



Garden Notes

www.sustainableclaremont.org

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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!



Wildlife in the Garden: While we usually hope for the minimum number of visits to our gardens by coyotes, rabbits, racoons, skunks, opossums, and squirrels, most of us quite enjoy seeing birds, bees and, of course, butterflies. You can encourage these last by growing plants that provide nectar for adults and ones that provide food for their caterpillars (not always the same).



1. Provide a sunny spot protected from wind, and place a few rocks there to absorb heat and provide a place for the butterflies to sit and warm up.



2. Some butterflies like to drink water and absorb nutrients from wet soil (called "puddling") so keep a small area muddy.



3. Plant a variety of species so there are flowers for most of the year, and plant them in largish clumps.

4. Leave a weedy patch for additional habitat.
5. Don't use any pesticides. Be OK with having leaves chewed by the larvae.



6. Try *Buddleia* (butterfly bush) or lantana which provide nectar for adults, passion flower which feeds Gulf Fritillary larvae, and *Asclepias* species (milkweeds) which support Monarch caterpillars. For more, see <http://californiagardenclubs.com/content/butterflies>.

www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/habitat/butterflies.php



Photographs (top to bottom: all taken at the Bernard Field Station)

- Painted Lady on Yerba santa
- Skipper on Goldenbush
- Gray Hairstreak on storksbill (a common weed)
- Green Hairstreak
- Monarch caterpillar on native milkweed
- Pipevine swallowtail

Favorite quote (courtesy of Sharron Neyer)

"When I go into the garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ornamental of the Month: *Clivia miniata*



Clivia forms clumps of 2 ft evergreen, strap-shaped leaves. Flowers are usually orange. Blooms in late winter or spring for a few weeks, followed by long-lasting red berries. Easy to grow in shade in the ground or in pots with low to moderate water. Mine bloom every year without fertilizing or dividing. Mealybug can be a pest.

Edible of the Month:

Rheum rhabarbarum



Rhubarb is a long-lived perennial with poisonous leaf blades but the leaf stalks are tart and delicious stewed with sugar to make pies or dipped in sugar and eaten raw. Plant in part shade in the coolest area of the garden. Don't pick leaves the first year. Stop harvesting if the stalks become thin, and let the plant rest. Needs good drainage and fertilizing, along with regular water and mulching to do its best.

Member question: How can my garden become a Certified Wildlife habitat? This is actually pretty easy to do and most of us have already met the requirements. The basics are these: provide several sources each of food, water, shelter, places to raise young, and use some sustainable gardening methods. For details, go to www.nwf.org/nwfgarden . Fill out the form for certification and pay a fee for the sign, and that's it.

Claremont Eclectic: A Tour of Six Local Gardens

Visit six outstanding and varied local gardens on **Sunday, April 6**, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Included in the ticket price of \$25 is admission to Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, as well as to the special "Tomatomania" event. Tickets are limited and can be purchased online (www.sustainableclaremont.org, or www.rsabg.org) up to the night before the tour, or on the day of the event at RSABG. Ticket holders can sign in at RSABG as early as 10:00 a.m. to pick up a brochure about the individual gardens and a map and to enjoy the RSABG grounds before the Garden Tour begins at 1:00 pm

This is a fundraiser for Claremont United Church of Christ, the Sustainable Claremont Garden Club, and Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden.

 **Volunteers** are needed to act as docents for the tour gardens. If you are willing to help, please email gardenclub@sustainableclaremont.org.

Considering having your trees pruned?

Go to www.treesaregood.org for info on what constitutes good pruning so you can talk knowledgeably to a trimmer and determine if he is good.

Strawberries (recommended by Sunset magazine):

Raspberry Shortcake (good for containers, www.brazelberries.com)

Mara des Bois (alpine, intense flavor, www.edenbrothers.com)

Sequoia (large, June-bearing, sweet, also from Eden Bros)

Seascape (everbearing, good in containers)

Musk variety (aromatic, spread by runners <http://muskstrawberries.com/>)

Golden Alexandria (alpine, tiny everbearing, good in shade <http://fraisesdesbois.com/varieties/>)

Upcoming events and more

Mar 8: Armstrong Nursery—Gardening for Beginners, 9 am, free

Mar 12: Garden Club meeting, 7-9 pm Napier Center at Pilgrim Place, "Edible Garden Tidbits" with master gardener Connie Newport

Mar 15: Armstrong Nursery—Tomato Basics, 9 am, free

Mar 22: Armstrong Nursery—Herb and Veggie Basics, 9am, free

Mar 22-23: Descanso Gardens Cherry Blossom Festival 9am to 4pm both days, <http://www.descansogardens.org/>. Camellias, daffodils, magnolias throughout March, \$9 general, \$6 senior

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "*Clivia*" is named for Lady Charlotte Florentine Clive; "*miniata*" means "flame scarlet"

Plant miscellanea: Some perennials, such as fibrous begonias, impatiens, California poppies, and pansies, flower so quickly from seed that they are treated like annuals but they will live more than one year if treated well.

Things to do in March

General

✓ Continue to look at catalogs and order seeds for new and heirloom varieties

Pest/disease management

✓ Reduce mosquito habitat: empty any standing water in pots, dishes, etc and clean out birdbaths regularly too:

Edibles

✓ Plant tomatoes out when nights are reliably over 50 °F

✓ Maximize space by interplanting a slower growing crop like carrots with a faster growing one like radishes

✓ Plant blueberries in large pots with acidic potting mix. Water and fertilize regularly. Half to full day sun

Ornamentals

✓ Cut back ornamental grasses—tie leaves together firmly about 1ft up, then cut off to about 4" tall

✓ Time to prune away cold-damaged leaves or branches on shrubs

✓ Plant coral bells, penstemon, primroses, yarrow; seed for most annuals

✓ Remove dead flowers from spring bulbs but leave foliage to store energy for next year; remove leaves when brown

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