

The Real Dirt

NEWSLETTER OF THE

RAMONA GARDEN CLUB, RAMONA CA
A CGCI BLUE RIBBON CLUB

December 2025

General Meeting: December 10, 2025

Mountain View Community Church 1191 Meadowlark Way, Ramona

Doors open at 11:15 am

10:00 am Board Meeting

December General Meeting Fun!!

At our December Meeting we will be having lots of great things happening.



We will be having a lively team **Trivia Game** with lots of Ramona and Garden Club questions. Each team will be comprised of approximately six people per table with teams competing against each other for the high score. It is a fun way to learn more about your fellow club members and show off your Trivia Knowledge!

We will also be having **Ramona High School Band** playing Christmas songs for your pleasure! The band is led by the band director, Abbie Gerdes.

Come join us and support our local young people!!



Holiday Potluck Lunch



Join us for our Holiday Feast Potluck!

If you haven't already signed up to bring a dish for the Dec meeting, please contact Rebecca Holton at either 760-715-2355 or email rraab715@yahoo.com.

Please see Page 3 for all the information on the **December Craft Table** that will be at the December meeting.



Robert's President's Message



Happy holiday season everyone.

While winter technically starts December 21 and runs thru March 20 for San Diego County, the Fall-to-Winter transition is obviously already well under way in Ramona. Perhaps someday soon, spend 5 minutes to mentally think about the changes occurring in your garden. What is different about the sounds, smells, feel of the soil, moisture and colors? We are indeed changing seasons. And of course, seasonal change means our garden tasks and especially plantings must also change to remain in alignment with the Mediterranean climate we enjoy.

While we all can be proud that the Ramona Garden Club has recently grown to 103 members, and I am confident we will continue to grow, our success isn't just about numbers. Nor is it just about the size of our bank account, or the revenue we create to provide scholarships, grants and beatification projects for the benefit of the Ramona community. While those aspects are indeed vital to reaching our stated objectives, I have yet to hear anyone say they joined, or rejoined the RGC because of those numbers. Rather, what I do often hear is the "how" we accomplish our goals is fun, supportive, and welcoming. So, well done everyone!

One way you can experience an educational and fun event is to attend a field trip. The various trips have been very well attended this year, and typically have averaged 10-15 members and guests. I routinely hear how much attendees enjoyed the camaraderie, as much as the venue. And trust me on this, you do not have to be an extrovert to have an enjoyable time.

The December Holiday meeting will (as always) have great food, holiday crafts for sale, music by the Ramona High School Band, and I'll dust off the trivia game we missed last year when the electricity forced us to cancel. Sure to be a memorable meeting you will want to attend.

....Robert



Monthly Craft Table



Please donate your handmade Christmas Crafts
to the December Craft Table
to help raise funds for our Scholarships and Grants



Homemade wreaths, ornaments, garden-themed gifts and other seasonal creations not only brighten the holiday table but also help nurture the next generation of gardeners and environmental stewards.

Every item donated becomes a meaningful contribution to our scholarship and grants program, which provides financial support to students and local projects that share our mission of horticultural education and community enrichment.

Let's come together in December with generosity, imagination, and holiday joy.
Your handmade donations truly make a difference!

There will be no Field Trip for December.

Watch for the January Newsletter for all the information on the January Field Trip.

Holiday Feast Potluck at December General Meeting



We always have a Holiday type spread at the December General Meeting.

If you haven't signed up to bring something yet please contact our lovely Hospitality Chair:

Rebecca Holton at 760-715-2355

It is always a wonderful meal as we celebrate all the joy the Ramona Garden Club brings the members and the community.



Palomar District's 33rd Anniversary Season

Floral Design Forum 2025-2026

POWAY COMMUNITY LIBRARY 13137 POWAY ROAD, POWAY, CA 92064

January 5, 2026 Returning to us is **Noel Tribbey AIFD**, freelance Designer and lover of ladders. **He creates the WOW! Don't miss a great start to the new year.**

Start time Noon: Please Arrive by 11:30 a.m. to help set up

A Quick View of Upcoming Activities

December 1st & 15th - Collier Park Work Days

December 5th & 17th - Safari Park Work Days

(Contact Debbie Gomez, deb4fino@pacbell.net for more info)

December 10th - General Membership Meeting

Holiday Potluck, Trivia Game and Ramona High School Band (page 1)

Holiday Craft Sale Table (page 3)

January 5th - Palomar District Foral Design Forum. Poway Library - Noon (page 4)

