



Newsletter of the Paradise Garden Club, Paradise CA

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Todd with Daniel Hodge,
September's speaker.

October brings a welcome change to Northern California gardens. Cooler mornings make it a pleasant time to tidy summer beds, refresh containers, and plan for the months ahead. Even as the growing season slows, there is plenty to enjoy outdoors, from changing leaves to the last blooms of the season.

This month, our garden club invites you to share what worked well in your garden this year and what you might try differently next spring. A favorite plant, a helpful tip, or even a gardening mishap can start a good conversation. Whether you tend a large yard or a few pots, your experience is welcome.

As we head into autumn, take a moment to appreciate the gardens and gardeners around you. A shared seed, extra cutting, or a helping hand can make a small club feel like a close community. We look forward to seeing you this October 12th at 1pm at the Terry Ashe community center where we will hear John Thompson of Butte Valley Supply and Earthworm Factory discuss building soil health. John is quite knowledgeable in his field, and this should be an informative and lively conversation. We hope to see you there.

Thank you,

T3

Todd



PGCI General Meeting, October 12 at 1:00 p.m.

Topic: Building Soil Health

**Presenter: John Thompson, General Manager
Butte Valley Supply and the Earthworm Factory**

He will be speaking about the four principles of soil health and how they apply to home gardens, landscapes, and local growing conditions here in Butte County, focusing on practical ways to build living soil, improve water retention, support plant health, and work with natural systems to create healthier, more resilient gardens.

Index

1. Prez Greeting & Meeting Time	6-9	Getting to Know You, Toby
2. Index, Upcoming Events, & Beautification	10.	Minutes
3. Rose Society	11-12	TNG: Echos From the Garden
4-5 Protect Your Young Trees Now!	13.	Contemplate

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.

PGCI General Meeting, October 12 at 1:00 p.m. Building Soil Health

Presenter: John Thompson, General Manager – Butte Valley Supply and the Earthworm Factory

John brings two decades of hands-on composting industry experience spanning facility operations, feedstock logistics, and biological process management. He will be speaking on the four principles of soil health and how they apply to home gardens, landscapes, and local growing conditions here in Butte County. His talk will focus on practical ways to build living soil, improve water retention, support plant health, and work with natural systems to create healthier, more resilient gardens.

PGCI General Meeting, November 9 at 1:00 p.m. Backyard Stewardship

Presenter: Calli-Jane West, Community Partner Liaison – Butte County Fire Safe Council

At our May 11th meeting, Calli-Jane introduced us to the Backyard Stewardship guide and handed out copies to all present. Since then, she has visited Todd and Joyce's property and also Anne Pace's to provide guidance on how they could improve their property following the guidelines in the booklet, including fire resilience, connection to nature, ecosystem health and more. She will be discussing her recommendations as part of her presentation. One of the misconceptions about following the Backyard Stewardship Guide guidelines is the thought that we must cut down much of what is already planted and that is not the case.



September found us busily working at The Monument and The Library Mound. In October we are headed next to Elliott and beyond. Do you know how much we love working together as we give each area tender loving care? Join us and find out. I, Jeudie, am at the back greeter's table each month. Find me and I will give you details on the schedule.

Jeudie



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
BUTTE ROSE SOCIETY'S
ANNUAL ROSE SHOW

Saturday, October 24th 2026
1PM - 4 PM

CHICO CARD CENTER
545 Vallombrosa Avenue

The show is free and includes lots of roses on display for viewing,
rose arrangements, photography, and art and crafts.



<https://butterosesocietyorg.wordpress.com>

Protect Your Young Trees Now!

The Annual Deer Rutting Season Is Upon Us

By Michelle McNeill, UC Master Gardener of Butte County



Deer rubbing damage to a champagne loquat tree.

If you live in an area where deer roam, now is the time to take action to protect any new trees on your property from deer damage during rutting season.

