



# Garden Notes

"Creating edible and ornamental gardens"

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## Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

- Let us know what you'd like to see in the newsletter, and consider sharing interesting information you come across!
- If you have ideas for topics for the meetings, field trips or other activities, or would like to arrange any, we can use the help!



The first Garden Club election of officers will be held at the meeting this month on June 12—come and vote!

Many thanks to everyone who bid on the auction items—we made over \$700 and had a good time visiting at the social!

Stunning specimen of *Philadelphus lewisii* (named for Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark) in Patty Lindberg's garden. Happy in part shade, poor soil, drought-tolerant, and smelling like orange blossoms in April, this native deciduous shrub is a gem. Up to 8ft tall by 5ft wide.



Gorgeous red passion flowers in Pacifica, CA (*Passiflora manicata*). These formed a huge mound, covering about 20 ft of a fence.



**Favorite quote** (courtesy of Sharron Neyer):

*"A weed is a plant that has mastered every*

*survival skill except for learning to grow in rows."*

Doug Larsen

### Miscellaneous notes:

- citrus trees fruit on new wood so thin out whole branches rather than cutting back the ends
- thin apricots and plums to 3" apart, peaches and nectarines to 5"
- to discourage snails and slugs, raise vine fruits on pots or stands and sprinkle crushed eggshells on the ground underneath
- remove grape leaves on south side of bunches to reduce fungal growth
- water peaches deeply but less often near harvest to prevent rot

### Ornamental of the Month:

*Opuntia littoralis*

Coastal prickly pear is one of our local native plants and very versatile! The gorgeous, silky flowers grace the flower bed, the spines make it a good barrier plant, the pads and fruits are edible, and bees love it. Slow-growing clumps to 3' tall. Plant it away from walkways but in full sun.



### Edible of the Month:

*Lactuca sativa* L var *longifolia*

Romaine (also called Cos lettuce) tolerates heat and prefers partial shade. You can plant it now in beds or containers. The crunchy, somewhat bitter leaves are good sources of antioxidants and shine in salads, soups, wraps, and stir-frys.



## The Waterwise Lawn

This may sound like a contradiction in terms, but it is possible to have a grass lawn and still keep the water bills within reason. The first rule of course, is to assess just how much lawn you actually need to sit on, play on, or to set off your flower beds or house and then to reduce your lawn area. Next, consult with your local nursery about lower-water use evergreen grasses, (or embrace the idea of a lawn that goes dormant in the summer). Then, don't coddle the lawn—aim for one that grows slowly. Water it deeply once or twice a week, and do this early in the morning or late at night to avoid loss to evaporation. Occasionally rake out thatch and make holes with a fork so water seeps in easily. Fertilize infrequently and use a low-nitrogen formula when you do. Keep the lawn 3-4" tall and mow fairly often so the clippings are short and can be left to fall down to the ground and decompose. Learn to love the meadow-like variety created by common lawn weeds and avoid herbicides and pesticides, or pull out the weeds you hate most by hand. All of these will help to create a tough, healthy lawn, as ready as possible to face local restrictions on water use or prolonged high temperatures. When it's very hot, increase water a bit if possible, raise mowing height by about 25%, and reduce traffic on the lawn. If there are water restrictions, stop walking on the lawn, water only those areas most important to you and resign yourself to brown bits, at least temporarily.

→For alternatives to a traditional lawn, come to the June talk by Bart O'Brien.

He will present several exciting design strategies, along with some of the best plants that will enliven them. Turn your flat green ecological desert into a three dimensional paradise that will engage your senses! Bart is Director of Special Projects at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic. An authority on California flora as well as that of northern Baja California, Mexico, he is also an accomplished collector, grower, photographer, lecturer, and the co-author of three recent books on native plants.

### Planting from 6-packs:

- Choose plants that are sturdy-looking, not tall and leggy
- Avoid ones with many leaves showing damage, discoloration or brown tips
- Choose ones not yet in flower, or only starting to flower—early flowering often means stressed plants that won't develop well
- Avoid rootbound plants—gently remove one from its cell to check that the roots are well-developed but not a tangled mass
- Gently loosen the roots before planting so they will grow out into the soil
- Place the plants close enough together so that their leaves will touch when plants are full size—this will shade the roots and reduce evaporation from the soil
- Shade lightly for the first week and keep watered well to get plants established

### Upcoming events and more: *(The garden club is free and open to all)*

**June 12: Garden Club meeting** (7pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Pilgrim Place)  
*"Re-imagining the California Lawn"—Bart O'Brien*

**June 22:** Golden State Water demonstration garden field trip

**June 29:** Workshop on using greywater in the garden, 9 am to 4pm (\$50). For info  
<http://greywatercorps.com/whatwsnext.html>

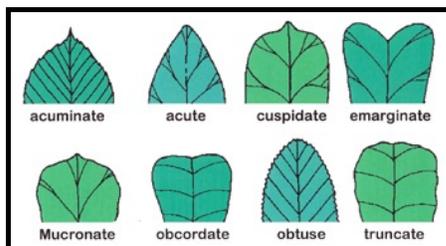
**Ongoing:** "Gateways to the Communities" exhibit at RSABG  
<http://rsabg.org/garden-news1/912-gateways>

**Garden tours:** go to [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) and type in 'spring garden tours'

### Did you know?

**Botanical Latin:** "*littoralis*" refers to coastal areas; "*sativa*" refers to cultivation; "*longifolia*" refers to long leaves.

**Plant Anatomy:** ([www.cmg.colostate.edu](http://www.cmg.colostate.edu))



### Things to do in June

#### General

- ✓ Deadhead ornamentals to keep them flowering and pick vegetables to encourage continued production
- ✓ Water container plants regularly and well; mulch beds
- ✓ Check irrigation system for problems
- ✓ Visit [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com) for good ideas (some of them are here!)

#### Pest/disease management

- ✓ Check leaf backs for waxy white spirals containing Giant Whitefly eggs. Pick off leaves, tie in plastic bags and put in trash, or blast the eggs off with a hose
- ✓ Use netting or fabric row covers to discourage birds (and squirrels). Mylar flash tape on branches may help too
- ✓ Water tomatoes deeply every 5-7 days and mulch to prevent blossom end rot due to inadequate calcium uptake

#### Edibles

- ✓ Unusual vegetables: "Golden" beets, "Atomic Red" carrots, "Sequoia" beans ([www.kitchengardenseeds.com](http://www.kitchengardenseeds.com))
- ✓ Thin tree fruit if not enough drops naturally; support heavy branches
- ✓ For fun, food, and decoration, make a teepee of scarlet runner beans

#### Ornamentals

- ✓ Order native bulbs like calochortus and dichelostemma for fall planting ([www.telosrarebulbs.com](http://www.telosrarebulbs.com))
- ✓ Hardy water lilies are easier to grow but don't bloom as long as tropical varieties. Find these and other pond plants at Van Ness Water Gardens in Upland ([www.vnwg.com](http://www.vnwg.com))