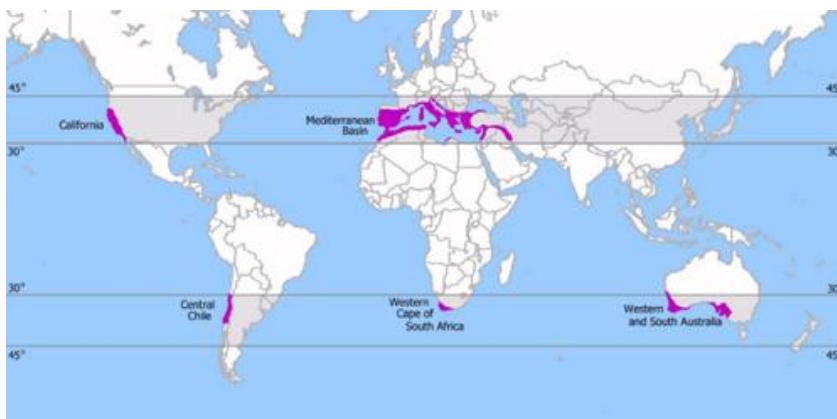
January 14th - General Membership Meeting Ken Abernathy "Saving the Monarch Butterfly"

Newsletter deadline: December 30, 2025

Did You Know?

San Diego County is designated as a Mediterranean climate, characterized by hot, dry summers and mild, wetter winters. The climate varies from the cooler, more humid coast to the hotter, drier inland areas. This is influenced by the Pacific Ocean, which moderates temperatures.

There are only five major regions in the *world* with a Mediterranean climate: the **Mediterranean Basin**, **California**, **central Chile**, the **Cape Region of South Africa**, and **southwestern and southern Australia**.



When selecting plants and trees, consider our climate characteristics.

Summer characteristics

- **Hot and dry:** Summers are defined by high temperatures and very little to no rainfall.
- **Clear skies:** The influence of subtropical high-pressure systems leads to clear skies and plenty of sunshine.
- **Potential for drought:** The lack of rain can lead to dry landscapes and an increased risk of wildfires.

Coastal influence: Some coastal areas may experience refreshing sea breezes.

Winter characteristics

- **Mild and wet:** Winters are typically mild, with temperatures rarely dropping below freezing, and moderate to high rainfall.
 - **Rainfall from westerlies:** The shift in weather patterns allows the westerlies to bring storm systems and precipitation to the region.
- Rejuvenated landscape:** The winter rainfall helps to create and sustain the region's lush vegetation, including plants like olive trees and citrus.

December Birthdays

4th - Andre Perreault

10th - Georgie Suitor

23rd - Pene Manale

26th - Carol Bazinet

30th - Lynn Thierolg



A belated **October 14th** Birthday! I missed **Karen Newhard** from our birthday list in October! We wish her a very belated Happy Birthday.



Wishing Everyone a Wonderful
Holiday Season!

Plants for Mountain View Community Church

On November 1st we donated 34 plants to the Mountain View Community Church where our meetings are held. The amount we pay for the monthly use of this beautiful facility is offset in part by landscaping plants that we supply 4 times a year.

There were 4 gallon-sized *Furcraea MacDougalii* in the latest collection which can get quite large.

This program is a win-win!

... Connie

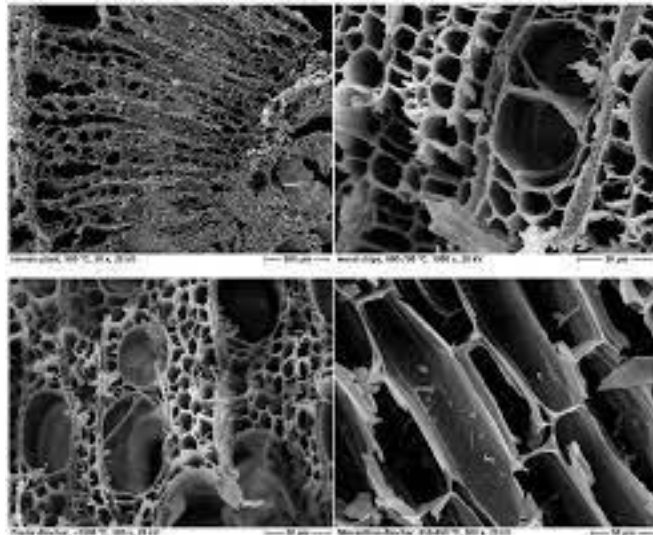
Furcraea MacDougalii



What is This Biochar Thing About?

Biochar is a charcoal-like material produced by heating biomass (such as wood, crop waste, or manure) in a low-oxygen environment, a process called pyrolysis. This carbon-rich material is used as a soil amendment to improve soil health, water retention, and nutrient uptake. Because it is primarily pure carbon, it lasts virtually forever in soil and need not be replenished.

Biochar benefits include improving soil health and plant growth by increasing water retention, nutrient availability, and microbial life. It is not a fertilizer, rather look at it as microscopic housing (see below) for beneficial microbes.



