

The Real Dirt



NEWSLETTER OF THE

RAMONA GARDEN CLUB, RAMONA CA

A CGCI BLUE RIBBON CLUB

No Regular October Meeting in Lieu of:

October, 2026

Palomar District Meeting

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

Mountain View Church, 1191 Meadowlark, Ramona

Featuring: **Roy Toft**

Bringing Native Nature Home:

Native Wildlife and Watershed Gardening

Reservation Deadline: Oct 7 - See Registration Form on Pg. 13



Roy Toft has been pursuing his career as a wildlife photographer for three decades. In addition to being a biologist, natural-history educator, and a Senior Fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers (ILCP), Roy shares his knowledge while leading and teaching photo workshops around the world. He has received top honors in the most prestigious professional competitions in his genre such as the London Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year award. Roy won the Gerald Durrel Award for endangered species in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. His photos have been in National Geographic Magazine, Smithsonian and Audubon. Roy's recent book project "Wild Ramona" features the local wildlife found here in Ramona, California.

Roy's other passion besides nature and photography is gardening! Roy lives with his wife Stella on a 28 acres on the west side of Ramona. Since buying the new construction in 2005, Roy has set out to design, install, and plant the roughly 2 acres the Toft's call their garden. Walking paths, rock walls, sitting areas, water elements, and a rich tapestry of drought tolerant plants such as Aloes, Agaves, Palms and Euphorbias which fill this space surrounded by the natural chaparral and boulder covered hills of west Ramona. Having a water-wise garden, with plants that blend into the native habitat, was one of the Roy's main goals as well as providing structure, water, and food to attract and nurture the native wildlife.



Ramblings from Robert

Hello Everyone,

Well, according to my calendar, September 22 marked the official start of autumn (Fall) in the Northern Hemisphere, including San Diego. That means cooler nights, and hopefully cooler days soon. And with the Mediterranean climate we enjoy in San Diego County, the rains aren't far behind. We can now start to plan for, and planting your favorite cool weather veggies. Perhaps like some of you, I have significant "experiential" learning (aka: dead plants) to help me understand the critical importance of matching the planting of plants, and particularly seeds with the right season. If done right, you can experience the sleep-creep-leap cycle of plant development, especially native plants.

I am thrilled to announce that **Stephanie Hurst** has agreed to chair the newsletter committee, and this is in fact her inaugural edition of "***The Real Dirt***." She has recent relevant experience with writing, editing and formatting newsletters for other organizations, and is excited about this new opportunity with the Ramona Garden Club. Contact Stephanie at stephaniehurstgdc@gmail.com with questions about newsletter submissions, or if you have an interest in joining her committee.

And, while we are talking Newsletter, a HUGE shout out to our previous award-winning Newsletter Chair, Maggie Crane for her undying devotion to the RGC, and mentor to many of us individually...especially me!

Jane Vidal has agreed to chair the new "*How to Toolbox*" committee coming on-line this year to help members tap into skills and experiences of other RGC members. With your involvement, this committee will directly support a primary RGC objective to provide educational programs and projects to RGC members. More on this later.

Great news for streamlining membership payments. New and returning members now have a second option to mailing checks, with on-line payments now available on our webpage at ramonagardenclub.com. Thank you, Pene Manale.

Bonnie Crawford has once again secured an impressive line-up of guest speakers (as well as cool field trips) for the year. Up next is world renowned photographer and biologist Roy Toft at the October 21, Palomar District meeting we will be hosting.

Hope to see you there,

Robert

Ramona Garden Club Fall Plant and Craft Sale

November 7, 2026

Ramona Oaks Park 25341 Pappas Rd, Ramona, CA

10 am to 2 pm

There will be a volunteer sign up sheet at the October meeting.

- There are three shifts you can sign up for or spend the whole day.
- Set up is from 8 - 10 and you would be helping unload vehicles and organizing plants. Sales is from 10 - 2 and clean up is from 1:30 - 3
- Plant deliveries will be from 8:30 - 9:30.
- We need lots of plants, cardboard boxes for the customers and gently used garden items to sell.
- Please label your plants with the plant name and a brief description.

We also need shoppers so spread the word. Hope to see you there.

