



SEPTEMBER, 2014

Flower Press

MEETINGS: 7PM, THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH (EXCEPT JULY) AT THE PLEASANT HILL COMMUNITY CENTER, 320 CIVIC DRIVE, PLEASANT HILL

Message From Our President

There is no better time than now to feature succulents in the garden!

- ▶ We are deep into the drought and face a high fire danger season.
- ▶ Landscape guidelines promote using water-retaining plants as “defensible zones” around buildings.
- ▶ Succulents are becoming a popular feature in “hell strips” – those patches between the sidewalk and the curb that are difficult to maintain and irrigate.

The landscape is changing in response to the climate. Here are some ideas on how to get expert advice and inspiration:

Visit the Ruth Bancroft Garden, as many of us did in August when Bancroft hosted our club on a docent-led tour.

The Garden presents an excellent display of cacti and succulents that can grow in our area. It shows how plant colors and textures play out as design elements, and what size some of these plants can achieve with several years of growth! Bancroft staff are available to give information and guidance to gardeners seeking succulent help.

For two days of immersion on the subject, go to the annual Succulent Extravaganza at Castroville’s Succulent Gardens. This FREE event will be held Friday, September 26 (8am-5pm) & Saturday, September 27 (8am-4pm).

The focus will be on “succulent landscaping – how to design, build and maintain succulent landscapes that beautify without taxing already stretched water sources.”

Kathy Brenzel, garden editor for Sunset Magazine, will give the keynote presentation on the changing landscape in California. Also, author Debra Lee Baldwin and Bancroft’s Brian Kemble are scheduled for repeat performances.

Landscape professionals will design and install several demonstration gardens before and during the event. Each garden will set the stage for questions and answers about succulent-based landscaping and gardening, such as plant palette and selection, handling, watering, fertilizing, growth rates, and pest and disease issues. Some gardens will include non-succulent companion plants.

I’ll be at the Extravaganza – looking, listening, and no doubt buying – for the 4th year in a row. See you there?

Debbie Arnold

Next Meeting: Sept. 2 at 7 PM “Design Solutions for Small Spaces”

On the surface, small gardens may seem easier to design than large ones. Challenges abound, though, and ways to deal with them will be the focus of our September speaker.

Susan Morrison will give us ideas on plants, décor and hardscape that fit nicely into small spaces even as they reflect your personal tastes.

In her presentation, she will show us how to:

- Make a small garden seem larger;
- Convert a side yard into a cocktail garden;
- Transform a courtyard to a tropical garden.

And yes, Susan will take into account our area’s climate and soils. She’s a Concord resident and a Contra Costa Master Gardener.

Susan operates Creative Exteriors Landscape Design, is the author of *Garden Up! Smart Vertical Gardening for Small and Large Spaces*, and the garden app *Foolproof Plants for Small Gardens*.

She will bring copies of her book to purchase for \$20 (including tax) – cash, check or credit card.



It’s Tomato Tasting Time

Bumper crop or bummer crop?

This summer – and our tomato season – has been a little strange. If you have tomatoes and some to share, our September meeting is the place to be.

This is the month we typically sample the harvest of our tomato-growing members. If you want others to enjoy your delights, bring along some for tasting.

Please cut your tomatoes into bite-sized chunks and identify them with your name and the variety. It’s also fun to have a whole tomato for display, so our friends can see what they look like on the vine.

Upcoming Club Events

Sept. 23 7 PM board mtg; ask any officer for details

Oct. 7 Member meeting and speaker: Yulan Tong
“Wildflowers of Mt. Diablo, CA & S Africa”



Our August potluck dinner meeting was followed by a show-and-tell program on honeybees (see page 4), then topped off by a taste-test sampling of honey-and cheese pairings, organized primarily by Marian Woodard. Most of the honey came from Steve Gentry of Steve's Bees. (Thank you, Steve!) That's Carol Giolitti and behind her, Mertya Chang peering into the beehive.

Double Benefits from Work Party

Several club members went to Rodgers Ranch Aug. 16 to move some items out of a cargo container and make room to store PHGSC tables and pop-up canopies.

Denise Koroslev, club member and president of the Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center, said the old farm tools that were removed had been donated and were not original to the ranch. Some were broken beyond repair and were discarded.

"Vintage" items were loaded onto member Susan Wagner's truck and will be sold at the "garden shed" station at our plant sale in May.

Below: Denise Koroslev & Debbie Arnold pose with a plow. And the work party gathers at Susan Wagner's truck containing items for our plant sale.



BANCROFT TOUR
A delightful Aug. 14 tour of Ruth Bancroft Garden was followed by an ice cream and tea social thanks to Lynn Grassano (left) with serving help by Carolyn Tambweker.



OPERATION PROPAGATION

It's time to trim back perennials and root the cuttings.

Now, while the weather is warm, nurture those "babies" so they'll mature over the winter and be strong plants for our spring sale.

