



ATAHERTON GARDEN GUILD

Since 1966

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2023

## Calendar

### Meetings

Board Meetings: 9: 00 am

Social: 9: 30 am

Meetings: 10: 00 am

Meetings are on Mondays  
unless otherwise noted

#### October 2

Jennings Pavilion,  
Holbrook Palmer Park,  
Atherton

*"Creative Table Settings"*

#### November 6

FILOLI

86 Canada Road,  
Woodside

*Claire Margetts from  
Sissinghurst, England*

#### December 11

Leslie Howard  
86 Fredrick Avenue,  
Atherton

*Christmas Party*

#### January 8

Gamble Gardens  
1431 Waverley Street,  
Palo Alto

*Presidio Tunnel Tops Program*

#### February 5

Suzanne Legallet  
88 Selby Lane,  
Atherton

*"Lets Play Antiques Road-show"*

#### March 4

Suzanne Legallet  
88 Selby Lane,  
Atherton

*Nancy Schram: unique plants  
Carmen's Nursery*

#### April 1

Garden in Portola Valley  
875 Westridge Drive,  
Portola Valley

*Tour*

#### May 6

Atherton Town Center  
Dinkelspiel Ln. & Ashfield Rd.  
Atherton

*Tour*

#### June 3

Rita Wachhorst  
298 Park Lane  
Atherton

*June Luncheon*

# AGG

## Meeting October 2

Holbrook Palmer Park  
Jennings Pavilion  
150 Watkins Avenue  
Atherton

Dahlia

# President's Message

*"I think gardening probably helps me be a better actor. It kind of cleans your brain. You can't have an ego with a garden." Helen Mirren*



**B**ritish actress Helen Mirren, 78, caught the acting bug while attending St. Bernard's High School for girls, where she would act in school productions. After high school, she began acting in theatre, working in many productions, including in the West End and Broadway. Sixty years later, she is still acting and is set to play "Golda" as in Golda Meir, the late Israeli Prime Minister Golden Meir, who resigned in 1974 over her administration's handling of the Yom Kippur War. She was awarded the Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 2003 Queen's Birthday Honours List for her services to drama. You can catch her film on Netflix in late September or October.

Like Oscar de la Renta, she joins the ranks of famous people who find solace in gardening. She described the outdoor activity as "meditative," stating: "It's a huge body of knowledge which I don't have and I'm always trying to add to. Gardening is learning, learning, learning. That's part of the fun of it. You are always learning." The beauty of nature is so fantastic. It's wonderful to watch something grow that you've taken a cutting of."

Dame Helen, who splits her time between her homes in London and Lake Tahoe, said she finds getting her hands dirty 'meditative' and thinks it helps 'clean' her brain. She once created a temporary garden while filming in the 1960s as she was learning her trade. Mirren explains: "My penchant for gardening came during my time at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford, where I found the physicality of Shakespeare's material and the material world of plants sort of converged." It was here that she developed a passion for the outdoors and the countryside. She loved the scent of damp earth and pungent wildflowers. She was hooked for life and has never looked back.

There is no better place for renewal than in the beauty of one's own garden. With this in mind, in October, I will prepare my planting beds for winter: clear out weeds and rocks, add soil amendments, and plant some fava beans to replace lost nitrogen in the soil in my dormant vegetable beds. Like Helen Mirren, I can't wait to see what I will learn this month in my garden. I am always surprised, and that's where the magic of gardening happens for me. For a complete Master Gardener gardening checklist, please refer to the Hort report in this newsletter.

Just in time for the upcoming holidays, we will meet at Holbrook Palmer Park at our next General Meeting on October 2nd. Come and be inspired by beautiful festive table settings created by our very own AGG talented members - I look forward to seeing you soon and sharing this fantastic opportunity with you. **Patti**



*Not to Miss  
AGG Meeting on October 2  
Creative Table Settings*

*Beautiful, inspiring designs by AGG Members*

*Karen Handal  
Kasey Hansen  
Kathy Ladra*

*Berenice Mancilla  
Pam Smith*

# Town Center Labels/Journalism Program

## AGG Donates and Installs Plant Labels for the New Atherton Town Center

By Patti Spezzaferro

Photos by Suzanne Van Ness



When past president Joan Sanders suggested identifying the New Atherton Town Center plants with plant labels, Nan Ray and I loved the idea and gladly went to work. Our goal for this project was to provide the town center with botanical plant labels to create an educational interactive garden walk-through. One hundred ninety-two easy-to-read, durable, and attractive labels were placed to identify 25 native species with extras in reserve. The tags include the plant's common and botanical names.



