



Beyond the Garden Gate

Elk Grove Garden Club

A Message from our Co-Presidents ~~~~~



Here we are, starting a new year of our wonderful garden club! We don't just grow flowers here we grow beautiful friendships as well. I hope everyone had a lovely summer. It's been a strange one, weather-wise, we had unusually hot days back in March, followed by a mild summer (mild for us, anyway). I don't know about you, but my vegetables didn't do quite as well as they have in years past.

Juana, my co-president, pours so much energy into this club, and together we are looking forward to a very enjoyable and productive

year full of interesting topics.

Our club has changed a lot lately, and we want to welcome all our newcomers! We're excited to meet you and get to know you better. I know you may be used to doing things a little differently, so we ask for a bit of time and patience as we all find our rhythm together. We're a fun group of gardeners, cooks, and everything in between, and we're confident this merger will be a wonderful one, full of things we can learn from each other.

We have some lovely plans in store for the coming year, and we're hoping for a beautiful late summer and fall: gloves, cutters, and all.

Ana Weekley



It is an honor to once again serve as your Co-President for the 2026-2027 term alongside my colleague Ana Weekley and our Board.

A recent trip to Mexico inspired me with its orchids and tropical plants, deepening my appreciation for flowers and the joys of gardening. I'm genuinely excited for the garden year ahead! Our club's program promises learning and meaningful community impact through donations to non-profit organizations, volunteer work, and our college scholarship.

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Volume 19, Issue 1, Sept. 2026



Next Meeting

Thursday, September 10

10a – social

10:30a – meeting begins
Gil Albani Recreation Center
8830 Sharkey Ave.

Sign up!

Help us get the new
year started right!

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Calendar—EGGC and More!

We're delighted to unveil our redesigned newsletter. Heartfelt thanks to Jan Fetler for undertaking this project, and special gratitude to Vivian Sellers for her years of dedicated service in this space. Vivian, enjoy your well-deserved break!

Please welcome our two new board members, Vice President Chris Duane and Secretary Loren Lewall. Both have jumped in with enthusiasm and are already making an impact.

As we prepare for the new garden year, we are actively working behind-the-scenes on coordinating some wonderful projects, including field trips to a local winery and Lavender Estate, artisan bread and gazpacho cooking demonstrations, various district classes, and local and State Capitol garden tours. I'm also pleased to share that we're in the final stages of formalizing our speakers' program for the 2026-2027 yearbook—a labor of love that I hope you'll enjoy!

Please join us on September 10th for inclusion activities to reconnect with fellow members. Whether you're new or have been with us for the past 16 years, you're invited to enjoy and help create an exciting and productive 2026-2027 Garden Club year!

Juana Zamora

###

2026-27 Refreshment Committee

Treats for the September meeting will be brought to you by: Ana Weekley (team leader), Juana Zamora, Susan Muckey, Vivian Sellers, Loren Lewall, Maureen Slocum, Nancy Baldwin, Chris Duane, Pamela Hertzler, Jennie Hertzler, Jan Fetler and Margrethe Reed. Thanks everyone!

Please signup at the September meeting to bring food to **2 meetings** for the 2026-27 calendar year.



September Meeting ~~~~~

By Juana Zamora



This meeting is all about signing up to help out with the Club in the coming year. Look for these and more signup sheets:

- Snacks for the meetings. Members are all asked to sign up for 2 monthly meetings
- Propagation workshop in September
- Poinsettia farm tour—November 5 (limited to 25)
- Succulent Pumpkin Class helpers—October 17
- Lichtenberger Rose Garden volunteers
- Sacramento River Valley District meeting—October 20

###

New Newsletter Editor ~~~~~

By Jan Fetler



I'm stepping in to produce the Club newsletter to give Vivian Sellers time to do other jobs. I've been writing newsletters for various organizations for most of my life. I hope you enjoy them.