Recently I discovered that the tung oil tree I planted in April had suffered major damage to its narrower-than-a-finger-in-diameter trunk. A deer had scraped and rubbed its antlers on it. Upon further inspection around my property, I discovered my Necta Zee nectarine tree was another victim: most of its branches had been broken off and were lying on the ground.

Why was this happening now? Each spring, male deer (also called stags or bucks) grow a new set of antlers that are coated with a furry, velvet-like covering. By fall, the antlers have fully grown and the velvet coating starts to itch, so the bucks use young trees to scrape off the velvet and also to mark their territory. In the competition for mating, when males joust with one another to win over female deer (does), a hard antler surface is more valuable than a softer, velvety one.

The breeding peak for deer in Northern California is roughly late October into November. While bucks are able to breed with a doe as soon as they shed the velvet from their antlers, no mating actually occurs until a doe enters her estrous cycle. Since bucks are ready weeks before this, they become increasingly active and aggressive as the fall arrives. Bucks will paw into the ground to form oval bare-earth patches called "scrapes" and rake their antlers against trees and shrubs leaving "rubs." These "rubs" are likely a communication tool to advertise a buck's presence to other deer in the area. Rubbing and scraping begin as soon as a buck starts shedding the velvet from his antlers and continues to build until actual breeding begins.



Year-old deer damage to a strawberry marina tree.

Bucks usually target trees with smooth bark and trunks that are between one and four inches in diameter. They will also bruise and batter tree branches with their antler racks and tend to target younger trees because the smaller branches are the right size to strike between their antlers. It is believed that the thrashing against a tree is practice for the competitive antler battles that occur during the mating season, and that the thrashing also toughens the muscles in the animal's neck. Bucks tend to avoid trees with thorns, rough bark, or low branches. Saplings and smaller trees with pliable trunks are at high risk, while larger, more mature trees are less likely to be affected.

As the deer rub to clean the summer velvet from their antlers, they strip the bark from young trees. This can be fatal to trees because beneath that bark is a nutrient and water transport system known as the cambium layer. If the cambium layer is removed around the entire tree trunk, also known as girdling, there is no way for the tree to survive. If the damage is only partial, the tree may be able to seal over the damaged area. Over several years or more, new bark will grow in and slowly cover the wounded wood. However, even if the tree does not die, the damage can be so extensive that it may be stunted and never fully recover.

How can trees be protected? Buck rub can be discouraged by utilizing scare tactics. Deer are wary animals and you can use this to your advantage by employing motion sensor sprinklers or noise-making devices. Some say that hanging reflective objects such as CD's or aluminum foil strips within the vicinity of your trees is a deterrent because the sudden movements, flashes, or noises will startle the deer. Another possibility is to apply a commercial deer repellent; these typically contain strong-smelling substances that deer find unpleasant. This method, however, must be continually refreshed as the offensive scent dissipates.



Goat fencing barrier can protect young trees from deer damage.

By far the most effective way to protect your trees is to protect them from deer with some kind of physical barrier. This can be achieved in various ways. For example, a perimeter fence that is high enough that deer cannot jump over it (seven to eight feet) is certainly an effective deterrent to protect an area. If a high perimeter fence isn't possible, three or four T-posts pounded in around individual trees, leaving a three-to-four-foot diameter space that's wrapped with hardware mesh or chicken wire securely fastened to the T-posts can be an effective barrier. When the tree matures enough you can remove the T-posts and surrounding material.

Another method is to encircle your tree with stiff goat wire fencing, cutting a large enough section to surround the tree and bending the wire squares of one side back through the squares of the other side to secure it. Or you can make an inexpensive barrier from corrugated drainage tubing that can protect the trunk when limbs are high enough to be out of danger. It can be reused year after year. You can find this in four-inch diameter by ten-foot-long sizes at most home improvement stores, usually for less than \$20. Measure the distance from the ground to the first set of branches on your young tree, then cut a piece of tubing to that measurement and slice down the length of the tube in a straight line. To install, pull the tubing open and fit it around the tree trunk, being careful not to scrape the bark with the edges of the tubing. It may be helpful to have a second pair of hands for this. When rutting season is over, simply remove the tubing or goat fencing and store for use again the following year.