Contact: Carol Wilson caroljaywilson@gmail.com

**SEE FLYER AT END OF
THIS NEWSLETTER**





Garden Club crafters made these beautiful decoupage seashells for the Fall Plant Sale. See the end of this newsletter for the Fall Plant Sale Flyer

Sign-up for Succulent Pumpkin Workshop

Friday October 16th at 1:00

in Diane Schafer's garden at 25322 Kerri Lane SDCE

Pumpkins are for the District Meeting and
Fall Craft and Plant Sale

Bring small freshly succulent cuttings to share



TO SIGN-UP PLEASE RSVP TO DIANE SCHAFFER -TEXT 760-658-0334
OR EMAIL zoomnphoto@yahoo.com

To be on the contact list for future Arts & Crafts workshops, contact
Janice Strizver 619-708-5441 jstrizver@gmail.com



Ramona Garden Club

2026 - 2027

Speaker & Program Planning Guide



Month	Speaker	Date	Topic / Subject
September	Lloyd Snapp	Sept. 9, 2026	Perennials for Continuous Bloom & Propagating Perennials
October	District Meeting Roy Toft	Oct. 21, 2026	Bringing Native Nature: Native Wildlife & Watershed Gardening
November	Mario DeMatteo	Nov. 11, 2026	From Tragedy to Triumph: How One Tomato Plant Saved My Life.
December	Christmas Party (No Speaker)	Dec. 9, 2026	Potluck Holiday Luncheon
January	Lucy Warren	Jan. 13, 2027	Native Plants in Landscape Gardening
February	Niki Vollrath	Feb. 10, 2027	Soil Care 101: Soil, Dirt, Compost & Mulch
March	Mary Friestedt	Mar. 10, 2027	Growing an Herb Garden
April	Bill Toone	Apr. 14, 2027	Monarch Butterflies
May	Debby Dunn	May 12, 2027	Design for Serenity Landscape Design
June	Picnic in the Park Installation of New Board Officers	June 9, 2027	Installation of New Executive Board



Gardening Today for a Greener Tomorrow

RAMONA GARDEN CLUB

October Field Trip

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2026



MEET AT MOUNTAIN VIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

AT 9:00 A.M.

Carpool from the church

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN
MEETING LOCATION



FIRST STOP:

Brick & Barn *Antique Show*

Historic Betty Crocker Estate

29200 Miller Road
Valley Center, CA 92082

(760) 651-2635
bricknbarn.com

FREE
PARKING!

SECOND STOP:

Bates Nut Farm

Pumpkin Patch & Fall Fun!

- Pumpkin Patch
- Farm Market & Country Store
- Delicious Treats!

15954 Woods Valley Road
Valley Center, CA 92082



FREE PARKING
at both locations!

*Come for the antiques...
Stay for the pumpkins!*



Farm Stand Fun!



Eighteen people were able to attend the farmstead tour on September 16th.

The group visited:

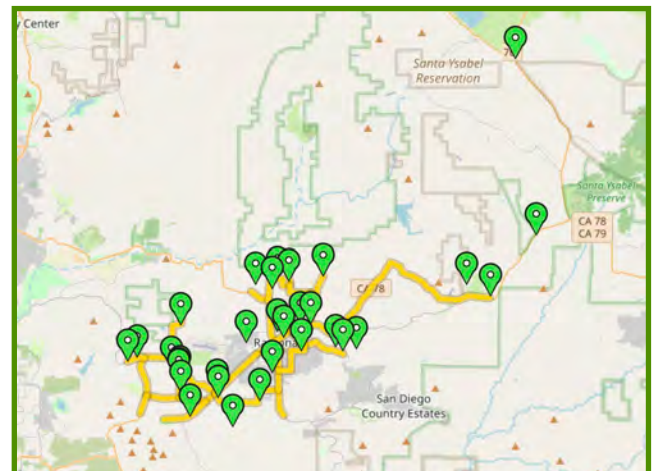
- Mini Barn Market
- Pages Organics
- Early Light Farms
- Lil Patch of Heaven.



Do you want to check out more farm stands?

Go to [FARMSTAND.TV](https://www.farmstand.tv).

They provide an interactive map of around 30 different farm stands in the Ramona area! They provide directions to each stand and links to their phone number and website, if available. By subscribing to their YouTube channel you can see videos of various farm stands as well.



October Birthdays

3rd - Kelly Manring

8th - Jeannie Baby

11th - Nancy Pate

13th - Vern Kilcrease

21st - Sherry Aargon

24th - Diane McKee

27th - David Sabon

29th - Teri Schmidt



Committee Notices

Membership

It's going to be another amazing year for the Ramona Garden Club! Thank you Garden Club members for your continued support and dedication. Remember to invite your garden loving friends to visit our club to see what we are all about. They will receive a raffle ticket for a chance to win a free gift and learn something new!