Special thanks go to Nan for her knowledge of plants, which proved essential for this task. We also wish to thank Suzanne Legallet, Atherton Town Arborist Sally Bentz for their horticulture input, Suzanne Van Ness and my husband, Ross Koningstein, for working on the installation. Nan and I did the final walk-through and are thrilled to have the labels installed in time for Atherton's Special City Council Meeting to mark its 100th birthday Kick-off on Tuesday, September 12th, followed by Atherton's Centennial Celebration on Sunday, September 24th.

I'd like to give a special shout-out to our label providers, AAA Quality Engravers. They were founded in 1991 in New Orleans and later moved to Mississippi in 2008. Bernard Holiday saw a need for quality plant labels at affordable prices for friends, home gardeners, and for more extensive botanical gardens. They have produced more than one million garden markers since going into business. To purchase these botanical tags for your garden, contact Bernard at [aaaqualityengravers@gmail.com](mailto:aaaqualityengravers@gmail.com) or call him at (601) 878-5999. For more information, check out their website at <https://www.aaaqualityengravers.com/default.html> to see his beautiful photos of plant tags.



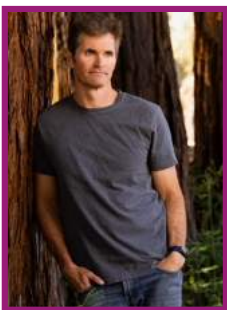
## Conservation Journalism Program

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Holbrook Palmer Park • Jennings Pavilion

by Nancy Butler



My son, Rhett Butler, is the CEO of Mongabay.org, a non-profit conservation and environmental science news platform that aims to raise awareness about social and environmental issues related to rain-forests and other ecosystems throughout the world. Rhett and his team have won numerous awards.

This will be a talk by Mongabay Founder Rhett Ayers Butler, about the state of conservation journalism including how environmental reporting can drive real-world impact.

Rhett also will speak about his journey of growing a personal passion project into a multinational non-profit media organization that covers critical issues affecting wildlife, wild places, and communities globally. His talk will be accompanied by nature photos he's taken around the world.

The event is free and open to all. The link to sign up [events.mongabay.org](https://events.mongabay.org). Click on *More informational* and RSVP with number of people attending. Please RSVP so they can determine how much food and drink will be required.

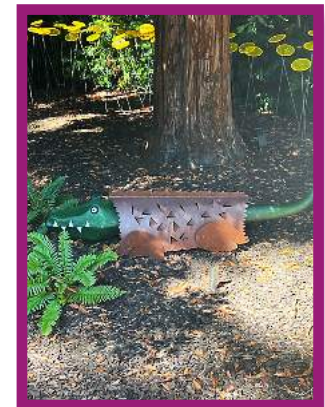
# September Meeting



# September Meeting/Garden Tour



September  
Private Garden Tour  
with owner/hosts  
Zorica (Beba) Kovacevic  
and Srdjan Mitrovic  
pictured at right  
with Joan Sanders



# Member Travel Photos

## Photos of Singapore Gardens by Pam Brown



## Gardens in Japan • Photos by Nancy Butler



Here are a few scenes from Japan, the bamboo forests near Hakone and a couple of the gardens on the West Coast of Japan.



# Horticulture Report/Atherton Book

## October AGG Horticulture Report

by Patti Spezzaferro

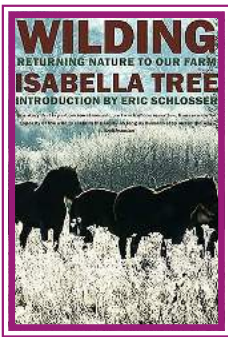
### October Master Gardener's Checklist

- Feed hydrangeas with an acidifier for bluer blooms. Feed them with agricultural lime to turn them pink.
- Plant bulbs now for spring blooms.
- Fall is a great time to plant natives. Check the UC Davis Arboretum website for ideas.
- Plant garlic and shallots now for a summer harvest.
- Prepare planting beds for winter: Clear out weeds and rocks. Add soil amendments and plant winter cover crops such as fava beans to replace nitrogen in the soil.
- Add fallen leaves and plant debris to your compost pile. Or, leave them on the ground to serve as a natural mulch for your garden.

