

The Gardeners' Club

June 2010

June Meeting: Designing Your Edible Front Yard

You are in for a treat - we are pleased to welcome back Lisa McAndrews as our speaker this month. Lisa is a longtime horticulture educator at Cabrillo College and a landscape architect. At Cabrillo, she teaches a course called Edible Landscaping, focusing on how to grow and harvest the diversity of edible plants that can be grown locally, including fruits, nuts, berries, vegetables, herbs, native plants and weeds. With people increasingly interested in local, organic food and needing to tighten budgets, a growing trend in gardening is to include edible in planted landscape around homes. We are moving away from the old idea that beautiful gardens have to be solely ornamental, and edible gardens have to be not-so-attractive and in a separate location. Consider planning and planting a blended garden with lots of edibles.

That doesn't mean you have to dig up your front lawn and replace it with veggies, although some people advocate doing just that (I did it in 1973, had a bumper crop, and got into BIG trouble with my landlord). See "Lose the Lawn" on Page 4. But you can have your cake...er, I mean, lawn...and eat it, too. An edible landscape design can incorporate any garden style and can include anywhere from 1-100% edible species.

Although the process for planning an edible landscape is the same as planning an ornamental landscape, you might feel overwhelmed with the emphasis on edibles. Having Lisa help us with information and creative thinking will help.



Monthly Meeting
Thurs., June 10th

7:00 p.m.

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Drive

Refreshments will be served,
thanks to Sim Gilbert (snack) and
Pat Williams (dessert).

Hungry for information before the meeting? Rosalind Creasy (www.rosalindcreasy.com/edible-landscapingbasics), credited with starting the edible landscaping revival, offers The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping and the Edible Garden Series, separate volumes on salad gardens, Italian gardens, heirloom gardens, and more, with a wealth of ideas. If you really DO want to dispense with your lawn, check out the newly revised version of Edible Estates: Attack on the Front Lawn (Allen, Balmori and Haeg). The slideshow at Treehuggers (www.treehugger.com/files/2009/05/18-beautiful-edible-landscaping-plants.php) features eighteen beautiful edible plants for inspiration. There are some plants there that are unfamiliar - you might want to try something new. For even more of the unusual, visit http://www.anniesannuals.com/special_pgs/eblds/100527/email.htm for *Edible Oddibles!* *Tasty Tales of the Strangely Scrumptious.*

Buckwheat: A Good Summer Cover Crop for Home Gardens

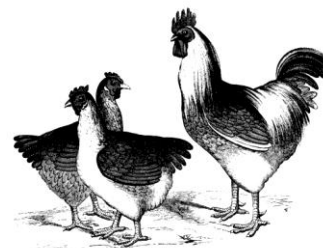
Buckwheat is a good summer cover crop to provide “green manure” to enhance your soil fertility and texture. Buckwheat is a fast-growing, warm-season, succulent, broad-leafed annual plant that can smother out weeds, protect the soil surface and provide habitat for pollinating and other beneficial insects. It doesn’t require much water and tolerates poor fertility. It is particularly efficient in increasing phosphorus availability. Because it grows so fast, buckwheat is ideal for planting in places that might be left bare over the summer, such as spare garden beds whose spring crops are harvested and fall crops are yet to be planted.



Buckwheat reaches the flowering stage at about two to four feet high, in as little as four to five weeks. It continues to flower for several weeks, then sets seed two to three weeks after flowering. Buckwheat seeds are eaten by ground dwelling birds including quail. But if you don’t want it to spread on its own, pull it out or chop it down before it sets seed. You can plow it under after flowering in July or August, then plant leafy salad greens or overwintering carrots or onions. *Source: Oregon State University Extension.*

Growing Forage for Chickens

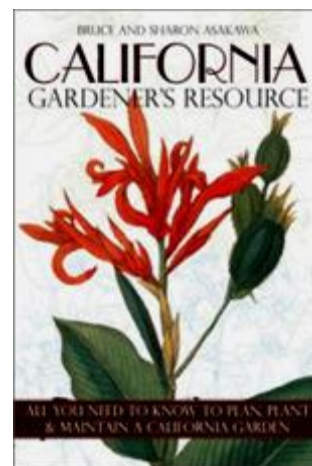
My chickens are ill-behaved; free-range, they eat all sorts of forbidden things in my garden, including prized succulents. I love them anyway. So much so that I think I’ll plant Peaceful Valley’s New Improved Omega 3 Chicken Forage Blend (www.groworganic.com). As you know, Omega-3 fatty acids are an important component of a healthy diet. One way to get this substance in our food is to eat eggs from chickens raised on a diet that promotes the formation of Omega-3's right in the egg. Peaceful Valley’s blend is planted for chicken forage to achieve this high Omega-3 result. But my chooks will STILL eat my succulents.



