



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

Deb Rooney and Jayne La Grande, Co-Presidents

Nancy Compton, Editor

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

Welcome to September! It's the start of the new season of the River Valley Garden Club. It's so good to be back! September, September, September — I've always had a love-hate affair with September for so many reasons.

Once September hits, I think, "Fall!" and my brain gets excited. I automatically start to hope and believe that there will only be six more weeks of heat. I'm okay with September still having some hot days, but by the second week of October, my brain expects cooler weather. Here's hoping!

And then there's always the fashion question. Yes, that "age-old" dilemma — to wear white or not after Labor Day. Is that still a thing?

When I was young, September always meant the start of school. I was always excited and ready for school to start. As a parent, I was always thrilled that it was September and school was just about to start, the boys were headed back to school, and our family would be able to get back into a routine. And now, as I've gotten even older (ahem...), I look forward to September for two more reasons: the traveling that we usually plan for this month — both road trips and other vacation adventures AND of course, the start of the River Valley Garden Club season. Your River Valley Garden Club Board has been working hard to bring you a full season of interesting meetings, fun field trips (and lunches), hands-on workshops, and the BEST parties! I am especially excited to have some new faces on our Board — not that those of us that are returning aren't beautiful souls!

Here are a few of the new faces:

- * Jayne LaGrande will be joining us as Co-President
- * Rosann Stevenson — Refreshments
- * Maria Lopez — Workshops
- * Karen Hoberg — Penny Pines

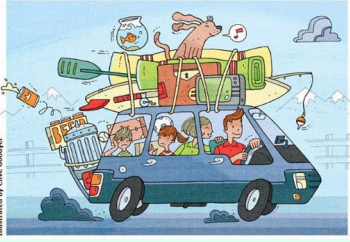
I cannot thank them, and the entire Board, enough for volunteering to be a part of this fun organization. Thank you so much! Here are a few things you can look forward to in the coming months:

Our **first membership meeting will be on Tuesday, September 26** — 6:30 for fellowship, fun, raffle, and refreshments, with the general meeting starting at 7 p.m. in the RMA building. The topic will be, "How Will I Water My Garden?" Presenters will be Cheryl McElhany and Linda Butler from SOLOS (Saving Our Lakes and Open Spaces). The focus will be on our increasing challenge of having enough water here in our community — a subject on everyone's mind, I'm sure.

Field trips have kicked off with a visit to the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center in August, and on September 10 we will be going to the Shepard Garden & Art Center for the "Diamonds in the Shade" Begonia Show, followed by lunch. Please let Sharon Barton know if you would like to attend (call by September 8 — Sharon's number: (916) 354-0408).

(.... See page 4 for remainder of president's message...)

Get Ready to Rock & Roll!



If our Fall 2023 Tour schedule is any indication, it will be a busy and exciting year for the River Valley Garden Club. Field trip co-chairs Sharon Barton and Laura McAllister have planned a series of trips that will include begonias, a vast array of herbs, vegetables, and plants at the Morningsun Herb Farm, flowers and a pumpkin patch in Loomis, and a return visit to our favorite poinsettia nursery — Hollandale Nursery somewhere in the outskirts of Lodi (I still haven't figured out where it is, but if I wander around long enough, I usually find it). And don't forget that all of these trips include lunch — a great way to relax and enjoy fellowship with other members.

Below is the schedule of tours for this fall:

Date	Time	Destination	Notes & Details
Sunday, Sept. 10	10 a.m.	Begonia Show	“Diamonds in the Shade” Meet at 10 a.m. at the RMA building to carpool. Lunch to follow. RSVP to Sharon by Sept. 8. (916) 354-0408
Tuesday, Oct 3	TBA	Morningsun Herb Farm Vacaville	Fall Plant Sale — Time and carpool details to follow.
Monday, Oct. 23	TBA	Flower Farm, Loomis	Time and carpool details to follow.
November 20 or 21	TBA	Hollandale Nursery in Lodi	Time, carpool, and lunch details to follow

Places you may want to go on your own.....

Sunday, October 8	Effie Yeaw Nature Center	Nature Fest — go to their web site for details
Check available dates—9 a.m.—1 p.m.	Park Winters, Woodland	U Pick bouquets — \$35
October 7 and 8	Fall Sale at Shepard Garden & Art Center	

Notes on above: *The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is an award-winning environmental and cultural education center located within the American River Parkway. You will remember the speaker we had last year from Effie Yeaw who brought several animal ambassadors with her, including a really cute owl named Echo.*



September 26 Program: "How Will I Water My Garden?"

