

# The Gardeners' Club

## February 2011

### Happy In Bonsai

We are pleased to welcome Don White to our February meeting. Don has been practicing bonsai for over 35 years. He became interested in bonsai in 1960 while stationed in the army in Korea, making a few trips to Japan. His wife of 41 years, Kathy, does Ikebana, and helps with the bonsai as well. They belong to 5 bonsai clubs, including Santa Cruz, Watsonville, San Jose, Salinas, and the Bay Area Satsuki Asso. They maintain over 300 trees in their own collection (wow!) and try to grow hibiscus also.

Don has been teaching bonsai for 10 years, which include monthly work shops at Alladin Nursery in Corralitos. He gives demonstrations at various organizations, including 15 years at the Santa Cruz County Fair. He has also written articles on bonsai.

Don's main sensei (teacher/mentor) since 1980 is Katsumi Kinoshita from Monterey. He has also studied in various workshops here in the United States with some of the top visiting Japanese and European Masters. At our meeting, Don will discuss the philosophy of bonsai, a bit of history, the types of plants used and how we obtain material for bonsai. He'll explain why we prune a certain way to create the outline of the tree and to maintain it



and how to keep the plant alive in those mysterious small pots. He'll talk about soil composition, feeding, watering, and a bit on how a tree is exhibited. The goal of bonsai is to take a bush and make it look like a miniature tree, to take a young plant and make it look

old, an old plant and make it look older and an older plant and make it look ancient. Don will bring bonsai examples, including a 400 year old California juniper, and will show us tools and different gauges of wire. He will demonstrate on a plant using a set of tools and some different gauges of wire.

Don says he likes to "wing it" at meetings and just have fun. He signs off all of his e-mail messages with "HIB" (Happy in Bonsai). Come be happy in bonsai with all of us at the February meeting!

**Happy  
Bonsai Meeting**  
**Thursday,  
February 10th  
7:00 pm**  
**Aptos Grange  
2555 Mar  
Vista Dr.**

**Thank you to Mary Balian for  
dessert, Nancy Adams for snack  
and for Suzanne Mercado for  
juice.**



The Lunar New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. We'll usher in the Year of the Rabbit, or the Year of the Hare, on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. I'm



trying to feel a sense of celebration, but as I write this, despite rabbit fencing everywhere, two wild rabbits are

dancing in my yard, and the perennials I optimistically put in the ground weeks ago are nibbled to nubs.

Well, there is no point in dwelling on losses, so perhaps I should consider something more positive. For instance, each culture has its own thoughts on which fruits and vegetables are appropriate for specific events, so perhaps learning about what's auspicious for the Lunar New Year will help me along the road to rabbit forgiveness.

Out in a wine barrel in my backyard my dwarf clementine tree is laden with seedless mandarin oranges, and this is indeed a good sign. Oranges and mandarin oranges, because they are round and golden, symbolize the sun and connect with the *yang* principle, which represents the positive and generative force in nature. Thus oranges are considered important symbols for the new year. The Cantonese name translates to "the lucky tree bearing fruits", and an appropriate gift is a potted tree. You can even search for a bonsai mandarin orange.



The narcissus, the lovely and easy to grow daffodil, is a symbol of good fortune and prosperity, so it is a beloved flower of the Chinese New Year. Also, it is listed on the Better Homes and Gardens' Editors' Picks of Rabbit Resistant Plants ([www.bhg.com/gardening/pests/animal/editors-picks-top-rabbit-resistant-plants](http://www.bhg.com/gardening/pests/animal/editors-picks-top-rabbit-resistant-plants)), so that makes it double lucky!

The color red, which is believed to scare off evil spirits and mythical beasts, is popular in Lunar New Year arrangements. The flowering quince is known for its beautiful flowers that bloom on the leafless stems of the plant in the late winter through spring, and fortunate

## The Year of the Rabbit

A Sigh from Mrs. MacGregor (a.k.a. Lise Bixler)



tinguri.deviantart.com

indeed are those of us whose quince produce showy, spectacular flowers in a bright red color (other blossom colors are white or pink).