Bookshop Santa Cruz Gardening Book Suggestions

Uh-oh...Bookshop’s summer newsletter is out. They’ve got some great new gardening book recommendations, and as soon as I finish THIS newsletter, I’m going downtown and buying this one, California Gardener's Resource: All You Need to Know to Plan, Plant, and Maintain a California Garden by Bruce and Sharon Asakawa. Customized to the needs of California gardeners, twelve popular plant categories are covered—including edibles, perennials and water-wise

selections—and each of those sections has its own monthly list of garden tasks, reminders, and suggestions. It is filled with need-to-know information from popular gardening experts who include their collective wisdom in one complete guide.



Mélange

mé·lange (mā lônzh', -lônj'; -länzh', -länj')

Definition: odds & ends; a motley assortment of things; a mixture or medley; hodgepodge.

On the Summer Solstice, around June 21st, we have around 15 Hours of Daylight and 9 Hours of Nighttime. After, the shortening of the days signals plants, "Hey, it's time to reproduce!", and so they'll begin the process of bearing, fruiting and seeding.

"In June, as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them."

- Aldo Leopold



Here's a suggestion from the newsletter of Bonnie Plants (www.bonnieplants.com): The pretty chard that you planted is even prettier in a vase. Something in the chard must keep the water from getting cloudy. Use it as an impressive yet inexpensive centerpiece.

Old CDs to keep birds away!

If you've ever been frustrated with birds eating all the fruit off of your fruit trees, try this: reuse old CDs which are scratched, which you no longer listen to, or which AOL sent you one too many of, and hang them from branches using fishing line. The light reflecting off the CDs bothers the birds enough to keep them away from the fruit. Or so they

Tip

Does your lettuce bolt in the summer heat? Try planting tall flowers like Nicotiana (flowering tobacco) and cleome (spider flower) with lettuce to give it the light shade it in which it best grows.

The Perfect Father's Day Gift?



This bone china Urban Gnome, unlike its pointy-headed predecessors, is very, very cool, but at £49.50 (www.vitaminliving.com/products/gnomes) it is way out of the price range for most of us. Consider keeping a gardening dad hydrated, and keeping plastic water bottles out of the landfill and the ocean, by gifting him a stainless steel reusable water bottle by EarthLust. Look for one in a local store. For a great price and selection (e.g., graphics of trees, rhodies, leaves, bamboo, dragonflies, butterflies, lotus, cranes, hawks, etc.) go to www.getngreen.com.

A Garden of Poetry and Music

Saturday, June 26, 12 noon - 2 pm
Alan Chadwick Garden, UCSC

Set aside time for an afternoon in the Garden as we listen to the poems and tunes of the region's artists at this free event. The Friends will provide snacks. Questions? Call 831.459-3240 or email casfs@ucsc.edu.

EARTHLUST



Lose the Lawn

Garden With Mother Nature, Not Against Her

by Arlie Middlebrook

As Americans, we spend \$27 billion per year caring for our turf and lawns --that's 10 times than what we spend on school textbooks!

America has lost 30 percent of its songbirds. Amphibians are especially susceptible to pesticides and herbicides, which keep grass free of weeds and bugs. Without the bugs, there's no food for the toads. Bye! Bye!

In the West, most homeowners pour up to 60 percent of their household water on their lawns, trees and shrubs. Did you know that a 25' x 40' lawn needs 10,000 gallons of water each summer?

At most home product stores, nearly 25 percent of aisle space is devoted to lawn care products. Rows of chemicals, lawn mowers and other gas-powered devices abound. On the weekends, otherwise quiet neighborhoods are filled with the rancor of power mowers, edgers, power pruners and leaf blowers. The typical lawn mower spews out 20 times the amount of pollution than the average car on the road today.

Americans use 4.5 billion pounds of toxic pesticides a year in home gardens --more per acre than is used in agriculture.