Soil and plant benefits

- **Improves water retention:** Biochar acts like a sponge, holding moisture in the soil and reducing water runoff.
- **Increases nutrient availability:** It acts as a "fertilizer sink," trapping and holding nutrients so plants can access them more easily, which can decrease the need for synthetic fertilizers.
- **Boosts microbial life:** Its porous structure provides a habitat for beneficial microorganisms, which can increase soil microbial biomass.
- **Enhances soil structure:** Biochar helps create a more stable, permeable soil structure that improves aeration and reduces compaction.

Increases crop yield: Studies show it can increase crop yield, root biomass, and overall plant productivity

...*Robert Holton*

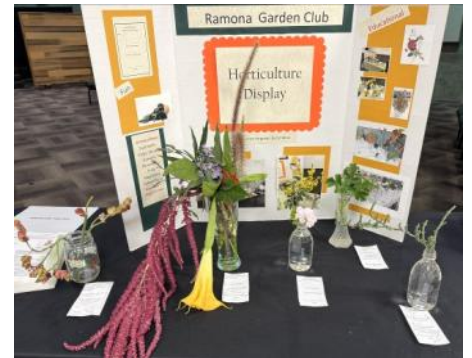
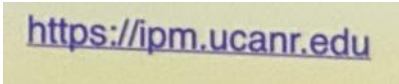
November General Membership Meeting

Linda Stewart, Master Gardener gave a very informative talk on: **What's that Bug? What are we going to Do about It?** Check out page 10 & 11 of this newsletter for all the information you can receive from the Master Gardeners.

Along with the wonderful speaker, we had an awesome Thanksgiving Potluck. Thank you for everyone that brought in the food and for the Hospitality Chair & workers for setting everything out and cleaning up afterwards for us!

We had a Silent Auction of the crafts from the Fall Plant Sale. Thank you all for bidding on the items and supporting us.

We have very talented crafters!



November Field Trip El Plantio Nursery



Thank you Bonnie for your work putting these field trips together!

We had 13 people enjoy the field trip to El Plantio Nursery, on November 19. We all enjoyed a wonderful tour of the property, led by the owner and manager, Lloyd. It is family owned, and Lloyd is the third generation to overlook operations.

He showed us places that are not open to the public, and explained their propagation process, and their greenhouses as well.

We also learned that any Garden Club members will get a 10% discount on their purchases when they visit their nursery. Be sure to tell them you are a Ramona Garden Club member!

He was a wonderful tour guide, and we will invite him sometime, as a speaker for our Garden Club.

Afterwards, the field trip group enjoyed a fun lunch at 'Farmer Boys' in Escondido.

Be watching for field trips coming up in 2026, and come join the fun. Our field trips are growing in popularity, and it's a fun way to get to know other club members! *...Bonnie*



FREE Pest Notes

For Homes, Gardens, and Landscapes – From UC IPM

at ipm.ucanr.edu

Insects, Mites, Mollusks, Nematodes, and Spiders

- Ants
- Aphids
- Asian Citrus Psyllid and Huanglongbing Disease
- Avocado Lace Bug
- Bagrada Bug
- Bark Beetles
- Bed Bugs
- Bee and Wasp Stings
- Bee Swarms
- Black Scale
- Boxelder Bug
- Brown Marmorated Stink Bug
- Brown Recluse and Other Recluse Spiders
- California Oakworm
- Carpenter Ants
- Carpenter Bees
- Carpenterworm
- Carpet Beetles
- Centipedes and Millipedes
- Citrus Leafminer
- Clearwing Moths
- Clothes Moths
- Cockroaches
- Codling Moth
- Conenose Bugs
- Cottony Cushion Scales
- Drywood Termites
- Earwigs
- Elm Leaf Beetle
- Eucalyptus Longhorned Borers
- Eucalyptus Redgum Lerp Psyllid
- Eucalyptus Tortoise Beetles
- Eye Gnats
- False Chinch Bug
- Fleas
- Flies
- Fungus Gnats
- Giant Whitefly
- Glassy-winged Sharpshooter
- Goldspotted Oak Borer
- Grasshoppers
- Hackberry Woolly Aphids
- Head Lice
- Hobo Spider
- Hoplia Beetle
- Horsehair Worms
- Indian Walking Stick
- Lace Bugs
- Lawn Insects
- Leaffooted Bug
- Leafrollers on Ornamental and Fruit Trees
- Mealybugs
- Mosquitoes
- Moth or Drain Flies
- Myoporum Thrips
- Nematodes
- Oak Pit Scales
- Olive Fruit Fly
- Pantry Pests
- Pitch Moth
- Psyllids
- Red Imported Fire Ant
- Redhumped Caterpillar
- Roses: Insects and Mites
- Scales
- Scorpions
- Silverfish and Firebrats
- Sixspotted Spider Mite
- Snails and Slugs
- Spider Mites
- Spiders
- Spotted Wing Drosophila
- Springtails
- Squash Bugs
- Subterranean and Other Termites
- Sycamore Scale
- Thrips
- Ticks (Lyme Disease in California)
- Walnut Husk Fly
- Whiteflies
- Widow Spiders and Their Relatives
- Windscorpion
- Wood-Boring Beetles in Homes
- Wood Wasps and Horntails
- Yellowjackets and Other Social Wasps
- Zoropsis Spider