(Preparing for our May plant sale is a year-round activity. Sources: Some club members & CC Master Gardeners website: <http://ccmg.ucdavis.edu>)

Clip and root: Abutilons, Calendrinia spectabilis, Candytuft, Dusty Miller, Geraniums, Graptopetalum, Lavender, Loropetalum chinense (Chinese fringe flower), Passiflora citrina, Penstemon, Philadelphus, Plectranthus, Rosemary, Salvia, Spirea, Tagetes lemmonii, Teucrium.

Divide: Agapanthus, Daylilies, Iberis semper-virens, Penstemon, Primulas, Shasta daisies

Direct seed spring-blooming plants: Calendula officinalis 'Geisha Girl', Centaurea cyanus, Clarkia amoena, Eschscholzia californica, Lathyrus odoratus, Linaria marocanna, Lobelia erinus, Myosotis sylvatica, Nemophila

Bury or pin to the ground the attached stem of a small bush / shrub after wounding the stem's underside. When rooted, cut apart & dig up the new plant.

Club Business

NEW CLUB ROSTER: If you didn't pick up your 2014-'15 membership roster in August, you may do so at the September meeting. After that, rosters will be mailed to members still needing to receive them. Save us postage! Come and get your roster!

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

• Judy Kornbluth • Donna Rivera ✿ Please add their names to your roster. If you'd like their roster contact information, just ask our Membership VPs, Ingrid Owen or Patti Marcus. (See page 4 for their phone numbers and e-addresses.)

MEMBERSHIP INTEREST SURVEY: Many members at our August meeting filled out the survey form to say what they like about our club and what they'd like added or changed. If you haven't already responded, please take a few minutes to complete the survey – included with this newsletter – and return it at the September meeting or send it to Susan Pratt, whose address is at the bottom of the form. *Thank you!*

FOR PENNY PINES: Donations in August: \$26. Thanks to all who contributed. New member Peggy McGurk won the wine-cork birdhouse made by Jack Giolitti. (She is pictured here at the August meeting's "bee crossing" entrance display.) The money collected goes to the Penny Pines fund for replanting national forests in California.



SURPLUS PRODUCE: Do you have extra produce from your garden? Donating it to our local food banks and pantries would be much appreciated by them.

COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY: Saturday, Sept. 27 is Pleasant Hill' Community Service Day. Volunteers help local organizations, including the Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden. Start the day with a FREE pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in Pleasant Hill Park on Gregory Lane. To sign up call 671-5229 or go to <http://pleasanthill.volunteerhub.com/Events/Index> .

Creating Beauty in a Harsh Drought

Symposium on "Native Gardens for Drought-Challenged California"
sponsored by the Regional Parks Foundation

Sat. Sept. 20 • 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. • Merritt College, Oakland • \$50

Sun. Sept. 21 • 9 a.m. - Noon • Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley • \$30

Sunday aft. field trip to Mt. Diablo's Mitchell Canyon offered to first 25 sign-ups

<http://www.nativeplants.org/symposium.pdf>

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Contra Costa Master Gardener FREE Library Talks

Terry Lippert on "What Went Wrong in Your Vegetable Garden (and how to fix it)" • 6:30 p.m. • Sept 9, Brentwood
• Sept. 11, San Ramon • Sept. 16 Lafayette

Roxy Wolosenko on "Conserving Water in the Landscape"
• 6:30 p.m. • Sept. 23, Martinez



CONTRA COSTA MASTER GARDENERS' FREE SUSTAINABILITY FAIR: SEPT. 6

Theme: "It's in your hands"

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6.

Location: "Our Garden"

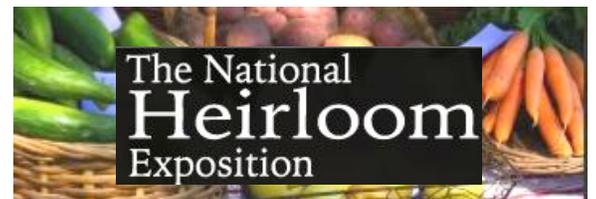
N. Wiget Lane & Shadelands Dr., Walnut Creek

Talks and demos throughout the day to include topics such as ✓composting & soils, ✓lose-your-lawn, ✓irrigation basics, ✓native plants, ✓plants for pollinators, ✓backyard chickens, ✓self-watering containers, ✓backyard grapes, and ✓biointensive gardening.

Additional features: ✓plants for sale, ✓kids' activities, ✓food trucks, ✓raffles and more.