### Book of the Month

## Wilding - Returning Nature to Our Farm

By Isabella Tree



For years Isabella Tree and her husband, Charlie Burrell, farmed the family estate Knepp Castle in West Sussex and struggled to turn a profit. By 2000, with the farm facing bankruptcy, they decided to try something different. They would restore KneppHU's 3,500 acres to the wild. Using herds of free-roaming animals to mimic the actions of the megafauna of the past, they hoped to bring nature back to their depleted land. But what would the neighbors say, in the manicured countryside of modern

England where a blade of grass out of place is considered an affront? Buy it here on Amazon and discover how Isabella Tree's remarkable book brings together science, natural history, a fair bit of drama, and—ultimately—hope to Knepp Farm and to the public at large.

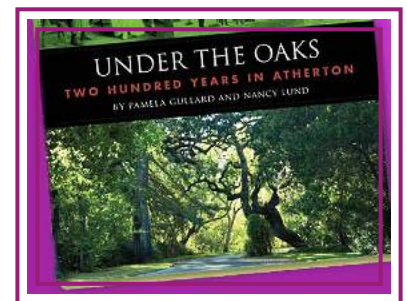
## UNDER THE OAKS: TWO HUNDRED YEARS IN ATHERTON

by Pamela Gullard

Dear AGG Members,

The beautiful book about Atherton's history, "Under the Oaks: Two Hundred Years in Atherton." is available from the Atherton Heritage Association for a special price of \$25.00. The regular price was \$75.00. You can get copies from Marion Oster who arranged the special price or at the Atherton Heritage Association Room, in the old Town Hall. (open on Tuesdays from 10 until 1pm). Checks should be made out to Spring Ridge Histories for \$25. Many of our members have their gardens shown in the book. Give Marion a call.

Marion E. Oster  
meo@rjoster.com



# Interview/Welcome New Member

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## Who's in the Garden

*Patti Spezzaferro speaks to  
AGG member Karen Handal about what inspires her  
to keep gardening and much more*



**Patti:** Which three historical or present gardeners would you invite to your dinner party?

**Karen:** Frederick Law Olmstead, Beatrix Farrand, and Capability Brown

**Patti:** What is your greatest fear?

**Karen:** Loss

**Patti:** What is your idea of perfect happiness?

**Karen:** Shared times with friends and family on a sailboat or in the garden.

**Patti:** Which gardens are your favorites?

**Karen:** The great gardens of England - Hidcote, Sissinghurst, and Great Dixter break my heart with their beauty. Gardens of friends who share them always touch my heart, most recently AGG members Suzanne Legallet, Marion Oster, Joan Sanders, Anita Joy, Julie Douglass, Norma Baker, Barbara Tyler, Kasey Hansen, and Patti Spezzaferro.

**Patti:** What have you learned recently about gardening that you wish to share?

**Karen:** I just learned Roses of Yesterday & Today in Watsonville still exists. I first visited that beautiful canyon setting in 1976 and met Pat and Newton Wiley, who inspired me. I loved their original personal and discursive catalogs. I assumed it was long closed down, and I look forward to visiting.

**Patti:** What is your favorite gardening product and why?

**Karen:** My A. M. Leonard English transplanting spade with an ash handle and hand-forged carbon steel shovel. It reminds me of the 35 years I have gardened with it.

**Patti:** What inspires you to garden?

**Karen:** Looking forward with hope to what evolves.

**Patti:** A motto by which you live by while gardening?

**Karen:** You have to garden where you are. That sounds obvious, but in Connecticut, I planted bougainvillea in pots as I missed my California garden. Now, I find myself planning to refrigerate bulbs as if I could recreate my east coast garden of 32 years. I am in an amazing Mediterranean climate. You have to garden where you are and not someplace else!

**Patti:** What is your greatest extravagance?

**Karen:** Hmmm...anything involving plants, music, books, art, and cooking.

**Patti:** What does The Atherton Garden Guild mean to you?

**Karen:** Friendship and camaraderie through sharing the love for gardening.

## Welcome New Member Nyna Dolby

*A bit about Nyna in her own words*



I am a multi-generational Californian who moved back to the Bay Area in 1993 after 10 yrs in Seattle. I immediately started volunteering as a flower arranger at Filoli. Unfortunately, that role stopped with Covid. I live in Los Altos and have two grown and married children nearby and 4 grandchildren ages 7-11 that I love spending time with. I enjoy gardening to supply interesting foliage to feed my floral design habit (I do weddings and special events for friends and local churches). I also volunteer as a flower arranger at Gamble Garden and the SF Fine Arts Museums now instead of at Filoli.

During Covid I started applying my interest in family history and art, doing research on my mother's cousin, CA Modernist painter Agnes Pelton. I am compiling family data and personal history with her art history in hopes of adding to the scholarship about her.

