



The Watercan Post

Newsletter of the Paradise Garden Club, Paradise CA newsletter@paradisegardenclub.org ParadiseGardenClub.org



Welcome to the latest edition of the Paradise Garden Club Newsletter, your friendly gathering place for gardeners in the beautiful foothills of Northern California. Here in Paradise and the surrounding areas, we are blessed with a Mediterranean climate that brings mild winters, stunning spring blooms, and the chance to nurture everything from native wildflowers to hearty vegetables. As we step into the new year, our small club continues to thrive on sharing our knowledge, community support, and a deep love for the land that surrounds us. Whether you are tending to a backyard plot, experimenting with drought tolerant natives, or simply enjoying the quiet satisfaction of watching seeds sprout, there is something here for every level of gardener.

February offers an excellent moment to pause and prepare. While the garden may seem dormant, it is a busy time for pruning roses, deciduous fruit trees, and vines, all essential tasks that set the stage for abundant growth in the coming seasons. Cool season crops like leafy greens, beets, and hardy herbs are thriving now, and it is an ideal window to plan your spring planting, pick up bare root trees at the newly opened Heinke nursery on Skyway or start seeds indoors. Many of us are also turning our attention to California’s remarkable native plants, which not only conserve water but also support local pollinators, birds, butterflies, and other wildlife in this fire-prone yet resilient landscape. Our club members have been swapping tips on everything from soil amendments to creating habitat-friendly spaces that honor the natural beauty of our region.

As gardeners we enjoy sharing stories, advice, and inspiration at our meetings and gatherings. Your participation makes this community special, so please join us at our next meeting on Monday February 9th at the Terry Ashe Community Center at 1pm as usual. We will be hearing from our local resident Swede Hanski who will be speaking about the benefits of using goat herds for vegetation control.

Together, as a club we cultivate not only beautiful gardens, but also lasting friendships rooted in our own little slice of Paradise. Happy gardening! 🌱



Even months we bring snacks. Bring what you enjoy to share.



PGCI General Meeting, February 9th at 1:00 p.m.

“Using Goats in the Landscape”

Swede Hanski, “the Goat Guy” will share with us how the activity of goats is useful in our Butte County landscapes.

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Beautification Team Report



It is amazing that we have such good weather. So, it is easy to go out and do some gardening. The beautification team went to Elliott and did the usual weeding and sweet peas. There were dead flowers to trim and pine needles to rake up.

The Foster Triangle had a few months of winter sleep, so it was high time we headed there next. The weeds had almost taken over! The tiny triangle at the northernmost corner was in the worst shape. Joanie and Margaret worked on it for over an hour.

We will not let it go so much again. That little area has a wonderful spray of poppies in the spring. We cut back old Iris fans so the new ones could be enjoyed. We did general clean up everywhere, including cutting back the wayward branches of the Red Bud trees. Foster triangle now looks like we gardeners have given it love.

The PID garden was next to work on another day. There were tons of weeds there as well in the gravel walkway. We cut back the spent flowers and trimmed a few of the manzanita. We have asked Mark Sulik, our contact at the PID, to apply a deeper mulch layer to reduce weed growth.

We have fun chatting while we work. Spring will be here before we know it so we will endeavor to keep ahead of the errant plants (weeds) and plant hardy, beautiful specimens to make our eyes dance. There is always gardening to keep us busy and well exercised.

Enjoy your home spaces and consider joining us for a few hours each month. Talk to Jeudie at the welcome table so we can put you on our email list to learn which garden we are working on next.



Jeudie

Thank you Wendy, Ellen, Toby and Todd

We started off the new year with a panel of PGCI members sharing their different fields of gardening expertise. Wendy on succulents; Ellen on native plants; Toby on the challenges she's had with steep hillside erosion & repair; and Todd on tool maintenance and ways to be prepared ahead of time with first aid packages and caution with certain tools. This was a hands on, interactive occasion with never a dull moment. Well done speakers!



