



ATHERTON GARDEN GUILD  
Since 1966

Newsletter  
November 2023

## Calendar

### Meetings

Board Meetings: 9: 00 am  
Social: 9: 30 am  
Meetings: 10: 00 am  
*Meetings are on Mondays  
unless otherwise noted*

#### 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*

## *November 6*

### *Filoli*

*86 Canada Road*

*Woodside*



*November Program  
will feature  
Claire Margetts  
from  
Sissinghurst England*

# President's Message

Successful gardening is not necessarily a question of wealth,  
it is a question of love, taste, and knowledge.

Vita Sackville-West • (1892-1962)



**B**aroness Vita Sackville-West was a flamboyant bon vivant poet and prolific writer of thirty-five books who fell deeply in love with gardening and became one of the most famous gardeners of the 20th century. Together with her husband, diplomat, and writer Harold Nicolson, they created one of England's most romantic and most visited gardens.

Sissinghurst estate is located on Biddenden Road, near Cranbrook, Kent, an hour and a half south of London. Vita and Harold purchased the castle and 460 acres in 1930 and went on to create a haven for peace, beauty, and tranquillity. Harold provided the architectural classical framework of the garden in the form of paths, hedges, and walls for his wife's wild profusion of planting.



Even though Vita was not a professional gardener and learned by trial and error, she developed three steadfast rules for gardening that everyone can benefit from. Firstly, be ruthless. If something is no longer pleasing, change it. Secondly, be messy in the garden and let self-seeded plants grow where they naturally fall. Wild-flowers will mix with cultivated plants in a garden; this was not a disaster but a symphony of color for the eyes. Thirdly, be intentional and have an architectural plan, a color plan, and a seasonal plan.

Sackville-West's most outstanding achievement was the creation of the one-color gardens. She created this by relating groups of plants in mass and height and trying colors against each other until the right combination surfaced. Sissinghurst is a testament to how gardening is a product of love, taste, and knowledge. It is now run by the National Trust and is acclaimed as the embodiment of modern British gardening tradition.



Come to our November 6th General Meeting at Filoli and learn more about this British national treasure. Claire Margetts will be our speaker. She recently graduated from the Historic and Botanic Garden Training Program of England and is not working in a hands-on training program at Sissinghurst, Kent, as part of the HBGTP scholarship program. Claire is now a visiting horticulturist in a Filoli exchange program. Don't forget to bring a guest, if you like. Until then, happy gardening. **Patti**



*Seasonal Decor  
by  
Suellen Rottiers*



*Happy Thanksgiving  
to AGG Members,  
their Friends and Families*





# November Program

## Some Thoughts From Our November Speaker Claire Margetts, Inaugural Sissinghurst Scholar



**Earliest gardening memory:** Squishing mistletoe, *Viscum album*, berries into an apple tree graft. I spent my early years in a new build on an estate, dad was always trying to bring nature and the wild into our world

**Who has inspired your career the most and why:** My great-great grandfather. He was a head gardener near Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds in 1917 (a stone's throw from the National Trust garden Hidcote.)

**If gardening is a career change, what did you do before:** I feel incredibly fortunate to have had an entrepreneurial career. I've worked with start-ups, creatives, thought leaders and educators. I travelled the world helping connect ideas and bring them to fruition. I worked in the Arctic on a climate science expedition. I now get to use those learnings while training for a future leadership role to help care for one of the UK's most special gardens.

**Favourite landscape and garden that has influenced you:** Sissinghurst is remarkable. I'm drawn to nostalgic and atmospheric places, homes that are connected to gardens, gardens that are connected to meadows, meadows that are connected to woods.

**Dream plant destination:** Algeria. I'm keen to travel on horseback to see *Iris unguicularis* 'Alba' in the wild, as Jekyll did many years ago. Alternatively, the Himaylayas where *Cardiocrinum giganteum* tower – at Aberglasney we learned to propagate from seed with excellent results. If I can't make it to the mountains, it's a trip to Crùg Farm Plants – there isn't much they can't tempt me with there, and it's in Wales.

**Favorite planting style:** That of 19th-20th century flower gardens. The seasonal exuberance that a carefully crafted and romantically executed mixed border with a hint of wild can bring. I'm keen to understand how we go on to look after this way of gardening, Vita's plants in five, ten, 20 years' time. I want to believe that we can find solutions so that these plants can not only survive but thrive in a changing world.

**Biggest challenge facing gardeners today:** Resource. Without this we cannot adequately face all the other challenges; skills shortage, a climate and biodiversity crisis, water efficacy, plant and soil health.

### Library Flowers November Chair Sally Brudo

6 Anita Joy  
13 Suzanne Legallet  
20 Marion Oster  
27 Berenice Mancilla

### Hospitality November 6<sup>th</sup> Chair Berenice Mancilla

Pam Smith, Coordinator  
Sue Fitch  
Barbara Tyler

### 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)





# October Meeting/Table Settings





# October Meeting/Farmers' Market



## Stick Candles

The source for the candles featured on Karen Handal's table setting is "Stick Candles" in Highlands, NC. You may order and learn about the company on their website ([stickcandles.com](http://stickcandles.com)). Some of their products are now available on Amazon, but to see all their products, go to their website.