905 Maywood Court, Los Altos, CA 94024 • Email: [nlcdolb@yahoo.com](mailto:nlcdolb@yahoo.com) • Phone: 650-575-4557



# This & That

## FLOWER ARRANGING FOR THE SEASONS & HOLIDAYS!

at the  
Atherton Arts Foundation  
[www.athertonartsfoundation.org](http://www.athertonartsfoundation.org)

150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton, CA - Holbrook Palmer Park (basement of main house)



Classes held the third Friday of each month:

OCTOBER 20 • NOVEMBER 17 • DECEMBER 15

10:00 – 11:30 am

- ❖ Learn and create from noted Floral Arranger, Karen Flores!
- ❖ Karen will demonstrate and lead each student in creating a magnificent arrangement to bring home! Plan a dinner party or luncheon to show off your creation.
- ❖ ALL supplies will be provided for you: container, greens, flowers, accessories & holders
- ❖ You only need to bring your clippers!
- ❖ You will go home with your beautiful arrangement!

Cost: 3 class series: \$285    Single class drop-in: \$120



Contact Instructor for enrollment: Karen Flores [karenflores@me.com](mailto:karenflores@me.com)

## Hospitality

October 2<sup>nd</sup>

Chair Berenice Mancilla

Leader: Katie Blommer  
Sue Barkley  
Karen Olson



## Library Flowers

October

Chair Sally Brudos

- 2 Sue Fitch
- 9 Karen Handal
- 16 Kasey Hansen
- 23 Lynne Heppberger
- 30 Leslie Howard



Atherton Centennial  
Celebration Committee

included

AGG Members

Joan Sanders

Patty Leugers

Marion Oster



Swarm of Ladybugs photo was taken by Sue Matthew's daughter Kristin Galvin who took the picture in Saratoga. The Ladybug swarm happens every Year.



*The Atherton Garden Guild*  
PO Box 685  
Menlo Park, CA 94025

## *AGG Newsletter*

*October 2023*

### OFFICERS 2023 - 2024

**President:** Patti Spezzaferro  
**Co- First Vice Presidents Programs:**  
Karen Handal, Suzanne Legallet  
**Second Vice President Membership:** Karen Olson  
**Treasurer:** Judy Blommer  
**Recording Secretary:** Suellen Rottiers  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Sue Matthews  
**Historian:** Diana Bryan  
**Newsletter:** Martha Woollomes  
**Co-Parliamentarians:** Julie Douglas, Joan Sanders  
**Website & Technology:** Anita Joy

### CONTRIBUTORS

Di Bryan, Nancy Butler,  
Pam Brown, Nyna Dolby,  
Karen Handal, Sue Matthews,  
Marion Oster, Patti Spezzaferro,  
Suzanne Van Ness, Martha Woollomes

### PROOFREADERS

Sue Barkley, Kasey Hansen,  
Sue Matthews, Patti Spezzaferro

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023 - 2024

**Atherton Library Flowers:** Sally Brudos  
**Christmas Holiday Party: Hostess** Leslie Howard  
**Committee:** Katie Blommer, Julie Douglass,  
Kasey Hansen, Berenice Mancilla, Nan Ray,  
Patti Rodley, Patti Spezzaferro, Anna Zappettini  
**Donations:** Chair Pam Smith, Nan Ray, Karen Handal  
**Holbrook Palmer Rose Garden:** Patty Leugers  
**Horticulture:** Patti Spezzaferro  
**Hospitality/Refreshments:** Berenice Moncilla  
**June, 2024 Luncheon: Hostess** Rita Wachhorst  
**Committee Chair:** Terri Bailard  
**Committee:** Katie Blommer, Erika Enos, Sue Fitch,  
Karen Handal, Suzanne Legallet, Jeanne Quinlan  
**Newsletter:** Martha Woollomes  
**Nominating:** Chair Barbara Tyler, Julie Douglass, Karen Olson  
**Website:** Anita Joy  
**Yearbook:** Terri Bailard



## *Birthdays*

**October**

**Flowers: Marigold & Cosmos**

*Marigold: vivid hues stand for the warmth  
and beauty of the rising sun  
and the power it has to resurrect*

*Cosmos: Innocence and love, can also  
speak to balance, beauty, joy, and modesty*

- 3 Patti Spezzaferro
- 7 Barbara Hills
- 8 Karen Olson
- 25 Barbara Tyler
- 27 Sonia McLellan
- 27 Jessica Varelas