



ATHERTON GARDEN GUILD
Since 1966

Newsletter
December/January 2023/2024

Calendar

Meetings

Board Meetings: 9: 00 am

Social: 9: 30 am

Meetings: 10: 00 am

*Meetings are on Mondays
unless otherwise noted*

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
Holiday Party
December 11

*At the home of
Leslie Howard
86 Fredrick Avenue
Atherton*

Holly Berries

President's Message

The poinsettia ushers in the holiday season as a symbol of hope and goodwill



When I think of the holiday season, I think of the red poinsettias. This beautiful, colorful plant was discovered near Taxco, Mexico. While we know the plant as an indoor plant, poinsettias grow to be large woody shrubs in Mexico, often reaching 10 feet tall.

Poinsettias were introduced to the United States by Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first appointed U.S. ambassador to Mexico. In 1825, while visiting Taxco, he became enchanted with the red blooms and sent some plants to his South Carolina home. Poinsett, a skilled botanist, propagated the plants and began distributing the plants to friends and various botanical gardens. By 1833, the plant was named poinsettia after Joel Poinsett. Congress has

given the poinsettia recognition by declaring December 12 National Poinsettia Day. This day honors Joel Poinsett, who died on December 12, 1851. Observe National Poinsettia Day by giving this beautiful plant as a gift.



Although the Poinsettia is primarily an ornamental plant today, Aztecs used the plant's red bracts to make a reddish-purple dye used in textiles and cosmetics. They also crushed and applied the plant to skin infections or placed plant parts on a person's chest to stimulate circulation.

Today, red poinsettias account for over 70% of holiday plant sales. Let its beauty and grace fill your home with the magic of Christmas and inspire hope for a world filled with love and tranquility.

I can't wait to kick start the holiday parties at Leslie Howard's beautiful home on December 11th. On January 8th, AGG will meet at Elizabeth Gamble Gardens to hear a talk presented by Chief Park Officer Michael Boland on Presidio Tunnel Tops. 2025 is going to be a terrific year with our friends at AGG. Our outstanding and generous Board of Directors and committee chairs wish you all the blessings a heart can know for 2024. *Patti*



Atherton Garden Guild

Holiday Party

Monday, December 11

5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

At the home of Leslie Howard

86 Fredrick Avenue, Atherton

You will not want to miss this festive party

Join with fellow AGG members to celebrate the season
in Leslie's beautiful home
resplendent with dazzling holiday decorations

Cost: \$45.00 per person

RSVP by December 4th to Anna Zappettini

527 Carmel Circle, San Mateo, CA 94402

January Program

AGG January Meeting 2024

January 8 - Tunnel Tops

Elizabeth Gamble Gardens • 1431 Waverley Street, Palo Alto

Program Speaker Michael Boland

Chief Park Officer at Presidio Trust

In Michael Boland's own words

“For three decades I have focused my academic and professional work on the future of parks as vehicles for addressing the pressing social and environmental challenges of our time. As a parkmaker, my work has focused on the transformation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and in particular the Presidio of San Francisco, into an innovative urban national park. My work has included public, private, and non-profit experience, with a focus on managing multiple interdisciplinary teams; delivering high-quality, high-stakes, high-visibility public projects; facilitating complex community engagement and public participation processes; creating relevant contemporary park programming; and modeling 21st century sustainable stewardship practices in urban parklands.”



Since 2001, Mr. Boland has worked at the Presidio of San Francisco, where he is the Chief Planning, Projects and Programs Officer for the Presidio Trust. He heads up an interdisciplinary team of planners, designers, resource managers, and program staff who are guiding the Trust's transformation of the Presidio into an innovative urban national park. Mr. Boland has played a role in the transformation of America's largest urban national park, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, since 1989. From 1990 to 1997 he worked for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, where he created a projects division that managed an array of park projects, including Alcatraz Island and the transformation of Crissy Field.



