

HAPPY JULY & AUGUST BIRTHDAYS!

7/2 Ron Gordon
 7/5 Ana Maria Barillas
 7/11 Kim Mannos
 7/14 Anya Kallianpur
 7/16 Mira Blackwood
 7/19 Lilia Carrillo
 7/23 Charlene Allen
 7/24 Ray Law
 7/24 Ingrid Nonnast
 8/9 Pat Heydon
 8/25 Jerri Lamb
 8/28 Sandra Wise
 8/30 Lucia Perales



PHOTO PFUNDRAISER

Although the Pacific Region Convention has been rescheduled to August 2021, the Photo Pfundraiser is still on and changed to a virtual photo contest. The deadline is September 1. Photos are to be submitted digitally to Karen Ramsey (541-479-5513) at sierrakr@aol.com. Information is on PRGC website www.pacificregiongardencubs.org. Cost is \$5.00 per photo entry fee or \$20.00 for 5 photos. This money supports the PRGC Scholarship Program!

PLASTICS FREE JULY

By Kathy Itomura

“Plastics Free July” is a movement begun in Australia nearly 10 years ago that has since gained 250 million participants world-wide. The goal is to reduce or eliminate personal plastic use every July (and year-round, of course).

We have studied this issue together, and many garden club members have already reduced their plastic use. But now the corona virus is here, and suddenly we're bringing our groceries home in plastic bags again. Plastics Free July is a great time to re-double our efforts. (And stores have resumed charging for bags, though we must load our own if we bring them.)

One place to start is with our masks. Are we wearing environmentally friendly masks? If you wear a reusable, home made mask of recycled fabric, perhaps from an old t-shirt, then Go to the Head of the Class for wearing the most sustainable mask! Less environmentally friendly are the N-95 masks that are used by medical professionals and contain plastics and other synthetic materials. Disposable paper masks usually contain microplastics and cannot be recycled. The numbers can really add up; it is estimated that if every British citizen used one disposable mask every day for one year, an additional 73,000 tons of plastic would go to the landfills.

Our personal efforts add up to something important, so consider plastics use all year and especially in July.

To Kill A Mockingbird

By Janet Jack

Since the pandemic that all of us are living through, many have been able to sleep in later. Whether due to working at home or business shut down, the good side of a tough problem is a little extra sleep....



However, the idea of sleeping later is not observed by our feathered friend, the Northern Mockingbird. His schedule is constant: Up at 6:05 AM and to bed at 8:00 PM. This would be an agreeable situation if he was wasn't so vocal. His songs are always at full volume and his repertory extensive.

Even if this little bird makes you crazy by interrupting your sleep, just take a moment to learn a little about him. All that singing has a purpose. The male that can mimic the most sounds is the most desirable by the female. They are very intelligent birds and can mimic up to 200 sounds. Naturally, the male with the most songs is the smartest and wins the lady.

Mockingbirds are monogamous and the males participate in nest building and baby care. Mockingbirds are so smart they know how to protect their homes. If a large predatory bird threatens the mockingbird he will sound out a loud call to other mockingbirds in the area and they will come to his aid to drive the predator away.



The mockingbird is so special that Harper Lee chose him to be the title of her epic book. It is a sin to kill anything that does no harm and the mockingbird just sings his songs and does no harm in the garden. Ms. Lee used this truth to demonstrate how it was wrong to convict and murder an innocent man.

The next time you are fortunate enough to hear the mockingbird serenade, just enjoy his song and know it would be a sin to quiet him.

USE YOUR EGGHELLS

By Kathy Itomura

Eggshells are such perfectly lovely little containers. I hate to toss them, so I save the best ones and punch holes in the bottoms, add a fine seed soil mix, and plant my next season's veggie seeds in them. They are easy to handle, placed in the egg containers they come in.

When my seeds are up and ready to transplant, I gently but thoroughly crack the shell containers and place them directly, shell and all, into the garden. The roots quickly find their way into the garden soil, and that eggshell, made up mostly of calcium carbonate, helps my plants grow strong.



I always have more eggshells than I can place seeds into, so I save them to crush in the blender with water added. This gives a mineral boost to many plants. Pour the mixture around your tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants to reduce blossom end rot.

Burbank-Valley Garden Club

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GARDENING DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

BY KATHY ITOMURA

Monitor your plants, especially those in containers, so they don't go dry before you water. Keep your trees watered too. Pay attention to the veggies and pick them before the fruits stop growing. If you keep them picked, most will keep setting fruits, somewhat like deadheading your flowering plants, they keep on trying. Protect vegetables and fruits from the critters by using bird netting and by keeping them picked.

