



River Park Garden Club

April 2024 Newsletter

Questions Asked and Answered:

Master Gardeners at Our Next Meeting

After 10 years of being a Master Gardener, Anna Symkowick-Rose (right) has pretty much heard the gamut of gardeners' woes.

"The most asked question?" she said "Well, that would be about tomatoes. It's always about tomatoes. We keep growing them because we love them and they grow well in Sacramento. But tomatoes get a lot of things. It's all about your soil...building the soil is important. "

The question 17-year Master Gardener veteran Therese Ruth (below, left) has been asked the most is: "How much should I water (trees, shrubs, and plants). Our answer is 'it depends!' -- on where it's planted, the time of year. Whatever."

Both of these Master Gardeners (who are also club members) will answer **garden questions at the club's next meeting, at 6:30 p.m.. Thursday, April 18, at Shepard Garden & Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd.** Please bring your own dinner. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

Master Gardeners train for 16 weeks, studying everything from horticulture and plant propagation to water conservation and insects and much more, they say.

After completing the course, Master Gardedners must volunteer for 50 hours the first year and 25 each successive year. Anna and Therese volunteer at the State Fair farm every year as well as at Harvest Day at the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center. Continuing education is also required. There are about 200 Master Gardeners in the Sacramento area.

"The role of a Master Gardener is to help home gardeners with their garden problems," Therese said. To help generate good answers, she suggests members bring good samples of the problem, "not just a leaf, but a piece of the problem plant, a small branch, perhaps, to see what the leaves and flowers are doing."

Anna said from her training she learned to "be a knowledgeable volunteer. I am not afraid to say 'I don't know' to a question. I don't necessarily have all the answers in my head, so I have to know how to find good answers – from good resources." Have a sick shrub? Bring a sample Thursday.



Notes and News

River Park Tree Canopy Project

On a very cool March morning, four River Park homeowners got new trees -- free from SMUD (or the Sacramento Tree Foundation). The trees were planted expertly (right), also for free, by our club's Tree Canopy Project planting team. Team leader is Debbie Eldridge (below, second from left). Other team members (from left) Charles Burgess, Eldridge, Lynn McCormack, Paul Townsend, Ron McCormack, Brian Brousseau and Lee Ruth (seated.)



Shephard Spring Sale a Winner!!!!

Participating in the semi-annual sale at Shepard Garden and Arts Center, yielded a profit of more than \$1,150 for our club through sales of garden-related goods including dozens of potted plants, pots, tools and garden-theme home décor.

City Rebates!!

The City of Sacramento Department of Utilities will present a webinar on “How to Create Landscapes that Save Money and Water” from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 16. Register for the webinar online at the City’s Water Conservation Website – www.cityofsacramento.gov/utilities/water-conservation/rebates

During the session, Utilities staff will explain how eligible customers may get city rebates for making water-saving improvements such as up to \$3,000 for converting grass to drought tolerant landscaping and up to \$800 to upgrade an irrigation system.

“Special Garden Spaces” Tour Coming Up!



Friendly koi in a pond surrounded by fruit trees, succulents, perennials, veggies and garden sculpture.

A made-in-the-shade garden with an artist’s studio, summer outdoor living spaces and specimen Japanese maples.

These are just two of the six very personal gardens that will be on the River Park Garden Club’s fourth annual neighborhood garden tour, “Special Garden Spaces.”

The self-guided tour, Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., will include six diverse River Park backyard gardens. Tickets are \$5. Children under 15, free. (Children are welcome, but strollers will NOT be allowed in gardens.)

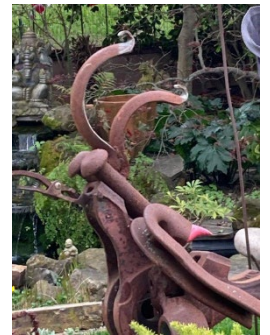


Tickets may be purchased on the day of the tour, beginning at 9:45 a.m. at the ticket table located at 5457 Carlson on the Caleb-Greenwood School lawn. Tickets may also be reserved ahead by calling 916-454-5637.

The tour will also feature a large garden made for entertaining as well as self-reflection. It has its own meditation platform. The smallest garden has a big heart with elegant plant vignettes that include pots handmade by the owner’s grandchildren. Antique farm equipment in another of the gardens, serves as trellises and interesting notes along with a large modern greenhouse filled with bromeliads.

The sixth garden combines exotic herbs, greens, vegetables, fruit trees and a beautiful rose garden. Everything in this garden is grown from seeds or cuttings! Talk about having a green thumb!

In addition to the gardens, there will be an artists’ boutique featuring garden-oriented art and crafts. For more information, go to: <http://www.riverparkgardenclub@yolasite.com>





April and May Garden Tasks

With our late winter and early spring rains, we have not had to worry about irrigating our lawns, landscaping and gardens but that will change with the coming warm and then hot weather.

Now is the time to plant any trees, shrubs and perennials you want to add to your landscaping. (Late fall is the best time for this so the roots have time to settle in before next summer's heat but if you missed that opportunity, do it now and give the new plants time to settle in.) At first, new plants, whether they are trees, shrubs or perennials, need more water to get established. Later, you can go back to your regular watering cycle.

Two to four inches of mulch will help keep the soil cool and retain moisture but it is important to keep the mulch at least three inches away from the crown of the plant (where the root ball meets the soil) to prevent crown rot. Mulch also deters weeds.



Be on the lookout for spring pests. They start to multiply as it warms up. Aphids can be blown off plants with a strong stream of water (they cannot fly to return to the plant). Watch for natural predators such as ladybugs and don't use any spray that can destroy the "good guys or girls." Use bait for earwigs, snails and slugs – there are organic, OMRI-approved baits that are safe around kids and pets and break down into iron phosphate, a nutrient that plants can use. It is best to put out the bait in the evening a few days before you plant any new tender plants.

It is important to dump any standing water -- mosquitoes breed in a tablespoon of water!



When nighttime temperatures stay above 50 degrees you can transplant your warm season vegetables into the garden – tomatoes, peppers, eggplant squash, etc. This usually occurs in late April or early May. You can also direct seed carrots, spinach, chard, radish, and etc.

If you have fruit trees such as peaches, plum, apricots, and etc., thin when the fruit are about 1" in size to 6" apart. This helps produce larger fruit and puts less weight on the tree's branches to help keep them from breaking.

By Therese Ruth