This is another rabbit-proof plant, incidentally.

A bouquet in the house might include pussy willow branches. Known as *Yin Lou* in Cantonese. "Yin" and the words 'silver' and 'money' sound very similar in Cantonese. Therefore, having pussy willows in the home during Chinese New Year will encourage abundant luck and prosperity.

This time of year we can look at the "Friends of Winter" and their traditional symbolism in both Chinese and Japanese culture for inspiration. These three "Friends" are the Pine Tree, Bamboo and the Plum Tree and its blossoms. Together, the "Friends" collectively contribute qualities that

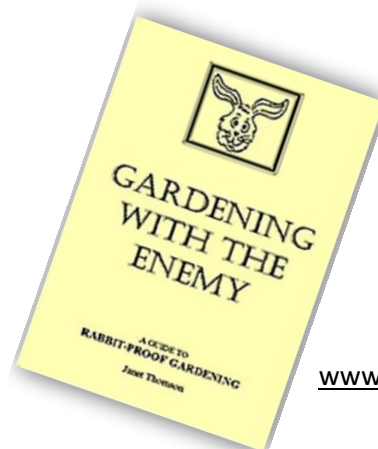
provide a path for weathering difficult times. The roots of the Pine tree grow deep and find ways to hold on even the most challenging rocky cliffs. They endure no matter how difficult the environment. Bamboo knows how to give and bend under even the harshest winds – bending, not breaking. The Plum tree is the first to blossom in late winter in parts of Japan and China, sometimes even while there is still snow on the tree limbs. The blossoms provide a glimmer of hope during the last grips of winter that beauty and joy are about to renew themselves.

Google taught me to create an harmonic arrangement of bamboo, quince and plum blossoms in my home, Next I'll Google to learn how to coexist with Rabbit during HIS year.

My *Allium schubertii* bulbs are poking through the earth, getting ready to bloom firework displays. And I've learned rabbits dislike them – yes, there is cause for celebration!



*Allium schubertii*



[www.rabbitgarden.com](http://www.rabbitgarden.com)

## Now We Know Why the Chicken Crossed the Road

Melita Isreal gave an audience of about 50 people who attended Bill Patterson's meeting on chickens last month the definitive answer—"Because it was eggs-actly what she wanted to do" — and won a dozen freshly-laid eggs. The star attraction was Big Red, one of Bill's highly conversational hens ("buh-wAAck!"), who nibbled bugs and grass, demonstrated her skills at manure-making and allowed us to



pet and cuddle her. We learned a lot from Bill's talk and quiz, and his hand-outs were most informative, and most appreciated. Thanks, Bill!



*A second chicken of indeterminate breed attended the meeting.*



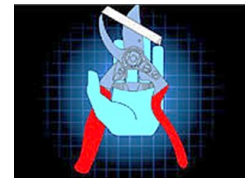
## Pampering Your Pruners

Most of us are struggling to find the time to use our pruners (this is rose pruning time, after all), let alone to sharpen, adjust and oil them. But well-kept tools make our work easier. The Felco Store ([www.felcostore.com/maintenance](http://www.felcostore.com/maintenance)) has a wonderfully detailed set of instructions for caring for your pruners, from sharpening to resetting tension and angles. Here are some of their illustrated instructions:

### Sharpening your pruners



**Step 1** Hold the pruning shear flat in the left hand and sharpen the blade using a sharpening stone (beveling angle 23°).



**Step 2** Turn the pruning shear over to remove burring from the blade. To do this, set the ceramic stone to a sharpening angle of 5°.