Young orange tree protected by goat fence barrier.

The best time to protect your young trees is before the deer find them during the annual rutting season. For this year, that window is closing fast. If tree damage is extensive and a tree is girdled, it's sometimes possible to train a new sprout from below the damage into a new top. In an effort to save my girdled tung oil tree, I cut the trunk back below the "rub" damage, leaving only six inches of trunk. Time will tell if it recovers.



Update: Good News! My tung oil tree is starting to leaf out !

All photos in this article were taken by Michelle McNeill, Master Gardener.

Getting to Know You . . .



Toby was fifteen when she met sixteen-year-old Todd. It was the beginning of an adventurous life that continues to this day. They were two kids full of curiosity and ready to explore the world together.

Never fond of heights, on her eighteenth birthday, she had her first parachuting lesson; a gift from Todd. She went twice. Not her thing. Yet, she had faced that fear.



Another day, early in their teenage relationship, Todd showed Toby a little prize from a crackerjack box. It was a small plastic toy of the ugliest dog Toby had ever seen, a Borzoi. He said, "This is the kind of dog we are going to get when we get married." Years later, they ended up loving, breeding, raising, and showing these stately Russian wolf hounds all over the states, including at the Westminster Dog Show in New York City. They hired Shane, the artist who painted multiple murals

post fire to paint a mural of her Borzoi on the ruins of their burned-out garage at their rebuilt Paradise home.



At twenty-one, Toby married Todd. Their honeymoon lasted one and a half months, touring in a Volkswagen bug throughout the United States. Sharing a deep attachment to traveling, routine life and work became, and still is, sandwiched between trips.

Both interested in a medical career, Toby became a registered nurse focused on palliative and hospice care. Todd became a doctor and started in family medicine.

There was a gap between college and med school for camping and traveling. As their three children grew up, camping and hiking were foremost on the schedule. The car was packed, everyone was ready to go, when dad got home, everyone jumped into the car and they headed out.

They lived in Pennsylvania during Todd's residency, and whenever they had time off they traveled as far north as Labrador and Nova Scotia and as far south as Florida. After residency, they lived in Brownsville, California where he was in family practice, unfortunately working one hundred plus hours weekly.

At this time, Toby was in her thirties, raising a newborn, a third grader and a high schooler. They lived at the end of a country road next to a malevolent neighbor whose actions later led to his long-term imprisonment for beating his girlfriend to death. A police officer warned Toby of the danger they were in living near that man. With her husband mostly away at work, she nurtured her children, taking care of daily needs, school schedules, busy life—amid continual hostility and threatening behavior from the neighbor. A local told Toby the hostile neighbor promised that he would kill her family. Upon hearing that, they packed up their kids and belongings and left within hours and went to a hotel in Paradise and began looking for a house.

To cut back his hours, Todd switched to emergency medicine and then worked at Chico Community Hospital and eventually got hired at Feather River hospital. Toby worked as a nurse caring for hospice patients while focused on raising their children.

The appetite for traveling the world has taken Toby and Todd on an incredible journey. It is not without mishaps. Yet nothing deterred them from the love of adventure experiencing other cultures, landscapes, foods, and lives.

Their travels and backpacking adventures led them through every national park and every state in the United States. Their love of scuba diving began in their forties, taking them to multiple locations in the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Todd has exceptional skills as a trip organizer setting up month long trips to Thailand, and Burma, now named Myanmar. Myanmar was only open for 1.5 years before the military closed it again. Recently, they just completed their near month-long trip to Indonesia to scuba dive and see exotic animals like Komodo dragons and orangutans. Coming soon, snorkeling in Hawaii with their grandson.