For more information and details, go to:

<http://ccmg.ucanr.edu/SustainabilityFair/>



Billed as the world's largest produce display and the world's leading pure food event

Sept. 9, 10, 11 • 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily
Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa

\$10 one day • \$25 all three days

Heirloom seeds, plants & produce • Heritage live-stock • Anti-GMO activists • 350 Exhibitors
100+ Speakers • Demos, display gardens & more

<http://theheirloomexpo.com/> 707-773-1336



FREE 2-day event at Succulent Gardens Nursery

2133 Elkhorn Rd., Castroville • 831-632-0482

Sept. 26-27 • Fri. 8-5 • Sat. 8-4

Focus on Succulent Landscaping

Demo Gardens • Speakers • Plants for sale
(See Debbie's President's Message on page 1)

c/o 900 Hamilton Dr., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
PLEASANT HILL GARDEN STUDY CLUB



~ Upcoming Sales ~

- Sept. 6:** 10AM - 3PM CC Master Gardeners at their Sustainability Fair: Our Garden, Wiget & Shadelands
- Sept. 13:** 9AM - 1PM Markham Regional Arboretum : Shrubs and pretty foliage
- Sept. 13:** 10AM - 1PM SF Botanical Garden: Native plants and succulents
- Sept. 13:** 9AM - Noon Gardens at Heather Farm
- Sept. 27:** 2 - 5PM DVC Horticulture Dept.
- Sept. 28:** 9AM - 1PM DVC Horticulture Dept.

WEEKLY SALES

- Markham: Tues. 9AM – noon, weather permitting
- UC-Berkeley Bot. Gdn: Natives: Thu. 10:30AM - 1:30PM
All plants: Daily 10:30AM - 4:30PM
- Tilden's Native Here Nursery: Tue. 12-3PM, Fri. 9AM -12, Sat. 10AM - 2PM

Pleasant Hill Garden Study Club Contact Information

Officers

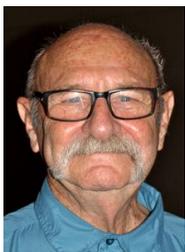
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Web site: <http://www.phgsc.com>

Honeybees: Needed By Us and Need Our Help



There are 84,000 species of bees – more than mammals and birds put together – but only one species makes honey and lives in a colony.

Brought here from Europe, honeybees flourished in America, but now need our help to survive.

Give them flowers with nectar they like, and use minimal to no pesticides, advised Gary Lawrence, a honeybee “guru” in this area, and our speaker at the August meeting.

Gary has hives in his Pleasant Hill backyard, and for the bees he grows lavender, rosemary, citrus, apples, lion’s tail (Leonotis), borage, open-faced roses,

and cashmere bouquet (a Clerodendrum). He also offers them sunflowers, which bloom later in summer when nectar and pollen are really needed.

Bees collect and transfer pollen as they flit among plants. Gary said they are the world’s most effective pollinators.

Pollen also gets into the honey made by bees, and it’s the pollen in local honey that helps people fight allergies. Gary said we can benefit from “local” honey produced beyond our county.

The honeybee population is declining, in large part due to the pesticides that can kill bees directly and also kill plants on which bees forage – such as weeds along roadsides and around fields.

Locally, honeybees are having an extra-hard time because their nectar

sources are drying up in the drought.

“It’s a pathetic year,” Gary said. “The bees are starving, so they will raid hummingbird feeders.”

Underscoring Gary’s point, member Marian Woodard said beekeepers are doing supplemental feeding. White cane sugar water is best for honeybees in this situation, she added.

Marian said Gary donated two hives, complete with bees, to the Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm, which Marian and her husband operate.

The pollinating presence of the bees helped the farm crops prosper, she said.

Both Gary and Marian brought honey for tasting after the meeting. Marian also brought cheeses for honey/cheese pairings.

Membership Interest Survey

Your participation is the best way to get the most out of your PHGSC membership.

Being involved helps you get to know other members better.

Sharing your thoughts will help club leaders fine-tune our offerings to better serve everyone.

Please take a few minutes to give your feedback with this survey. *Thank you!*

How do you view our club?

[Ratings: 1= poor . . . up to 5 = excellent]

Monthly speakers – your overall rating:

1 2 3 4 5

Comments, suggestions _____

Speaker topics – your overall rating:

1 2 3 4 5

Comments, suggestions _____

Meeting format – your overall rating:

1 2 3 4 5

Comments, suggestions _____

Meeting refreshments – your overall rating:

1 2 3 4 5

Comments, suggestions _____

Trips & tours – your overall rating:

1 2 3 4 5

Would you pay for day trip transportation?

Yes No

Comments, suggestions _____

What might you like to do?

Lend your gardening expertise:

Lead a pre-plant sale workshop on cuttings, plant divisions, potting, or similar topics

Help identify and price plants prior to our May sale

Be a “high volume” propagator for the plant sale

Do research for a Plant of the Month presentation and/or bring PoM plants to show and sell

Open your garden for a tour of club members

At club meetings:

Bring cut flowers for the refreshment table

Help with set-up (arrive at 6:30; 6 for potlucks)

Help with clean-up (done by 9:30)

Assist president with last-minute tasks

Communications / community:

Contribute to our newsletter

Assist with our website or Facebook page

Represent our club at Rec & Park events

Committee work (and thus serve on the board):

Club historian (fairly easy)

Inventory manager (also fairly easy)

Special projects (as needed)

Other:

Do a little, now and then

Call me about anything to see if I can help

I would like to: _____

Thank you! Your comments and recommendations are much appreciated. (If you have more to say, please write on the back of this form.)

Please print:

Name _____ Phone _____

Best time to call _____ E-mail address _____