Tunnel Tops

Tunnel Tops is part of the Presidio of San Francisco, which was used as a military base before being turned into a park. The Presidio is one site in the sprawling Golden Gate National Recreation Area, made up of 80,000 acres of national parkland that stretches across numerous locations north and south of the landmark bridge. Tunnel Tops connects two of the Presidio's four main areas: The Presidio's Main Post section to the Crissy Field waterfront area below, with its beaches and beautiful 2.3 -mile waterfront promenade. So what was once a raised freeway has been replaced by paths that connect the two for the first time in decades. Tunnel Tops offers unforgettable Golden Gate Bridge views, the Presidio Visitor Center, the Outpost playground and Field Station curiosity lab, trails and public lawns, Presidio Pop Up food celebrating diverse cultures, and great places to picnic in the Presidio.

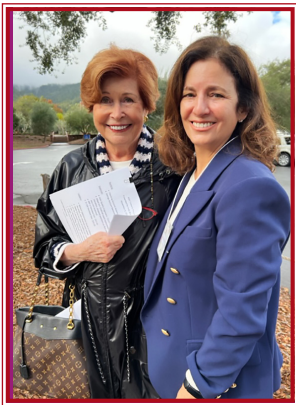
The Presidio Trust, a quasi-governmental and private entity that oversees the Presidio national park site. It has worked in collaboration with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the urban federal park's philanthropic partner, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy on rehabilitating the former army base into a recreational area. The area includes housing, businesses, cultural attractions, lodging and other public amenities. The parks conservancy helped raise \$98 million for the Tunnel Tops project.

Presidio Tunnel Tops is free to all and open every day.

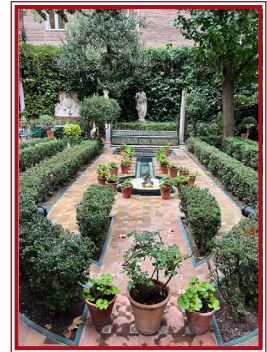
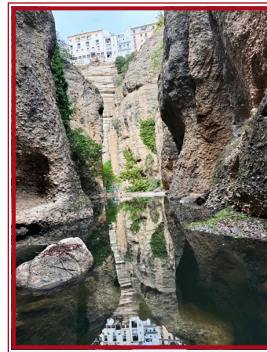
November Meeting



Speaker Claire Margetts,
Jim Saylards, Dir. of Filoli Horticulture



Member Page



Julie & husband Mark

Julie Douglass's trip to Spain



One of the 3 gardens of Joaquin Sorollato

In the Andalusian city of Ronda, attached to the Casa Moro del Rey, there are 3 hanging gardens built along a cliff (inside of which are 150 very wet and steep steps!) going down to the bottom of this gorge. Water was brought up to the town by Christian slaves over 800 years ago. Once at the bottom, it truly looks like Jurassic Park. The gorge is an important stop for many birds migrating to and from Africa.

A jewel box of a museum and garden - Madrid is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the passing of the artist Joaquin Sorolla. He created 3 unique gardens to enjoy before entering his home and studio which are filled with his gorgeous art and many artifacts from his family life. No line to enter and the entry fee for his home is 3 euros, but never a fee just to go and see the gardens.



What causes the leaves to change color?

The onset of fall brings cooler weather, shorter days, and brilliant color seen across a range of plants. We are presented with stunning displays of orange, yellow, red and purple leaves. What causes the foliage to change color?

Lew Feldman director of UCBG

As shown in the photo above, the transformation in leaf color usually begins with the disappearance of the typical green hue, due to the loss of the pigment, chlorophyll, and with the simultaneous appearance of red, orange and yellow pigments. Submitted by Suzanne Legallet



Gates & pots set around fountain: Entry into the gift shop.



On our recent trip to Madrid, we entered the Retiro Park (aka the green lung of Madrid) which is filled with beautiful trees, meandering paths, and many fountains. Mark's comment when we saw this one: "Just like in Lindenwood at the Oster's."