Upcoming Events

Paradise Garden Club meets every second Monday of each month at 1:00 at the Terry Ashe Center. All are welcome. Odd months we bring cuttings, plants or seeds to share while even months we share food snacks. ***Bring your own beverage.***

PGCI General Meeting, February 9th at 1:00 p.m. "Using Goats in the Landscape"

March 9 at 1pm Swede Hanski, "the Goat Guy" will cover how the activity of goats is useful in our Butte County landscapes.

PGCI General Meeting, March 9th at 1:00 p.m. "Bring Back the Pollinators"

Presenter: Michelle Graydon with the Xerces Society.

Create and conserve habitat for our all-important pollinators! Because of their critical contribution to plant reproduction and diversity, pollinating species (insects and other invertebrates) are considered keystone indicators of environmental health. Join a local expert from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation to learn how to attract and retain pollinators such as bumble bees, native bees, and Monarch butterflies to your garden.

PGCI General Meeting, April 13th at 1:00 p.m. "Members Tea Party & Garden Gab"

Enjoy tea & nibbles and get to know new members as well as club history bits from members that have been around for years. Bring your favorite cookie or healthy snack to share. Tea provided. Come, relax, let's catch up on our gardening questions, problems, ideas and dreams. Gardening minds are beautiful.

Master Gardener News

For detailed information and to sign up go to: <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-butte-county>

LOCAL NURSERY CRAWL

Step 1

Pick up a flyer at a participating nursery

Step 2

Visit as many nurseries or shops as you can! Check out what each nursery has to offer, ask questions, and get inspired!

Step 3

Collect stamps from each nursery you visit on the flyer. Once you visit your 6th nursery you'll be entered into a raffle to win a gift certificate from that nursery!

Step 4

Feel good about supporting your local nurseries during the Crawl

12th Annual Local Nursery Crawl

Friday & Saturday
March 27 & 28, 2026
9:00am-4:00pm

- 5 Hodge's Family Nursery, Inc.
9681 Midway Durham Ca 95938
530-894-6598
hodesfamilynursery.com
- 6 Kinney Nursery & Topsoil
4115 Rowles Rd. Vina Ca 96092
530-893-2196
kinneynursery.com
- 7 The Little Red Hen Nursery
189 E. 8th Street Chico Ca 95928
530-891-9100
littleredhen.org
- 8 Magnolia Gift and Garden
1367 East Ave. Chico Ca 95926
530-894-5410
magnoliagardening.com
- 9 The Plant Barn Nursery
406 Entler Ave. Chico Ca 95928
530-345-3121
theplantbarn.com
- 10 The Rock Garden Nursery
9869 Hwy 99W Gerber Ca 96035
530-527-2411
therockgardenproberta.com
- 11 Songbird Landscape Supply
2742 Highway 45 Glen Ca
530-804-0713
songbirdlandscapesupply.com
- 12 Vang's Plants & Succulent Hub
116 Broadway St. Chico Ca 95928
530-804-2758
vangsplantsandsucculentshub.com.square.site

1 Cactus Affinity
1311 Stanley Ave. Chico CA 95928
530-324-5053
cactusaffinity.com

2 DejaVu Gardens Galore Nursery
5424 Foster Rd. Paradise Ca 95969
530-877-7341
dejavunursery.com

3 Floral Native Nursery
14388 Meridian Rd. Chico Ca 95973
530-892-2511
floralnativenursery.com

4 Harvests & Habitats Nursery
1710 Park Ave. Chico CA 95928
behind 1078 Gallery
530-342-3376

HODGE'S FAMILY NURSERY
Upcoming Events

February 7
Learn & Grow Winter Festival
Fruit Trees, Roses, Composting & Bonsai. Free! 10-1

March 7
Grapes & Berry Clinic
Demonstration with Daniel Hodge.
Wyld Flour Food Truck at Hodge's. Free! 9-4

March 14
Bonsai Clinic
Chico Bonsai Society at Hodge's. 10-12

March 27 & 28
Local Nursery Crawl
A weekend of visiting your local nurseries. Free!
Both days 9-4

April 4
Sip & Stroll Saturday
Wyld Flour Food Truck at Hodge's. 9-4

April 14
Honeybee at Hodge's
Free homeschool event. Register online. 12-1

April 25
Our 42nd Annual Spring Celebration
Local vendors, raffle, spinning wheel with prizes, face painting, food trucks. Free! 10-3

PGCI Members, grab your friends and go!



