

December—January 2020-2021 NEWSLETTER

River Park Garden Club

Well, I wish we were meeting for our annual Holiday Brunch right now. But better for everyone to be home, safe and warm, anticipating spring with enthusiasm. I am.

Our gardens offer a great opportunity for creativity, exercise, and satisfaction. My fiancé and fellow RPGC member, Charles (Burgess) and I are busy in the garden.

We have a citron tree that was already here when I moved in. Everyone wanted me to cut it down. I just couldn't do it.

It is a Corsican Citron that bears fruit that makes great marmalade and candied rind for baking! I am involved with that tree and so excited to have it.



President Debbie Eldridge in front of her Corsican Citron tree

Late last summer I found a striped Monarch caterpillar and that started our butterfly

project – inspired by one of our Garden Club speakers.

We planted what we call our “Milkweed Meadow” to attract Monarch caterpillars like the one curled below.



We watched this Monarch caterpillar eat the milkweed for a week. Then he disappeared. Later we found him poised to make a pretty cocoon on our hummingbird décor! Hopefully it means the milkweed will attract more Monarchs next year.

It was with much the same intention that we also planted California Pipevine to entice the California Swallowtail caterpillars and eventual brilliant blue butterflies to our garden. We built a trellis for the pipevine to grow on.

After a year's worth of growth and some imported guests we were rewarded with a group of 20+ pupae! Once we saw hornets dragging them away we gathered them into an aquarium and fed them leaves until they were large enough to return to the vine. We can't wait to see what we find next year!

(More Butterflies, next page)

(Butterflies)

We can also look forward to our club meeting again, as soon as possible. We have promises from our committed speakers that they will be ready to entertain and educate us when we can meet again at Shepard Garden and Arts Center.

So far, I have called about half of our members and enjoyed catching up. Mostly I just want you to know your Garden Club board is thinking about you and wishing you well. I appreciate all of you who took the time to talk with me. I hope to reach every member soon.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome any time.

Don't hesitate to call me or anyone else on the board with ideas for reaching out, newsletter features and future activities.

I wish everyone Happy Holidays!



A pipevine swallowtail caterpillar at work

SAVE THE REDWOODS!

There is a proposal to build private student housing on the Newman Court property at J and Carlson, across from CSUS. If approved as proposed, it will mean clear-cutting the parcel, including cutting down the 10 majestic Coast Redwoods that line J Street and Carlson Drive.

“A variety of concerns have been expressed about the project,” according to River Park resident Kate Riley. “We are only asking that the City reject the developer’s request to remove the 10 Coast Redwoods (*along with 11 other Private Protected Trees*). *The developer’s request conflicts with his own arborist’s recommendation to retain the trees.*”

The Coast Redwoods are part of a “Gateway” element to River Park, Riley said, and they are established, healthy trees along the perimeter of the property that can co-exist with them.

“Their preservation would enhance the project by providing human scale to the proposed multi-story buildings,” she said. “We want the City to know that River Park wants those Coast Redwoods to stay!” she said.

The trees range in size from 100 to 123 feet tall and are from 37 to 62 inches in diameter. They were in place before 1971, and could be more than 60 years old.

“To remove them is to irrevocably damage the character of our River Park neighborhood. There is the potential for a negative impact on River Park’s real estate value as well,” Riley wrote.

The project has not been approved by either the Planning Commission or City Council, and is in early stages of City consideration.

(See Redwoods, next page)

(REDWOODS)

“The purpose of the River Park Garden Club is to engage in activities that result in the beautification of our neighborhood,” said Lee Ruth, River Park Garden Club representative on the River Park Tree Canopy Project Steering Committee.

“Keeping in mind the RPGC does not have an official position on the Newman Center development that proposes to take out 10 beautiful, mature Coastal Redwoods along with a number of other varieties of smaller trees. This clearly damages the beauty and character of our neighborhood.



“City planners and our city councilman need to be made aware that the trees’ destruction flies in the face of the City Tree Ordinance recently enacted to protect our tree canopy - and you want them protected.”

Comments may be sent to:
Council member Jeff Harris,
JSHarris@cityofsacramento.org

Robby Thacker, City Planning Department staffer -- rthacker@cityofsacramento.org

Add your name to the Save the Redwoods mailing list -- kbriley@surewest.net



Anne's Yard

By Anne Fay

The glorious crimson and gold of fall is transitioning to the black and white of

winter. Long, cold, and hopefully wet—winter is a state of *stillness* that seems to last forever until, as in the Wizard of Oz, a door opens from the sepia tones of winter to the vivid color and life of spring. Alas, that's months away.

The turkey was hardly out of the oven before most of my neighbors decked their homes and gardens with cheerful lights and evergreens to celebrate the season. But well before modern holiday merry-making, the ancients held festivals to mark the winter solstice. In the northern hemisphere, the solstice on December 21 begins the winter season. It is the shortest day, when the sun seems to hang low and *still* in the noontime sky, and shadows are at their longest.

According to the Farmers' Almanac, many Christmas customs, symbols, and rituals harken back to winter solstice celebrations of ancient cultures. The lighting of a Yule log is believed to have originated with the Scandinavian *Feast of Juul*, when fires were lit to symbolize the heat, light, and life-giving properties of the returning sun. Ancient Romans celebrated the festival of *Saturnalia*, when grudges were forgiven, wars were postponed, and carnival-like festivities were held. Even the Christmas tree can be traced to solstice celebrations.