Beautiful seasonal floral arrangement by Kasey Hansen

Happy Holidays



AGG Members
and their
Families and Friends

Who's in the Garden

Interview with Joan Sanders

by Patti Spezzaferro



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

Joan: Of course, who wouldn't want to ask Thomas Jefferson to a dinner party and talk gardens? My second ask would be the wonderful garden author and designer Beverley Nichols. He has a delightful sense of humor and would be most interesting, gossipy, and chatty. I also would love to have Peggy Hinman, my most recent landscape architect, to thank her for all she did for my garden. She had a perfect sense of scale proportion and taste. A good and delightful friend.

Patti: What is your greatest fear?

Joan: My greatest fear about gardening is not enough water and loss of ability to dig in the dirt.

Patti: What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Joan: Perfect happiness is a well-tended, pleasing garden shared with friends.

Patti: Which gardens are your favorites?

Joan: Gardens I enjoy are of course Hidcote (especially as it was created by an American and full of garden rooms) I enjoyed Filoli while volunteering there for 30 years. It allowed one to become intimate and familiar with a public garden. I would love to experience the High Line in NY. What a great idea of recycling an elevated abandoned rail bed and making it a garden to walk through the city.

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

Joan: A friend who was coping with too many incursions with deer told me that planting nepeta (catmint) had proved a great natural deterrent in her garden.

Patti: What is your favorite gardening product and why?

Joan: The hori hori (dig dig in Japanese) is a great large blade that works as a weeder and as a trowel. Easy to dig small planting holes, brakes up root balls – all purpose, all the time.

Patti: What inspires you to garden?

Joan: I am inspired to garden when God needs help making a sense of order and calm in navigating nature.

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

Joan: Two thoughts come to mind while gardening. "I am making the view I choose" and "some people play tennis, I play garden."

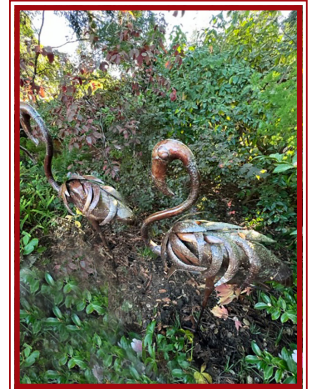
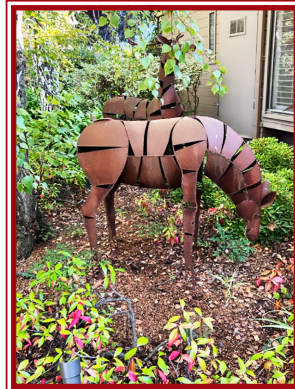
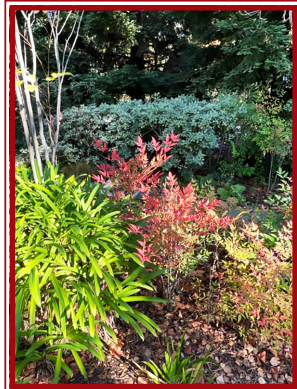
Patti: What is your greatest extravagance?

Joan: My greatest extravagance in the garden is twofold. Great design costs money and also garden art is a great joy as it needs no watering, pruning or feeding.

Patti: What does AGG mean to you?

Joan: AGG has been a joy in my gardening life for 45 years and counting. So wonderful learning from and being with like-minded friends.

Views of Joan's Fall Garden



Horticulture Report

December AGG Horticulture Report

by Patti Spezzaferro

December Master Gardner Check List

- Indoors, keep holiday greens well watered or mist daily. Keep trees and greens away from hot, sunny windows and heat sources. Poinsettias should be kept away from heat sources. If you're using poinsettias to decorate outdoors, bring them in out of the cold at night.
- Take advantage of the rain we get this month. December is still a great time to plant perennials, shrubs, and trees to establish roots, promoting lush spring growth.
- Plant some cool-season annuals, like violas, primroses, and pansies.
- Keep an eye out for frost warnings. Be prepared to cover with frost Blanket for protection. Note: remove frost blankets during the daytime hours. Keep plants watered during this time.
- Feed the birds: keep those feeders full.
- Select bare-root roses for a summer rose garden.
- You CAN plant vegetables in winter! See our Year-round Vegetable Planting Schedules for San Mateo and San Francisco Counties for what can be grown now in your area.
- Now is a good time to plant chilled tulip bulbs. Chilled bulbs may grow taller with larger flowers than non-chilled bulbs.
- Clean up the garden – remove excessive leaf litter, etc. – to avoid over-wintering diseases.

