you can be as active as you wish. Some of you join us during the day for field trips and tours, some of you participate in workshops, and many of you support our community projects. I often get emails after each newsletter saying thank you for all the wonderful information. Nancy Compton does a great job every month! Many of you join us on the 4th Tuesday for our speakers. I



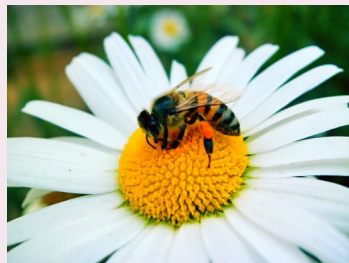
Refurbishing the CRES school garden

love it — being able to pick what works best for you and your schedule and still be a part of this amazing group is the best part of being a member.

For all of this, I could not be more grateful to each one of you for your contributions — either as a board member or a club member. Both matter. I could not be prouder of having been your president, and I am so appreciative of all the support along the way. It's been so fun! Thank you!

Deb

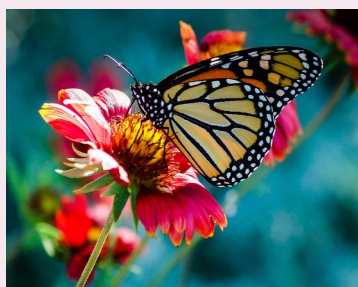
June is Pollinator Month!



Sacramento Digs Gardening announced that June is Pollinator Awareness Month by providing the following information in their daily blog:

“From the biggest carpenter bees to tiny sweat bees, from hummingbirds and bats to beetles, moths and butterflies, our natural world depends heavily on the continued efforts of our pollinators.”

In fact, approximately 75 percent of flowering plant species need the help of animals and insects to move their heavy pollen grains from plant to plant (or within a plant) for fertilization. This includes flowers on fruit trees and vegetable plants — the plants that help feed us.



Why do pollinators need so much publicity? Unfortunately they continue to be endangered by disappearing natural habitats, urbanization, and the indiscriminate use of pesticides in gardening and farming.

Kathy Morrison, co-writer/editor of *Sacramento Digs Gardening* shared that she sees quite a few pollinators in her home garden now, but states that it does take some time and thought to develop a welcoming landscape. Here are a few of her tips beyond planting to attract pollinators and help them thrive:



- * Leave some open ground for native ground-nesting bees, and leave it alone. Kathy says that she turned over some soil in the garden one time and sent one poor bee into a tizzy. It apparently had just returned to the site and was trying to find its (then buried) nest. Kathy felt horrible.



- ◆ Provide safe access to fresh water. For bees, a shallow dish with sloped sides or with pebbles in it will allow them to drink without drowning. Kathy puts marbles in clean pot saucers. Keeping them full of water can be a challenge in summer, but well worth it. Water features are also great additions to gardens for use by birds.

- ◆ Use integrated pest management practices when solving garden pest or disease problems. (See the UC IPM website at <https://ipm.ucanr.edu/>). A general pesticide will wipe out everything — it's like setting off a bomb to get out a laundry stain.



For more information on Pollinator Month and ways to help these important creatures thrive, check out the many resources at <https://pollinator.org/>

Being rather nosy, I decided to check out the above web site, which is the official website of the Pollinator Partnership. There are so many interesting topics and suggested activities, to include Bee-Friendly Gardening, (their motto is no lawn, garden, balcony, or window box is too small!) Eco-regional Planting Guides, Monarchs, and pollinator events like World Bee Day (May 20), Moth Week (July 20-28), the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (October 15-17), and Bat Week (October 21-31).

Maybe we can think about incorporating these ideas into our programs!

Plant Sale a Huge Success!



Items for sale at the Plant Sale Extravaganza

Many thanks to all of our members who spent considerable time and talent to raise veggie and plant starts from seed, propagate plants, refurbish donated pots, join in the planting party, work the event, and in general, support our Plant Sale Extravaganza that was held on Mother's Day, Saturday, May 11, in the RMA parking lot.

With nearly 20 tables of greenery, flowers, and garden art, buyers began eyeing their purchases even before the tables were completely set up or the canopies raised.



Danny Carrillo, our first customer, showing off a lovely arrangement he purchased for his wife.

After everything was set up, our very first and very enthusiastic customer was RMA Board Member Danny Carrillo who selected one of the floral arrangements made by our design team of Rosann Stevenson, Berniece Jones, and Cathleen Riebe.

Those lovely arrangements just flew off the tables.



Candy Hearn chatting with former President and Master Gardener Pam McCabe

One feature that was included this year was the addition of a Master Gardener who was available to answer questions and make recommendations. Former President Pam McCabe worked the first shift, and the second shift was handled by former member Mindy Cecchetini.



Children engaged in making their Mother's Day gifts at the children's activity table

Jan Mathews and Mo Young handled the ever-popular children's activity table where children worked on their Mother's Day gifts by decorating terra cotta pots and then planting a seedling. We may be the only garden club that includes this feature specifically for children, and it is always a hit with the families in our community.