While Todd was in school, he studied the Russian language for four years and wanted to go there, but the political constraints at the time were very tightly controlled as in armed guards pointing guns at you at the border crossings. The only way to go there was by taking a month-long camping bus tour. The rule on bus trips: there must be a consensus of at least five people wanting to stop to see the same thing. For example, they could not get five people to see Lenin's tomb so, the two of them alone, (not grouped), had to wait in line five hours. A rowdy group on board the bus drank like fish all night. Toby and Todd left the bus between France and Amsterdam and thumbed their way to Amsterdam. This led to a lifelong hate of bus tours.

Five years ago, they went to Asia. As in many places around the world, obtaining safe drinking water is always a concern. Many toilets are simply a hole in the ground. As in any place in the world, you eat what is put before you and that is what they did. They learned that if you have clean drinking water and indoor plumbing, you are among the wealthiest people in the world.



Because of their extreme dislike for bus tours, they have used a company called, "Tours by Locals" all over the world for many years. These are personalized tours shaped according to Toby and Todd's desires. This service was great for touring any place when they had long lay overs or were unsure of the locale. Ten years ago, in getting to Palau, during an 18-hour stopover their wonderful guide was a South Korean fellow who had been adopted by a family in the United States. Having dual citizenship, he moved back to South Korea and became a guide. Guides know what is safe and interesting. He led them through

the backstreets, little restaurants, and they had ice cream at the University of Seoul. Another guide led them through Manila.

During the trip to Indonesia this summer, they had a 36-hour layover in Singapore with eight hours to tour. As part of Bali, at Flores Island, they had a 16-hour tour up into the villages, backstreets, and neighborhoods where people live. Getting to experience what it is to live in these unusual places is the goal of these personalized trips. At Flores Island a wedding was taking place, and they were welcomed. As custom dictates, they ate whatever was given, which is tricky because it is cooked in water that makes nonnatives sick due to parasites. Toby and a local woman became friends.





During this trip, orangutangs were nearby. They are doomed to extinction because their habitat is shrinking, as the land is cleared to grow palms for palm oil. There is a significant lack of food for these gigantic vegetarians. Also, Komoto dragons, a bite will kill you, yet an awesome creature to behold. Plus, Probiscis monkeys, the stud with his harem watched them, unmoving for hours. Monkeys will steal sunglasses, and other items if you are not mindful. Their habitat, too, is shrinking.

Diagnosed with diabetes at 60 years old, Toby is very mindful of her diet and deals with neuropathy in her feet which causes balance issues. Moving from boat to boat while going on dives is no longer feasible for the future. If something happens in a remote area, it often takes three or more hours to get medical help. She felt that hanging up the tanks at this age is logical. They have good memories of dives throughout their many travels.

Toby's home garden colors are pink, white and blue. Sage is perfect for her terrain. It was a Butte College donation to the PGCi plant sale one year. Bees love it.



Efforts to find plants that can thrive in the "The Slump Garden," a hillside area next to and above Toby's house, continue. Native seeds suggested by a local nursery failed to thrive. Although Black-eyed Susans, and pink African daisies have done well. Waddles have been helpful to stem the erosion while things take hold. It continues to be a work in progress while the side garden thrives as a colorful triumph. The calla lilies were ones propagated from the PGCi plant table one month.

On a medical note, Toby encourages us to closely watch the clinical summaries made during medical visits. The artificial intelligence that forms the summaries grouped her family history as being her personal, individual history. It was significantly dangerous. It had read that she had mental issues, a previous heart attack among other diagnoses that have nothing to do with her. If left unchecked, and unable to speak for herself, she could have been treated with medications or procedures based on those reports. Be proactive. Promptly review any notes made with artificial intelligence including clinical summaries and the medication lists after medical visits.

Toby helps set up the back tables each month for plants or snacks as part of the PGCi Hospitality Team. Always helpful and friendly, look for her to learn more about her never-ending travel discoveries.