### Oiling your pruners



**Step 1** The spring and the space between the blade and anvil blade should be oiled daily.



**Step 2** Pour a few drops of oil into the handle after cleaning the shaft using a dry cloth.

## Happenings at Alladin Nursery

Alladin Nursery, 2905 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville (724-5785), will have a huge Parking Lot Sale on February 12th. and 13th. Lots of plants in need of a good home will be priced extremely low as well as giftshop items. On Saturday, February 19th they'll offer a Free Fruit Tree Class starting at 10am. Anyone is welcome to come learn about pruning and caring for their fruit trees with Lloyd of L.E. Cooke. If you want to continue learning bonsai, Alladin offers Bonsai Workshops every fourth Saturday of every month, beginning March 26th at 1pm with Don White, our speaker this month.



**Fig. 2.3.1 a :** Modern bean seed compared with traditional variety

## Seed and Biodiversity Forum.

"Seed saving" has largely fallen by the wayside in modern agriculture, reducing the genetic diversity of the crops we rely on. The Santa Cruz Reskilling Expo is kindling a local seed-saving effort with a event at the Live Oak Grange, 1900 17th Ave, on February 26, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The Seed and Biodiversity Forum will examine the scope of our diminishing genetic resources and focus on vibrant local solutions that can be achieved by gardeners, orchardists, homesteaders and small farmers. Included will be a panel discussion, a demonstration of seed harvesting methods, teaching about perennial vegetable starts, video clips, a plant give-away and seed exchange and the launching of a new Seed Lending Library. Community TV will be filming the panel. Admission by donation to cover costs: \$0-\$10. For more information on this event and the local reskilling movement, go to <http://reskillingexpo.org/>.



# What a Gardener Really Wants for Valentine's Day

by Andrea Bellamy



(Reprinted with permission from her Vancouver blog, Heavy Petal at <http://heavypetal.ca/>)

Forget the drugstore chocolate in the velvet heart, or even dinner at a swanky restaurant. What I want right about now are seeds. (When I think "Valentine's Day," I think, "time to plant peas!" not "better buy a card!")

Here are my picks for some vegetable seeds that would make great Valentine's Day gifts. No tacky stuffed animals required.

Who says practical can't be romantic? If your love is of the puppy variety, buy your sweetie some Sweetie tomatoes, Blushing

Beauty peppers, Tenderheart Sui Choi, or Cupid grape Tomatoes.

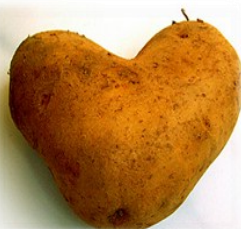
Want a little more sugar in your bowl? Try Sugar Daddy peas, Sugar Buns corn, or Sweet Mama squash.

Is your love the tempestuous type? Drunken Woman lettuce and Passion or Obsession corn are perfect choices.

And if your lover doesn't mind a little dirt under his or her nails (or in the bedroom), you've got to pick up some Quickie corn, Mr. Big peas, Fat n' Sassy peppers, and Sweet Meat squash.

Don't even get me started on the flowers you could buy.

Photo by *lovelypetal* on Flickr. The seed varieties here are available from West Coast Seeds ([www.westcoastseeds.com](http://www.westcoastseeds.com)) or Vesey Seeds ([www.veseys.com](http://www.veseys.com)).

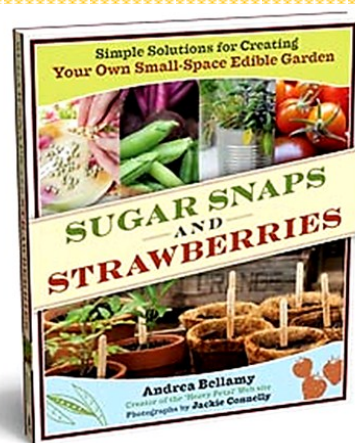


Editor's Note: Maybe Andrea didn't let herself get started on the flowers you could buy following her theme, but *she* didn't just receive an e-mail from Brushwood Nursery ([www.gardenvines.com](http://www.gardenvines.com)) offering TWO new clematis, the white 'Forever Friends' or the blue-violet 'Aphrodite'. Which to get? Both; one for me, one for

someone I care about. And can we ignore the valentine sale at Renee's Garden ([www.reneesgarden.com](http://www.reneesgarden.com))? I think not. Until February 14th you get these "lover-ly" flowers at 20% off: 'Falling in Love' Shirley Poppy, "Queen of Hearts" and "Windowbox Cupid" Sweetpeas, Alyssum 'Summer Romance', "White Bride's Veil" Love in a Mist and 'Exotic Love Vine" Mina Lobata.