And we are proud to announce that this year's Plant Sale Extravaganza raised enough money to fully fund our Scholarship and Grant program! Again, your participation and support was amazing — this took a total team effort.

Pioneer School Youth Gardeners Send a Note of Thanks

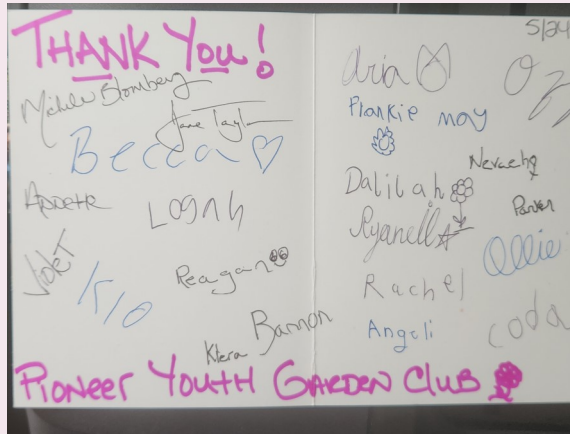


Students in the Pioneer School Garden program sent this photo to our club as part of their "thank you" note.

Our club is proud to have awarded the Pioneer School Youth Garden program one of our grants this year, which they were gratefully able to use to purchase some hand tools and other items needed to ensure that their garden grew and thrived.

Member Michele Blomberg was instrumental in starting this garden program, and she continues to engage in the weekly lessons that have now become part of the curriculum at Pioneer School in the Mt. Aukum area.

The garden itself consists of several raised beds in which vegetables are grown. A compost pile is kept behind the main building and out of the way. And what is so charming is the multitude of endearing garden art that includes angels, cherubs, and a butterfly drinking station with little pebbles to stand on, so they don't get their wings wet.



"Thank you" note from the students in the Pioneer School Garden

On June 11, several club members drove up to the Mt. Aukum area to see the garden and learn more about the program to which the club has contributed. The children engage in a classroom lesson about growing things, after which they go outside to the garden and either plant, tend to, or harvest.

Because school was over and some vegetables were still in the ground, members were invited to pull up onions and garlic, and help themselves to some potted chives that remained after the final plant sale.

School gardens are gaining in popularity as an incentive for healthier eating and increased physical activity. By their very nature, school gardens encourage teamwork, individual responsibility, and a commitment to success.

Following our tour of the school garden, members reconvened at Toscano Winery to enjoy a leisurely lunch under the big white canopy outside.



Club members who visited the Pioneer School Garden



Raised bed with vegetables

Got Snails?



It's a beautiful day and you're excited that you can go outside and play in your garden, but the first thing you notice, almost before you're out the door, is a slimy trail across your garden path. This means, of course, that your garden is now the happy home to snails, or their naked cousins, slugs. Or both.

Dealing with these slimy gastropods is probably #106 on a gardener's list of things they love to do in the garden, so perhaps these suggestions might be helpful.

The favored recommendation for ridding our gardens of these interlopers is to remove them by hand — preferably a gloved hand, and then either smashing them, or drowning them in soapy water, neither of which is appealing. Be sure the water is soapy, however, because they can live quite nicely in plain water, perhaps thinking they have taken a vacation at a lake.

There are two times of the day that are best for locating and removing snails. These are just before dawn, or about 10 o'clock at night, at which time you will certainly need a flashlight to ferret out these sneaky creatures. I don't know about you, but 10 p.m. is past my bedtime, and I can think of several things I'd rather be doing if I were awake, like reading a good book. And who gets up before dawn?

However, I have learned where snails hide during the day, for reasons that range from not liking sunshine to preferring to lurk around in darkness so we can't find them. Try upending an unused terra cotta pot. Or looking under a pile of lumber. Or even in a compost pile. Chances are you will find your snail.

Snail prevention might be a better option. It is known that one way to prevent snails from hanging out in your garden is to scatter crushed egg shells around your plants. Snails and slugs don't like crawling over sharp or jagged edges, so save your egg shells, dry them, then crush them into small pieces. Or try the pan-of-beer method. This involves opening a beer, pouring it into a low sided container, perhaps like a pie tin, and then setting it out in the garden. Presumably snails will be attracted to it, will drink the beer, and then die. This method has two drawbacks: (1) Sounds like a waste of a good beer, and (2) A container of dead snails is smelly and unsightly, and generally, — well just plain gross.

You may or may not be interested to know that snails are not native to the U.S., but during the California Gold Rush, restaurants in San Francisco imported snails from France to serve to their customers. Wow — weren't there better options for feeding gold miners? Some snails sure thought so, and escaped their fate out into the windswept wilds of San Francisco, and from there — everywhere.

And finally, snails and slugs hate plants with a strong smell — and lavender is apparently on top of the list. So we should plant lots and lots of lavender, which is actually a two-fer — (1) snails hate the smell; and (2) bees love lavender, so we are helping pollinators do their job.



*Have a wonderful summer!
Your editor is taking time off.
Next newsletter — September*

