



The Real Dirt

No General Meeting for April

SPECIAL EDITION

The Ramona Garden Club usually holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (Sept-June) at 12:00. Sadly however, due to the CoronaVirus outbreak, all meetings (both General and Board) are cancelled until further notice and, as I already informed everyone, our Garden Tour/Plant & Craft Sale has been cancelled for 2020. Hopefully we can pick up the ball next year, and we'll be all energized to have it go forward in 2021.

Accordingly, I decided to go ahead and do the newsletter for April with some new and different items of interest to keep everyone entertained and positive during this difficult time. Obviously, the usual calendar entries will be missing as Zoo volunteers will not be reporting to work, nor Collier Park Beautification Days be moving forward since parks are closed. I'm sure Teri, Debbie & Ramona will be there to check things out. Teri says, "So many things are blooming...it's beautiful!"

So.... Although beaches, parks, trails, restaurants, movie theaters, bars, gatherings, classes, schools and such as CLOSED... LIVING still goes on. And gardening is one of the activities we can engage in without threat of harm to ourselves or others. Some of the things people are doing around town are playing or learning a musical instrument, doing puzzles, online courses, reading, keeping in touch with family through Zoom or Hangout, cleaning out a drawer or closet, free virtual museum tours, helping to make masks, helping others get groceries, taking their dog (or even cat) for a walk, putting music on and dancing, singing, yoga, watching movies, pulling weeds, talking to friends on the phone, stationary bicycle, texting friends, planting, landscaping, organizing photos, treadmill, baking bread or other goodies, planning, as well as creative ways to get our exercise in.



But my favorite activity by far is BIRDING. This is an exciting time for birding. I sat in my back yard for 32 minutes one day and spotted over 17 different species of birds, namely quail, Eurasian Collared Dove, Yellow-Rumped Warblers, hummingbirds, Bushtits, Red-Tailed, Red-Shouldered & Cooper's Hawks, Acorn & Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Scrub Jays, Oak Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Finches, White-Crowned & Golden-Crowned Sparrows, Song Sparrows, California & Spotted Towhees, Black-headed Grosbeaks, We are so lucky here in Ramona to have such a bird sanctuary all around us. Plus, the Orioles are back as you can see from the photo courteous of Debbie Canfield! Just now as I was writing this, a hooded Oriole (just like in the pic) stopped by my hummingbird feeder. What a thrill! Western Bluebirds are nesting in my yard too!



Kehrin Schmidt reports and likes the idea of putting up a strand of Christmas lights in the shape of a heart during the pandemic, and I think it's a great idea so I'm passing it around to those in the RGC who might like to participate. SHOW YOUR LOVE & SUPPORT! Keep your heart open to those who are fighting the Covid-19 virus, and their families.

The Ramona Garden Club meets at 12:15 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Mountain View Community Church, 1191 Meadowlark Way

A guest speaker, refreshments, door prize, plant swapping, raffle, horticulture table and library table are featured.

For additional information contact:

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

Member of the National Garden Clubs Inc. (NGC), NGC/Pacific Region and California Garden Clubs, Inc. / Palomar District and a proud Blue Ribbon Club

President's Message



Greetings,

Ramona Garden Club Members!

As we are now experiencing "social distancing" and "sheltering in place," complying with federal, state and local guidelines during the CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) pandemic, it is good to know we have an opportunity to be creative with remote communication! But most importantly, it is in the best interest of protecting the health of our wonderful members that we now communicate in this way.

Stay Happy and Well!

Georgie Suitor

Ramona Garden Club President

New Ideas



FACE MASKS — As most of you have already heard, it is highly recommended for your own protection as well as everyone else's that you wear a mask when you are out in public, i.e., to the grocery store, post office of doctor, etc. These masks are easy to make if you are someone who sews. I made several "designer" masks for family and friends, and I will be glad to make one for anyone who needs one. Just email me at grover_web@yahoo.com. Since some fabrics can allow particles to pass through, it is best to use felt, wool or paper. I made mine out of tightly knit fabric but added a wool insert to some of them (see pic).



April Birthdays

- * Sandy Bedard
- * Bernadette Faust
- * Jeannie Mettler
- * Cynthia Uline



RECIPE FOR HAND SANTIZER

You can make your own hand sanitizer which is a quick and easy way to wipe off groceries when you get home from the store, and hands and countertops. Just make sure the final result is at least 70% rubbing alcohol. I used cheap napkins and a baby wipe container, but any plastic or glass jar will do.

Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ C. alcohol, $\frac{1}{4}$ C. water, $\frac{1}{4}$ C. vinegar, 1 tsp. dish soap and 10 drops of essential oil, i.e., orange or lemon or whatever. Roll the papers, put in jar and cover with liquid.