HODGE'S
FAMILY NURSERY

LEARN & GROW
WINTER FESTIVAL
FRUIT TREES, ROSES,
COMPOSTING & BONSAI

Get Dirty For A Beautiful Garden

10am - 1pm

Saturday, February 7

Featuring:

Daniel Hodge, Hodge's Family Nursery

Pruning Clinic at 11:00am

Julie Matlin, Butte Rose Society

Rose Clinic at 10:00am

David Boyer, SeaCoast Compost

Will Sanger, Chico Bonsai Society



THE WYLD FLOUR

Calendar

Workshops are free, however registration is required. Workshop space is limited, so sign up early. Full workshops: If you'd like to be placed on the waiting list please email us at anmg-butte@ucanr.edu. Be sure to include your telephone number in your email so we may contact you.

Workshops

- Seed Starting
February 3, 10-11:30am
- Seasonal Garden Series—Winter Garden Talks
February 7, 9-11am
- Choosing and Preparing your Flower Garden **NEW!**
February 11, 11:30am-1:30pm
- Plant Selection and Planting Techniques **NEW!**
February 18, 11:30am-1:30pm
- Native Plants
February 21, 11am-12:30pm
- Care and Maintenance: Considerations in Garden Planning **NEW!**
February 25, 11:30am-1:30pm

Spring Workshops Start in February



The Spring 2026 Series of Master Gardener Workshops is about to start! The series begins Tuesday, February 3 with a timely session on starting summer vegetable plants from seed and concludes in mid-May with a fascinating workshop about bats. In addition, we are offering Seasonal Garden Talks four times a year at our Chapman Park Teaching Garden at the Dorothy F. Johnson Center (775 E. 16th Street, Chico). The Winter Garden Talks will take place Saturday, February 7. Visit [our website](#) for the complete list and to register. Shown above: Seedlings started from seeds in a variety of containers.

Master Gardener News

For detailed information and to sign up go to: <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-butte-county>

Daffodils popping out all over.



Photo by Nancy Howe

At our January meeting, the **2025 Star Award** was presented to Nancy Howe. Each year the members vote to acknowledge someone who has endeavored to be helpful in various ways in the Paradise Garden Club. That person keeps the Star Award, with their name added to the plaque, at their home for the year.

Nancy has served on the board, is part of the Beautification Team, is editor of our newsletter, The Watercan Post, and is part of the Hospitality Team that sets up part of our monthly meetings.

It is quite an honor to be recognized and appreciated. We have such diligent, hard working members. Look around you, who's next? We appreciate what you do!



A Handful of Promise

by Nancy Howe



Standing in his kitchen, my son took a handful of fine, lightweight soil from a container on his counter, and poured it into my hand. I rubbed my thumb over it and smelled it. There was a faint, pleasant, earthy smell and it felt special. This was something I wanted to put in my garden.

He has used this home compost machine for several years and I have kept my eye on it, but I continued to compost the old way. I had given up on the many kitchen compost holders I tried because eventually fruit flies and the messy decomposition happened before getting it to my outside compost bin. It was just too unpleasant. For the last year, I have used a one-gallon Ziplock bag to



collect our (no animal products) kitchen scraps. No fruit flies! When the bag is full, it gets emptied into the outside compost bin. Easy.

Last Christmas my son gave us a compost machine. “Lomi” is the unit I am using. There are several other units on the market to consider. <https://thewellnessreview.co/we-tried-the-4-most-popular-home-compost-machines-heres-how-they-stacked-up/> Costco has some to check out at the moment.



I am not a techy girl. I prefer to have an on and off button and this is exactly that. Drop in the charcoal filter, press on, choose the cycle, press go and the magic begins. There is online support if needed.

It turns out that a full one-gallon size Ziplock is the perfect amount to fill the Lomi. Although, you can just drop scraps into the unit as you make your salad, crack your eggs, empty your coffee grounds or tea bags.

