



Here's the Dirt

A publication of the River Valley Garden Club

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Rooting for You..... Jayne LaGrande, President

Fall is an amazing time of year with so much to see and do. Last weekend I visited Apple Hill and enjoyed driving through the winding, narrow roads lined with trees of red, yellow, and orange leaves. Apple pies were still available, along with other treats. In my own yard, the dogwoods, Chinese Pistache, and Chinese Tallow are yielding to the shorter days and cooler temperatures, as their green leaves turn on the colors of the season and gently float to the ground. This can only mean one thing: leaf collection, composting, and other garden cleanup activities. You're having the same experience in your yard, so take a photo and share it on the River Valley Garden Club Facebook page so we can all appreciate the changing season.



We're wrapping up the annual member solicitation and I want to thank you all for responding to our call to renew your membership. It means our club can continue to thrive and offer the benefits you value, such as field trips, guest speakers, plant sales, district meetings, and social events.

Sharon Barton and Laura McAllister are organizing two field trips in November: one to the 77th Annual Chrysanthemum Show at the Shepard Garden & Art Center on **November 17**, and our annual visit to Hollandale Nursery in Lodi to purchase poinsettias on **November 26**.

For those interested in carpooling to the Chrysanthemum Show, please meet at the RMA building at 10:30 on **Sunday, November 17**. For those interested in carpooling to Hollandale Nursery, please meet at the RMA building at 10: a.m. on **Tuesday, November 26**.

Please contact Sharon Barton at 916-354-0408 or Laura McAllister at 805-404-7974 by November 15 to reserve your spot. Lunch will follow both field trips.

Finally, mark your calendars for **Sunday, December 15** for the annual RVGC Holiday Party at the RMA building from 3-6 p.m. This will be a cocktail party with food, a signature drink, cookie exchange, games, and more. Your invitation will be delivered shortly. I hope to see you at one of these fabulous events.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Jayne LaGrande

President



Sandhill Cranes Arrive in the Delta

On a warm and pleasant evening in September, a small, but very interested group of garden club members traveled to the Cosumnes River Preserve to witness one of nature's most beautiful sights — the annual arrival of the Sandhill Cranes. As this preserve is a crucial component of the Pacific Flyway, it is possible, as dusk descends, to see hundreds—perhaps even thousands of these regal birds coming in to nest for the winter.



The Cosumnes River Preserve consists of over 50,000 acres of wildlife habitat and agricultural lands owned by several local, state, and national partnerships, including the Nature Conservancy, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Sacramento County Regional Park system. The preserve is centered along the Cosumnes River, including its floodplains and riparian habitat, and is buffered by an expanse of agricultural lands.

Sandhill Cranes are rather large birds that group together in great numbers, filling the skies with their distinctive bugle-sounding cries, which apparently is a result of their anatomy. When they come in to roost for the evening, they are easy to spot, not only due to their size, but for their distinctive silhouette, because they fly with their neck straight out, as opposed to similar birds like herons and egrets.



Sandhill Cranes can be quite entertaining and they are known for their dancing skills — as evidenced by their mating routine. Interestingly, Sandhill Cranes are among the oldest species of birds, as fossils dating back two million years have been identified by anthropologists. The garden club has no additional dates scheduled to visit this site, but you may contact the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitors Center at (916)-684-2816 to ask for future visitation dates. You'll be richly rewarded.



Learn to Identify Sacramento’s Trees.....



The Sacramento Tree Foundation is offering a tree identification online workshop, as well as a walking tour of Southside Park. The workshop, “Tree Identification 101” will explore the beauty of our urban forest, while providing names to these impressive trees. Offered at 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, this free webinar also identifies the trees that thrive in Sacramento, and which choices may be best for your own landscape.

SacTree’s Pamela Sanchez, an ISA Certified Arborist and a specialist in urban forestry, will lead the webinar. “Tree Identification 101” is open to everyone. Space is limited and advance registration is required. To receive the webinar Zoom link, sign up at the following web address:

<https://sactree.org/event/tree-identification-101-webinar/>

As a follow-up to this webinar, SacTree will offer an Autumn Tree Tour of Southside Park — a tour scheduled for 3 p.m. on Saturday, November 16. This tour will include the park’s many mature trees, just as the trees will be displaying their fall colors. This 90-minute tour includes a bonus— a copy of “A Californian’s Guide to the Trees Among Us.” Tickets for the walking tour (including the book) are \$25 and advanced registration is required. **Sign up at [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/autumn-tree-tour-and-book-registration—1038081599007](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/autumn-tree-tour-and-book-registration-1038081599007).**



The Sacramento Chrysanthemum Society announces its Annual Show and Sale

The two rooms of the Shepard Garden & Art Center will be filled with all colors and varieties of gorgeous chrysanthemums, which the Chrysanthemum Society says are the queen of all flowers.

This two-day event will be held on November 16 and 17 — and the River Valley Garden Club is scheduled to attend on **Sunday, November 17.**

Chrysanthemums are one of America’s favorite flowers with over 160 different species, mostly native to China, Japan, and Europe. According to Ted King, owner of King’s Mums in Clements, California, the best types to grow for cut flowers are the medium to tall varieties with long stems that may require staking. They bloom from mid-September and perform best in areas that remain frost free for most of November.

King’s top choices for cutting are Autumn Eyes, Fire Island, Kelvin Mandarin, Prom Queen, and Statesman..



Hike at Deer Creek Preserve



This is a good time of year to immerse ourselves in nature with a self-guided hike at Deer Creek Hills Preserve, which is literally in our own back yard.

On this trek, hikers can explore the scenic trails through oak woodlands and rolling grasslands.

The trail is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the month of November. Whenever we may seek tranquility and a good workout, the trails offer a perfect escape.

Deer Creek Hills Preserve is the largest open space preserve in Sacramento County offering self guided hikes and the viewing of wildlife.

Deer Creek Hills includes a working cattle ranch, 45,000 acres of Blue Oak Woodlands, seasonal creeks, and grasslands.

Visitors may enjoy the expansive views of both the Sacramento Valley and the High Sierras.



Organizing our stuff.....

Every true gardener seems to have an overabundance of garden stuff at the end of the season — stuff that won't fit neatly on the shelves of our shed or our garages. What is this stuff — you may ask? Well, how about fertilizer, grass seed, birdseed, potting soil, and anything else that needs to be kept safe from bugs and rodents. Here is a great tip I learned recently: buy buckets (or visit a garage sale).

Buckets are the gardeners' equivalent of baby food jars for storing stuff. Clean them out and let them dry, then fill them up with what otherwise would be bulky to move around.



Buckets with lids are even better, as you can stack them on top of one another to save space. And label them so you don't put fertilizer in the bird feeder.