Plant Diseases

- Anthracnose
- Apple and Pear Scab
- Armillaria Root Rot
- Damping-off Diseases in the Garden
- Fire Blight
- Lawn Diseases: Prevention and Management
- Mushrooms and Other Nuisance Fungi in Lawns
- Oleander Leaf Scorch
- Olive Knot
- Palm Diseases in the Landscape
- Peach Leaf Curl
- Phytophthora Root and Crown Rot in the Garden
- Pitch Canker
- Powdery Mildew on Fruits and Berries
- Powdery Mildew on Ornamentals
- Powdery Mildew on Vegetables
- Roses: Diseases and Abiotic Disorders
- Sooty Mold
- Sudden Oak Death
- Wood Decay Fungi in Landscape Trees

Weeds

- Annual Bluegrass
- Bermudagrass
- Brooms
- Burning and Stinging Nettles
- Catchweed Bedstraw
- Chickweeds
- Clovers
- Common Groundsel
- Common Knotweed
- Common Purslane
- Crabgrass
- Creeping Woodsorrel and Bermuda Buttercup
- Dallisgrass
- Dandelions
- Dodder
- Dyer's Wood
- Field Bindweed
- Green Kyllinga
- Invasive Plants
- Kikuyugrass
- Mallows
- Mistletoe
- Nutsedge
- Perennial Pepperweed
- Plantains
- Poison Hemlock
- Poison Oak
- Pokeweed
- Puncturevine
- Roses: Cultural Practices and Weed Control
- Russian Thistle
- Spotted Spurge and Other Spurges
- Weed Management in Landscapes
- Weed Management in Lawns
- Wild Blackberries
- Woody Weed Invaders
- Yellow Starthistle

Vertebrate Pests: Birds, Mammals, and Reptiles

- Bats
- Birds on Tree Fruits and Vines
- Cliff Swallows
- Coyote
- Deer
- Deer Mouse
- Ground Squirrel
- House Mouse
- Lizards
- Moles
- Opossum
- Pocket Gophers
- Rabbits
- Raccoons
- Rats
- Rattlesnakes
- Skunks
- Tree Squirrels
- Voles (Meadow Mice)
- Wild Pigs
- Woodpeckers

Management Methods

(including pesticides and biological control)

- Biological Control and Natural Enemies of Invertebrates
- Bordeaux Mixture
- Hiring a Pest Control Company
- Pesticides: Safe and Effective Use in the Home and Landscape
- Pesticidas: Uso Seguro y Eficaz en el Hogar y en Jardines
- Soil Solarization for Gardens and Landscapes

Miscellaneous

- Houseplant Problems
- Itching and Infestation: What's Attacking Me?
- Lyme Disease in California

Visit our website
ipm.ucanr.edu
 to download any of
 these helpful guides
 or to check out more
 of our pest-related
 publications.

For other University of
 California gardening
 publications, go to
anrcatalog.ucanr.edu.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
 Agriculture and Natural Resources

Statewide Integrated
 Pest Management Program

Can't download?

Visit or call your local University of California Cooperative Extension office.

To find your local office, go to ucanr.edu/County_Offices, or look in the county government pages of your phone book.

ANR NONDISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the University of California (UC) and the UC Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources not to engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities (A complete nondiscrimination policy statement can be found at ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/files/215244.pdf). Inquiries regarding ANR's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to John Sims, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618. (530) 750-1318.

Cactus Jack Schlotte



The camaraderie among members of this club exceeds anything I've experienced in other clubs and organizations I've been involved with. That is so special and we all should be thankful for the friendships forged here among us. Love and respect to you all. 👍

...From a recent group chat of some Ramona Garden Club Members!

I think we are all very thankful of what we have in this club!



Executive Board 2025 - 2026

President	Robert Holton
Vice-President	Bonnie Crawford
Secretary	Barbara Boryla
Treasurer	David White

Ramona Garden Club P.O. Box 1412 Ramona, CA 92065

Webpage: www.RamonaGardenClub.com

Find us on Facebook - Ramona Garden Club

Newsletter Editor: maggiocrane@att.net

Affiliations:

National Garden Clubs Inc. - Gardenclub.org

Pacific Region Garden Clubs - pacificregiongardenclubs.org

California Garden Clubs, Inc - Californiagardenclub.com

Palomar District - find through Californiagardenclub.com/ member websites