I prefer to use the “long” setting, which takes at least twelve hours to convert the scraps into nutrient rich soil. There is a low grinding blade at the bottom that turns, pauses, and repeats. There is a charcoal filter that eliminates all odors. No kidding. Noise? Quieter than your dishwasher. Once you see this lovely soil coming out, the sound of it becomes soothing. You know you are going to have a bit more wonderful to add to your landscape. I have heard some people mix it into their chicken feed. It is that good.



Sustainability. We hear that word every day. The three pillars being environmental, social, and economic. The goal is to meet today’s needs without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs for long-term well-being. As gardeners, we put our loving energy into our environment to make it better. Especially here on the Ridge where the 2018 fire changed our world. Our challenge, our passion, continues to make it better than ever here in Paradise. This is a quiet and simpler way to succeed now and for future generations one handful at a time.



Meeting commenced at 11:30 AM Present: Todd Hummel, Cheryl Habriel, Margaret Hawe, Jeudie Lovell, Anne Pace, guest Nancy Howe.

The minutes from the December meetings were approved (motion by Todd, seconded and passed).

Treasurer’s Report – \$28,603.94 balance. For more detail see Treasurer’s report. We received a bill from PRPD for the upcoming year. Margaret will notify them we only use the facility for 11 months not 12. Cheryl made a motion to accept the Treasurers report. It was seconded and passed.

Membership – several people are delinquent.

Beautification – Cleanup at Elliott Triangle this Thursday. We will not be doing the planting at the Hope Plaza. Repairs at the Monument are on hold waiting for the Clampers.

Board Position - 2nd vice president is still open. Nancy Howe will fill in temporarily until we get a permanent volunteer.

Garden Tour – We have 3 gardens for the 2026 Tour so far.

Today’s Speakers – Todd Hummel, Wendy Wicklund, Toby Brandtman and Ellen Michels.

Star Award – to be presented today at the General meeting

Upcoming Activities

February Speaker – Swede Hanski on using goats in the landscape.

Good of the Order

Possible new members tea in April?

Meeting concluded at 12:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Habriel, Recording Secretary

Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – President Todd Hummel

Penny Pines - Joanie

Treasurer’s Report – \$28,603.94 balance. For more detail see Treasurer’s report.

Beautification – Work was done at the Elliott Triangle. The project at the Monument is waiting on timing from the Clampers.

Program – Club members Todd Hummel, Ellen Michels, Wendy Wicklund and Toby Brandtman spoke on various topics.

February Speaker – Swede Hanski on using goats in the landscape.

Good of the Order

Star Award – was presented to Nancy Hawe.

If you brought a plant, cuttings or seeds tell us what they are.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Habriel, Recording Secretary

2026 Garden Tour Preparations Update

Our 2026 Home Gardens search team has three home gardens confirmed and others in the process. Please contact one of these people (in the roster) if you know of a home gardens that you think would be great for the tour. Text, email or call Anne, Toby, and Ellen.

Can you turn out and iron hand size projects that Wendy is sewing up for the plant sale? Work from home on these projects and return them to Wendy for finishing. Your time is appreciated. Contact Wendy for details. (Number in the roster.)

Paradise Garden Club members,

We need one of our members to volunteer to be our **Vice President of Publicity**. If you have a friend or two who would enjoying assisting you in this endeavor, great. A few things this position covers will be to

- attend monthly PGCi board meetings
- gather information from fellow board members on upcoming events
- distributing that information for our website updates, the newsletter editor, and various local news media including the Town of Paradise, the Paradise Chamber of Commerce, and local television stations.

Some of this can be done at home from your computer.

Why get involved? It is so much fun to be part of the board and make an impact in our community. Interested? Contact Todd or Anne in your roster.

Newsletter Welcomes Your Input

Photos for the newsletter. You know those times you gaze at the beauty in your yard or a plant you notice during a walk or drive? Email or text those photos and they'll find a place in the newsletter for everyone to enjoy. Please note the names of plants when possible.

Is there a plant, a tool, a gardening experience you'd like to share with the group? Email your write up and photo. Everyone will appreciate it.