Probably the most important advice for the summer gardener in southern California is—Relax, the die is cast. Take care of what is already there and wait till autumn before initiating new projects. This is a time to get out your garden books for ideas and how-to's for those fall projects. Use these hot days to sit indoors next to the fan and peruse those seed and bulb catalogs! You can decide now what you want to plant in the fall and place your orders before the best of the best are sold.

Obtaining the best bulbs is a case in point; by the time you see them at the nursery, they are already disappearing. For southern California, the most rewarding bulbs in the garden are the South Africans because our climate matches their natural habitats. They think they are at home here, so they grow freely with little additional care from you, plus they will usually naturalize! Select now to obtain the best babianas, tristanias, lachenalia, sparaxis, ixia, freesia, oxalis, watsonia, and others. Plant them in the fall in sunny spots that will receive little or no summer water.

As with all advice, there are exceptions and planting anything tropical is a fine thing to do in summer! Now is the time, if you have the space, the water, and the inclination to plant anything tropical —palms, bougainvilleas, ginger, tropical water lilies, most citrus.

Bougainvilleas, if they are already in your yard and established, could do with *less* water right now. While that seems counter-intuitive, if you give bougainvilleas plenty of water in summer, they just grow a great mass of green leaves and thorny branches. If you cut way back (and on older plants, completely withhold) water, they will reward you with tremendous and prolonged flower display. Of course, if you are planting a new bougainvillea, you will need to water it and any other tropical plants until they are established.

Printed By: Burbank Printing, 3131 West Burbank Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505

OVER THE GARDEN WALL



BURBANK-VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

Member of the San Fernando Valley District, California Garden Clubs, Inc.,
Pacific Region, and National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Newsletter Number 161 Mid-Summer Extra 2020 Editor, Temporary: K. Itomura

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Your Executive Board members decided to issue this Mid-Summer "Extra" edition of *Over the Garden Wall* as a thank you to all who sent in their 2020-2021 dues on time, and an encouragement to those who still might be wondering what garden club means during these times of the corona virus. We miss seeing all of you and hope you will be with us in September when we plan to meet again at Little White Chapel in Burbank. Our speakers are lined up, ready for the new garden year.

Top agenda item at our recent Board meeting was the topic of how to provide you a "safe" space in which to meet and final details will be in your September newsletter. For the first few meetings we have decided that no refreshments will be prepared and offered on site. Table decorations are eliminated from our meetings as well, in order to reduce points of potential virus contact. Chairs will be wiped with disinfectant before use, and we may need your assistance with this. Masks and six foot distancing between attendees will be required.

We do not know what conditions will be like in September and therefore we are also planning for an alternative way to deliver your garden club to you. For members who can access the internet, either with a smartphone or with a computer or laptop, most of our speakers have indicated they are able to present their programs online. I have attended online garden club meetings and found that the quality of the presentation was very high, including the question and answer interactivity. To "attend" a virtual meeting online, a member would need access to either a "smart" cell phone or a computer with an online connection. It is not necessary to have a webcam or microphone.

A feature of our meetings in the past has been the fund-raising activities, including the Raffle and the Opportunity Table. Because these are very "high contact" events, with the potential to transfer a virus, we are replacing the Raffle with a Door prize. Everyone attending the meeting will have an equal chance to win the Door prize at no additional member cost. We are saying "good-bye" to the Opportunity Table for the foreseeable future. We will still have a Penny Pines collection box into which you may place your donations without having to handle the box.

You will be glad to know that the Board approved a scholarship recipient for the 2019-2020 garden year and the Club's \$500 check was awarded to Stefan Strong, a biology student at College of the Canyons. Stefan is close to completing his two-year degree and intends to continue his education at a four-year school, where he will major in horticulture with the goal of becoming an agriculture teacher. Presently, Stefan works for Steve List at Sylmar Charter High School where he assists with teaching students practical horticulture skills. We wish him success and hope he will be able to visit us in the coming year. Many thanks to Pat Heydon, who chaired the Scholarship Committee this year.

Congratulations to our newsletter editor, Ingrid Nonnast; our newsletter *Over the Garden Wall* received a third-place ribbon in the 2019 California Garden Club awards! Yay! And our Club prevailed again as a Blue Ribbon Garden Club!

We hope that all of you have remained safe and well during these unusual months apart.

Best wishes to each of you,

Kathy

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Garden Club Meetings are normally held at 10:00 a.m. the first Thursday of every month. The Club does not meet in July and August. Next meeting: September 3, 2020. Meetings are held at **Little White Chapel**, 1711 North Avon Street, Burbank, CA 91505.