Future travel dreams include South America, the rest of North and South Africa, Vietnam, and Cambodia... and the whole world.



Toby's adventure continues

Singapore Gardens



"Parks and Trees Act 2005" in Singapore — buildings must have garden features and be maintained. This is a small part of the law that details the importance of nurturing plants in the city.



Out and About



Back home
breeding,
raising, and
showing
Borzoi dogs.



Board Minutes

September 14, 2026

Meeting commenced at 11:40 AM

Present: Todd Hummel, Cheryl Habriel, Margaret Hawe, Jeudie Lovell, Anne Pace. Guests: Wendy Wicklund and Linda Strand-Talmo.

Minutes from the July meetings were approved (motion by Anne, seconded and passed).

Treasurer's Report – \$29,363.80 balance. Margaret asked Tri Counties bank regarding investing a portion of the club's funds. Wendy will check with Stiffle. The Board will make a decision in October. We need an audit – Cheryl, Wendy and Margaret will meet soon.

Membership – Linda will remind the new people of our next meeting.

Beautification – All sites are "up to snuff!"

Community Events—Possible Participation in —Wellness Fair at Bille Park September 19th, also Home on the Ridge Expo at Johnny Appleseed Days October 3 & 4. The Board decided to participate if there is a discount or free cost to the club.

Daffodils—None ordered for this year. The Board will decide in January whether or not to order for 2027.

Today's Program – Daniel Hodge, Hodges Family Nursery in Durham on Compost, Compost Tea and Winter Garden Prep.

Upcoming Activities: September 25 – Full Circle Floral in Vina and Verbena Fields in Chico

Recruit for 2nd vice president position

Garden Tour search committee sign ups

October program – John Thompson, GM at Butte Valley supply & Earthworm Factory Building Soil Health

Meeting concluded at 12:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Habriel, Recording Secretary

General Meeting

September 14, 2026

Meeting commenced at 1:00 PM

Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – President Todd Hummel

Treasurer's Report - Margaret - The club balance is \$29,363.80

Beautification – Jeudie – All sites looking good.

Good of the Order - Members shared the cuttings they brought and the best and worst of their summer gardens.

Anne advised of sign-up sheets for: Staffing the Wellness Fair at Bille Park on September 19th, Field trip to Full Circle Floral in Vina and Verbena Fields in Chico, September 25th, and Home on the Ridge booth during Johnny Appleseed Days, October 3 & 4.

Speaker: Daniel Hodge, Hodges Family Nursery in Durham on Compost, Compost Tea and winter garden prep.

October Meeting: John Thompson, GM at Butte Valley Supply & the Earthworm Factory Building Soil Health

Meeting concluded at 3:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Habriel, Recording Secretary

ECHOS FROM THE GARDEN

Remembering the Plants our Ancestors Grew

Author: Carla Waldrep

Have you ever wondered what grew in your ancestors' gardens—what they tended with care, what they relied on year after year, and what brought them simple joy? It's easy to picture the vegetable garden: rows of corn standing tall, beans climbing their poles, tomatoes ripening in the sun, potatoes, and leafy greens. These staples sustained families throughout the year.

But beyond the vegetables, there were other plant filled spaces—flower borders and herb patches filled not with mass-produced annuals, but with hardy heirloom varieties. These plants survived not because they were pampered, but because they endured. And in these spaces, a single plant often carried many purposes: beauty, nourishment, medicine, memories.

My Grandmother's Garden Legacy

When I think back to my childhood, I can still see my maternal grandmother's garden as clearly as if I were standing in it now. She always grew poppies, marigolds, petunias, sedum, forsythia, and the enchanting rose campion with its vivid fuchsia blooms and delicate silver foliage. These flowers circled the edge of her vegetable beds with fullness and color that made the whole garden feel vibrant and alive. The hum and buzz of pollinators added to its liveliness.