Yearbook

The 2026-2027 Ramona Garden Club Yearbook will be distributed to members at our November 11th meeting this year. See you there!

'How To' Toolbox

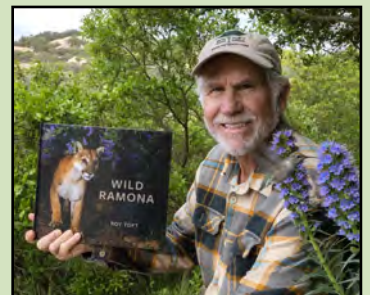
Maybe you have a project and have no idea how to start, these folks can help you get started. A benefit of membership if you are interested in working on projects for your home or garden and just need someone to consult with. Do you have a skill to share? Please email me at janievidal@gmail.com. Please include your information as it appears on the Toolbox graph below.

Name	Cell #	Email	Skill to Share
Robert Holton	760-346-8677	reholton1@gmail.com	Birdhouses / water feature landscaping
Debbie Gomez	760-705-6192	deb4fino@pacbell.net	Plant Propagation
Jack Schlotte	760-315-7753	photojack53@gmail.com	Cactus and succulent landscaping
Bonnie Crawford	805-215-9302	bonnie953@gmail.com	Vintage and antique landscaping
Janice Strizver	619-708-5441	jstrizver@gmail.com	Crafts / garden art



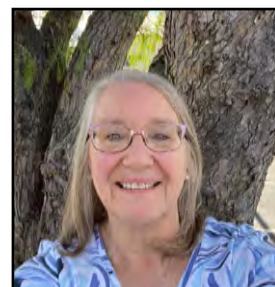
Roy Toft and PBS's Nature: San Diego, America's Wildest City

Many of us have seen Roy Toft speak and even own his book, 'Wild Ramona', which features many of his amazing wildlife photos. Apparently, his work attracted the attention of PBS's program 'Nature' and they filmed many of the inland nature segments on his property, spending several months there to capture video of the wildlife. You can see this program by going to the PBS website: 'Nature', Season 43, Episode 3.



Notes from a Novice

I joined the Ramona Garden Club in 2024 with my husband, Carl, because he had recently retired and has an interest in gardening (house plants are more my thing). So far we have mostly attended the monthly meetings because we enjoy the speakers and have a few friends who are also members. I truly am a novice when it comes to outdoor gardening, so I thought I might put down a few thoughts about what I am learning.



Lloyd Snapp, from El Patio Nursery in Escondido, was the featured speaker at the September meeting. He spoke about perennial plants that are well suited for our Ramona microclimates, such as salvia, bulbine, gaura, society garlic, verbena and angelita daisy. Some of these I'd never heard of before! He then showed us which propagation method was the best for each of these plants, either by planting seed, softwood cutting, division, and offsets/layering. Again, what? I already knew about planting seeds, though the correct procedure of only slightly below the surface of the soil was good to know, as well as when to transplant the seedling and how to gradually adapt the plant to its new growing environment. Softwood cutting made sense to me, too, as it is a pruning and propagation technique for house plants. He also recommended dividing certain plants which seemed to be the easiest propagation method of all. Offsets and layering were very interesting to learn about as certain plants, such as bulbine, have flexible branches that can be stimulated to grow roots while still attached to the mother plant. Finally, he talked about the best time of year to use these different propagation methods. Here is the breakdown:

Plant	Propagation Method	Best time to propagate
Salvia	Softwood cuttings	Spring/Early Fall
Verbena	Stem cuttings/layering	Warm growing season
Gaura	Seed or basal cuttings	Spring
Society garlic	Division or after blooming	Cool season or after bloom
Bulbine	Offsets or Division	Warm Season
Angelita daisy	Seed or Division	Cool season

Oh, I almost forgot! Lloyd is a good friend and supporter of RGC so, if you shop at El Plantio, be sure to tell them that you are a member of the Ramona Garden Club (or mention Robert Holton) you will get a 10% discount.

Stephanie Hurst, Editor



Janice Strizver, our Arts and Crafts Chair, created this beautiful garden arrangement for the Ramona Chamber of Commerce mixer that was held on September 17th. Community outreach is an important part of the mission of the Ramona Garden Club.