Would you like to write a regular column for the newsletter? Let's talk.

Text or email Nancy. Contact info in the roster.



HORTICULTURE

OAK NOTES

By Pam Austin of El Cerrito Garden Club



One of the oldest and most widespread trees on Earth, oaks appeared about 65 million years ago, long before humans.

Facts about oaks:

- There are 500 species of oaks. Twenty are native to California. They thrive in our hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. Oak trees are considered a keystone species. Keystone species are the glue that holds an ecosystem together, and their removal can cause dramatic changes. Oaks provide food, water, and shelter to species of 5,000 insects, 105 birds, 105 mammals, and 58 amphibians. Acorns are

highly nutritious, carbohydrate-rich, and were a diet staple of the Californian indigenous people.

- Acorns are toxic to dogs and horses.
- Oaks tolerate fire due to their thick, furrowed bark and tough leathery leaves. During wildfires, the larger oaks in areas cleared of fuel may scorch but rarely burn completely. Damaged trees will re-sprout from the root crown.
- On the northern California coast, live oak, valley oak, and canyon live oak occur naturally. Coast Live Oak trees grow to 20' to 40' and as much as 80' and as much as 250 years. Some oaks live as long as 500 years.
- Some oaks are deciduous (drop their leaves) while others are evergreen.

Oaks provide many benefits:

- Oaks enhance property values: It's been demonstrated in studies that oak trees on your property increase property values. Living next to an open space that contains oak trees also increases property values.
- Oaks are landscape workhorses: All California oaks are very well-adapted to the elevations where they occur naturally. They provide the backbone for "right plant/right place" kinds of landscaping that reduce the need for extra irrigation and fertilizer.
- Oaks filter water: The leaf litter that accumulates under oak trees prevents soil erosion by buffering the impact of rainfall. Leaf mulch helps retain soil moisture, lowering soil temperature and discouraging weeds. All water in California flows through oak woodlands.
- Oaks provide shade and cooling to the landscape.
- The structure of oaks provides aesthetic enjoyment.
- If you like truffles, thank oak trees, since truffles have a close relation with the roots of oak trees. Truffles are almost impossible to grow. Instead, truffle farmers plant oak trees, hoping to create favorable conditions conducive to the growth of truffles.

However, the threats to oaks are many:

- Construction removes entire trees or damages the root zone resulting in oak tree death.
- Subdivision of property and fragmentation in land use reduces open space for oak savannah and forest, threatening seedling recruitment in some oak species.
- Inappropriate landscaping practices designed to support exotic landscape species threaten oak health.
- Sudden oak death is a disease caused by a pathogen believed to be spread by California Bay trees, rhododendrons, and camellias.
- Climate change results in rising temperatures and unstable conditions.

To address these problems, in 2004, California passed oak woodlands conservation legislation under CEQA. Every county is required to adopt policies that create an oak protection program.

Planting an oak is a legacy for future generations. Planting an oak is a gift to future generations. Each oak serves as a living legacy, offering ecological benefits like biodiversity support, air quality improvement, and carbon sequestration.



**"Every oak tree started out as a couple of nuts
who stood their ground."**

— Henry David Thoreau



Our Community Impact

Every day, National Garden Clubs, Inc. is transforming communities — beautifying landscapes, fostering environmental education, and nurturing youth gardening.

Scholarships Awarded
\$5,326,800

Garden Club Members
138,976

Plant America Grants
\$390,210

Member Clubs
5,000

Contact with nature is restorative to body and mind. It stimulates our parasympathetic nervous system and calms our sympathetic nervous system. Our parasympathetic nervous system responds to soft fascination which are the sounds and views of nature. Our sympathetic nervous system responds to everyday life, to harsh sounds and threatening situations, such as when we are about to cross a street. These stimuli deplete our attention and stress us. Contact with nature is beneficial, helping us to relax and clear our minds for contemplative thought. This involuntary response affects all humans. As a species, we evolved in nature, and the comfortable feeling we get when we are in nature is in our genes.



