



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

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



Over the last two weeks, Pat and I took a trip to Colorado. We spent time exploring Park City, Dinosaur National Monument, Steamboat Springs, Estes Park, and finally, visiting lifelong friends in Denver. Everywhere we went, we could feel and see that fall had arrived. The aspen trees were dropping their last few leaves, the colors of the season were everywhere, and there was the wonderful chill of fall in the air. We had a great time — took a few walks, saw mountain goats, elk, deer, and mountain sheep, and even tried out electric bikes.....now that's a whole different article!

One of my favorite “finds” was in Steamboat Springs — the Yampa River Botanic Park. It was a well-designed park, open to the public, right next to the beautiful Elk River.

It was designed as a place of serenity, created to celebrate and conserve the plants, trees, and birds that thrive in the Yampa River Valley. They've designed a beautiful Serenity Walk providing an experience for participants to connect with nature. Eight themes are connected as you walk through the park — walk them all in a day, only walk one that touches you for that day, or just take the brochure and incorporate the tools into your daily life. A beautiful brochure is available to guide you through.

Thought I'd share — Enjoy...Fall is in the air...

Awareness in the Rainbow Garden — Dare to love yourself as if you were a rainbow with gold at both ends. Be at peace. — *Aberjhani*

Service to others in the Windigo Garden — The best way to find yourself is to love yourself in service to others. — *Mahatma Gandhi*

Resilience in Sascha's Rock Garden — Like tiny seeds with potent power to push through tough ground and become mighty trees, we hold innate reserves of unimaginable strength. We are resilient. — *Catherine DeVrye, The Gift of Nature*

Journey — a thoughtful walk on the pathways. The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. ... - *Lao Tzu*—

Reflection at the Reflecting Pond. The mind is like water. When it's turbulent, it's difficult to see. When it's calm, everything becomes clear. — *Sindu Masilamani*



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Rooting for You.....

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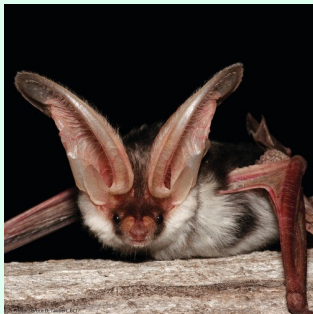
Forgiveness in the Hidden Garden — Forgiveness is Choosing to love. — *Gandhi*

Joy at the Joy of Life Gate. Whatever path of action you find that brings good and happiness to all, follow this way like the moon in the path of the stars. — *Jack Kornfield*

Gratitude on The Green — Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion to clarity. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace to today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. - *Melody Beattie*



Deb



A Pallid Bat

A Pallid Bat? Really?

The conservation and agricultural communities in California are proud to announce the passage of Senate Bill 732, signed into law by the Governor on October 8, 2023, establishing the Pallid Bat as the official state bat.

The bill states that these bats have provided the State of California with more than \$1 billion worth of pest control on the state's agricultural lands. They have also helped reduce the state's fire risk with their consumption of bark

beetles and wood bores.

Pallid bats can be found in the desert, oak woodlands, coastal redwood forests, and pine forests of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This bat has a light brown fur, a white underbelly, extremely large ears, a pig-like snout, small eyes, and a wing span of up to 16". It is perhaps not a wild flying mammal you would be happy to bump into on a dark night in an unfamiliar area, particularly if you were in a Harry Potter movie.

The Pallid bat, while seemingly a scary and menacing animal, does have its enemies. This bat is preyed upon by ground predators like foxes, raccoons, snakes, cats, and large amphibians.

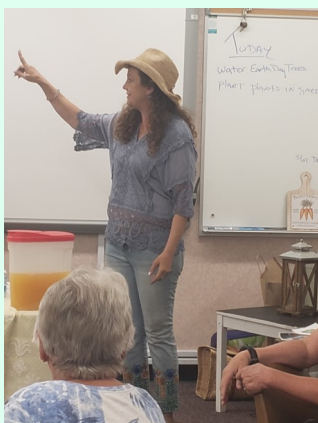
Unlike a lot of other bat species, it can catch its prey on the ground, as well as in the air, making it not only valuable to our agricultural lands and fire control efforts, but multitalented as well.



Grant Program Nominees

For many years the River Valley Garden Club has had a Grants program whereby a sum of money has been awarded to an entity whose focus was on gardens, horticulture, or groups that were connected with nature and the environment. We have provided grants to groups such as Soil Born Farms, which is now a thriving enterprise. We have helped fund school gardens, as well as groups working with students with disabilities that wished to purchase compost bins or building materials for raised garden beds.