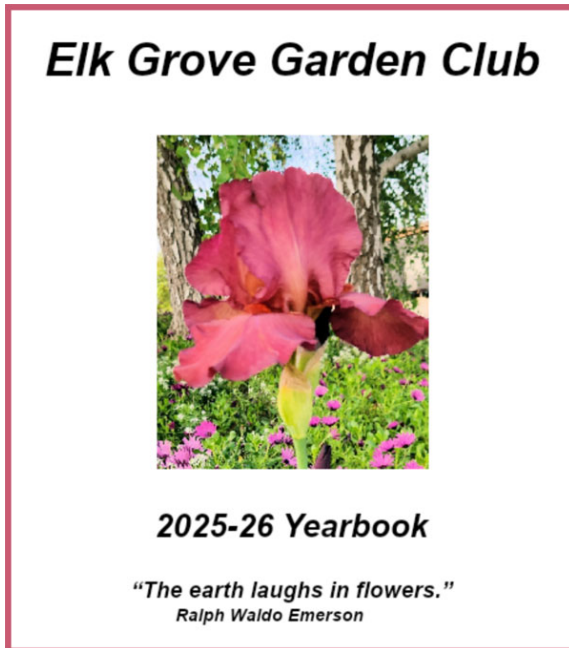
Each issue will begin with announcements of Club activities followed by seasonal articles to amuse you or teach you

something new about gardening. If you have ideas for future articles, please let me know:

janfetler@gmail.com, 916 955-3124. The deadline for the October issue is September 24.

Yearbook Reminder ~~~~~

By Nancy Baldwin



If you have recently joined EGGC, we need to get your picture and have you verify your contact information that will be published in the yearbook. September is the last opportunity to make any corrections, as printed copies of the yearbook are scheduled to be distributed at the October meeting.

At the September meeting, look for me near the signup tables. You can review what I have so far and I'll take your photo if we haven't already done that.

###



By Susan Muckey

To be included in our yearbook, dues must be paid by our first meeting on September 10.

You can send a check to treasurer Susan Muckey, 10324 Spiva Road, Sacramento, CA 95829 or bring your check/money to the September meeting.

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Scholarship Letter of Appreciation

By Susan Muckey



Kaitlyn White is our 2025-2026 scholarship recipient. In the fall she will continue attending CRC and then plans to transfer to a 4 year University to study agriculture and horticulture. Upon completion of her education, she plans to work in a research lab. Her ultimate goal is to start her own plant nursery and tissue culture lab.

###

Propagation Workshop ~~~~~

By Vivian Sellers



On Thursday September 17 at 9:30a at my home, everyone is welcome to learn to propagate shrubs and perennials from cuttings and divisions.

You'll also learn to propagate your succulents from divisions, cuttings and leaves. Propagate plants for yourself and for the April plant sale.

Look for the sign-up sheet at the September meeting.

###

Succulent Pumpkin Class ~~~~~

October 17, 2026, 10:00 am – Noon

By Chris Duane

To make this year's workshop a success, we will need many succulent cuttings, acorns, small pinecones, moss, etc. We depend on club members to bring what you can to help us make beautiful, full succulent pumpkins!

Please bring your succulent cuttings to the October meeting. They need to be trimmed to a 1" stem. To protect them from bruising, please place cuttings in a box rather than a bag.



We also need to borrow glue guns. Make sure your name is on yours so they can be returned to you.

Assistants needed!

I need several assistants to help with the workshop on Saturday October 17, beginning at 9:00 am until noon at the Wackford Complex, Poppy Room. Find the signup sheet at the September and October meetings

With up to 40 people expected, ages 16 and up, assistants will answer questions and help participants so they complete their creations in a timely fashion.

Members of the community pay \$25 for the class, and the profit goes to CSD scholarships for kids.

###

Tour Eisley Poinsettia Farm ~~~~~

By Gay Rigmaiden

I hope you'll be able to join us on Thursday, November 5, 2026. The farm is operated and located at Green Acres Nursery in Auburn. Our tour guide will be Greg Gayton. It's about a 45 minute tour limited to the first

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25 members who sign up—find the signup sheet at the September meeting.

We will leave at 9:30a from the Burlington Coat Factory, then drive to Auburn for breakfast/lunch at Awful Annie's. Then we will gather inside Green Acres Nursery, Auburn at 12:30p. More details soon!

This is the first week of tours, so there will be plenty of plants to choose from and purchase.

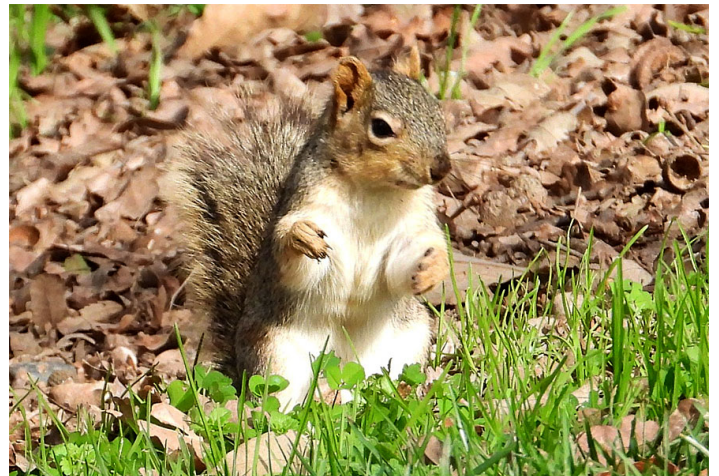
Coordinators: Vivian Sellers, Jan Fetler, Gay Rigmaiden



Stories from the Garden ~~~~~

By Master Gardener Kim Steinmann

The reflections of Hazel, a squirrel who lost her nut. Again.