Palomar District News

October 12-14, 2026

Pacific Region Convention
Thousand Oaks, CA

October 21, 2026

Palomar District Meeting
Hosted by Ramona Garden Club
Mountain View Church, Ramona

October 5, 2026

Floral Design Forum
Poway Community Library
13137 Poway Rd., Poway
Speaker: Marilou Gibson

October 27 & 28, 2026

National Garden Club Symposium
Handlery Hotel,
950 Hotel Circle North, San Diego



The County of San Diego is offering
FREE TREES
to residents in your community!

- ✓ Free trees for private property in unincorporated communities
- ✓ Choice of tree species selected for your region, including climate ready, native and edible trees.
- ✓ Renters and property managers may participate with owner approval.

To apply, learn more information or for accessibility and language services, scan the QR code or contact Urban Forestry Coordinator:
Magen Shaw
trees.LUEG@sdcounty.ca.gov
<https://bit.ly/EDTPP-PP>



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO **WATERSCAPE REBATE PROGRAM**

Did you know that the County of San Diego has a rebate program for water-wise improvements? These include, but are not limited to:

Turf Replacement, Native Plants, Rain Saving Containers, Gutters, Rain Saving Gardens, Septic Tank Pumping, Landscape Optimization Services and Smart Irrigation Controllers.

You must apply directly the County and be approved for the rebate before you begin the improvements. Click on this link: [Waterscape Rebate Program](#), for more information and to get started.

2026-27 Executive Board

President:	Robert Holton
Vice President:	Bonnie Crawford
Secretary:	Barbara Broyla
Parliamentarian:	Diane McKee
Treasurer:	David White



“Rooted in Friendship, Growing Together”

2026-27 Standing Committee Chairs

Arts & Crafts: Janice Strizver
Collier Park: Teri Schmidt
Facebook & Website: Pene Manale
Grants & Scholarships: Connie Sabon
Historian: Jack Schlotte
Horticulture Table: Carol Bazinet
Hospitality: Carol O'Brien & Toni White
How To Toolbox: Jane Vidal
Library Tree: Carol Wilson
Membership: Lynn Thierolf
Newsletter: Stephanie Hurst

Penny Pines: Diane McKee
Palomar District Delegate: Teri Schmidt
Photographer: Diane Schafer
Plant Sale: Carol Wilson
Publicity: Robert Holton
Raffle Drawing: Jen DeSimone
SD Zoo Safari Park: Debbie Gomez
Sr. Center Flowers: Rebecca Holton
Sunshine: Diane McKee
Yearbook: Connie Sabon

Contact Newsletter Editor @ stephaniehurstgcl@gmail.com
Ramona Garden Club Website - ramonagardenclub.com
Check us out on Facebook!

Affiliations:

National Garden Clubs Inc. – gardenclub.org
Pacific Region Garden Clubs – pacificregiongardenclubs.org
California Garden Clubs, Inc. – californiagardenclubs.com
Palomar District – californiagardenclubs.com/palomardistrict

Ramona Garden Club

P.O.Box 1412 | Ramona, CA 92065 US

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Palomar District

**Fall Membership Meeting
Wednesday, October 21, 2026**

**Mountain View Church
11991 Meadowlark Way, Ramona CA 92065**

Hosted by: *Ramona Garden Club*

Reservations requested by: October 7, 2026

Cost: \$22

Checks payable to: Ramona Garden Club

9:00 am: Check-in, brunch, and shopping

10:00 am: General meeting

Brunch: Savory & sweet items, fruit, beverages

Shopping: Unique hand-made crafts

**Program: "Bringing Nature Home: Native Wildlife and Waterwise Gardening"
Roy Toft, Professional wildlife photographer and biologist**



For more info contact - reholton1@yahoo.com

Names of persons attending:

Total attendees x \$22 = Total enclosed \$ _____



Please send one check for all attendees from your club.
Make checks payable to: Ramona Garden Club
Send by October 7, 2026 to:

Ramona Garden Club
P.O. Box 1412
Ramona CA 92065 - 7402



Ramona
Garden Club

PLANT & CRAFT SALE

SATURDAY, NOV. 7, 2026
10 AM - 2 PM

Ramona Oaks Park
25341 Pappas Road, Ramona, CA

Great
Prices!



Succulents



Heritage
Roses



Wide Variety
of Plants



Gently used
Garden Items

Crafts made by club members
of the Ramona Garden Club.

All proceeds go to scholarships and grants
in the Ramona community.