

February--March 2022

# River Park Garden Club Newsletter

“Plan” is literally a four-letter word



While the last few weeks have been unseasonably warm and sunny, the overall wet and dreary winter have washed a frigid pall of inaction over most of my outdoor gardening activities. But that has only made **plans** come to life in the warm and toasty bits of my imagination. Plan number one (part A) came to life while researching ‘weeping tree’ on Google and happening upon the image of a Weeping China Doll rose tree. When I first began my search to procure a Weeping China Doll rose tree all sellers were out of stock. I persisted and eventually ordered my China Doll rose tree. Several months ago, I received a very small rose with nary a word on how to turn this roseling into a beautiful weeping tree such as the one on the left.

Part B of plan number one came to me as my roseling began to grow and spread out

in the small pot that became its temporary home. I began to mull over the choices and once again Google opened up the possibilities and I learned a new word – obelisk. (Okay, I had heard the word before, just not in the gardening context.) Now, with a 4’ obelisk in hand plan B is to find just the right spot for the obelisk and relocate the Weeping China Doll rose tree within its boundaries and watch as the seasons turn the obelisk pink and fragrant with the arms of the weeping rose. (See Plans, Page 2)

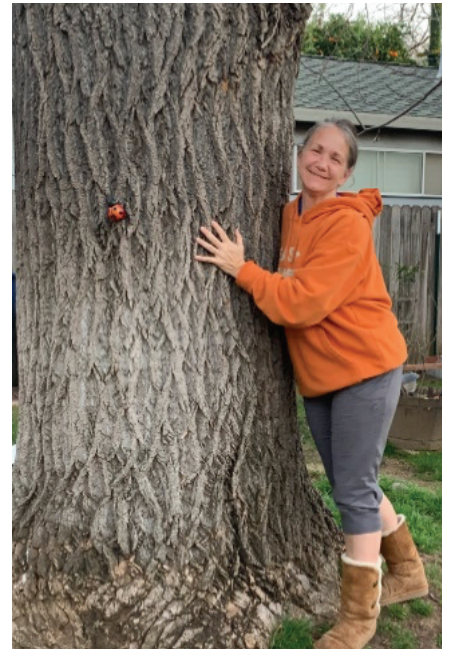
Plan number two entails replacing and relocating two old and decrepit raised garden beds. Details to hash out include where to put the new garden beds? What design to use and what else should be considered? The current beds are falling apart, don't produce and are in an area of the backyard that receives only a wee bit of afternoon sun. Truth be told there isn't a lot of sun to be had in the shadow of my monstrous Tennessee Tulip tree (pictured on the lower right). The new spot I have been eyeballing gets a portion of morning and late afternoon sun. I am looking forward to finding out how the change in location will affect this year's crops.

But of course, there is a plan 1½ that must be completed prior to moving forward with plan number two. Charles and I put a workshop in the backyard and are in the process of completing a deck around two of its sides. This will need to be finished so that we know how much room and space is left in the yard for the beds. Plan number 2½ includes removing the old beds and relocating the dirt to the new ones.

Last but certainly not least is plan number three. Once the old beds have been removed from the old location, we will be laying brick, pavers, slate or something not yet imagined. This will be the new BBQ and smoker area, which will free up space on the patio for playing corn hole with the family.

The thing is I have plans popping up in my head all the time. I take a walk and see houses and yards, parks and people who all inspire something in me. Many of the plans just sit there, waiting for time and action that may never come. Some change and grow and take different shapes. They get pushed back or buried or replaced with new and better plans. I think having plans is like having hope. And all the plans I have for my garden give me hope for a bright, cheerful future.

"Gardening is an exercise in optimism. Sometimes, it is a triumph of hope over experience." –Marina Shinz



Debbie Eldridge

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## Our Garden Tour is Back!

"Seven Special Garden Spaces" a tour of River Park gardens will be staged by the RPGC from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 23. The seven interesting gardens will include a fantasy garden, and one with plenty of grownup games and leisure spaces.

Despite inflation, our price will remain at \$5 per ticket. We will need as many volunteers as we can muster for tasks before the day and on the day to help with setup, ticket sales and two at each house to help visitors through the gardens. We will have a sign-up sheet at our meetings or call tour chair, Pat Smith, at 916-454-5637.



## **Spring WILL Come...**

Maybe not soon enough for gardeners, but Greg Gayton promises to help us plan for it, when he speaks about “What’s New in 2022 in the Nursery” at **our next meeting, at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 17.** The meeting will be at Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Members are asked to bring their own food, but desserts, soft drinks, water, coffee and tea will be provided.

Enthusiasm is Greg’s middle name. Enthusiasm for plants, people, dogs, his job(s) at Green Acres Nursery, and photography. Add California to that list.

“I always loved California,” said the Pueblo, Colorado native. “I came to California in 1976, as soon as I graduated from high school. I was 18.”

After taking garden-oriented classes at American River College and UC Davis, Greg worked at Matsuda’s Nursery as commodity buyer and retail manager at their 200-acre growing ground which Green Acres eventually bought from Matsuda’s. Greg, a California Certified Nurseryman, came with the deal.

At Green Acres he is responsible for marketing, safety, and community outreach. That includes public speaking, plus photographing all the products for the company’s periodic advertising magazine, plus all the company’s e-commerce. Greg also answers questions on the Green Acres’ podcast.

They come from customers at all seven of the company’s nurseries.