Another one! How could there be so many identical looking brown leaves?? Hazel had thought herself so clever last month when she had buried her huge acorn near that big brown leaf. Finding stashed acorns was always hard. She had a track record of losing most of her nuts, but this year was going to be different! She had made sure to remember a nearby landmark--a great big dried brown leaf!

She sighed. Better start digging. There were a LOT of big brown leaf landmarks on the ground!

Note: Squirrels bury nuts in the garden as a way to store food for later, a behavior called 'scatter hoarding'. By hiding acorns, black walnuts, and other nuts in many

different spots, squirrels ensure they'll have food through winter—even if they forget some of the locations. Those forgotten seeds often sprout into new trees and plants, making squirrels accidental gardeners who help forests and gardens regenerate. If these four-legged gardeners are becoming too disruptive in your garden, see the UC IPM web page on squirrel management—good luck with that...

<https://ipm.ucanr.edu/home-and-landscape/tree-squirrels/pest-notes/#gsc.tab=0>

###

Prune Christmas Cactus ~~~~~

By Jan Fetter

Do you want your Christmas (or Thanksgiving) Cactus to have flowers covering the whole plant like this rather than a fringe of blooms at the bottom? Prune it before the end of September. Pics show you how.



The plant pictured below is about 15 years old in the original pot. It is actually a Thanksgiving Cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and lives in a protected area outside year around. This photo taken in November.

I recommend pruning in September before buds begin forming. Pruning in September not only keeps the plant compact but forces the blooms into a smaller area for bigger show—often making 2 buds per stem. If your plant already has buds, pruning now will delay blooming, but the plant should recover and set more buds. Withholding water a bit now will encourage buds to form. Or wait to prune till after blooming.

To keep plants compact, pinch back leaves (starting with the newest leaves) till 2 leaves emerge from one. The goal is to remove “chains” of single leaves. If your plant has long streamers of single leaves (they do this when kept inside in summer or don't get enough light), you can begin by shortening the streamers by half for this first pruning.



The “2s” above indicate where 2 leaves emerge from one. Take single leaves back to those leaves.

Below is what you are left with.



Buds forming on these shortened leaves are less likely to droop. New growth in spring is more likely to emerge 2 leaves at a time making a more compact and beautiful plant.

And now I should CLEAN THIS PLANT which is dusty from living outdoors in a shady spot all summer. Hosing it off and then spraying all the leaves with a mixture of

(Safer) insecticidal soap and water will make leaves shiny and ready for beautiful for flowers!

General Care for Christmas Cactus

Bloom time of the plants. There are 2 *Schlumbergera* varieties that bloom in late fall. The plant most folks have (and the one pictured) is actually a Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*). It blooms in many colors but always begins blooming here in November. Then there is the Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera buckleyi*), hot pink flowers appear in December or later. Both are pruned the same.

Plants bloom best when roots are crowded and when they live outdoors spring through fall. Shortening days and cooler temps signal them to set flower buds. Give them plenty of light but no direct sun. Water when the soil surface is dry but not more than about once a week. They should not sit in a saucer of water.

Repotting should be done in spring when plants begin active growth. Any soil that drains quickly like soilless mixes sold at the nursery will work. The best pot to avoid soggy roots would be terra cotta clay. Spring is also a good time for some all-purpose fertilizer.

Propagate by twisting off leaf branches. Shorten cuttings to the newest 3 to 5 leaves. Put cutting in water to cover the lowest leaf by half. Roots will form on the end resting on the bottom of the jar. You can also propagate in pots. In that case, allow the cuttings to sit on a shelf for a day or 2 to “callus” the cut end. Place cuttings in fresh potting soil, water and cover with a plastic bag to maintain moisture.

To bathe, spray the plant down with a hose to clean off the summer dirt. Then mix mild liquid soap (Castile or use insecticidal soap) with water and spray the wet leaves. Water beads dissolve and the plant will dry to a lovely sheen.

