



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!**

Time change! Garden Club meetings will 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 we engage in.

Favorite quote: *(chosen after I saw one in my garden)*

"A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books."

Walt Whitman

 **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.



At left, one of my favorites at the recent cactus and succulent show at the LA Arboretum.

Hedges: Why hedges? To provide privacy, to set off an area, to create a decorative barrier, to provide security, to act as a windbreak. Hedges often look better than fences and provide a pleasant background to planting beds. They can help confuse the eye about property boundaries and make your garden look larger. But they do require time to grow and regular maintenance to look their best. Depending on the purpose of the hedge, you might choose evergreen or deciduous plants, ones that tolerate shearing into a formal structure or ones that have a more relaxed effect, ones that grow rapidly or slowly, tall or short. The choices are many. The most common plants for formal hedges around Claremont are privet for tall hedges, and boxwood for low ones. Informal hedges can produce flowers or fruit. You can see California natives for informal hedges at http://www.laspilitas.com/garden/California_native_hedges.html. Formal hedges should be pruned so that they are narrower at the top than at the bottom to be sure the whole plant gets light. To look their best, they need careful and regular attention. A good source of information on planting and care is at http://landscaping.about.com/od/hedgesfences/a/hedge_plants.htm.

Ornamental of the Month

Ribes speciosum



Fuchsia-flowered gooseberry is a local native shrub to 6ft x 5ft. Briefly deciduous. Glossy, dark green, 2 inch leaves. Spring flowers; red edible fruit. Thorns and bristles on stems--good barrier plant. Part sun to shade, no water to moderate water. The one pictured is at the Bernard Field Station. Favorite of hummingbirds.

Edible of the Month

Portulaca oleracea



Purslane is a common lawn weed, but is also cultivated (available at SuperKing). Annual succulent with red stems and fleshy leaves, easy to grow in pots or as ground cover in vegetable beds. Leaves a bit salty and sour--good in salads, stir-fried, soups, stews, or cooked like spinach. Good source of omega 3 fatty acids, vitamin A and E. Recipes at <http://www.epicurious.com>.
Photo from Wikipedia

The sign at right made me laugh:

What's a hybrid? Hybrids are the result of crossing two different species or varieties (the most famous animal hybrid is the mule). There is a lot of natural hybridization in the wild, and plant breeders have worked hard to create commercial hybrids with greater size, beauty, disease-resistance, productivity, taste, and so on (one is the Early Girl tomato). Hybrids are sometimes sterile, but most often reproduce quite well. The problem is that the offspring generally look like one or the other of the parents of the hybrid and not like the hybrid itself. Given enough time and effort on the part of plant breeders, hybrids can sometimes evolve to become true-breeding, but this is rare. If you want more of a particular hybrid variety, buy more hybrid seed or plants, or root some cuttings. You can make your own hybrids by hand-pollinating the stigma of one true-breeding variety with pollen from another true-breeding variety and see if the resulting offspring have any special characteristics (often they don't, but sometimes, jackpot!).



Saving seeds: now is a good time to start saving seeds of plants you like. Don't collect seed from hybrids (see above). If you have several varieties of a plant, they may cross-pollinate so that the seeds of a plant you like may not completely resemble the parent. If you want to be sure they do, then you need to grow the different varieties far apart, or bag the flowers so they self-pollinate, or plant varieties that flower at different times. In general, you should let seeds mature on the plant, remove them from the fruit (anything that produces seeds, from a walnut to a rose hip, is a fruit) and store them in labeled, unsealed envelopes in a cool, dry place until planting time. There is an excellent source of information on seed saving at <http://www.howtosaveseeds.com/>.

Double duty: You can take advantage of the fact that radishes grow faster than carrots by mixing the seed and sowing it in the same area. Be sure the soil is lump-free or the carrots will "fork". The radishes will be ready in about a month (pull them out carefully so you don't disturb the carrots). The carrots will be ready in about two months. A recipe for cream of carrot soup is at the Old Farmer's Almanac: <http://www.almanac.com/recipe/cream-carrot-soup-0>

Did you know?

Botanical Latin: "Speciosum" means showy, and, in full bloom, the fuschia-flowered gooseberry definitely is!

Plant miscellanea: Each strawberry you eat is a multiple fruit. The red, fleshy, sweet part is really the enlarged end of the stem, and the true fruits are the small, hard parts usually thought of as seeds. Each of these fruits contains a single seed. Even if bred to be without seeds, the hard fruit walls remain, so no non-crunchy strawberries are on the horizon.

Things to do in September

General

- ✓ Keep weeding!
- ✓ Water compost heaps every so often or decomposition will stop

Pest/disease management

- ✓ Put out saucers of clean water every few days for birds and lizards (they'll eat pests)
- ✓ In morning, use water to blast aphids, whitefly off top and bottom of leaves

Edibles

- ✓ Figs won't ripen once picked so let them soften on the tree
- ✓ Prune fig trees right after harvest
- ✓ Grapes and raisins can be toxic to dogs, so clean up dropped fruit

Ornamentals

- ✓ Pull out spent annuals; replace with celosia, zinnia, ageratum, begonia
- ✓ If you see yellow patches on snake plants or orchid cactus, move them to a shadier area
- ✓ Consider a crape myrtle for a small, water-wise flowering tree
- ✓ Use sticks to mark sites where bulbs are planted, interplant with annuals
- ✓ Fertilize Christmas cactus
- ✓ Lightly prune roses; give a last feed

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>

Upcoming events and more

Sept 8: A talk about the new Drought Resistant Irrigation Program

(DRIP) 420 N Harvard Ave, 7-8:30 pm

Sept 10: Garden Club—"Soils, plants and water relationships", talk by

Juan Garcia (sponsored by MWD), Pilgrim Place, Napier Center, 660 Avery Rd, 6:30-8:30 pm

Sept 13: Seed swap and talk by master gardener, Ovitt Family Community

Library, 215 East C St, Ontario, 10 am-noon

Sept 20,21: Orchid show and sale, South Coast Botanic Garden,

<http://www.southbayorchidsociety.com/Show/index.html>

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

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