Reasons to spend more time with plants:

- * Plants make you happy!
- * Plants relieve stress.
- * Plants improve memory, learning and creativity.
- * Plants connect you to nature, which is good for the soul.
- * Planting a garden is a great family activity.
- * Plants clean the air in your home.
- * Plants help people recover faster from illness.

Think of PlantSnappers as a basic form of Instagram, but dedicated to plants and nature photos.

As we all struggle to adapt to spending so much time confined to our homes, we are encouraged by the folks at PlantSnap to download the PlantSnap app on your phone and spend some of your time every day reacquainting yourself with the beauty and wonder of nature and our amazing planet, Earth.



All this rain is wonderful!!!! But, with the rain comes the weeds as we all know so well. I believe this works well for weeds growing between pavers and in cracks.



SOME BIRD-FRIENDLY IDEAS FOR PLANTING



According to John Rowden, Senior Director of Bird-Friendly Communities at the National Audubon Society, his top 5 native plants for California birds are:

1. Black Elderberry- Drought resistant and good in compacted soil, has a berry that is not sweet, but is good in jam. It supports Scrub Jays, Northern Mockingbirds, Grey Catbird, Thrashers and Robins, plus 40 native moths & caterpillars. Elderberry, a good anti-oxidant, can be taken to combat cold and flu symptoms.
2. Sticky Monkeyflower- Preferring full sun, these plants are drought resistant and produce orange, red or yellow flowers, and their foliage is covered in a sticky secretion. A dependable source of nectar for hummingbirds.
3. Toyon (California Holly)- A drought tolerant bush which can grow up to 30 ft tall, with snowy-white flowers in summer, produces bright red berries in winter. Although the berries are toxic to humans, many birds feed on them.
4. California CoffeeBerry- This perennial shrub displays little greenish-white flowers in summer with a dark berry sought after by birds. It grows in a variety of soils, tolerates shade, and has low water requirements.
5. Buck Brush- This evergreen grows up to 12' high, produces white, light blue or lavender colored flowers Feb-April. Acts as a host to moths which feed many bird species. Drought tolerant growing in full sun with moist soil

Open all the shades and curtains; Play music all day in the kitchen; Shower and put on clean clothes; Drink water in a fancy glass; Call at least one friend a day; Have a movie time at 3 or 4 pm; Take a walk.

Make dessert; Take pictures of your garden; Send them to a pal; Clean out a drawer; Put on music and dance to it; Look through photo albums.

Put perfume on; Style your hair a different way; Pick a flower and Listen to the birds. Bake. SMILE!

In these trying times, trying something new out of necessity or boredom is an option. I tried this and was pleasantly surprised and delighted by my effort, so I'm passing it on to you...

Slow Cooker Bread Recipe

- ½ Cup warm water
- 2 Cups warm milk
- 1Tbsp. Melted unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp. Warm olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. Sugar & 1 Tbsp. Honey
- 2 packages of yeast
- 1 C. whole wheat flour
- 5 C. white flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder



In a bowl, stir the ½ C water, sugar, honey, yeast. Wait 5 minutes (at least) until it looks sort of frothy on top. While you're waiting for the yeast mixture, warm 2 C. of milk (I used ½ almond, soy or other milk), the butter and olive oil.

Next, add milk mixture to the yeast mixture. Mix in a mixer by slowly adding the 6 C flour, salt and baking powder. [I mixed it with the beaters until I had 1 C of flour left and then used the dough hook.] Mix for about 5 minutes. Then knead the dough by hand for 7 minutes (or more).

Line your slow cooker or crockpot with parchment paper and place the round ball of dough inside. It will rise by itself as it heats up. Cook on High for 2 – 2.5 hours. Top should be spongy and springs back. The bottom will brown first. Make sure it's cooked all the way through. I cooked it for 2.5, but on the next time I'll take out after 2 or 2.25 minutes. Then stick in the oven on broil for 5 minutes to brown the top. To me this was necessary. Watch it so it doesn't burn. That's it!

[Note: If you add a bit of lemon juice, it will act as a natural preservative and the bread will last longer.]

News-worthy

WEEDS

"A plant is a weed only within a certain context; one person's weed is another person's wildflower."