###

Rita's Reflections by a New Name ~

By Rita Achuff

Old column, new garden club, new name. Easy...unless you happen to be an over-thinker. I didn't spend this much time naming my children. Some of my considered name changes included Pondering, Shallow Connections, and Dirty Thoughts. ChatGPT's suggestions were not a perfect fit either. I was left with Digging Deep, and you will find me there for now.

Beyond the Garden Gate

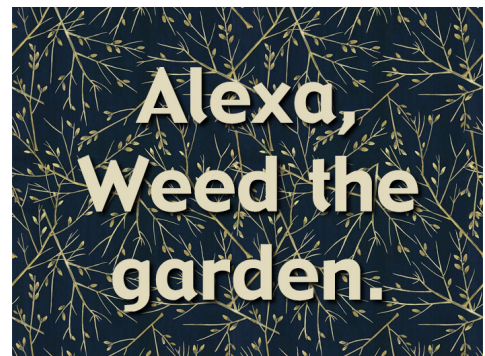
Earlier this summer I was admiring the various plants at the Farmers Market, debating which plants might survive in my care while remembering that every vegetable I had ever planted in a pot had died. A helpful plant lady convinced me that cucumber plants were hardy, self-pollinating, and a good fit for large pots. She recommended I cover a banana peel with water in a large glass jar for 3 days and then water my little plant to promote healthy, robust growth.

The results were amazing! My baby cucumber plant looked like the picture in Jack and the Beanstalk! Every day it grew larger, with more beautiful yellow blossoms flowing out of the large plastic pot onto the ground. I checked AI for pickle recipes and took inventory of my mason jars as I prepared for a day of pickling. Every day I inspected the plant for baby cucumbers with high expectations followed by deep disappointment. Not one tiny cucumber among the many blooms!



After several weeks of banana water and daily inspections, my conclusion is that the banana water is a cucumber contraceptive and bee repellent.

###



In My Summer Garden

By Jan Fetler

Since we don't meet or have newsletters in summer, we don't get to share what happened in our gardens during the heat. I'll give you a peek now of mine.

Fruit



By the first day of summer, I was almost finished picking nectarines. This is a harvest from 'Harko,' a brown rot resistant variety that won in taste tests. It wins in mine! The fruit is sweet and free-stone when ripe and very messy in a good way.



'Late Santa Rosa' plums were the harvest for August and still picking.

When I planted my orchard, I purposely chose fruit that ripens at different times. I may have a touch of OCD...

Vegetables

'Juliet' grape/cherry tomatoes - so very reliable and taste like a real tomato.

'Shishito' peppers - I grew enough to roast a sheet pan or two of them from each harvest.



'Carminat' pole/climbing beans - burgundy in color making beans easier to see for harvest. Its real benefit is the pods stay tender even after the beans begin to set inside. That's for when I do miss a few pods during harvest! Beans turn green when cooked.



'Kakai Hulless' pumpkins - if you like roasted pepitas, these pumpkins produce seeds with no shell! Just harvest and roast. Each pumpkin produces about 2 cups of seeds, but the flesh is not edible. Unlike many pumpkin plants, these make a big bush rather than sprawling 20 feet.

Flowers

I try new varieties every year. I use them in arrangements all summer and as photographic subjects. My favorites this year include:



Verbascum 'Honey Dijon' from our Morning Sun field trip on April 1. This perennial is compact as mulleins go, and the yellow is a bit different too.

Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Purple Lace' - Another perennial that makes wonderful cut flowers. White tipped flowers sparkle.

Heliopsis helianthus 'Touch of Blush' - this sunflower relative is beautiful even if it never blooms, but it blooms. It was practically eaten alive by snails soon after I planted the plant purchased online. It recovered nicely.

Okay, okay, enough already. Hope your garden treated you well this summer!

####



September Garden Checklist

By Jan Fetler

- *Adjust your watering system to reduce water as days grow shorter. Or, let a smart controller do the work.
- *Plant vegetable seeds outdoors: Asian vegetables (such as bok choy and Chinese cabbage), carrots, chard, kale, lettuce, radish, spinach, etc.
- *Plant seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Florence fennel, lettuce and kale.
- *Plant a cover crop if not planting a winter vegetable garden.
- *Add compost to empty vegetable beds before replanting. Continue through the fall.
- *Consider adding a new layer of mulch around your fruit trees. September can be hot, dry, and windy.
- *Fertilize all berry plants and prune new growth on cane berries.
- *Buy bulbs. Refrigerate hyacinth and tulip bulbs six weeks before planting.
- *Balance compost piles by adding plenty of "browns" when adding a lot of disease-free fallen fruit.
- *Limit pests and diseases: spider mites, squash bugs and leafhoppers.