More recently it was determined that we should focus our funding on more local groups so that we would have an opportunity to witness the benefits of our funding, and we have contributed, for example, to the Murieta Trails Stewardship and the Tri-County Wildlife Rescue. Nominations for our grants has come from our membership. This year, we have four nominees:



Michele Blomberg teaching a lesson to youth garden club members

Pioneer Youth Garden Club

A previous recipient of a grant, the Pioneer Youth Garden Club is grateful for the funds they received which was used to purchase good soil for the school garden. They are once again asking to be considered for a grant this year, as they have been learning about worm composting and would like to purchase a “Hungry Worm Bin Composter.” They plan to start processing fruit waste from the cafeteria so the young gardeners have an opportunity to see a complete cycle of composting and recycling

Michele Blomberg, co-founder of this wonderful school garden, reports that they have a new and enthusiastic teacher this year, Adam King, who puts a fun spin on everything. The youth garden club meets on Tuesdays at 2p.m. and invites anyone from our club to visit and see some of the projects they

are working on.

SOLOS — Saving Our Lakes and Open Spaces

This is a group of 1300 Rancho Murieta residents committed to the protection and preservation of land, water, environment, and the quality of life with-



A bench installed by Joy Salo as part of her Eagle Scout project. Joy received one of our grants to support this project.

in our community. This community coalition works toward the preservation of the lakes, open spaces, and hiking/biking trails for the benefit of the community. Membership is open to all residents. Right now a major concern is the quality and availability of water to current residents, as

additional development is planned going forward. Will we have enough water for our gardens? For our families? Even though last year was a banner year that provided ample water, projections for the future show return of drought years, which are always a challenge. A recent project of SOLOS was lake clean-up day — a day devoted to picking up trash and debris from around our beautiful lakes.



Pioneer Youth Garden



A clear and windy day at Lake Calero

Grant Funding Nominees (Continued)

Rancho Murieta Fishing Club



This lesser-known group works primarily behind the scenes and in coordination with other local groups to ensure that the lakes are stocked with fish for the benefit of not only local fishermen and women, but for the children's fishing derby that occurs each spring.



Fishing club members also work with SOLOS to accomplish spring clean-up around the lakes. In addition, the club supports installation of a new dock at Lake Calero that is being built and sponsored by RMA.

Paws Partners / Tri-County Wildlife Care

This group asks the question: Did you know that songbirds can eat up to 80,000 mealy worms a week? And did you know that baby birds are fed at least every 25 minutes for at least 12 hours 7 days a week? Many baby birds fall out of their nest, or become lost or injured before reaching maturity. Paws Partners seems to be connected with a wide variety of environmental and animal rescue groups throughout the country, with the local chapter being Tri-County Wildlife Rescue, a group in Jackson that rescues and saves birds and other wildlife in our adjacent foothill area.



Sacramento River Valley District Meeting – November 14

If you haven't already signed up to attend the Sacramento River Valley District meeting on Tuesday, November 14, contact Deb Rooney right away so you are not left out. Contrary to the erroneous information in last month's "Here's the Dirt," the speaker will be Lauren Port, Assistant Director of U.C. Davis Foundation Plant Services.

The Foundation does virus disease detection and disease elimination for raisin, grape, strawberry, rose selections, sweet potatoes, fruit, and nut trees. Lauren will discuss propagation stock, the process for bringing rootstock into California, and ensuring disease-free cultivators.

Attending a district meeting means that you will meet gardeners from other local clubs, shop at the plant sale, and enjoy a lunch prepared by Pioneer Garden Club. Information & fellowship guaranteed!



A Walk on the Wild Side



Nature walkers Maria Lopez, Chris Reuter, Deb Rooney, Nancy Compton, Rosann Stevenson. Berniece Jones, who was part of the group, took the photograph

On a sunny November morning, a group of RVGC members set out on a nature hike along the Cosumnes River. The initial purpose of the hike was to collect natural materials for a workshop scheduled for the spring.

But it turned out to be so much fun that an idea was born: How about starting a hiking club within the garden club? We are so fortunate to have endless trails around Rancho Murieta, as well as lots of trails in the neighboring foothills, and Maria Lopez seems to know all of them.

We could designate a specific date of each month, and then whoever shows up will take part in the hike!

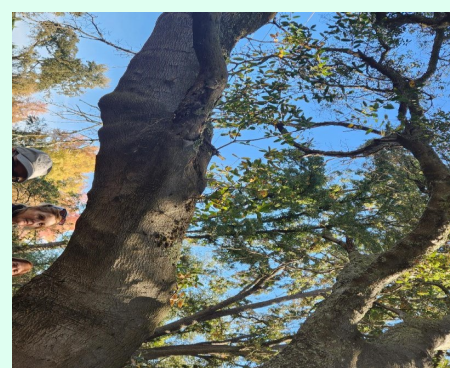
Stay tuned, as this is an idea worth pursuing. Dates for future hikes will be announced via emails and in the newsletter.