“What’s the most asked question? Depends on the season. Right now, everyone’s asking when the summer vegetables will be in. It’s only February! It’s still winter. But the veggies will begin to trickle in mid-month and then later on,” he mused.

“We now ship house plants out of state, so they have to be photographed. I have a studio at the Elk Grove store,” he explained.

“What’s the most difficult thing to photograph? You’ll laugh. It’s the glossy bags that fertilizer and dirt come in. Sounds silly, but they are the worst.”

“Do I have a hobby? My four dogs! But they are not really a hobby. They are my life,” Greg said. “I have

1 Golden Retriever and three chihuahua mixes. If people look on my Facebook page, they’ll see I have dogs and plants. I don’t have time for the other stuff other people put on theirs.”

“I have been really blessed. I work for a company that is very caring. (An example is that the company offers a free Christmas tree to disabled veterans and immediate family members of actively deployed troops during the holidays.)

“But if ever I have a bad day,” Greg said, “I just go out into the nursery and help customers.”



## Meet a New Member – Janice Stern

When you receive a call about our next meeting, you might be surprised by the mellifluous English accent you hear. That would belong to one of our newest members, Janice Stern.

“I retired and moved to Sacramento last April (from Pleasanton) to be closer to my grandson, who will be two,” said Janice. She joined the garden club and almost immediately was thrust into its activities.

She bravely asked how she could help and volunteered to work on the club’s Calling Committee. Shortly, she found herself chairman! “Well, it’s a way to get to know people.”

She is also getting to know Sacramento.

“It’s a small town but with big town attributes. I think it’s very exciting,” she said. She also joined The Renaissance Society, the Sac State lifetime learning institution and has taken a few classes there, including a “walk-about” course on Sacramento.

As a career city planner, she knows how to get around a city.

“We walked around Sacramento and I got to know it better that way.” She also is interested in the cinema, so took a film course.

As for gardening, she said she has done

a few things around her new garden, but not like in her garden in Pleasanton.



“I moved into my house here that has a front garden pretty much planned out, with a number of interesting

low water and low maintenance plants. So I haven’t done much there except add some roses,” she said.

Among the roses she has planted are the dark red Mr. Lincoln, “for its fabulous scent,” she said, “and Queen Elizabeth. I am originally from England. The Queen Elizabeth does not have a strong fragrance, but it is kind of my special rose.”

She also planted two climbers -- America and Westland. Then there is her Marina, a yellow floribunda rose and the brilliant Tropicana.

“I am waiting to do too much,” she said. The back yard has fruit trees and raised beds from the previous owner. “I took out some bushes and put in roses there as well. I am slowly improving the garden.”

Spoken like a truly thoughtful gardener!

# RESOURCES

Until we can go play in our gardens again, without fear of near-frost, chill, rain (pray for it!), there ARE things to do. Indoors.

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## **PORE OVER CATALOGS!**

RPGC VP Therese Ruth says she has “zillions of catalogs,” all waiting to be carefully perused and pages turned down. Gardeners are old school. So seed, flower, tree and gardening suppliers still produce colorful printed catalogs.



Specific catalogs, say, for roses (suggested by rose whiz and RPGC member Pam Myczek), include David Austin's English

roses catalog with its spot-on accurate colors and helpful lists of roses to grow for a hedge, in shade or sun, scent and color.

Pam said she also likes a California company called Burlington Rose Nursery in Visalia. They offer a printed copy of their rose list, and also custom propagation and budding services. Find them on line or call (559)747-3624 to request a catalog. (Mention River Park Garden Club). Another favorite of Pam's is the extensive Edmunds Roses catalog.

## **GET LOST on WEBSITES!**

**True Leaf Market** – Founded in 1974, this site features a huge collection of heirloom, organic and no-GMO seeds for sale. Who couldn't love a company that has a CPO (Chief Pest Officer) cat named Taylor, in charge of, well, pest control and employee morale. The company sells flower, vegetable and microgreen sprout seeds. Looking for edamame seeds, 90 kinds of heritage tobacco seeds? Parisian carrots (they are round!)? Or 14 different kinds of mustard? Look no farther than ([trueleafmarket.com](http://trueleafmarket.com))

**Linda Vater - Garden Inspired Living**, offers a very personal, inviting website, replete with garden planning ideas, recipes for the things you grow, philosophy of gardening, nice music and many how-to's including Why Stake Dahlias Early? And Preventing Slug and Snail Damage. Good luck with that. ([lindavater.com](http://lindavater.com))

(Continues, See Niwaki, on next page)



**Niwaki** --To say that Niwaki (Japanese for garden tree) is just a garden tool site would be like saying the Mona Lisa is just a painting. Meet the master makers of garden shears, snips and Secateurs (pruners), four-legged ladders, garden knives, digging and weeding tools, bonsai paraphernalia and more, all introduced in workshop videos and snips of gorgeous Japanese gardens, gardening and flower arranging – for which you cannot use just any scissors, right? The owner of Niwaki is an Englishman who originally went to Japan to learn sculpting, but ended up back in London purveying exquisite, mostly handmade, tools. The tools are akin to the fine ceramics also produced in Japan. The website takes a while to navigate because there is so much to savor at (niwaki.com)



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## TREE CANOPY PROJECT

River Park Garden Club members (below), Lee Ruth, left, and Tim Kustik planting a native Valley Oak (donated by Green Acres Nursery and Supply) in Glenn Hall Park's Childrens Playground on Nov.20.



## Shepard Garden and Arts Events

\* Spring Sale, March 5 and 6.

\* Garage Sale. June 11

RPGC will participate at both events.