

# River Park Garden Club



I often ponder what topics may be interesting to write about and share in the newsletter while involved in a variety of activities. I usually have my best flow of ideas while walking around the neighborhood with the dogs or, appropriately, while weeding or otherwise tending the garden.

Of course these occasions are stolen moments during the whirlwind of a merry-go-round of activity that is my life; and when I return from my walk, have cleaned up my gardening tools and debris, I quickly hop on the next horse and all ideas are left behind in the dust.



Not this time!  
Today I am excited to share with the club that I have ventured into the wild world of succulents, purchasing a 1.25-foot-tall Dragon Fruit. Dragon

Fruit! Charles and I recently went to the movies with my parents to see *Raya and the Last Dragon*.

My new succulent has no correlation with *Raya* and *Sisu*, the last, very colorful dragon. However, if I am lucky, my Dragon Fruit, will someday be otherworldly and very colorful.

First an update on the Monarch chrysalis. I am sad to report that the chrysalis is still on the front porch hanging from the paper towel we glued it to. I will bring it to the June meeting so all can see before we add it to the compost or suffer it some similar fate.

We hope for better results next year.

And on the other end of the front yard where our trellis of California Pipe Vine grows lush and fuller with each passing week, we were joyfully surprised by a patch of little visitors. While they seemingly disappeared in the weeks that have followed, we are excited to have created this very tiny bit of butterfly ecosystem.

Back to the Dragon Fruit. Charles and I were wandering around the outdoor garden area of Home Depot looking for posts to hoist up the leaning fence in the backyard when I spotted these containers of odd –and not at all appealing looking—plants, Dragon Fruit.

Well, the name was sure interesting. As we do, I retrieved my phone from my bag of wonders so that I could find out exactly what this strange looking succulent was and what it could be with a little love and time.

(Continued; see Debbie, page 2)



(more Debbie)

Seeing the images of the mature plant was all I needed to convince me that this was just the plant for me. (I think this may be a common story among garden enthusiasts including some RPGC club members).

On page 1, there is a selfie of me seemingly hugging my new garden addition. To the right, is the promise of the extraordinary gift of color, fruit and almost prehistoric awe I imagined when bringing my dragon home.

We have planted it in a pot, not knowing if we'll need to bring it inside during the

cooler months and not sure what location will suit it best.

YouTube and the internet have given me some tips on what to expect and how to train it. I have much more to learn to see that my new plant thrives and look forward to

watching it grow and teach me something new that I can perhaps share with you all.



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## We'll Be Meeting – In Person!

The River Park Garden Club's first meeting since our Holiday Brunch in December 2019, will welcome members back to Shepard Garden & Arts Center at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, June 17! In case you have forgotten (it's been a long time) the Shepard Garden & Arts Center is at 3330 McKinley Blvd.



The ever-popular Greg Gayton, an RPGC member and a manager of Green Acres Nurseries, will be our speaker. Per usual, he will offer tips on the newest, most interesting summer-and-beyond plants, appropriate for Sacramento gardens.

There will be no pot luck at the meeting, but members are welcome to bring food, a plate and utensils, for themselves only. There will be no food sharing just yet. The Hospitality Committee will provide beverages, cups and ice. See you soon!

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(Can you identify this blooming tree, to the left? Tell newsletter editor Pat Smith at our meeting and win a prize!)

# The Summer Garden

With the first 100-degree day already forecasted before the arrival of Summer on June 20, it is time to get your garden ready for Sacramento's long, hot, dry weather.

Because it looks like we are once again in a drought, it is more important than ever to do everything we can to protect our gardens. Some of the basics include:

Keep gardens weeded -- weeds compete with plants for nutrients and water!

Mulch flower beds 2 to 4 inches deep but keep the mulch a few inches away from the base of plants, moisture against the base of the plant can cause rot.

Water early in the day to reduce evaporation and increase soil saturation. New plantings and container plants may need more frequent watering, don't let the root balls dry out. Hanging baskets may need to be watered twice a day. During prolonged periods of heat move the hanging baskets to the ground where it is cooler, especially important for fuchsias and begonias.

Raise containers off patios and porches with "pot feet" and even pieces of wood. Group containers together to provide insulation from heat on the sides of the pots (especially important for dark colored pots).

If flower or vegetable plants "wilt" in the late afternoon it does not necessarily mean they need water, they are being "drama queens" and are conserving moisture. Check them after the sun is off them or the next morning and see if they have rebounded, if not they may actually need more moisture. Check soil moisture down 2 to 3 inches and water only if it is dry.

Cut flowers and harvest fruits and vegetables early in the morning for best flavor, color and lasting time.

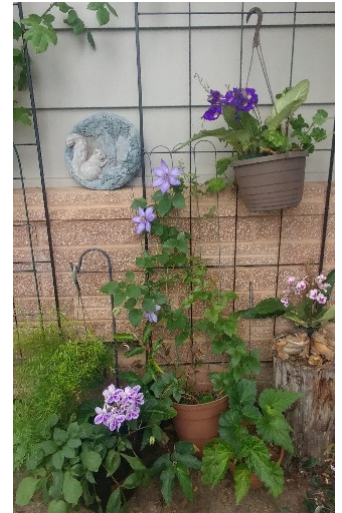
Keep vegetables harvested to keep these plants producing all summer long.

Watch for hornworms on tomatoes, but if your yard attracts birds they will probably get them before you see them. If your plants are bothered with whiteflies use yellow sticky traps, for aphids and spider mites use a strong stream of water to blow them off, they cannot fly so have no way to get back up to the plant.

For extreme heat consider shade cloth in the afternoon for your ripening vegetables – tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc., this will help to prevent sunburn. If your plants are in containers they can be moved into the shade for the hottest part of the day. Many houseplants enjoy outside time on a shady porch or patio during the warm months.

If snails and/or slugs are a problem, leave a damp piece of wood or folded newspaper out, they will crawl into it overnight, collect it in the morning and dispose of it in the garbage.

For information on any particular garden pest visit the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources website: [www.ipm.ucanr.edu](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu). Pest Notes (which include almost everything that can affect a garden – insects, animals, diseases, etc.) are listed under the section on "Home, Garden, Turf and Landscape Pests."



~~~ **Therese Ruth**