



## President's Message

by Paula Elias



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Dear Manteca Garden Club Members,

Happy Valentines Day to you all! It's February and your garden club season is half over! I can't believe how the months have passed!

As winter is moving along, please make sure to read our awesome newsletter with Cate's garden tips. She will help you to prepare for the coming Spring!

I also see our friends, the San Joaquin Master Gardeners and local nurseries such as Rainforest, have lots of garden classes. We are so lucky to take advantage of the classes all so close by Manteca. I post many of these classes on our garden club FB, Lorna often posts on the newsletter calendar and Barbara posts often on our club website. All are great, wonderful, interesting classes available free or at low cost!

We have a lot going on in the next couple of months; rose teams, Arbor Day, a field trip, and of course our garden tour! Come to our meetings to hear about it all!

See you in February!

*Paula*

### Key Dates

#### Meeting

Tuesday, February 12	Valley Lode District Meeting; Host: Calaveras Garden Club
Wednesday, February 13	Board Meeting, Manteca Golf Club café, 9:30am Garden Tour Meeting, Manteca Golf Club café, 10:30am
Monday, February 18	Manteca Garden Club, Manteca Library 12:30-1:00pm refreshments; 1:00pm meeting Speaker: Bronwyn Escola, Wild Blooms Flower Farm; Topic: Beautiful seasonal cut flowers for sale at her farm stand and DIY buckets of blooms at her farm in Ripon.

# Gardener's Corner for February

by Cate White, Master Gardener

Now that January is behind us, can Spring be very far behind? As the days begin to lengthen, a gardener's mind starts anticipating longer, warmer days and more time spent in the garden. Even those of us who are well along in years feel the urge to be out in the fresh air, tending our plants and taking satisfaction in watching them grow. But, aging also means accommodating issues like limited mobility, strength, balance and flexibility, so gardening comfortably and safely becomes a priority.

There are many ways to make garden jobs safer and easier. First, be sure to keep paths free of obstacles, including hoses lying on the ground, and be aware of uneven or slippery pavement. Next, take inventory of your tools. Think about investing in long handled cultivating tools to minimize stooping, and search for ergonomically designed hand tools that can reduce injuries and soreness. Keep your tools sharp. A kneeler bench that has a low padded bench for kneeling with four legs shaped as handles to help you get back up is a great addition to your tool collection. The bench can also be used for sitting, by turning it over and straddling the seat with both feet on the ground for stability. Another strategy for getting up when kneeling on the ground is keeping a long handled shovel handy to help pull yourself up. T-bars can also be anchored in the ground for this purpose. Reconsider jobs that require being off the ground. Ladders can be hazardous for seniors, so jobs requiring ladder work are best done by younger helpers. This also applies to hauling and lifting heavy items.

Installing raised beds is a great way to reduce back and knee strain. These can be anywhere from 18 inches to 3 feet tall, made out of wood or concrete blocks, sometimes covered with plaster. Kits are available, or you can hire someone to construct them. Another option is using galvanized livestock watering tanks. Fill your new beds with quality garden or potting soil fortified with aged compost.

You can also reduce your garden chores by growing plants that have low maintenance and water requirements. Consider whether you really want to do the work necessary to keep fussy plants like hydrangeas, gardenias and azaleas flourishing. Check out web sites like the Arboretum All-Stars: [arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum-all-stars](http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum-all-stars), for attractive alternatives.

Lastly, one of my favorite strategies is to plant annuals and bulbs that will naturalize in your yard. Violas will reseed and come up every spring, covering the ground with pretty little flowers and smothering out weeds. Once the weather gets hot, they die back, but only after setting seed for next year. Alyssum is another great ground cover that reseeds and blooms in spring and summer. Bulbs such as daffodils, freesias and grape hyacinths will return every spring, while summer bulbs such as daylilies, iris (technically a rhizome) and amaryllis are also reliable repeaters.

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## February Garden Checklist

- Plant bare root shrubs and trees
- Continue baiting for ants, snails, slugs and earwigs
- Monitor for Asian citrus psyllid
- Prune deciduous trees and shrubs. Remove dead, diseased wood, making cuts properly to encourage good structure. Spray with horticultural oil to control insects and diseases.
- Spray peaches to prevent peach leaf curl one more time before bud break.
- Cut back deciduous sages to within 6-8 inches from the ground. Cut back fountain grasses to within 2 feet off the ground.
- Plant seedlings of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce and parsley. Plant beets, chard, carrots and peas from seed. Spring flowers such as violas, pansies, snapdragons and Iceland poppies can also be planted now.
- Continue adjusting irrigation according to the weather. Do not water within 48 hours of measurable rain.

## Gardener's Corner for February (continued from Page 2)

By learning to adapt, you can continue experiencing the joys of gardening for many years to come! For further information, check out the San Joaquin County Master Gardeners web site: [sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu](http://sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu)



An Idea for Raised Beds



Galvanized steel watering tubs used as raised beds



Violas

## Plant(s) of the Month

By Eric Teberg

*Primula vularis*, English Primrose

Exposure: Shade to Light Sun  
Height: 6-12 inches  
Blooms: Spring to Early Summer  
Moisture: Consistently Moist  
Flowers: Yellow, salmon, cobalt blue, white



*Primula malacoides*, Fairy Primrose

Exposure: Shade, light dappled sun, keep out of high heat  
Moisture: Water often  
Soil: Loamy and peat rich, moderately acidic  
Blooms: Late Winter  
Flowers: Pink, rose, fuschia, white



## February Birthdays

2	Vi Bobson	21	Wendy Benavidez
3	Carol Boné	22	Beverly Ensley
9	Phyllis Brooks	22	Anita Handley
11	Linda Schneider	28	Victoria Miller

