



Garden Notes

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Welcome to the SC Garden Club newsletter!

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

Reminder of time change! Garden Club meetings now start at 6:30 to allow time for socializing and snacks before the talk. The presentation will start at 7pm and the meetings will end between 8 and 8:30pm depending on the length of the talk, and the amount of discussion and conversation.

Garden Club lending library now open!



Right from the start, we have wanted to have a lending library of garden books and now at long last, due to the efforts of **Patty Lindberg**, it is open! Claremont Heritage kindly gave us space in their library in the Garner House in Memorial Park. We now have about 100 donated books, along with some magazines. All you need to do is fill out a library card and you can check out the books M-F, 9am to 1pm.



Nancy Hamlett wrote: The Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden at UCLA (<http://www.botgard.ucla.edu/>) houses plants used for undergraduate teaching and research including unusual plants from all over the world such as this amazing bromeliad. There are guided tours, or you can download a self-guided tour from the website. The garden is small, so I'm not sure I'd make a special trip just to see it, but if you're out Westwood way, it's a nice place to visit.

Member question: "What is a weed?"

Let's start with a quote (courtesy of Sharron Neyer):

"What we call a weed is in fact merely a plant growing where we do not want it."

E.J. Salisbury, *The Living Garden*, 1935

Ornamental of the Month

Penstemon spectabilis



Showy penstemon is one of our most beautiful native plants. This photo was taken at the Bernard Field Station so you know they are drought-tolerant and pretty much care-free. They are 3ft evergreen perennials with grayish leaves arranged opposite each other, and bloom April through June in full sun. Insects love them and some sleep in the flowers (you can see one doing that here)!

Edible of the Month

Brassica oleracea var. botrytis



Romanesco broccoli is a cauliflower variety with a lovely green color and fantastic spiky shape. Grow just like other cauliflowers. Break apart, steam till tender, dress with vinaigrette made with garlic, capers, and olives, cool. Or break apart, coat with olive oil, season with salt, pepper and garlic, roast at 425 degrees 15-20 min.

(Photo from Wikipedia)

There isn't a clear definition of a weed, apart from that in the quotation above. Consider dandelions and clover which are often considered weeds. Dandelions are cultivated as a leaf vegetable and for medicine; clover provides food for grazing animals, nectar for bees, and replenishes nitrogen in the soil. Wheat growing as a crop is desirable; in my flower beds it is not. In a garden, poppies are desirable; in a wheat field they are not.



Most plants considered weeds are survivors

which require no special treatment to grow; they are often considered invasive like the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*, above right, photo from Wikipedia). Plants that are well-behaved where they evolved can become invasive weeds if transplanted to other areas without their natural controls.

You may think even pretty plants are weeds if:

- you didn't plant them
- they compete for the sun/soil/water your other plants need
- they provide homes for insect pests and diseases that infect other plants
- they are poisonous or thorny (climbing asparagus is a pest in my garden)
- they reproduce so freely that seedlings are a massive undertaking to remove (I have pulled out thousands of privet seedlings)

So how can you cope with weeds as defined above? You can:

- learn to love them for their good qualities—dandelions are actually pretty and a lawn with many species is more interesting and ecologically friendly
- plant thickly or mulch so that there isn't room for seeds to take hold
- patrol regularly and pull up weeds as soon as you see them
- be sure they aren't "volunteers" that you might want, tho—I have a crepe myrtle, a wisteria, and two Japanese maples that were volunteers
- avoid plants that self-sow too vigorously or remove flowers or fruit before they drop (keep those privets pruned!)
- If all else fails, use the least toxic herbicide you can find

 **Share what you've discovered** about the flower and vegetable varieties you tried this year—the great and the not-so-great—with other garden club members. Send us your observations to include in the next newsletter.

Upcoming events and more

Oct 4: RSABG fall planting festival <http://www.rsabg.org/upcoming-events>

Oct 6: Sustainable Claremont Annual Meeting, Padua Hills Theater, 4467 Padua Ave, Claremont, 7-9 pm. The theme for the exhibitor tables (7-7:30) is "DRIP through this drought!" Free and open to all.

Oct 8: Garden Club "Fall Planting-winter veggies and ornamentals", talk by Jacquieline Evans (Armstrong Garden Center), Pilgrim Place, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, 6:30-8:30 pm

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

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: No surprise that "spectabilis" means "spectacular". And "botrytis" refers to clusters.

Plant miscellanea: When large cells ("bulliform cells") on the upper surface of many grass leaves lose water due to drought, the outer edges of the leaves roll inward, protecting the surface from the sun and reducing evaporative water loss.

Things to do in October

General

- ✓ Readjust water controllers
- ✓ Continue to pull out dead annuals and vegetables and compost
- ✓ Peruse seed catalogs

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Sprinkle moth balls (moth crystals if there are children about) around plants damaged by rabbits, cats, dog, or opossums
- ✓ To prevent gopher or mole damage, put ½ inch mesh several inches below the surface

Edibles

- ✓ Don't feed fruit trees—it may force them into growth too early
- ✓ Reduce water to fruit trees, but don't let dry out
- ✓ Plant cole crop seedlings; beets, peas, radishes, spinach, chard seed; seed potatoes; artichokes and cane fruit

Ornamentals

- ✓ Think about what native plants to buy for planting in November
- ✓ As you walk around, notice plants with good fall color to consider for your garden
- ✓ Divide clivia, iris, daylilies, ginger, gladioli, naked ladies
- ✓ Prune and clean up pelargoniums
- ✓ Aerate and de-thatch lawns

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>