Besides keeping up her amazing blog, Andrea Bellamy has written Sugar Snaps and Strawberries, giving up the dirt on growing gorgeous organic food with very little square footage. Her book is getting rave reviews! You don't need a big yard to grow tasty food. You can transform that tiny nook, corner, strip, porch, alley, balcony, or postage-stamp-sized yard into an edible oasis, overflowing with fragrant herbs, sugar snap peas, French breakfast radishes, and scarlet runner beans. The publisher, Timber Press, is even sponsoring a contest to win the book AND a garden starter kit. Go to <http://www.timberpress.com/sugarsnaps> to enter.



# A Few More Valentine Ideas



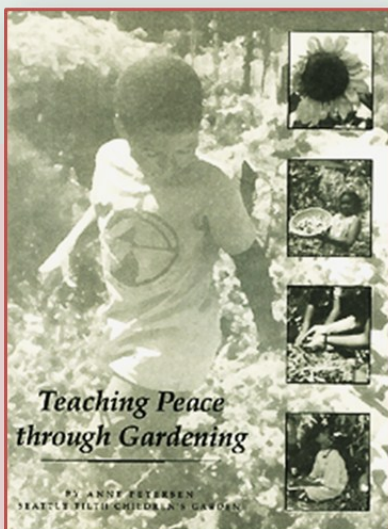
## "Clementine"

As featured on  
BetterGnomesandGarden.com.



## "Bee Mine" Valentine's Day Cookies

Honey bee cutter from Kitchen-crafts at [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).



Give someone the gift of a ticket to the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show. Better yet, buy one ticket for her or him and one ticket for yourself, and go together.

The theme of the 26th annual festival will be "Life in the California Garden" and will be held Wednesday through Sunday, March 23-27 at the San Mateo Event Center. Tickets in advance (you can get them at local garden centers) are \$16; at the door, they are \$20. Children are free. Last year, I discovered the best bargain of all: a multi-day pass is only \$25. I stay for a couple of nights at a nearby hotel or with friends, and that allows me to avoid one exhausting day trying to see all the exhibits, buy plants and attend seminars. Instead, I can plot out my seminar schedule, tour the exhibits at my leisure and walk back to my room for rests whenever I need to. This makes the whole experience much more enjoyable for me, and I learn so much at the educational seminars, which I don't really have time for when I go for only one day. Twenty full-sized garden installations from top Bay Area designers and seminars led by well-knownd experts will invite

attendees to "Get Your Green On" with a strong emphasis on forward-looking, environmentally friendly techniques that can be accomplished in urban, suburban and country gardens. Alice Waters will be featured at several Saturday events that focus on the Local Foods movement. Nationally acclaimed filmmaker Deborah Koons Garcia will show three short films from her upcoming new documentary project "Symphony of the Soil" which examines community based and scientific growing practices all over the world. Show Producer Deborah Estey says, "...the segments on dry farming in Napa, community gardens and a successful biodynamic community in the third world should appeal not only to gardeners, but to anyone interested in green, sustainable practices". There will be a 5000 square foot Aesthetic Edible Garden and cooking demonstrations and discussions on How to Grow a Chef Worthy Garden. The hands-on Children's Garden Spoutopia returns.