WEEDS—CULTURAL CONTROLS

by Kathy Itomura

In June's newsletter we wrote about mechanical techniques for weed control. The University of California's Agriculture website also provides the following weed control information:

Cultural Controls:

- Black plastic mulch blocks light and stops most weeds from establishing.
- Clear plastic does not block light and in some cases has little to no effect on weeds. Clear plastic with good soil contact and high sunlight can heat the soil enough to kill weeds, seeds, and pathogens. Known as solarization, this method is effective only to a few inches depth.
- Whatever methods of weed control you decide to use, you will obtain the best results by observing your garden often and applying weed controls when weeds are still small. It also helps to learn to identify your weeds.

Please see your June newsletter for additional information.

SEND IN YOUR DUES TODAY

Burbank-Valley Garden Club Annual Dues were due June 30. Dues are \$25 for Individual Member or \$30 for Family Membership. Please send your check to Treasurer, Ingrid Nonnast, 907 N. Clybourn Avenue, Burbank 91505.

"The secrets are in the plants, to elicit them you have to love them enough."
~~George Washington Carver

"A GARDEN OF WORDS, UN JARDIN DE PALABRAS"

Would you like to improve communications with your gardener? This 30-page free booklet is available at <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8423.pdf>—just click to download it to your computer or phone, and voila!, you are on the way to becoming bilingual in the garden! This very useful free booklet was created by the Santa Barbara Master Gardeners and provides English to Spanish as well as Spanish to English translation for hundreds of useful gardening words.



CONGRATULATIONS!

The Southern California Garden Club celebrated their 93rd birthday on June 13, 2020! Good job, fellow gardeners! Keep up the good work!

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED

We love to print your photos and articles, so please send them in and share with members: information, pictures of your garden, your latest trip, and your great ideas. Cut-off date for submission is the 15th of every month. Contact the newsletter editor.

BOOK REVIEW: "FROM SEED TO SKILLET"

By D. Jean Collins, Beyond Recycling Committee



The subtitle of this book, "A Guide to Growing, Tending, Harvesting and Cooking Up Fresh, Healthful Food to Share with People You Love," invites the reader on a journey with author Jimmy Williams as he inspires us to take our joy and love of gardening to the next levels.

He pulls the reader into the warmth of his world with stories of his grandmother Eloise who taught him and his siblings to garden. "We had to work in the garden if we wanted to eat. My grandmother – a South Carolina native who grew up in a traditional Gullah community whose members were descendants of Caribbean slaves – learned how to garden from her grandmother."

Williams' experience and expertise have been honed by years of growing and selling vegetables and herbs at Farmers' Markets in Hollywood and Santa Monica. He is also in great demand as a designer and installer of edible gardens. The book includes beautiful photographs by Eric Staundenmaier showing client gardens from Los Angeles, Malibu, Pasadena, and other locales.

As an apartment dweller, I found it difficult to locate comprehensive guides to gardening with no land. Williams offers the following advice, "People almost always have *some* space, even if it's just a driveway, the back steps, an apartment deck, or a sun room with a good light." He goes on to describe the greens and herbs that grow well in tight spaces and in pots and how to help them thrive.

"Ah-ha" moments like these happen throughout the book. For example, many people think the desire to grow home gardens is a new trend. True, this trend grew stronger, born of the anxiety of bare grocery shelves and of seeing miles of cars waiting in line at food banks – situations caused when Covid-19 restrictions broke the supply chain. People began to realize how vulnerable we are when we don't know who grows our food and how far it has to travel to get to our tables. And once the food magically appears on supermarket shelves, we agree to pay increasingly higher prices for fear of more shortages.

Williams points out that several times in our nation's recent history, during times of war, disease, and economic uncertainty, Americans have grown "War Gardens" and "Victory Gardens" as acts of self-reliance and survival.

This book is a helpful guide as more of us return to home gardening for survival, self-reliance and the joy and peace it offers. A treasure trove of information includes: step-by-step planting, raising, harvesting and delicious recipes: how to design, build and plant raised beds; how to design your garden using crop rotation; a table of 'Friends and Foes,' – plants that grow well together and those that don't; sources for seeds, seedlings, soil boosters, and other supplies (including his company HayGround Organic Gardening). For the researcher in you, there is an extensive bibliography, a concise, easy to navigate index and a Table of Equivalents. You will enjoy your journey.

FROM SEED TO SKILLET, by Jimmy Williams and Susan Heeger. Photographs by Eric Staundenmaier. Published by Chronicle Books, 2010, 175 pp.