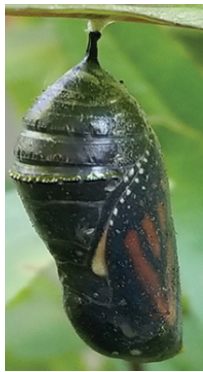


March-May 2021 NEWSLETTER

# River Park Garden Club

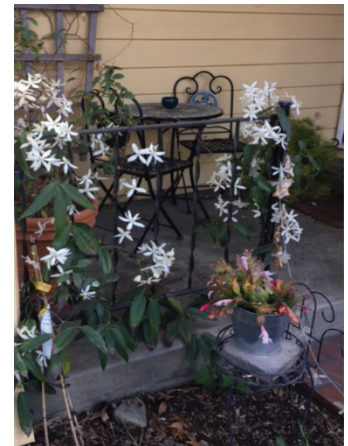


What a wild first term as garden club president this has been! To say I've been eased into the role would be an understatement. While I must admit I was nervous about the public speaking aspect of the job –but also a teensy excited– I certainly did not expect to be spared the pleasure the entire term. And hopefully that will not be the case. I am excited to say we are tentatively planning an outdoor gathering for June with our favorite Green Acres speaker and member Greg Gayton. My wonderful fiancé captured this image of Greg during his presentation last year. Greg always brings an interesting array of plants from the nursery, sharing the how to's and wherefores of each plant. Then he kindly donates a portion of his show to our raffle. Last year my dad won a grevalia and since his house has no need for additional flora it was planted and is flourishing on the south east side of my house. I am looking forward to what Greg will share come June. Stay tuned for details in the next newsletter.



I wanted to share an update on the Monarch chrysalis found in my milkweed meadow. During one of our windier days, the chrysalis disconnected and fell to the ground. Charles and I found and rescued it but did not know what to do with it. We researched on the web and found a wonderful resource on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/mKFq5lYgT5Q>) that taught us how to attach the

chrysalis to an alternate location. We have done so, connecting it to a paper towel and hanging it on our front porch, and now we are awaiting the transformation. We learned that before the butterfly emerges, the chrysalis turns very dark, nearly black. Ours is now black (see image on the left) and we are hopeful that our butterfly will emerge soon and be healthy (image of a healthy 'black' chrysalis on the right). We've become so invested in this little guy we plan to plant even more milkweed this year to encourage the Monarch population. In other news, I am enjoying smelling all the blossoms around the neighborhood. Each day brings a new discovery. The rhubarb I planted over two years ago is beginning to grow and I am looking forward to my first harvest. Looks like I'll be making some strawberry rhubarb pie this summer, yum. I am especially pleased that the clematis I planted last summer has started to bloom and planted on the front porch railing, provides a welcoming aroma when we come and go.



I hope you all are enjoying the warmer days, blue skies, busy birds, blooming flowers, bushes and trees along with the hope and promise of cheerful, festive days ahead. I look forward to our next in-person gathering and the opportunity to address members face to face. I will be a little nervous in my new role but very happy to see you all. Until then, stay safe, keep planting and I'll see you soon!

## **Get to Know Your Club President**

Debbie McCormack Eldridge has been president of the River Park Garden Club for a year, but unfortunately has not been properly introduced. Someday, when we are able to get back together at Shepard Garden and Arts, we will give her a big “Hurrah.” Until then, here’s an introduction to her.



The McCormack family is well represented in the club. Debbie’s brother, Ron, is a past president of the group. Her mom, Lynn, has been the mastermind for the food table over the past few years and her Dad, Tim, is also especially helpful when the club sales and meetings come around. Her son, Tim Eldridge, has entertained us with his piano artistry at several special club events. Her fiancé, Chuck Burgess, also a club member, is on the RPGC Dining Committee.

Debbie’s roots in River Park are deep. She attended Caleb-Greenwood for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and was on the swim team at Glenn Hall and the neighborhood soccer team until her age group ended at age 14.

Her interest in gardening is enthusiastic!

“I have a little bit of everything,” she says. “I do some veggies and fruit. We have a cantaloupe vine. I don’t know where it came from. And I just planted a kumquat tree, inspired by Lee and Therese’s (the Ruths) tree. It is kind of fun to plant something and then see the fruits of your labor. I ordered a pomegranate tree a few years ago, planted it and now it is 20 feet tall. I recently ate my first pomegranate from it.”

Debbie, who recently turned 52, has a few years to go before she can be in her garden fulltime. Meantime, she works as a database programmer for the MotorTrend Group.

“We stream Motor Trend (magazine) on our app. The print magazine started 70 years ago, and now it has only an internet presence -- [motortrend.com](http://motortrend.com), based in El Segundo. The original company here was IntelliChoice, in the Bay Area. I got my first job there, right out of college. I recently celebrated 30 years with the company.”

The future of River Park Garden Club under her leadership will still include meetings with speakers, participating in the River Park Fourth of July parade and the club’s garden tour.

“I think the expanded newsletter has helped our members know we are thinking about them and the articles in it have offered useful information,” Debbie said. “And maybe we should have a contest for biggest tree or a drive-by front yard tour?”



## Anne's Yard

It starts with the smallest hint of a change, a renewal, a miracle.  
Spring is like that.

Millions of tiny signs of a fresh new season -- like blades of grass in an empty field or pink buds in an almond orchard.

I have one such clue in my garden right now. Something so simple, yet so surprising. So welcome at this particular time.

Late last spring, a friend gave me a small struggling clematis transplanted in a nice ceramic pot.

He and his wife collect these spectacular flowering vines and wanted to share the beauty with me.

"Take special care," he said, "the baby clem had a rough time in shipment from an out-of-state nursery."

Assuming it survives, he said, in a couple of years I should be rewarded with a six-foot vine covered in giant white blooms (*Clematis* "Beautiful Bride").

Sadly, even in the shade with measured water, I couldn't keep it alive through the hot and buggy summer.

Clematis goes dormant in the winter, but it was only August. Oh well, my yard isn't suited to clematis anyway. I disposed of the crispy remains and set aside the pot.

In early January (way too late, right?), I needed a vessel for bulbs saved from last year's Spring Sale at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center. So, I reached for the pot still containing the rich soil previously inhabited by the dead clematis.

The sprouted bulbs quickly grew tall and flower buds began to form. But what's that weed low down in the center of the pot? It's "Baby Clem" vigorously climbing back from the dead! A tiny sign of a change, a renewal -- a garden miracle.