Lawns are TMT - Too Much Trouble: they waste water we don't have, they create yard waste, which must be disposed of, they cost thousands of dollars to maintain, and they require poisons to stay green!

A cost-benefit analysis comparing natives to a conventional lawn after 20 years reflected an 80 percent savings in labor costs. Not to mention water savings or benefits to the environment. Let's bury the lawn aesthetic once and for all and instead use nature without abusing her. We can learn how native plants evolved as an ecological system through the process of natural selection without any input from human beings, and by employing principles of design and science; we can create a garden that is inspired by nature and fits in beautifully in our neighborhood. When designed and built properly, any of these gardens can be beautiful, inexpensive and easy to maintain solutions to the TMT lawn.

But perhaps, more importantly you'll be gardening with mother nature, not against her.

(Reprinted with permission)



What a glorious year for roses, isn't it, with all of the rain we've had? But it's also a big year for blackspot. A number of studies, including one from the Texas A&M Research Station, have shown cornmeal to be effective as a fungicide, and rose gardeners have found it to be particularly effective on blackspot disease. You can use the common cornmeal that is available at the grocery store, but it is less expensive to purchase horticultural cornmeal from a feed and seed store. Somehow cornmeal is able to attract a member of the *Trichoderma* fungus family, which is a good fungus that kills off disease causing fungi in a matter of weeks. Work 2 pounds of cornmeal into the soil for every 100 square feet. Sprinkle a handful of cornmeal around the base of each rosebush, gently working the meal to the loose soil. Water well, to activate the fungus killing properties.



Our Decidedly Un-Bored Board

The May Board meeting was quite a treat! Mixing work with a pleasurable evening, we were delighted to tour Bill Patterson's garden and chicken coop. He wined and dined us in a style to which we could get accustomed. He then volunteered to join the Board, in the newly created position of "Member at Large". We welcome Bill and his fresh ideas and energy! We all agreed that the "Member at Large" position could be offered to any of you members who have an interest in being more involved in the Club but can't commit to the full responsibilities of a position. It's a good way to get your feet wet and to influence the Club's operations and activities.

Perhaps you'd care to join us at the next meeting? It will be on Monday, June 28th, hosted by Debbie Kindle with a tour of her garden at 6pm and the business meeting at 6:30pm. Her address is 3320 Putter Dr., Soquel. As always, any member is welcome to attend.



www.thegardenersclub.org

Thanks to the persistence and effort of Cherry Thompson and the pro bono work of her husband Joe (Computer Frustration Specialist, www.joehometech.com, 247-1150) we now have an up-and-running web site. You can go to the internet for info about upcoming meetings and archives of the newsletters. We also have a Yahoo group, thegardenersclub. The purpose of the group is to communicate with other members of the club between meetings and newsletters. For instance, you just heard about a surprise 2-day plant clearance sale, or you need emergency advice on a horticultural crisis. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thegardenersclub>.

pvac 37 Sudden Street, Watsonville, CA 95076
pajaro valley (831) 722-3062 www.pvarts.org
arts council and gallery

SCULPTURE IS



Sierra Azul's astounding 2-acre demonstration garden is the perfect setting for the eagerly anticipated annual outdoor exhibition of regional artists' sculptures, "Sculpture Is". Stroll through the gardens (bring your camera), see Mediterranean gardening at its best, bring home a plant you can't live without and see art and nature combined in an extraordinary fashion. Admission and inspiration are free. Exhibit runs from May 31 – October 31.

[Sierra Azul Nursery and Gardens](#),
2660 E. Lake Ave., Watsonville,
763-0939.





Given Poems: Sabbath 2002 V

The cherries turn ripe, ripe, and the birds come: red-headed and red-bellied woodpeckers, blue jays, cedar waxwings, robins--beautiful, hungry, wild in our domestic tree. I pick with the birds, gathering the red cherries alight among the dark leaves, my hands so sticky with juice the fruit will hardly drop from them into the pail. The birds pick as I pick, all of us delighted in the weighty heights--the fruit red ripe, the green leaves, the blue sky and white clouds, all tending to flight--making the most of this sweetness against the time where there will be none.

~Wendell Berry

The Gardeners' Club

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www.thegardenersclub.org

It's easy-peasy to join our club. Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to 270 Hames Road, #50, Corralitos, CA 95076. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange Hall, 255 Mar Vista Drive, Aptos. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