###



September 5, 2026
National Hummingbird Day



Calendar ~~~~~

~~ EGGC Meetings for 2026-27 ~~

Second Thursday of the month at the
Gil Albani Recreation Center
8830 Sharkey Ave.

September 10 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Welcome back!
Business meeting

October 8 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Dwayne Kyte, Dragonfly Peony Farm
You Can Grow Peonies in California!

November 12 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Kristen Baker, American Begonia Society
Beyond the Begonia Basket: Discovering
the Amazing World of Begonias

December 10 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

EGGC Members
Winter Soup Brunch and Holiday
Center Pieces

January 14 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

**Jackson McCarty, Retired Deputy Ag
Commissioner**
A Novel and Practical Approach for Growing,
Harvesting, and Brewing Herbal Teas

February 11 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

David Roberts, Cactus/Succulent Society
Success with Cactus and Succulents!

March 11 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Jan Fetler, EGGC Member
Flower Photography

April 8 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

**Robert Presto, Sacramento Orchid and
Cymbidium Societies**
Orchids Unmasked: Secrets and Culture
Surrounding these Magnificent Plants

May 13 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Speaker
TBA

June 10 – 10a social/10:30 meeting begins

Potluck Picnic
Scholarship Recipient/Installation of Officers

~~~ EGGC Events for 2026-27 ~~~

September 17 – 9:30a

Propagation workshop
Vivian Sellers teaches all about propagation
Location: her home, 8609 Brodie Ct.

October 17 – 10a till Noon (9a for assistants)

Succulent Pumpkin Class
Wackford Complex, Poppy Room
9014 Bruceville Rd.

November 5 – 9:30a depart, 12:30p tour

Tour Easley's Poinsettias, Auburn
First 25 members to sign up
Meet at Burlington, breakfast at Awful Annies,
tour begins at Green Acres Auburn at 12:30p

~~~~~ Plant Sales ~~~~~

October 3/4 (Saturday/Sunday) 9a till 3p

Fall Sale
Sacramento (Shepard) Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento

~~~ FREE UC IPM Zoom Webinars ~~~

Third Thursday Noon till 1p

Various topics for home gardeners
See list, register and find previous presentations:
<https://ucanr.edu/sites/ucipm-community-webinars/>

~~~~~ Other Events ~~~~~

September 5 (Saturday) 10 till 11a

Fall Vegetable Gardening Talk/Q&A
Green Acres Nursery
All locations - Free

September 12 (Saturday) 9a till Noon

Master Gardeners Open Garden

Fair Oaks Horticulture Center
11549 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks

September 12/13 (Saturday/Sunday) 10a till 2p

Butterfly Fest 2026 - Free

The Secret Garden
8450 W. Stockton Blvd, Elk Grove
<https://www.secretgarden-online.com/events>

September 12/13 (Saturday/Sunday) 10a till 3p

Begonia Show and Sale

Sacramento (Shepard) Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento

September 19/20 (Saturday/Sunday) 10a till 2p

Butterfly Fest 2026 (weekend #2) - Free

The Secret Garden
450 W. Stockton Blvd, Elk Grove
<https://www.secretgarden-online.com/events>

October 10 (Saturday) 10a till 2p

Pumpkin Fest Vendor Event

Big Oak Nursery
10071 Grantline Road, Elk Grove

October 14 (Wednesday) 9a till Noon

Master Gardeners Open Garden

Fair Oaks Horticulture Center
11549 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks

November 7 (Saturday) 8a till 5p

Chrysanthemum Society Show

Sacramento (Shepard) Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd, Sacramento



Co-Presidents – Ana Weekley and Juana Zamora

Vice-President – Chris Duane

Secretary – Loren Lewall

Treasurer – Susan Muckey

<https://www.elkgrovegardenclub.org/>

Elk Grove Garden Club is a member of:

Sacramento River Valley District
California Garden Clubs, Inc.
Pacific Region of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
National Garden Clubs Inc.

The Newsletter Team

Editor – Jan Fetler, janfetler@gmail.com
(916) 955-3124

Newsletter deadline 2 weeks before the meeting.

This Month's Contributors

Ana Weekley
Juana Zamora
Vivian Sellers
Nancy Baldwin
Chris Duane
Gay Rigmaiden
Susan Muckey
Rita Achuff

Master Gardener Kimberly Steinmann