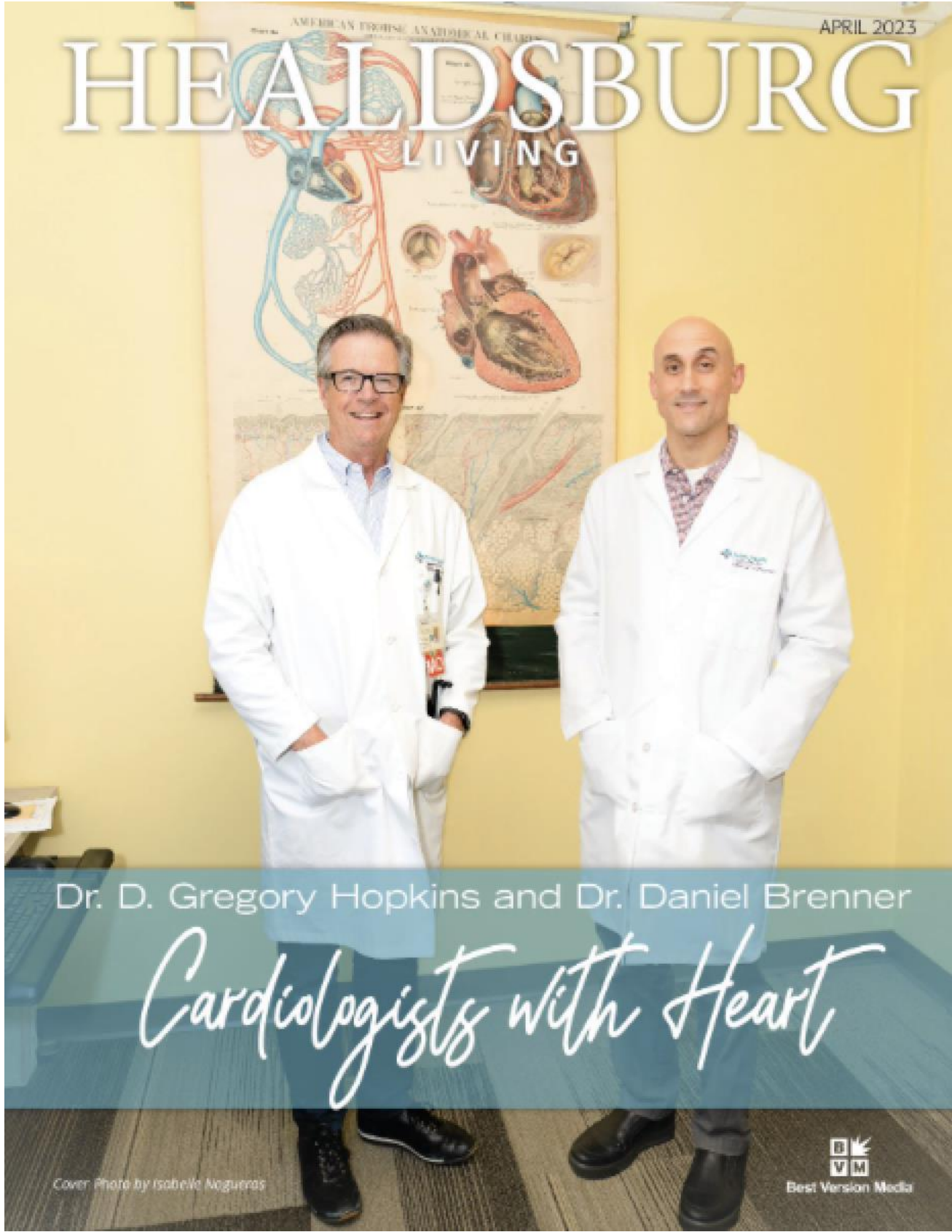


APRIL 2023

# HEALDSBURG LIVING



Dr. D. Gregory Hopkins and Dr. Daniel Brenner

## *Cardiologists with Heart*

Cover Photo by Isabelle Nogueiras

  
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# Pollinator Sanctuaries: Why They're Important

By Cindy Butner in conversation with Brent Young, Director of Agriculture Operations at Jordan Estate  
Photos provided by Jordan Vineyard & Winery

Western Monarch Butterflies are essential pollinators. According to the USDA, three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35 percent of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. That's one out of every three bites of food you eat.