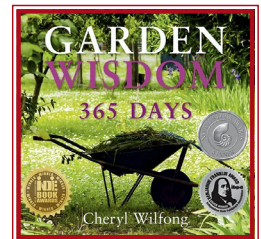
January Master Gardener's Checklist

- Pull weeds brought on by recent rains now before they go to seed.
- January is an excellent time to plant dormant fruit trees and roses.
- Top dress tender plants with a mulch mix.
- Keep the garden clean. Prune and cut back overgrown perennials, roses, and shrubs. Remove plants that haven't been doing well to make room for healthier ones.
- Protect plants from frosty nights. Cover and keep them watered - well-hydrated plants will hold up to the cold much better.
- Indoors, heaters can dry out houseplants quickly, so remember to keep them watered.
- Feed the birds in your garden.
- Start artichokes, asparagus, and rhubarb.

Book of the Month for December and January

Garden Wisdom - 365 Days

By Cheryl Wilfong



Start the new year with Cheryl Wilfong's book *Garden Wisdom 365 Days*. A fresh, funny, and wise inspirational book that everyone would love for the holidays. Using nature as a metaphor for human nature, author Wilfong humorously draws attention to the transience of the garden and our very lives. Buy it here on Amazon.

Holiday Gift Ideas

Pretty Smart Hypoallergenic *Succulent Earrings* for Sensitive Ears. These delicate handmade succulent earrings are metal-free, and they're presented in a cute gift box. Buy it on Amazon. \$14.00



Citronella lanterns Jazz up any garden or outdoor space while keeping away pesky critters with this citronella lantern. Not only is it durable steel, but it can be personalized. Try adding a family name or a word that has a special meaning. The lantern stands 41 inches tall and includes a canister and snuffer. Buy it at Uncommon Goods. \$145.00

Seed Saving Kit. Organizing and storing seeds can be tedious, but this kit makes the process easier and cuter. The aluminum box includes steel tins and envelopes to store seeds, but there's also a helpful chart with information on harvesting and preserving.



\$28.00 Buy it at Uncommon Ground.

Artificial Turf

Health Concerns Spur California Toward limits on Artificial Turf

By Patti Spezzaferro



The following text summarizes a Mercury News article entitled “Health worries spur California toward limits on fake turf” by Shreya Agrawal, published on Monday, November 6th, 2023. To read the complete article, please go to Calmatters.

Synthetic turf is an artificial, non-living turfgrass replacement and is popular because it requires no water or maintenance. The grass blades are made of nylon or plastic fibers, while the base is typically a crumb of rubber made of tires, plastic pellets, or sand. Research is making it clear that artificial turf poses toxic hazards.

On October 8th, Governor Gavin Newsom signed legislative Senate Bill No. 676, which permits local governments, including cities and counties, to ban synthetic grass in neighborhoods due to potential health concerns. Milbrae in San Mateo County and San Marino in Los Angeles County are moving to prohibit fake lawns.

Democrats in the Legislature are proposing bills that would further discourage synthetic turf. They're worried about health risks created by the chemicals present in these lawns, including perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS chemicals. Some chemicals in the crumb rubber base of synthetic turf, such as bisphenol A, commonly known as BPA, can leach out during extreme heat. These chemicals are known to cause cell death in humans. In addition, these chemicals have been linked to various chronic diseases, including cancers, diabetes, and neurological impairments.



Homeowners and public spaces have options. There are many drought-friendly plants, including warm-season grasses such as Bermuda grass and Buffalo grass, or doing away with grass altogether and planting trees or drought-resilient plant varieties indigenous to California. Janet Hartin, a horticulture expert at UC Extension in Los Angeles County, says, “While plants require water and maintenance, their cooling benefits and ecosystem benefits go far beyond the water savings one could get from synthetic turf.” I agree with Hartin. We have choices, so let us use them, and let's lead by putting our values of protecting our health and the health of our planet first.

