



Garden Notes

www.sustainableclaremont.org

gardenclub@sustainableclaremont.org

January 2014

Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

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

Pruning roses: The general rule is to prune roses that bloom most of the year in late winter (now), and those that flower only once just after blooming.



- No matter what sort you have, you should remove dead, damaged, and diseased growth, and other branches as needed to leave the center fairly open to provide good air circulation.
- Each of the cuts should be made at an angle just above an outward-facing bud (see left) so the new branches don't grow into the center (unless this is going to result in horizontal branches that will fall under the weight of the flowers—then choose a bud that will result in more upright growth).
- Each cut should be at a 45° angle so water runs off, with the back of the cut level with the bud, and the top of the cut between 1/4 and 1/2 inch above the bud. Too long a stub encourages dieback.
- Shrub roses and old-fashioned garden roses need little pruning beyond this.
- Hybrid teas produce larger flowers (but fewer of them) if pruned more severely so, after the initial cleanup, the remaining stems (canes) are generally reduced by 1/3 to 1/2 the original length, again usually cutting just above an outward-facing bud. Some of the older, woody ones can be removed completely to encourage new growth. Strip off remaining leaves.
- Clean up all the stem cuttings and leaves under the roses and throw them in the trash as they may harbor pests or diseases.
- Later, if you see aphids on the new growth, blast them off with a jet of water. Do this in the morning so leaves aren't wet at night which encourages fungal growth. Pick off any leaves that show powdery mildew, black spot, or rust as soon as you see that and toss them in the trash.

Favorite quote (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"The best fertilizer is the gardener's shadow." Author Unknown

Our local nurseries have free "How to" classes and demos throughout the year. Thanks to Patty Lindberg for the following info!

Armstrong has classes Jan 11 and Feb 1 at 9am (rose pruning) and 11 am (fruit tree pruning). Go to <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>) for more info.

Mt. Fuji's rose and fruit tree pruning demos will be held on Friday, January 10 at 1 pm and Saturday, January 11 at 10 am and 1 pm (call for info: 909-985-2219).

Ornamental of the Month: *Rosa mutabilis*



This old shrub rose grows to 6' x 6', is evergreen and blooms year-round. The single, 3" flowers start out with orange buds, then open to yellow, mature to pink and then red, with orange hips—all can be on the plant at the same time. It is disease-resistant, prefers a little shade, medium water, a sheltered spot--a great addition to any bed.

Edible of the Month: *Fortunella species*



Kumquats are common citrus trees and very decorative. They grow slowly to 10' x 10' but can be kept in pots. They are covered in white blossoms in the summer and in olive-sized orange fruit in the winter. The peel is sweet, the flesh sour. They are eaten whole and unpeeled, sliced in salads or made into an excellent marmalade.

Starting seeds indoors: There's a lot to be said for starting plants from seed—the variety available from seed companies is mind-boggling, it's a lot of fun to see seeds sprout and grow, and you can get dozens of plants for much less money than if you buy 6-packs or pots from a nursery. Here are some useful generic guidelines.



1. Fill a clean pot or tray (wash old ones and sterilize with bleach) with porous potting soil to within a half inch of the rim, add water and let drain.
2. Level the surface gently and sprinkle seeds about half an inch apart.
3. Cover the seeds with more potting soil (the depth should be about twice the width of the seeds) and sprinkle with more water. Label the pots
4. Lay a sheet of plastic wrap lightly on the top to slow water loss and put the pots in a warm window with good light. Too little light will result in weak, spindly growth. Fluorescent grow lights for 12-14 hours a day about 6" above the plants will help if you don't have a sunny spot. A waterproof under-pot heating pad can help germination for heat-lovers like tomatoes.
5. As soon as the seedlings start to emerge, remove the plastic wrap. Watch to make sure they don't dry out but be sure not to overwater or they may die from 'damping off', a fungal disease. Be sure there is good air circulation, and thin the seedlings if they seem crowded.
6. The first leaves look pretty generic, but the second pair will look more like the adult ones. When there are two pair of 'true' leaves, it's time to transplant each seedling to a small pot of its own.
7. Gently remove the set of seedlings from the pot and carefully separate them, keeping as much soil around the roots of each one as possible. Be sure not to squeeze the stem when handling a plant as this may kill it.
8. Make a hole in the potting soil in the new pot, put a seedling in, and gently firm the soil around the roots. Water in well.
9. Watch that the seedlings are getting enough light, warmth and water (but again, be careful not to overwater).
10. When they are sturdy and the weather has warmed up, put the plants in a shady protected location for a few days to 'harden off' outside before planting them in their final location.
11. A few good places to buy seeds: <http://www.reneegarden.com/>, <http://www.seedsofchange.com>, <http://www.anniesheirloomseeds.com/>, <http://www.burpee.com/> , <http://store.theodorepayne.org>

Upcoming events and more

Jan 11: Hypertufa workshop, (\$35) LA Arboretum 10am-noon, to register call (626)821-4623

Jan 15 (note 3rd Wed rather than 2nd): **Garden Club meeting**, 7pm, Napier Center at Pilgrim Place, **"The Joys and Benefits of Square Foot Gardening"** a talk by Jo Ann Carey

Jan 25: Seed and Plant Swap, 10am-noon, Ontario Senior Center, 225 East B St. Talk on **"Saving Seeds: Collection, Preservation, and Germination"** (thanks to Dan Pearce for this info!)

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Mutabilis" means 'varied' or 'changing in form or color'.

Plant miscellanea: Flowers have four sets ("whorls") of parts: sepals cover the bud, petals, stamens produce pollen, and the pistil houses the eggs. In some plants, such as lilies, the sepals and petals look the same and are called "tepals" (photo left).

Things to do in January

General

- ✓ Start seeds indoors
- ✓ Be careful not to compact wet soil by walking on it or pressing it down

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Continue cleaning up, especially under camellias where the dropped flowers can perpetuate brown rot
- ✓ Keep an eye out for aphids and wash off plants with jet of water
- ✓ Wipe pruning shears with isopropyl alcohol every few cuts to reduce the chance of spreading disease
- ✓ Spray new growth in roses with plain water a couple times a week to reduce powdery mildew

Edibles

- ✓ Plant asparagus crowns and rhubarb rhizomes—both happy in part shade
- ✓ Sow herbs indoors; transplant in Feb
- ✓ At end of month, start peppers and tomatoes indoors
- ✓ Prune dormant fruit trees such as apple, apricot, peach if not already done; fertilize established stone fruits

Ornamentals

- ✓ Deadhead and feed pansies and violas
- ✓ Feed camellias and azaleas with cottonseed meal; renew peat mulch
- ✓ Sow indoors to plant out in February: asters, marigolds, dianthus, cosmos, nicotiana, lobelia, petunias, verbena
- ✓ Sutters' Gold, Intrigue, Dolly Parton, Ivory Fashion and Chrysler Imperial are good, fragrant roses to plant

Please send photos and info about plants you've grown, gardens you've visited, gardening lore you've learned.

Sue Schenk, editor