Cosumnes River



Collecting natural materials for a spring workshop



One of our beautiful oaks



How to Keep Cut Flowers Alive

Here's a handy tidbit that will help us keep those beautiful cut flowers that we bring into our homes fresh and cheerful:

Give them sugar! Apparently cut flowers like sugar as much as we do. Providing cut flowers with sugar gives them nourishment.

Add to that an acidic ingredient like lemon-lime soda or aspirin allows the plant to absorb water more easily. A drop of bleach prevents bacteria, and it also lengthens their life.

This recommendation comes from Martha Stewart, and to confirm that it really works, I think I'll go out and buy some cut flowers and give it a try.

Things to do....Places to go....

Being a member of the River Valley Garden Club means that there is always something to do, always someplace to go, and so many interesting people to meet. So true!! Aren't we fortunate! Below is a list of things to do between now and the end of the year. Look over the list and add these dates and activities to your calendar, and enjoy the fellowship with our gardening family.

*** Tuesday, November 14—Sacramento River Valley District meeting**

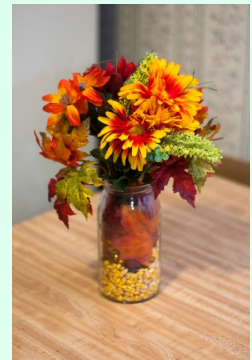
Shepard Garden & Art Center. Meet at **RMA parking lot at 7:45 a.m.** for carpooling.

Bring \$15 for registration and lunch

Saturday, November 18 — Fall centerpiece workshop

10:30 a.m. — RMA Craft Room —

Workshop leader: Rosann Stevenson



This is not the fall centerpiece we will be making. It's just a pretty picture.

Sunday, November 19—Chrysanthemum Show

Shepard Garden & Art Center — **meet at 10:00 a.m.** in the RMA parking lot for carpooling Questions? Call Sharon Barton or Laura McAllister.

Monday, November 20 — Workday at CRES School Garden

9:00 a.m. — meet in the CRES school parking lot. Bring gloves and shovels.

Team Leader: Berniece Jones

Tuesday, November 21 — Hollendale Nursery in Lodi.

Meet at RMA parking lot at 10:00 a.m. This is our annual poinsettia run — gorgeous poinsettias....rock bottom prices. Lunch following visit.



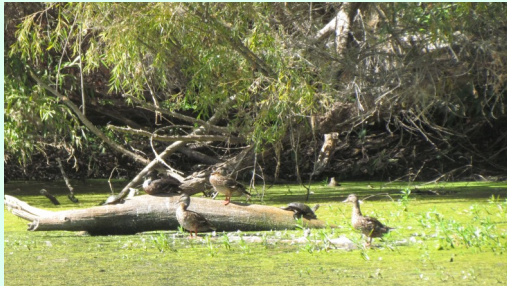
Sunday, December 10 — Annual Holiday Party — 3 p.m. in the RMA

Community Room. Details to follow.



Looking ahead to 2024....

Our speaker series for 2024 will begin with a bang, as we bring back **Roxy Jones**, Sacramento County Master Gardener, who will talk about **Developing Wildlife Habitats**.



Roxy is interested in how gardeners can bring their gardens into harmony with nature. She will provide us with simple things we can do to create an enjoyable garden that invites wildlife. Roxy will also talk about how to have your garden registered by the National Wildlife Federation as a *Certified Wildlife Habitat*.

This program is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 23,**

Tuesday, February 27: Jan Fetler and Vivian Sellers, both Sacramento County Master Gardeners will be with us to present the topic: **“Lawn Begone!”** The concept behind their presentation focuses on the fact that a typical suburban lawn gobbles up an inordinate amount of water. However, when replaced with native plants, a homeowner uses much less water and at the same time, attracts pollinators to their new habitat. Jan and Vivian have presented other topics to our club in the past, and have become favorites of our club members.

Tuesday, March 26 – Nature Photographer Paul Anderson will present “Murieta by Photo. Paul’s photographs have been widely acclaimed. He specializes in wildlife and landscape photography and has a passion for capturing the beauty in everyday moments. His photos of bald eagles have been celebrated locally. This is a not-to-be-missed presentation!

Tuesday, April 23 – Marlene Simon – “The Plant Lady” will present a program focused on creating an indoor garden – in other words, The Wonderful World of Houseplants. Marlene has long been a favorite of our club – you will recall her prior presentation that honed in on garden myths.

The program for May is still being fine-tuned and will be announced in the December newsletter. And of course for June – well, we love to party, so no speaker for that evening.

Some floral photos for your enjoyment.....