Hospitality

Holiday Party • December 11th

Leslie Howard, Chair

Katie Blommer, Julie Douglass, Kasey Hansen
Berenice Mancilla, Nan Ray, Patty Rodley,
Patti Spezzaferro, Anna Zappettini



January

Suzanne Van Ness, Coordinator

Patty Leugers
Nyna Dolbyi

Library Flowers

December

Library is closed December 25th

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|---------------|
| 4 | Sue Matthews | 18 | Karen Olson |
| 11 | Mary Rita McKay | 26 | Patty Leugers |



January

Library is closed January 1st

| | | | |
|----|----------------|----|------------------|
| 2 | Jeanne Quinlan | 22 | Suellen Rottiers |
| 8 | Nan Ray | 29 | Joan Sanders |
| 15 | Patty Rodley | | |

New Members / Garden Tour

Introducing New AGG Members



Address: 985 Lassen Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Email: carrie.drake1010@gmail.com
Cell phone: (650) 575-6835

Carrie Drake a home gardener is interested in conservation, flower arranging and horticulture. Her extensive volunteer experience includes: President of the Junior League of Palo Alto-Mid Peninsula, committee member of the Vintage Affaire (fundraiser for the Vista Center for the Blind & Visually impaired), and founding member of the Authors Luncheon (fundraiser for Ability Path). She has held leadership roles at Family & Children Services, and in 2019, worked with Palo Alto as Co-lead of the 125th Anniversary. Additionally, Carrie was Manager of Development for Sempervirens Fund (redwood conservation organization). She is a member and supports Filoli, Gamble Garden, the Garden Conservancy and the National Tropical Gardens.



Address: 40 Pinehurst Lane, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
Email: Mimihillyard68@gmail.com
Phone: (650) 678-8074

Mary (Mimi) Kirk Hillyard (Mrs. Gordon Edward Hillyard) enjoys flower arranging, home gardening, and arts and crafts. Her garden is noted for the beautiful roses that she carefully tends. Her volunteer work includes Co-chair, Garden Information Committee at Filoli. Mimi, a retired attorney, has two sons, and three grandchildren. She very much looks forward to being part of the Atherton Garden Guild.

Save the Date

Atherton Garden Guild Garden Tour

May 15, 2024

Welcome to My Garden

Enjoy touring four lovely gardens the afternoon of

Wednesday, May 15

12:30 pm - 4:30 pm

This first-time private tour will feature the "Gardener's Garden."

Tickets are \$40 each and are only sold by AGG members.

Members are asked to sell a minimum of four tickets and to staff a garden for two hours.

*The monies raised will be used for our donation fund.
The more tickets sold, the more AGG will be able to
donate to horticulturally and community related causes.*

Suzanne Legallet



The Atherton Garden Guild

PO Box 685

Menlo Park, CA 94025

AGG Newsletter

December/January 2023/2024

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 Douglass, Joan Sanders

Website & Technology: Anita Joy

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Suzanne Legallet, Joan Sanders,

Patti Spezzaferro, Martha Woollomes

PROOFREADERS

Sue Barkley, Kasey Hansen,

Sue Matthews, Patti Spezzaferro

COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2023 - 2024

Atherton Library Flowers: Sally Brudos

Holiday Party: Hostess/Committee Chair 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 Mancilla

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

December

Flower: Narcissus

Purity, Peace, Spirituality, Innocence

January

Flower: Carnation

Love, Healing, Strength, Fascination

December Birthdays

- 1 Sue Matthews
- 9 Karen Handal
- 11 Mary Sweeney
- 20 Dianne Schilling
- 23 Jean Gee

January Birthdays

- 4 Kathy Ladra
- 15 Anna Zappettini
- 17 Carrie Drake
- 20 Kataie Blommer