This has been a banner year for gardeners, as our unusually wet winter provided plenty of water to keep our gardens happy and productive.



*A garden with ample water.
What will next winter bring?*

But we know better than to expect this to continue, as climate change has made our weather unpredictable. And beyond the precipitation itself, the previously open land between our community and Folsom has been sprouting a seemingly endless supply of new homes, shopping centers, extended-stay hotels, and even high-rise apartments. Where will these folks get their water, and how will their water needs affect our own needs?

Our community is fortunate to have a nonprofit called SOLOS — an acronym for Saving Our Lakes and Open Spaces. This group of local residents is committed to the protection and preservation of our land, water, environment, and keeping our lakes and open spaces beautiful for all of our residents to enjoy.

One of the key issues here is water. For years we have been advised that water is tight. We have taken our showers with buckets to catch the water, which we then have dutifully taken outside and watered our gardens. With all of this new building, will we even have enough water to do this going forward?

Our September 26 program will feature two speakers from SOLOS — Linda Butler and Cheryl McElhany who will address some of the major issues and answer questions. Please join us for what promises to be a lively evening. And as always — our social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with the program beginning at 7 p.m.

Below are some random photos from in and around Rancho Murieta taken of our lakes and outdoor spaces which must be preserved to ensure that our community remains beautiful and peaceful.



A sunny day at Lake Calero



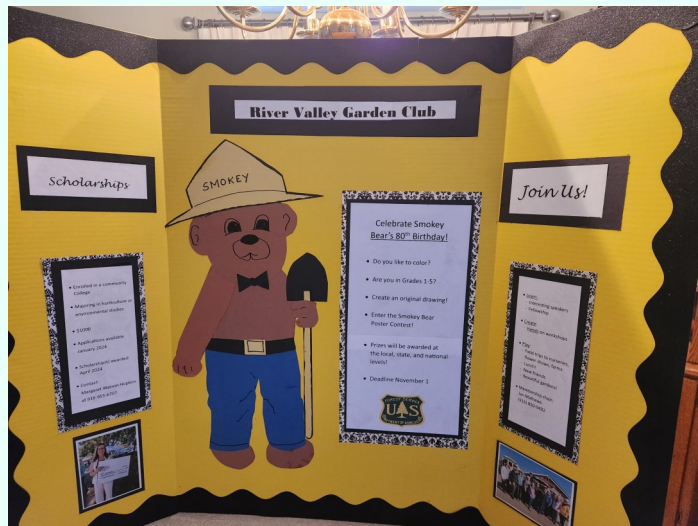
*Bench installed by Eagle Scout Joy Salo at
Lake Calero*

Rooting for You.....(continued from front page...)

Be sure to save the date of October 3 for a field trip to Morningsun Herb Farm in Vacaville. Time and other details will be sent out shortly.

Also, on September 10 the River Valley Garden Club will be participating in the first Kiwanis Family Activities Expo at Stonehouse Park from 4-6 p.m. We're looking forward to sharing our scholarship opportunities, and will be highlighting the Smokey Bear poster contest for children in grades 1-5. Come on out and say "hi!"

And last but not least, at the September meeting we will have sign-up sheets for upcoming workshops. Our goal as a club is to have a little something of interest for everyone. Stay tuned — and we'll see you soon!



Tri-fold backdrop featuring Smokey Bear will adorn our table at the Kiwanis Family Activities Expo

Deb

Sacramento River Valley District Plant Sale — October 7 and 8

Here is an opportunity to purchase some plants for your fall garden! The Sacramento River Valley District will host a sale on Saturday and Sunday, October 7 and 8. at the Shepard Art & Garden Center at McKinley Park.

This is always a huge sale involving many garden clubs, floral design groups, and often related groups, like jewelry and gourd artists.

Now that we are once again a part of this district, our club will need to participate by contributing items for the sale. Are you propagating plants? Donate them! Do you have related items such as watering cans, garden art, small tables that could be used as plant stands? Even Halloween or fall holiday items may be donated. What about candles or candle holders? Little ghosts and goblins that could be used to adorn indoor plants?

