



Garden Notes

www.sustainableclaremont.org

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February 2013

Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

We hope to interest, amaze, enthuse, encourage, help, and make connections between those in and around Claremont who want to be better at gardening (although we may not do all of these at once!).

We'll send the newsletter out around the first Wednesday in the month with a follow up email reminder about the field trip and any other useful info in the third week of the month. Feel free to distribute the newsletter to anyone who might be interested.

→ Let us know what you'd like to see in the newsletter, and consider sharing interesting information you come across!

- If you've visited a noteworthy garden, park, estate, or nursery that you think others would enjoy, send us a description, and photos if you have some.
- Ditto if you've discovered an outstanding plant, a clever new way to do something in the garden, or a really good book or website.
- Maybe you just found out the answer to a garden question that has been bugging you (possible pun here) and you'd like to share it.
- If you have as-yet-unanswered gardening questions, do send them along and we will find answers to publish.
- → If you have ideas for meeting topics, field trips or other activities, or would like to arrange any, we can use the help!

From our members:



Dorcia Bradley: We were very pleased to find out that when one becomes a member of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, admission to many other botanical gardens throughout the nation is free through the American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Admissions Program. There is a list of participating gardens at www.ahs.org/events/reciprocal/.

Sharron Neyer passed along this gem: Gardening is cheaper than therapy, and you get tomatoes!

Sue Schenk: The 1.6 acre Isamu Noguchi Sculpture Garden "California Scenario" (photo above left) is nestled in a plaza between office buildings in South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa (611 Anton Blvd). This is well worth a visit if you are anywhere near the area. The garden is free and open from 8 am to midnight (there is a charge for parking).

Ornamental of the Month:

Encelia californica

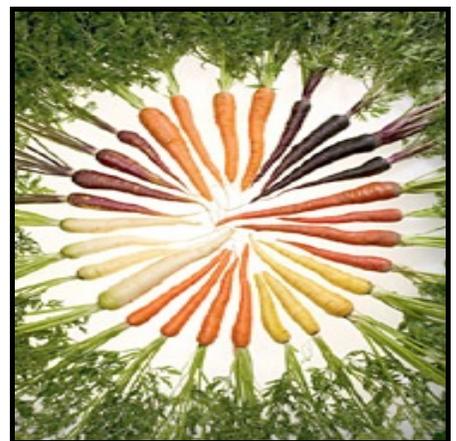
This California native grows into a 4ft by 4ft shrub and is a favorite of bees. It likes full sun and low water and February is a good time to plant it. Its cheerful yellow daisies inspired our logo!



Edible of the Month:

Daucus carota sativa

Carrots! Plant seeds now through April in well-tilled soil—rocky soil causes them to fork. The orange provide carotenoids, the red provide lycopenes, and the purple provide anthocyanins—all beneficial to your health (photo from USDA). One source for seeds: Kaleidoscope mix from Burpee.



Are 100 cabbages more than you want to grow?

Donate extra seeds, either food or flower, to local community gardens! Drop them off on the porch at 845 N. Indian Hill Blvd.

Claremont rarely freezes, but.....

Mia Myers, Master Gardener

Most of us don't have that particular emergency plan in place for the occasional dip below 32°. Here are some tips for the next one:

1. Water your plants. Hydrated foliage is less vulnerable to frost damage for some reason.
2. Leave the patio lights on. One degree of warmth may be just enough to keep your *Hostas* from turning to mush.
3. If a freeze is inevitable, throw sheets over your most vulnerable plants. The air trapped inside will serve as insulation. Remove them during the day when the air warms, then put them back at dusk. Bring tender succulents and smaller plants indoors. The garage is fine.
4. **After the freeze**, resist whacking back the catastrophes. Damage may not be obvious for several days and it may be superficial. Once the offended foliage has turned black and crispy, you may want to prune gently, but some offended limbs will leaf out again if left alone. It's painful to look at the damage, but plants are more resilient than we think.
5. Some people who keep large ornamental tropical plants outdoors string them with Christmas lights. They're invisible until you turn them on before a frost warning when the slight additional heat helps.

Once the weather warms, cruise town and notice which old standbys are undamaged. You may find *Nandina* and *Pittosporum* unexciting, but they've made it through decades of freezes that weren't supposed to happen. We're still in zone 9.

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Mia Myers grew up in old Claremont and graduated from Pomona College. She is an author, landscape designer and Master Gardener. Her internet business, SmartSeedStore.com, sends unusual seeds to gardeners around the world.

Favorite Quote: "My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant's point of view."

H. Fred Dale

Upcoming events:

(The garden club is free and open to all)

Feb 10: "Seedy Sunday"—1st annual community seed swap 10 am to 1pm Farmer's Market 2nd St west of the Diamond Center. More info at www.claremontforum.org

Feb 13: Garden Club meeting (7pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Pilgrim Place) "*Soil, Sun, and Squiggles: creating kitchen gardens*", a talk by Cynthia Robinson, UCCE Master Gardener

Feb activities: Feb 16 vegetable gardening class at Armstrong's; Feb 23 square foot vegetable gardening workshop at Mt Sac. More info on website. Club field trip TBA--Info will be sent out to members

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: The second part of a scientific name often tells you where the plant was first found, like the "*californica*" in *Encelia californica*. "*Sativa* (or *sativus* or *sativum*") means "cultivated" as in the domestic carrot "*Daucus carota sativa*".

Plant Anatomy: The places on a stem where the leaves are attached are called "nodes" and the stem between nodes is an "internode".

Things to do in February

General

- ✓ Sterilize cleaned tools and re-used pots with 10% bleach (stronger is not better)
- ✓ Pull weeds now before they get big
- ✓ Check sunset.com/garden/ for ideas

Edibles

- ✓ Decide what you want to grow and then check out seed catalogs and the local nurseries for interesting varieties (some sources are on the Sustainable Claremont site)
- ✓ Start seeds of cool weather crops like lettuce, eggplant, broccoli, peas and kale for later transplanting
- ✓ Fork over your vegetable bed when it is not wet to loosen the soil
- ✓ Draw up a plan of your vegetable patch and figure out what you want to plant where (don't overplant—one zucchini plant will feed a family)
- ✓ Sow a smaller number of seeds of some crops like carrots every two weeks to spread out the harvest

Ornamentals

- ✓ Feed cymbidium orchids
- ✓ Sow annuals such as alyssum, snapdragons, foxgloves, honesty, poppies, nasturtiums
- ✓ Plant pansies, primroses, iris, dahlias, calla lilies, canna lilies, amaryllis, tuberose
- ✓ Last chance to plant bare-root roses
- ✓ Wait to prune spring bloomers until after they've bloomed