



Garden Notes

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Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

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

Notes from members:



Dorcia Bradley: " Just about two hours from Claremont lies a vast expanse of nature that few are ever privileged to experience. It is the **Tejon Ranch**, 240,000 acres of conservancy that host native animals such as the prong horned antelope, as well as cattle that belong to "in-holders," land owners who predate the 2007 conservancy agreement. Recently, Sharron Neyer and I were able to join others from RSABG for a weekend with research botanists, to experience this magical place and to become acquainted especially with the delicate plant life that cycles through its sometimes harsh seasons. The most exquisite aspect, besides the incredible vistas, is the array of native flowers that thrive in the hills, among the grasses, and in the rocks of that massive landscape. Pictured here are some of the flora that captivated the trekkers. It reminded us that we can find beauty not only in nursery plants, but also amidst the wild outcroppings that emerge in the margins of our gardens." (See the RSABG website (www.rsabg.org) for information on future field trips.)

Sue Schenk: We discovered a real gem of a garden on a trip a few weeks ago to Eugene, Oregon. The Owen Memorial Rose Garden is well worth a visit for the huge areas of blooming perennials (and of course, the roses) if you are up there in late spring through summer. The Lychnis photo above right was taken there.



June meeting: There was a lot of discussion going on after the June talk about growing and using herbs! Many thanks to Dessá D'Aquila for the presentation, and for introducing us to the delightful taste of fennel flowers! These will become part of my garden next year.

Ornamental of the Month

Lychnis chalcidonica



This herbaceous perennial has many common names, including "burning love", "Maltese cross", and "Red robin". It grows 1 ½ to 3 ft tall with red, pink, or white flower clusters to 6" across, blooms late spring through summer. Sun to part sun, good drainage and moderate water. Naturalizes if happy. Plant in groups. Favorite of bees, birds, and butterflies.

Edible of the Month

Zea mays saccharata



Last chance to plant sweet corn-choose fast-developing varieties. Wind-pollinated so sow several seeds in hills 12" apart in blocks at least 4'x4' and plant only one variety. Full sun, water regularly, harvest when silks are drying and punctured kernel gives milky juice.

Favorite quote:

"Make a morning ritual of strolling through your garden. No weeding allowed—do it for the pure and simple joy of observation." Jane Austin Miller

Note: *Bumblebees are fun to watch and great pollinators, but they like to sleep in plants. Although generally good-natured, do check before picking vegetables and flowers to avoid being stung by a startled bee.*



To get rid of a lawn by solarizing it:

- good for lawns in sunny areas as it needs heat from the sun to work
- mow the grass short so more heat will be able to get to the roots
- water the lawn well since water transmits heat better than air
- cover it with clear plastic so that the plastic is completely in contact with the grass (this reduces condensation which lowers the heating)
- clear plastic allows more heat through; UV-resistance and 2ml thickness help the plastic last without damage
- leave the plastic in place for 6-8 weeks
- remove the plastic and the dead grass
- water and remove any weeds or grass that sprout
- the heat kills pests and disease organisms as well, but research indicates beneficial soil organisms are less affected or will re-colonize the area
- cultivation after solarization may bring more seeds to the surface so only dig up areas you plan to replant and expect to do some weeding

Wasps: friend or foe?

Both! Swatting at adult yellow jackets or going near their nests may result in being stung but, in order to feed their young, in a single season one colony may remove up to 2lbs of caterpillars and other insects that threaten your plants! Later in the year, adults like nectar and decomposing fruit, so be careful in clearing up. Many solitary wasps paralyze caterpillars or spiders, drag them to their nests, lay eggs on them, and the growing larvae eat them alive. Gruesome but useful! And some, like fig wasps, are tiny pollinators.

Upcoming events and more

No Garden Club meetings in July or August

Armstrong classes, <http://www.armstronggarden.com/pages/classes>

RSABG events: <http://www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events>

July 12, 14, 21, or 23: Edible gardening class sponsored by The Growing Home, 5-6pm open house, 6-7:30 class, free, Diamond Bar, register at <http://thegrowinghome.net/shop/free-class-the-natural-food-garden>

July 26: Fern and exotic plant show and sale, LA Arboretum, free with admission, 9am -4:30pm,

<http://www.arboretum.org/events/fern-exotic-plant-show-sale>

July 27: Garden Club potluck, 5pm, if you plan on coming, send an email

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Lychnis" refers to "flame" or "lamp"; "saccharata" refers to being "sweet".

Plant miscellanea: Sometimes the growing points of a plant are affected by a mutation, or by bacterial, fungal, viral, or environmental damage so that they produce abnormal growth, often in the form of a 'crest' (**photo of euphorbia stem left**). Normally this "fasciation" is rare, but it is selected for in some nursery plants like cockscomb celosias.

Things to do in July

General

- ✓ Pruning trees and shrubs now can stress them; reduced shade can harm underplantings, increase evaporation
- ✓ Save gray water to use in garden
- ✓ Check mulch and replace if needed

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Continue to rotate crops to prevent build up of pests and diseases
- ✓ Pick beans when not wet to prevent spread of rust and mildew

Edibles

- ✓ Plant tomatoes
- ✓ Fertilize corn with nitrogen when tassels form
- ✓ Stop removing strawberry runners; use in fall for more plants
- ✓ Stop harvesting asparagus, rhubarb
- ✓ Order cool season seeds to start later in the month (cabbage, sprouts, carrots, kale)
- ✓ Rinse, dry, bag, and freeze extra tomatoes
- ✓ Keep deciduous fruit trees small by pruning after harvest

Ornamentals

- ✓ Prune once-blooming climbing roses
- ✓ Clean up succulents
- ✓ Divide bromeliads

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://socalwatersmart.com/index.php/home/?p=res>