

September – December, 2021

River Park Garden Club Newsletter

Notes on Our First In-Person Meeting in 2021



I would like to share some of the interesting tidbits I learned during our last RPGC meeting in June. First a few things about Green Acres, one of my

favorite weekend escapes.

Speaker Greg Gayton mentioned that **Help is Wanted** at Green Acres. If I were at the retirement stage in my career, I can easily picture myself donning the Green Acres apron and helping customers find just the right greenery for their garden a couple of days a week.

We also learned that each Green Acres has its own buyers and thus its own unique personality and specialties. What you may find at one location may not be at another. But in its place will be a whole 'nother treasure; a very good reason to visit them all!

Greg brought a variety of plants, all of which were generously



raffled off to club members. I took some notes on the raffled collection and here is what I learned. Nemesia (above) thrives on neglect. While I did not bring home a Nemesia plant from the raffle that night, I had just purchased one a

few weeks prior and was glad to hear I would not have to baby my new plant.

I also wrote down the name "Ipheion uniflorum." These are small bulbs that produce a mass of tiny blue flowers and can



Ipheion uniflorum

spread if left undisturbed, growing in a meadow-like

fashion. I am often on the lookout for just such a plant to help fill in the blanks around the yard.

Another thing I learned at our June meeting is that the Dahlia was a source for sugar before sugar cane. While I haven't found a lot of information on this particular tidbit, I did learn that the tubers of the Dahlia are edible and were a part of the diet of the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

Another interesting use for the Dahlia' -- other than its striking beauty -- is as an alternative to insulin. Dahlia tubers can be processed to form Diabetic Sugar "which is frequently prescribed for the needs of diabetic and consumptive patients, and has been given to children in cases of wasting illness."

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/2016/stat-e-editions/inulin-from-dahlia-an-alternative-to-insulin.html>

(Debbie, continued, page 2)

(Debbie, continued)

I am most excited to write about the Dragon Fruit I brought home from Home Depot last spring and the “post” project it inspired.

When I learned that the Dragon Fruit could be trained to form a weeping tree of sorts, the wheels in my head began turning.

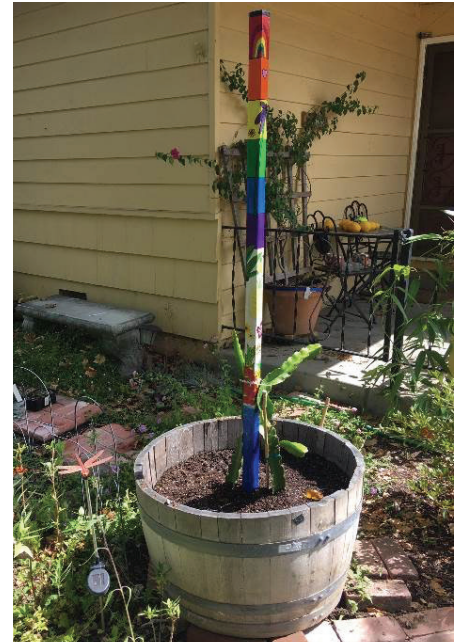
What was I going to use for a post? How would it look? How big? Would it be permanent?

After some consideration, I decided upon a 2 x 2-inch x six-foot post that I would paint in a brightly colored tropical theme.

I spent the next three weeks deciding what images and colors I liked, flipping, painting, drying and flipping again until the post was complete and ready for sealing, drying and planting.

When it came time to assemble and plant, we decided that just one Dragon Fruit wouldn't do. Instead, we decided one plant on either side of the post would yield better results. I am happy to report that both plants have adjusted well to their new home and are growing by leaps and bounds. Now comes the hard part of deciding which “branches” to remove for best results...

--Debbie Eldridge, President



Fall is for planting... and other garden chores.

After our long, hot, dry summer, Fall should offer some relief to our gardens, maybe even some rain!

Fall begins after Noon on Weds., Sept. 22 this year. In Sacramento our soil remains warm enough to plant in September and October.



Therese splitting agapanthus in her garden

It is a great time to add trees (visit nurseries now to see their fall color), shrubs and perennials to the garden. The soil is still warm so you will not see any new growth above ground with perennials, but the roots will grow and settle in before the soil cools.

Any new plantings will need to be watered until the weather cools and the rains (hopefully) show up.

Lawns – September or early October is a good time to renovate your summer-weary lawn. Lawns can be dethatched, aerated, over-seeded and fertilized to rejuvenate them. It is also a good time to replace some of the lawn area with drought-tolerant plantings. Be sure to adjust your lawn irrigation for Fall's cooler weather.

Flowers – Lift and divide crowded daylilies, agapanthus, iris, penstemon and other perennials. Replant or share with friends and neighbors. Plant spring bulbs – some, such as tulips, Hyacinths and crocus – do better if they are chilled in the

refrigerator for six weeks, so order/buy these as soon as they are offered.

Daffodils do not need to be chilled and unlike some spring bulbs, they rebloom year after year. Add bulb fertilizer or blood meal to the holes where you plant bulbs.

With the exception of roses, pruned in December/January, do not prune other shrubs, perennials, and etc. until early Spring. The foliage will help protect the crown and roots of the plants if we happen to have a very cold winter.

As the weather cools, plant pansies, violas, snapdragons, calendulas and other annuals that like cooler weather.

Vegetable Garden – If you do not plan to plant a winter vegetable garden, re-energize the soil with compost, chicken manure, dried leaves or a cover crop. Leave these in



place and let the winter rains incorporate them into your soil.

Cover crops should be chopped down

and dug into the soil before planting a summer garden. If you do plant a winter garden now is the time to get it started – lettuce, carrots, kale, etc. Sugar pod peas can be grown in containers and planted in succession so you have a supply through Spring.