[Taken from Weeds by Maisyn Taylor from DailyOM website]

Simply expressed, a weed is any plant that grows where it isn't wanted. Weeds are defined by their tendency to flourish at the expense of a gardener's overall vision, and we tend to battle their presence in our yards. It is interesting to consider, though, that a plant is a weed only within a certain context, which is to say that one person's weed is another person's wildflower. Most of us have pulled at least one dandelion up by its roots and disposed of it in the interest of preserving the look of a perfect green lawn, yet the dandelion is good medicine, packed with healing properties and vitamin-rich leaves that are a delicious, spicy surprise in a summer salad. [Note: the entire plant is edible]

In the wild, there is no such thing as a weed because the overall vision is in the hands of Mother Nature, who accommodates and incorporates all forms of life. In nature, balance is achieved over the long term without the aid, or interference, of a human supervisor. While one plant may prevail over others for a certain period of time, eventually it will reach an apex and then it will naturally decline, allowing for other forms to be born and survive. This self-regulating realm was the first garden of our ancestors, who learned the art of agriculture from studying the forests and fields of the as yet uncultivated earth. In a sense, weeds are harbingers of this wildness, pushing their way into our well-ordered plots, undermining more delicate flora, and flourishing in spite of us.

The next time you see a weed, you might want to look deeply into its roots, discover its name, its habits, and its possible uses. Instead of seeing an unwanted intruder, you might see a healer offering its leaves for a medicinal tea or its flowers for a colorful salad. At the very least, if you look long enough, you will see a messenger from the wilderness of Mother Earth, reminding you that, even in the most carefully controlled garden, she cannot be completely ruled out. _____

{Other examples of edible "weeds" are stinging nettle which can be made into a delicious and nutritious tea. Put in a pot, cover with water and simmer for 20 minutes. Add tsp honey and squeeze of lemon and enjoy. To me it tastes like vegetables. A third example is "Miner's Lettuce," which I have heard makes a delicious salad. Check to see if you have any of these in your yard. Fortunately for me, I have all 3 growing like wildfire all over the place...I'LL NEVER BE HUNGRY AGAIN!}



Dandelion— Full of Antioxidants, boosts immune system, supports healthy digestion, kills cancer cells.



Stinging Nettle— Good for heart, kidney & gallbladder health, treats respiratory conditions, good for blood circulations,

Miner's Lettuce— Purify blood, improve heart function, reduce cholesterol. Rich in Vitamin C, can be taken as an invigorating spring tonic.

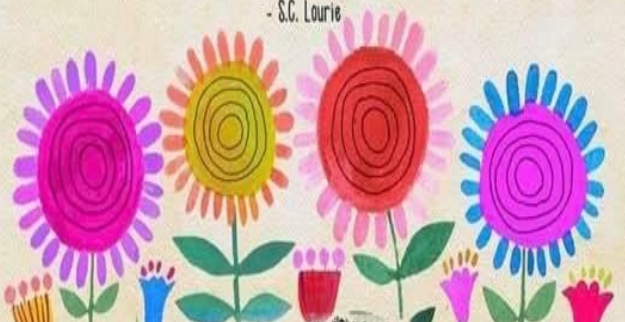


A SHOUTOUT TO
EVERYONE WHO IS TRYING RIGHT NOW.

Trying to do the right thing. Trying to stay open.
Trying to keep going. Trying to hold on. Trying to
let go. Trying to find their flow. Trying to stay
afloat. Trying to meet each new day. Trying
to find their balance. Trying to love themselves.
Trying new things and new ways.

I see you. I'm there too. We're in this together.

- S.C. Laurie



Free Farmer's Market



Drive through

Social distancing of 6' is mandatory

Fridays 1:30 - 2:30

First Congregational Church

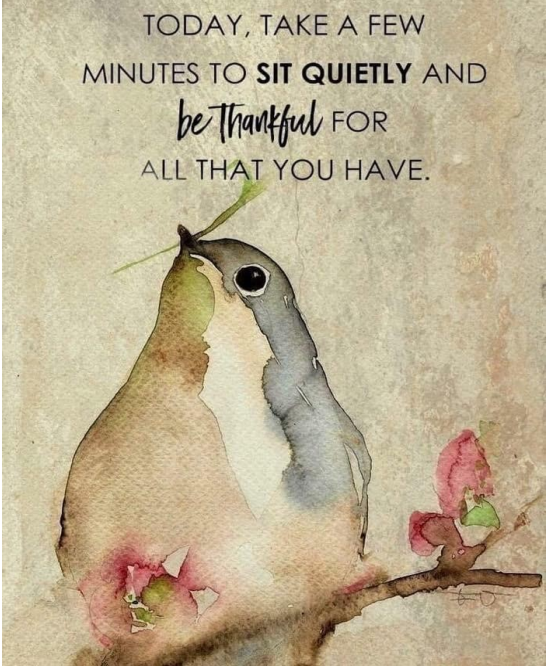
404 8th Street



Something to think about...



Pics from March meeting with speaker Mary Friestedt re Herbs



**LASTLY, I'D LIKE TO LEAVE
YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING
THOUGHT...** →→→→→→→→→

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