Our gardens provide contact with nature with similar restorative effects that nature offers. Just as we can go to the mountains, forest, or beach for a few days for restoration, we can get this vital benefit daily from our gardens. While strolling through a garden at the end of a day, we often feel the tension falling from our shoulders.

Creating a garden that works with nature dramatically reduces the work of gardening. Making it a contemplative space based on nature changes how we see our gardens.

Working with nature means that the garden will be informal and have the flowing lines of nature. Observing nature, we note many unexpected things happening in our garden refuge. Observation helps to keep our minds active. If we understand nature, working with nature can reduce the time and effort we put into our garden. Bringing nature into the garden allows our eyes to see the garden in a new way, not as manicured spaces but as free-flowing and irregular spaces. Instead of masses of a single species, there will be incredible biodiversity. With more biodiversity, we can see our gardens in a more complex way. There is also the advantage that if this year does not favor one species, another will thrive in its place.

The garden as a refuge should also be contemplative, where the gardener can rest, relax, and think deeply about things. In this type of garden, there are discoveries around every corner. The lack of formality and the chance to discover new things keeps the garden interesting. In the contemplative garden, there are changes from day to day and year to year. Seasonal changes have psychological benefits for the gardener.

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The garden refuge based on nature and contemplation should be an intimate, personal space. It is unique because the gardener creating it is unique. There are no precise rules to follow in its design. Design it with experiences that have brought you happiness. If childhood was such an experience, draw from your childhood. If you have fond memories of places you have visited or a gardener who has had a distinct effect on you, draw from them.

The garden as a refuge should also be a regenerative space. Much of it will come back on its own, year after year, with little effort. Nature restores itself. The gardener needs to tend the garden, but much less effort is involved. It allows for relaxation and thought more than constant tending.



Contact with nature and contemplation work together. Nature clears the mind and makes it possible for deep thought. Essential features in a contemplative garden refuge include plants, rocks, water, wildlife, views, and seasonal change. Consider the following.

Plants of all types, old and young trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous flowering plants are garden staples. Plants flower in different seasons. Deciduous and evergreen plants create year-round interest. Plants exhibit ephemerality: going through phases quickly - new growth in spring, flowering briefly in a specific season, attracting pollinators, producing fruits and seeds, and preparing for winter or drought.

Rocks are a stabilizing feature in the garden refuge and represent permanence. They were there before you created the garden and will be there after the garden has disappeared. Rocks are the parent material of soil on which all life depends.

Water is essential for life. It is visual and creates soft fascination through its sounds and constant changes of form.

Wildlife represents both good and bad in the garden but is always restorative. Butterflies, other insects, spiders, mammals, reptiles, amphibia, and microorganisms are essential to the garden's health.

Views created within the garden refuge or borrowed from beyond are valuable for contemplation. Views beyond the garden give it the feel of a more incredible expanse. Views within the garden are often small areas that help us look inward. View of the sky is especially important.

The garden refuge should change with the seasons. The cycle of the seasons is important to us psychologically. It represents stability and constancy as well as change. It offers hope for a new year to improve on what we did in years past. It helps us see how organisms adapt to this change and gives us hope for adapting to the changes in our lives.

Pathways allow us to move about, and benches provide a place to sit, relax, and think. Pathways should be appropriately surfaced for our needs and safety. Benches should be comfortable and secure and placed in the shade and sun.

The garden refuge can be small or large, depending on the site and the gardener's wishes. The important thing is that it be natural and bring nature into it. Soft fascination created by the sounds and sights of nature is essential to help set the mind at ease and help it reflect. The sounds of wind and air moving through the trees and birds singing are restorative, as is the sight of a butterfly slowly flapping its wings, ripples on a pond, or leaves moving in a breeze. All are soft fascinations that can help take our minds off our daily activities and free them for creative thought. It must be unique and speak to the gardener.

Joe Novak has a Ph.D. from Cornell. He teaches courses in Urban Agriculture and Garden for Wellness at Rice and is Director of the Betty and Jacob Friedman Holistic Garden. He is a lifetime honorary member of Texas Garden Clubs, Inc.



Contemplate



Winter nature shapes
vibrant colors reveal
wild, rambling life.