Houseplants - If your houseplants need more light through the Fall and Winter there are wide-spectrum lights that will make them happier. The lights come in table-top size as well as tall stands and are not too expensive.

--Therese Ruth

Meet A Fellow RPGC Member



Art has always attracted Melinda Lauten-Scribner, when she isn't gardening!

Lately, though, she's tried her hand for a second time, to grow dahlias. BIG dahlias.

"The first time I tried, it just didn't work. This time I have dinner plate sized dahlias, 10-feet tall!" Melinda said.

"They are an amazing deep red orange, curly leaves and yellow on the underside with 10 layers of petals."

"As for art, I have been around it my whole life. My own hands-on art work had been felting and making stained glass, but the glass was difficult on hands and back and nothing else really held my attention that long," she said.

A class she took at University Art a few years ago, introduced her to a new kind of artwork for her -- Cyanotype.

"It is a 19th century process that is such a great way to incorporate my first love – nature – and art. Like the stained glass, it is working with light, flowers, and vines," she said.

The process uses a photosensitive chemical emulsion that she brushes onto watercolor paper. When dry, she lays down whatever botanical specimen she wants to feature and then she exposes it to sunlight for 20 minutes. The paper is then chemically fixed to become permanent.



"Mainly, the natural things I use are from my garden, but I collect flowers everywhere I go. As I wander through River Park, I never go into anyone's garden, but hanging over the sidewalk? Fair game," she quipped. A member of RPGC for five years, Melinda is a retired social worker, with San Juan Schools for 15 years, dealing with truant families.



The Cyanotype process produces blue and white images, but Melinda said adding elements such as baking soda, salt, turmeric, and chili powder produces many different colors. From the paper she makes original prints, jewelry and note cards that she sells at Talini's. Her art is also on Instagram, @melindalauten.

"I will also be showing at the Kiwanis Arts Fiesta at Pavilions, Sept. 11 and 12," she said.

A Rose is a Rose, is a Rose, unless it's a Horse!

Debbie Arrington, President of the Sacramento Rose Society will be the speaker at the next RPGC in-person meeting, at **6:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 16.**

Her subject? "Roses Named for Racehorses."
Think Kentucky Derby, the "Run for the Roses!"

Arrington certainly knows a rose from a horse. She's been around both all her life -- as an avid gardener and horsewoman. She also writes the comprehensive Sacramento Digs Gardening blog.



"One fantastic rose named for a horse is 'Whirlaway,' a pure white miniflora. Whirlaway won the Kentucky Derby in 1941," Arrington said. "The minifloras are a relatively new rose class, a cross between miniature and florabunda roses. They look like hybrid teas. Some of their blooms can measure three inches across."

"Whirlaway" was created by California hybridizer Tom Carruth, who has created more than 100 new roses and serves as curator of the three-acre rose collection at the Huntington Gardens in San Marino.

Arrington is shown, at left, with "Marilyn Monroe," her Queen of Show winning rose, at a Sacramento Rose Society competition. Most recently, Arrington also was a winner at the Kentucky Derby! She shared in the victory of the 2020 Derby winner, a horse named "Authentic."

"In 2020, he also won the the Breeder's Cup Classic and was named Horse of the Year," she said. She is one of the horse's more than 5,000 part owners. "That means I own about one pound of Authentic!"

For dinner at this meeting, please bring food for yourself only, a plate, napkin and utensils. The Hospitality Committee will provide beverages, ice, cups and desserts. Thank you.

Shepard Garden and Arts Center Events

Sept. 11-12 -- Delta Gesneriad & African
Violet Show
Sept. 18- 19 – Begonia Society Show
Oct. 2-3 -- Fall Sale, member clubs, artists
Oct. 9-10 – Camelia City Porcelain Artists

Oct. 23 – Northern California Art By Fire
Nov. 6-7 -- Crysanthemum Show
Nov. 13 – Sacramento Textile Arts Show
Nov. 19-21 – Above the Fray Sale

River Park Garden Club History – Part 2

Our club was founded in 1951 by a dozen women who vowed to meet monthly at each other's homes – and conceivably they got a look at each other's gardens, too! Polly Parker was the first president and in the 70 years since, there have been 40 different presidents, some of whom held the office more than once.

The stated purpose of the club was/is: “To promote and encourage the proper cultivation of gardens for the beautification of our community.” It worked! As the club celebrates its 70th anniversary, it may be the oldest neighborhood garden club around.

Besides gardening, the club's members also have created flower arrangements for convalescent homes; donated funds to purchase landscape trees and benches for Caleb-Greenwood School; improved a 1,400-foot strip along Moddison Avenue; sponsored a Boy Scout troop; led field trips to flower shows and public gardens, and donated to River Park Baseball to improve the Baseball Diamond at Ciavarella Field.

Another continuing club project has been maintaining the plants, trees, fountain and signs in the Yermol Memorial Garden at River Park's entrance at H Street and Carlson Drive. Recently, members Dick Dotters and Lee Ruth, along with River Park resident and volunteer Richard Vincent, painted the two signs (erected in 1987) that had not been refurbished in five years. Dotters also donated the paint for the project!

The club has also always participated in the Spring and Fall plant sales at Shepard Garden and Arts Center. Sales bring in funds to pay club expenses and sponsor projects. **The next Fall sale will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Oct. 2 and 3.** Anyone interested in participating -- by donating plants or other garden-related items or staffing our table, may contact Therese Ruth (916-457-0822) or Lynn McCormack (916-455-4159).

Memories from the first in-person meeting of RPGC in too long!



Good listeners



Greg Gayton



Good friends