Berniece Jones is chair of this event and will welcome all donations. Please call her at (916) 354-2873. And certainly plan to attend this event to support our region's garden groups. It's a great sale, and there are lots of fun lunch options in the area.



Grant Opportunities for Local Groups

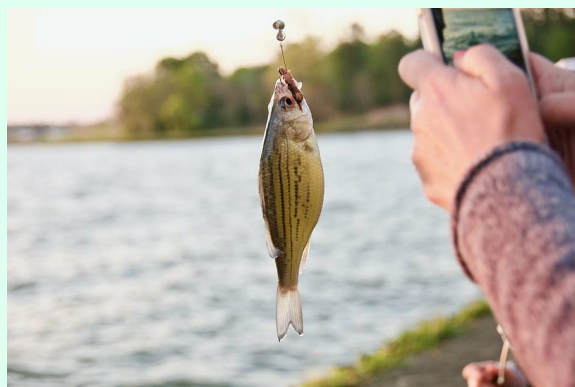
Each year, the River Valley Garden Club awards grants of \$500 each to local groups and/or nonprofits that focus on horticultural or environmental issues that make a difference in having a clean, safe and ecologically balanced environment. Past recipients have included Tri-Valley Wildlife and Rescue, and the Murieta Trails Stewardship. This year we have received two recommendations to receive a grant, both of which are briefly described below.

- ◆ **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 within our community. This community coalition works toward the preservation of the lakes, open spaces, and hiking/biking trails for the benefit of our residents. Membership is open to all residents. Leaders from SOLOS will provide a presentation at our first meeting on September 26 focusing on the critical issue of water. Attend this meeting and learn what we can do to protect our water and our quality of life. Membership in SOLOS is open to all interested community members.
- ◆ **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 group members also work with SOLOS to accomplish spring clean-up around the lakes. In addition, the club support installation of a new dock at Lake Calero that is being built and sponsored by RMA.

Additional recommendations to receive one of our grants are welcome from members. Please contact Grants Chair Nancy Compton at ncompton43@att.net. Recommendations will be accepted until October 31.



Lake Calero on a clear and windy day



Now that looks like a good dinner!

This just in....Legal Protection for Joshua Trees.....

We have just learned that as of July 1, the State of California passed a new law prohibiting the unpermitted killing or removal of Joshua trees. This new legislation tasks state wildlife authorities with developing and implementing a conservation plan for the species, and creates a fund to acquire and manage suitable habitat.

The Western Joshua Trees can be seen in the Mojave Desert, especially in Lost Horse Canyon in the Joshua Tree National Park area. Real estate developers have been active recently in some areas of the desert and thus this new legislation is designed to preserve the desert's natural habitat.



Plant of the Month – the Oddly Magestic Joshua Tree



It seems only fitting that since the passage of a bill to preserve the Joshua Trees that grow mainly in the Mojave Desert, that we designate the Joshua Tree as Plant of the Month.

The Joshua Tree is actually a yucca, designated as *Yucca brevifolia*.

Although the *Sunset Western Garden Book* shows their growing zones as 7, 9-16, and 18-23, they grow primarily in the deserts of Southern California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. The Joshua Tree is a sparsely branched slow-growing plant that grows to 15-30 feet eventually. They are gray-green and spiny-tipped, and often their old

dead leaves hang on, giving them a weathered appearance. They are difficult to grow under ordinary garden conditions, which is actually no surprise, as they seem best adapted to a natural environment surrounded by other Joshua Trees and desert plants.

Their silhouette is rather haunting and mysterious, which is part of their charm and appeal. They are also a photographer's dream, as a Joshua Tree in the foreground with a blazing desert sunset in the background makes for stunning images.

An online reference to Joshua Trees describes them as twisted and spiky trees straight out of a Dr. Seuss book.

The Joshua Tree was recognized by native peoples for its useful properties. Its tough leaves were worked into baskets and sandals, and flower buds and raw or roasted seeds made a healthy addition to the diet.



By the mid 19th century, Mormon immigrants had made their way across the Colorado River and witnessed these odd trees. Legend has it that these pioneers named the tree after the biblical figure Joshua, seeing the outstretched limbs guiding travelers westward.

Many birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects depend on the Joshua tree for food and shelter. For the rest of us, the Joshua Tree provides visual interest, and although they do have a somewhat lofty appearance, it is a rare gardener in our zone who would even attempt to grow this specimen of nature's anomaly.