## Visions of the Menlo Park Farmer's Market



The Menlo Park market opened in 1992 and is sponsored by the Menlo Park Live Oak Lions Club. The money from the market goes back into helping the community and the extra produce at the end of the market is distributed to feed the homeless. This local market features farmers from throughout California bringing their own unique produce all year long. Fresh dates from Thermal, organic mushrooms grown in Watsonville, local fish & crab out of Half Moon Bay, sweet corn from the Delta region, heirloom tomatoes out of Carmel Valley, and the most luscious selection of fruits from the Central Valley.





# Who's in the Garden

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## Who's in the Garden

*Patti Spezzaferro speaks to long-time*

*AGG member Suzanne Legallet about what inspires her to keep gardening and much more.*



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

**Suzanne:** Tommy Church, Gertrude Jekyll, and Bernard Trainor.

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

**Suzanne:** That I won't physically be able to garden, that one day I would wake up and everything in the garden died!

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

**Suzanne:** Plenty of time and good health to enjoy beauty, nature, friends, and family.

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

**Suzanne:** In California, Huntington, Joan Sanders', Patti Spezzaferro's, and mine. In England, Great Dixter and Stourhead. Back east: Longwood, Chanticleer, New York Botanical, and Wave Hill.

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

**Suzanne:** Digging and turning the soil over disturbs the natural balance of soil and its microseisms.

**Patti:** What is your favorite gardening product or tool?

**Suzanne:** Felco and a good pole pruner.

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

**Suzanne:** The results, the challenges, and new plants, and I have to admit, escapism, my brain is relaxed while gardening.

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

**Suzanne:** Enjoy, don't think about anything else, and the garden should be shared.

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

**Suzanne:** Buying plants I don't need and upgrading my well for enough good water.

**Patti:** What does AGG mean to you?

**Suzanne:** Sharing knowledge, plants, learning, and friendship.

## A Peek at Suzanne's Garden



# Horticulture Report/Atherton Book

## November/December AGG Horticulture Report

by Patti Spezzaferro

### November Master Gardener Check List

- Weather permitting, many of the October garden activities can continue into November.
- There's still time for fall planting of shrubs, trees, and perennials before the winter rains arrive (we hope!) Winter rains will help the new plantings establish good root systems.
- Cool-season vegetable seedlings can be planted: cabbage, kale, chard, and spinach, for example. Also, carrots may be seeded now.
- Remove dead or diseased limbs from trees and shrubs.
- First, give them a good cleaning if you put away your garden tools for the winter. Rub with alcohol after each use to prevent the spread of disease. Prevent rust with a light coating of lubricant grease (such as lithium grease). To avoid rusting out your shovels and saws, store them in a bucket of sand with a bit of oil (5 parts sand to 1 part oil).

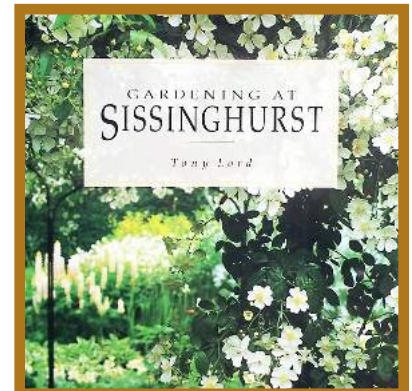
### December Master Gardener Check List

- 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.
- Sow wildflower seeds now for instant spring color.
- Start planning your spring garden now!

## Book of the Month for November and December Gardening at Sissinghurst

By Tony Lord

Sissinghurst is one of the most romantic gardens and most visited gardens in the world. This book showcases the garden's outstanding features to the distinctive styles of Sir Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West. It examines the design, development, planting, and maintenance of each part of the garden throughout the year. There are detailed planting plans of the beds and borders and an analysis of the precise use of colors that make this garden one of the most copied in the world. A must-book in every gardener's library. It makes a wonderful Holiday gift, too. Buy it here on Amazon





*The Atherton Garden Guild*

*PO Box 685*

*Menlo Park, CA 94025*

## *AGG Newsletter*

*November 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 Douglass, Joan Sanders

**Website & Technology:** Anita Joy

### CONTRIBUTORS

Terri Bailard, Suzanne Legallet

Suellen Rottiers, Patti Spezzaferro,

Jeanne Quinlan, 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 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*

**November**

**Flowers: Chrysanthemum & Peony**

**Chrysanthemum**

**Friendship & well-wishes**

**Peony**

**romance, prosperity, good fortune,  
honor, and compassion**

- 5 Kasey Hansen
- 7 Maxine Bonnette
- 13 Erika Enos
- 20 Judy Blommer
- 26 Barbara Peyton