



Garden Notes

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February 2015

Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

🐞 Please send us questions about gardening--we will do our best to answer them!



The Sunset Idea House:

Attaching pots of herbs to a sunny wall near the kitchen makes them easy to harvest, attractive, and easy to replace. A good idea, especially for houses with limited garden space.

Garden Design: John Kosta

included the following list of suggestions in his Jan 14 talk to the Club:

- Decide what you want (shade? low maintenance? beauty? food? etc)
- Keep the design simple
- Reduce lawn areas
- Create garden "rooms"
- Create shady seating areas
- Create privacy with hedges, walls, courtyards
- Plant large groups of the same plant rather than one of each kind
- Use color to brighten up the garden
- Include low, medium, and tall plants
- Use plants with large and small leaves, and different colored leaves
- Repeat size, color, leaf and flower form to help connect different areas
- Contrast color, size, and texture within an area
- Avoid straight lines and rows; use curving paths
- Include focal points to stop the eye
- Ensure that the garden isn't seen all at once
- Add a water feature or a fire pit
- Include garden art
- Look outside, in books, and online for ideas (www.sunset.com is good)

Favorite quote: (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"A garden is a complex of aesthetic and plastic intentions; and the plant is, to a landscape artist, not only a plant – rare, unusual, ordinary or doomed to disappearance – but it is also a color, a shape, a volume or an arabesque in itself."

Roberto Burle Marx

Ornamental of the Month

Romneya coulteri



Matilija poppy is one of our most spectacular native plants. Semi-deciduous with 3-8ft stalks of deeply-lobed, blue-green leaves. The 5" flowers are stunning in late spring and early summer. Spreads by rhizomes. Full sun (tolerates a little shade) and good drainage. Water weekly the first summer and then not at all starting the following spring. (Photo from the Bernard Field Station.)

Edible of the Month

Citrus reticulata



Mandarin oranges include tangerines (usually seeds, tart, originally from around Tangiers; good varieties Dancy, Pixie, Sunburst) and Satsumas (usually seedless, sweeter, originally from Japan; good varieties Golden Nugget, Kishu, Owari). Trees on dwarfing rootstock planted in the ground grow to 10 ft. Ripening time varies with the variety. Full sun and regular water. Prune any time. (Photo from Wikipedia).

Pest of the month: Scale



There are many types of scale, some actually useful as they attack undesirable plants. However, ones like the oval, stationary relatives of the aphid at left attach themselves to leaf veins and suck out the fluids, weakening the plant. The young have legs and are called 'crawlers'. They lose the legs when they settle down and develop a waxy covering which protects them. Scale can be controlled by gently scraping them off the leaf, removing the leaf, or using a horticultural oil spray.

Reader questions:

Poinsettias—plant outside or toss?

Poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) are frost tender, prefer acid soil, grow to 8 ft in the ground, and do not bloom well unless they get two months of total darkness at night in the fall. Darkness is hard to provide in an urban garden, so unless you enjoy a challenge, toss. If you do grow them, wear gloves when pruning as the milky sap of euphorbias can cause skin irritation. (By the way, poinsettias are not poisonous—that's an urban legend.)

Last year's seed packets--use or toss?

Seeds don't stay alive forever, but neither do they all expire immediately at years' end. Like people, the ones in a packet vary a bit in life expectancy. If you keep your packets in a cool, dark, dry location, you can expect to get good germination for several years. Here are some approximate times (years in parentheses): corn (2), lettuce (6), beans (3), cucumber (5), eggplant (4), kale (4), melons (5), onion (1), peas (3), spinach (3), tomato (4), radish (5). If you have older packets and are worried about poor germination, plant more thickly than normal and remove any extras.

Save the dates: more info on each as the times approach

March 21: tour of the Sherman Library and Gardens in Corona del Mar

April 19: annual Garden Tour

May 1: tour of Lyle Regenerative Center organic gardens at CalPoly

Upcoming events and more:

February 11: Garden Club, 6:30 pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Claremont

Talk at 7pm by resident Larry Schroeder and designer Graciela Gonzales:
"Drought-tolerant Landscaping: a story of one Claremont Home"

February 21: Free mulch, Cahuilla Park, starts at 6am, first come/served; you must load and transport it yourself

Armstrong classes: <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes> Free classes
Feb 14 or 15 Orchids; Feb 21 veggies from seed; Feb 28 waterwise gardens

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden: www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events
Visit their Grow Native Nursery

Huntington Library: Free talks plus plant sales on second Thursdays
www.huntington.org/WebAssets/Templates/content.aspx?id=538

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Romneya" is named after Irish astronomer John Thomas Romney Robinson; "reticulata" means "net-veined".

Plant miscellanea: Some plants like the Matilija poppy spread asexually by means of "rhizomes", horizontal underground stems. These produce new upright stems and roots at their nodes.

Things to do in February

General

- ✓ Water if rain is scarce
- ✓ Order plants and seeds
- ✓ Add compost to moist but not wet soil

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Clear leaves under sycamores to reduce anthracnose; put in trash
- ✓ Hand-pick or sponge aphids, scale, mealybugs, whitefly, off citrus
- ✓ Prune citrus so branches don't touch the ground providing highway for ants; put band of Tanglefoot on trunk
- ✓ Spray citrus with 1-2T dishwashing liquid per gallon to clean leaves

Edibles

- ✓ Finish harvesting winter vegetables
- ✓ Feed avocados (try not to damage feeder roots just below surface)
- ✓ Prune Kiwi vines
- ✓ Sow beets, carrots, chard, chervil, peas, radishes, spinach, endive, dill

Ornamentals

- ✓ Aerate warm-season lawns and remove thatch as growth starts
- ✓ Cut old stems on Mexican sage to ground when new ones are 8" tall
- ✓ Consider a deciduous magnolia
- ✓ Buy natives to plant next month

Please send photos and info about plants you've grown, gardens you've visited, gardening lore you've learned, questions you have. Sue Schenk, editor

The Metropolitan Water District is offering rebates for turf removal, rain barrels, soil moisture sensor systems. Info at: <http://socialwatersmart.com/index.php/>

Facebook: Claremont Garden Club
Instagram: Claremont_Garden_Club