What amazes me today is that I never recall seeing her transplanting or starting new flowers from seed. They seemed to simply appear each spring—self-seeded or returning as faithful perennials. Many of those plants still live on today. I have sedum, rose campion, forsythia, and others that are direct descendants of her garden, even though she passed away in 1995. They are more than plants now—they are traditions, heritage and memories rooted in the soil. And every so often, spring brings her little surprises. I'll find a lone petunia blooming in the pasture near where her garden once stood—an unexpected reminder that her flowers continue to scatter their legacy across the land.

Sweet Strawberries and Sweeter Memories

In addition to the flowers, along two sides of the garden were strawberries—the sweetest, most irresistible little jewels I've ever tasted. In springtime, they were my ready-made snack: a handful on the way to the school bus, another when I came home. Those same heirloom strawberries still linger today, still producing, still bringing joy. They make the tastiest jams, cobblers, and old-fashioned desserts, carrying both flavor and memory.

Sage: More Than a Seasoning

Nearby grew something my grandmother tended with special care: sage. It seasoned the sausage made from farm-raised hogs and gave her cornbread dressing its unmistakable flavor. But sage held more importance than its culinary uses.

For generations, sage has been valued in folk traditions. Sage tea has long been used to soothe sinus and upper respiratory discomfort. Often called the "Herb of Wisdom," it has been associated with clarity, focus, and memory. Traditional herbal knowledge also suggests sage may ease menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and support general cognitive well-being.

Other traditional uses include supporting digestion, providing antioxidant and anti inflammatory effects, and helping maintain healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Some even use sage rinses to promote scalp health and help with thinning hair.

A Garden Was a Pharmacy, a Pantry, and a Sanctuary

Our ancestors often grew other plants with dual culinary and medicinal purposes—garlic, mint, rosemary, dill, and oregano were the quiet workhorses of many ancestral gardens—modest in appearance but mighty in purpose. Garlic was prized for its bold flavor and its reputation as a natural protector against illness. Mint spread eagerly, offering refreshing and cooling teas and soothing remedies for digestion. Rosemary, with its piney fragrance, was both a culinary staple and a symbol of remembrance and clarity. Dill added its delicate, feathery charm to the garden while flavoring pickles and calming upset stomachs. And oregano, served as both seasoning and traditional support for wellness with its powerful antibiotic properties. Together, these herbs formed a small but powerful apothecary. Their gardens were more than food plots. They were pharmacies, pantries, and sanctuaries all in one. For me, any place where I grow and tend plants becomes an extension of that heritage. Whether flowers, vegetables, or herbs, it all feels like part of a living tradition passed down through hands that cared for the earth long before mine.

Ask the Elders: Wisdom Lives in Their Stories

If you have the chance, ask your parents, grandparents, or older neighbors what they grew in their gardens. Ask what their parents grew. You will uncover a treasury of knowledge—stories of the plants that fed them, healed them, colored their summers, and flavored their food. This wisdom doesn't belong only to the past. It can nurture you today and be passed on again, continuing a chain of memory rooted in the earth. Our ancestors' gardens were reflections of their lives, their needs, and their loves. And if we're fortunate, those gardens still echo through the generations—blooming for us, reminding us where we come from, and offering a bit of inherited beauty along the way.



Author: Carla Waldrep - Herbalist, Historian and Librarian

THE NATIONAL GARDENER 2026 WINTER ISSUE VOLUME 98, NUMBER 1, PAGE 35



Thanks!



September's speaker was Daniel Hodge from the Hodge's Family Nursery in Durham. Daniel explained how to brew nutrient-rich compost tea at home. He brought samples of ingredients and discussed the importance of the right balance of ingredients and how to apply them to your garden. This was a very interactive time of question and answers with an expert in the field. Thank you, Daniel!

Contemplate



Photo, haiku by Nancy Howe.

Roses at sunset
caressed with last light
fragrant memories.