



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!

From our members: Patty Lindberg writes—In January I attended the free pruning demonstration at the Mt. Fuji Garden Center in Upland. Lindsay Shiba provided the following pruning guidelines, while demonstrating the proper techniques for pruning roses, fruit trees, and berries: WHY DO WE PRUNE?

Roses: Mid-Dec – Jan

1. For larger flowers
2. Disease control
3. More flowers

Fruit Trees: Nov – early Feb

1. Better quality fruit
2. Disease control
3. Ease of picking

Tools: hand pruners, loppers, pole pruner, saws, chainsaw, etc.

Dormant sprays: Copper sulfate, year-round oil

Fertilization: Every 4-6 weeks for roses; 4-5 times per year for fruit trees



I have been pruning my own garden for a number of years, but I learned a couple of age-related facts: A rose shrub will produce for many years, but when it stops producing the number of flowers that you want, it is time to replace it. Also, raspberries need lots of water; canes should be spaced 14" to 18" apart; after 3 years, the canes become old and produce less fruit, so it is then time to cut the old canes and let new canes take over.

February Field trip: Doug McGoon (at left) showing us how he and wife Judy compost. Fabulous garden!

Gardening with Natives -

How to Have a Water-wise Garden That's Pretty As Well

Drought-tolerant landscaping need not look spartan. There are hundreds of vibrant native wildflowers and blooming shrubs (even Death Valley looks pretty in springtime.) But you won't find them in six packs at Home Depot, so this project takes some planning.

Penstemons resemble snapdragons, but are more brilliantly colored, they don't need much water, they love our sandy soil, and they come back every year on their own. *Penstemon spectabilis* is our local native.

Salvias (sages) come in every size and color imaginable. They smell good, attract hummingbirds, and are often deerproof (as are most herby things like lavender and rosemary). Mediterranean sages can be 6' tall, with long bloom periods and fabulous colors. Many of our local varieties are short, bushy, and bloom like crazy. *S. gregii* (Autumn Sage) is a fat little plant a couple of feet high, that will bloom six months out of the year. Cultivars range from vivid

Ornamental of the Month:

Hardenbergia violacea

Lilac vine is an Australian native. It's a rapid grower to 20 ft, covered in clusters of small, purple (or white or pink) sweet pea-type flowers in winter, with leathery leaves. Tolerates part shade and moderate water. Can cover a trellis rapidly!



Edible of the Month:

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary is a favorite culinary herb and also quite ornamental. Although some varieties are prostrate ground covers, the one in the photo has grown from a 1 gal pot to a 4x6x4ft tall shrub in 5 years. Tolerates light shade and low water. Smells great--bees love it.



red, pink, white, and peach to red and white 'Hot Lips', a real showstopper. Glowing blue Cleveland Sage spreads close to the ground, is intensely fragrant, and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Remember, tho, that water-wise does not mean maintenance-free. These woody perennials are so self-reliant that many gardeners forget to cut them back after they bloom, and bushes of brown sticks remain for months, like dead Christmas trees at the curb in January. A little winter pruning makes a world of difference.

California's wildflowers are legendary, and you can have sweeps of color year round. California **poppies** are no longer just orange. Hybrids can be white, pink, crimson. Blue **Gilia** glows in springtime, needs no attention, then reseeds itself to come back the following year. **Heuchera's** (Coral Bells) clusters of ruffley foliage form a handsome ground cover year round. Their small but brilliant blooms last for a good month and they thrive in dry shade. (Do plan for some shade for your house or your lower water bill will be offset by a monstrous air conditioning bill).

Ceanothus is a larger shrub that comes in many sizes, shapes and shades of blue. **Matilija Poppy** grows 6' tall in a season and produces enormous white flowers that resemble fried eggs. It's spectacular, though it spreads and can be a thug--cut it to the ground every winter or it will run amok.

Creating a native landscape from scratch requires planning to prevent your garden from deteriorating into gray chaparral. Look through picture books and list something that blooms every month of the year, so you don't have a breathtaking show in spring and a dreary horizon of decomposed granite the rest of the year. For inspiration, we'll be taking a field trip to the Bernard Field Station, and the RSABG is always a joy (plus they actually sell native plants on site.) For reassurance that a native landscape can be lush and colorful, visit the **Sam and Alfreda Maloof Garden** in Alta Loma. Five acres of plants get watered once a week, period, and there's nothing drab about it, ever. A native garden requires some thought, but you can look forward to many relaxing afternoons watching the birds instead of weeding. -Mia Myers (SmartSeedStore.com)

(editor's note: See "California natives for your garden" on the SC website)

Favorite Quote:"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses." *Abraham Lincoln*

Upcoming events:

(The garden club is free and open to all)

Mar 13: Garden Club meeting (7pm, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, Pilgrim Place) *"The positive and negative effects of transforming traditional non-native gardens to native gardens"*, a talk by Wallace Meyer, Director of the Bernard Field Station

Mar 30: Field trip to Bernard Field Station

Mar 9-June 10: *"When They Were Wild: Recapturing California's Wildflower Heritage"*; exhibit at the Huntington Library

Mar 15-17: Monster Tomato and Pepper Plant Sale at the Fullerton Arboretum (www.fullertonarboretum.org)

April 6-7: Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour, Los Angeles. Self-guided, 40 homes and two public gardens (theodorepayne.org)

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: 'violacea' refers to a purple color; for *Hardenbergia*, the flowers; in other plants, it might refer to stems or leaves. "Officinalis" refers to pharmacy (officina) and means "medicinal".

Plant Anatomy: most leaves have a broad, flat part called a "blade" and a stalk (the "petiole") that attaches it to the stem. If the blade is attached directly to the stem the leaf is said to be "sessile".

Things to do in March

General

- ✓ Dig compost into your beds
- ✓ Replenish mulch
- ✓ Check irrigation system/plan to install drip, weather sensor timers

Pest management

- ✓ Put copper bands around tree trunks to keep off snails (gives them a shock) or hand pick them
- ✓ Edge beds with plants that attract beneficial insects: asters, yarrow, chamomile, marigold, feverfew
- ✓ Wash aphids off plants; handpick or wash off other pests
- ✓ Cut off infested leaves or stems and put in trash--don't compost!

Edibles

- ✓ Plant citrus
- ✓ Plant rosemary, sage, thyme, tarragon; sow parsley, arugula, cilantro, dill
- ✓ Plant berries; fertilize existing ones
- ✓ Plant asparagus, artichokes, potatoes, onion sets

Ornamentals

- ✓ Acidify soil with ammonium sulfate or cottonseed meal for blue hydrangeas
- ✓ Plant calla, canna, daylilies
- ✓ Divide clumps of perennials: chrysanthemums, daylilies, agapanthus, Shasta daisies
- ✓ Prune camellias after bloom--remove dead wood, shape gently, open up center of shrub
- ✓ Increase salvia, pelargoniums and herbs by rooting softwood cuttings