Many pollinators, including Monarch Butterflies, are endangered. One of the primary threats is the loss of native plants (including milkweed species but also all nectar-producing native plants) along their migratory corridors, according to the World Wildlife Fund. We asked Brent Young, Director of Agriculture Operations at Jordan Estate, to tell us about their efforts to steward pollinator sanctuaries.

**CB: What are the mission and goals of the pollinator sanctuaries?**

**BY:** As stewards of a sustainably certified estate winery, Jordan has always been committed to supporting the environment, and implementing the pollinator sanctuaries was a natural extension of that commitment. The Jordan Estate is along the migratory route for the Western Monarch butterfly. It felt like a no-brainer to utilize its 1,200 acres of land and participate in the efforts to save at-risk Western Monarch Butterflies and native bees, honeybees, hummingbirds and other insects.

**CB: When did it begin, and how's it going?**

**BY:** It all started in 2019 when our culinary team was contacted by Pollinator Partnership, the world's largest non-profit dedicated exclusively to protecting and promoting pollinators and their ecosystems. From there, we helped them to promote their annual Pollinator Week in June as part of our summer vineyard hikes. After completing this initiative, we knew it was time to take our pollinator husbandry to the next level. We worked with the Pollinator Partnership staff for a year to fine-tune the optimal sites and materials needed to create the pollinator sanctuaries. Together, we selected plants based on the terrain, sun exposure, proximity to watersheds, and, most importantly, which pollinators each habitat will ultimately support. The next pollinator planting is already in progress, which started with planting 370 more plants in December of 2022, thanks to a grant funded by Toyota USA. I plan to experiment with a drip irrigation system. The intent is to find a more efficient and precise way of delivering water to the plants.

**CB: What results have you seen to date?**

**BY:** Since winter 2021, we have planted over 2,500 plants and several pounds of seed

across eight acres. We expect blooms from seed to take approximately three years to emerge and begin attracting pollinators. In the next few years, we aim to turn 10 acres of grassland into a preserved habitat for vital pollinators.

**CB: Have you seen an increase in the number or diversity of pollinators since establishing the sanctuaries?**

**BY:** We often feel the project has increased our awareness of pollinators across the property. It isn't easy to know if we see an upswing in pollinators or if we notice them more because of our heightened awareness. This spring will be an exciting time as many plants have started to establish themselves. We should see beautiful flowers emerging and pollinators fluttering about with the recent precipitation.

**CB: What challenges have you faced in establishing and maintaining the pollinator sanctuaries?**

**BY:** Establishing and maintaining the pollinator sanctuaries has been challenging. Milkweed is the plant that holds the key to helping save the monarchs who feed exclusively on milkweed leaves. It is expensive and difficult to grow because it needs cool, consistent temperatures for a set number of days to germinate successfully. The historic drought delivered additional challenges and obstacles with growing milkweed. While we've faced some obstacles, it's been a great learning process and is nothing we as a team can't handle here at Jordan. We look forward to refining and improving our practices over the next two years.

**CB: What are steps that residents can take to help with the project on their properties?**

**BY:** Residents, especially landowners in the Sonoma County area, can do their part by educating themselves on the problem. On a larger scale, planting milkweed is a significant step to take, but working with experts and partners to select suitable plant species is crucial to the success of your sanctuary. Other smaller but essential steps include reducing or eliminating the impact of pesticides, supporting local bees and beekeepers by purchasing local honey, registering as a bee-friendly garden or farm, and staying informed and inspired overall.



**Brent Young,**  
Director of  
Agriculture  
Operations at  
Jordan Estate




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