“Solstice” is from a Latin term meaning “point at which the sun stands still.” Of course, it is the earth that is constantly moving around the static sun—revolving and evolving from one season to the next. During this winter season of *stillness*, best wishes to you and your family for peace, joy, good health, and *patience* until the sun returns and the door opens to the vivid color and life of spring.

WINTER GARDENING

Technically winter does not start until 5:30 a.m. on Monday, December 21, 2020 but we have already experienced some cold night and early morning temperatures.

The 60-plus degree afternoon temperatures are nice, but the low overnight temperatures can do damage to tender plants.

Since there is no rain in sight in our immediate future, it is important to keep container plants, plantings under patio covers and house overhangs watered. The exception to this is succulents. Most succulents need less water in the winter to avoid rot.

Frost cloth or C9 Christmas lights (LED lights do not give off enough heat) can provide enough warmth to protect plants if the temperature gets down to freezing.

Most winter vegetables can handle low temperatures or will bounce back from any slight damage they might suffer.

Leave foliage on perennials even if it is damaged by cold

temperatures. Even damaged, it protects the rest of the plant.

The damage can be pruned off after there are no more freeze threats.



Therese Ruth, wintering

Sacramento, historically has a 50% chance of the first 32-degree day on December 4 and a 50% chance of the last 32-degree day on Feb 10.

It is time to start looking at seed, flower, and rose catalogs or online for new offerings for spring.

Catalogs that used to arrive in January, after the Holidays, now arrive in November and December. Bare root roses, fruit trees, grapevines and berries will be arriving in nurseries in late December or early January.

“Bare root” for the most part, now means planted in biodegradable pots.

Naval oranges, usually ready to pick in December and January, are best stored on the tree until you are ready to eat them, that is, IF you can keep the squirrels and other critters away from them.

Your roses should be pruned by the end of January and remember to strip off all the old leaves remaining after you prune. Clean up all pruned material and leaves to keep diseases from overwintering.

Deciduous fruit trees (with the exception of apricots and cherries) should be pruned, too. Spray nectarines and peaches to prevent peach leaf curl.

Pre-emergents such as “Preen” keep spring weeds from germinating and should be broadcast in late winter to prevent spring weeds.

IMPORTANT – pre-emergents prevent **ALL** seeds from germinating so do not use them where you want to start seeds in the garden.

Wonderful Websites for Gardeners

Too cold to be out in the garden? Whether you need a quick reference for transplanting a cactus or just want to take an armchair trip to a beautiful garden, these websites will be useful and entertaining.

* Sacramento Digs Gardening

<https://sacdigsgardening.blogspot.com>

Debbie Arrington and Kathy Morrison - former Sacramento Bee editors, have a blog and Facebook page that keeps gardeners updated about everything going on in the gardening scene in the Sacramento area – garden shows, sales, current garden problems, and etc.

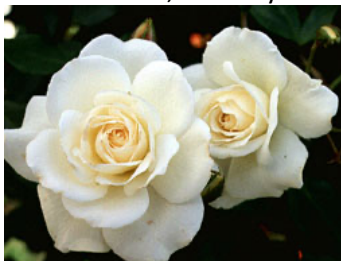
* Get Growing with Farmer Fred

<http://farmerfred.com>

Fred Hoffman, a lifetime Master Gardener, has a radio show on KFBK (1530) from 8–10 a.m. and on KSTE (650) 10-Noon Sunday mornings.

Hoffman's website has loads of gardening info, too, including a *Garden Basics* podcast that is accessible from the website. *Garden Basics* covers not only the basics of gardening but lots of advice from gardening professionals.

With the many large shade trees in River Park yards may have more shade than sun. Farmer Fred's website also includes a list of roses that will grow in shade, compiled by RPGC member and Master Rosarian, Pam Myczek.



Iceberg likes shade

The site features a monthly planting guide listing what can be planted either from seed or transplants, plus lists of seasonal garden chores.

* UC website for Home, Garden, Turf and Landscape Pests includes insects, diseases, and etc. -- <http://ipm.ucanr.edu>



Oak tubakia fungus

* Treehuggers, Sustainability for All

<http://treehugger.com>

Off the wall, but practical—includes how to capture rain, plus a list of 12 things you should never compost (spoiler alert –walnuts, pasta and magazines) and DIY seed pots.

* Garden Product Reviews and

Instructions -- looking for a special shovel?

gardeningproductsreview.com

Will have it, review it and explain how to use it. Lists of holiday gifts, too.

* Longwood Gardens' spectacular video tour of their conservatory!

Longwoodgardens.org

* Landscape designer Jack Barnwell's tours of Michigan's Mackinac Island "cottages."

<https://www.jackbarnwelldesign.com/>

* Garden Answer videos – a young couple with five acres they are continuously developing and planting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8inzF3q0il>

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(More Armchair Garden Tours, on next page)

(Armchair Garden Tours)

* The Most Beautiful Gardens in

Europe (just beautiful pictures and nice music, does not say where they are)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdbBRAEqiho>

* Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

www.maine gardens.org

New England's largest botanical garden offers both elegance and humor (the children's garden area, below, is sweet and clever)



* Katsura, Imperial Garden near Kyoto, Japan, the supreme serene garden, dating from 1579.

<https://sankan.kunaicho.go.jp/english/guide/katsura.html>



* Butchart Gardens, British Columbia's glorious former quarry turned into gardens
www.butchartgardens.com

* La Rosaraie, L'Hay-Les-Roses, Val de Marne, an astounding rose garden with 3,200 rose varieties near Versailles, France.
<https://roseraie.valdemarne.fr>



One of the arbors at L'Hay-Les-Roses