And, of course, there is the Marketplace with over 200 vendors selling plants, seeds, tools and gifts. Show hours are 10 am to 7 pm the first four days and 10 am to 6 pm on the last day, Sunday. General show information and a calendar of seminars, chef demonstrations and film showings are all at [www.sfgardenshow.com](http://www.sfgardenshow.com). Start planning your visit now!

**Spread the love.  
Teach a child  
about gardening.**

"Gardening is about much more than weeding or even providing food. It is about nurturing, caring, sharing, and building. Growing a garden can be a profound experience for children, connecting them with their own community."—[planetgreendiscovery.com](http://planetgreendiscovery.com)

"Teaching Peace Through Gardening," a manual created by Seattle Tilth ([seattletilth.org](http://seattletilth.org)), combines garden care with games and art for a fun and educational program. Activities and lessons are appropriate for children of elementary school age. A how-to book, but more importantly, a book about teaching peace.

"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." - Gertrude Jekyll





# New David Austin Roses

David Austin roses are charming and classic. These English roses combine the full-bodied beauty and fragrance of antique roses with the repeat flowering, strength, full bush and wide color ranges of modern roses. This year David Austin offers American rose lovers five new varieties.



## Kew Gardens

Small single flowers held in large clusters. Thornless. Bushy and upright.



## Lady of Shalott

Beautiful chalice-shaped blooms with a warm spiced tea fragrance.



## Susan Williams-Ellis

Charming white rosettes. Strong old rose fragrance. Very healthy and reliable.



## Tam o'Shanter

Deep cerise pink rosettes. Graceful arching habit. Very tough and healthy.



## The Wedgwood Rose Climbing

This lovely climbing rose has soft, rose pink blooms. Fruity fragrance with hints of cloves.

For more information, go to [www.davidaustinroses.com/american](http://www.davidaustinroses.com/american). To request a copy of their "Handbook of Roses" catalog, call 1-800-328-8893.

*If you always wanted to add roses to your garden but were too intimidated by their diva reputation, "Roses Are Plants, Too", a blog by rose guru Paul Zimmerman, is for you. Find it at [www.finegardening.com/blog/roses](http://www.finegardening.com/blog/roses).*

# Building Garden Structures



**Sat., Feb. 5th  
9 a.m.—1 p.m.**

## **Love Apple Farms**

Are you interested in learning how to build your own planter boxes, trellises, arbors, fences, benches, gates and simple sheds? This upcoming workshop will help. Thomas Wittman, with over 30 years of experience as a craftsman, farmer and teacher, will share his

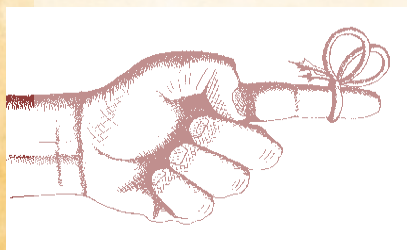
knowledge on building structures in a garden or outdoor setting. From basic trellises, gazebos, and benches all the way up to fences, planter boxes, arbors and small sheds, you'll learn from a master carpenter who has built many of the structures at the renowned UCSC Farm and Garden. Ideas, formulas and plans will be explained in a manner that is easily absorbed by the beginning builder. Basic tools and joinery will be discussed along with a host of simple and complex ideas that will inspire you to take on the challenge of creating beauty in form and function in the garden setting. There will be a demo on building a small structure on site. Cost is \$49. Advanced registration is required. Call 588-3801 or go to [LoveAppleFarms.com](http://LoveAppleFarms.com).

# Free Online Workshops



Horticulture magazine is offering a series of free Smart Gardening Workshops on line. In each one, they say you'll watch an informative, interesting slide show; listen to the advice of a gardening expert; and have a change to ask questions during the live

event. The first one hour Webinar event is called "All-Season Gold-Medal Perennials" and will be on Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, at 11 a.m. The speaker will be Kerry Ann Mendez of Perennially Yours ([pyours.com](http://pyours.com)). This event will give advice about top-performing and low-maintenance perennials for your garden, addressing sun and shade needs when selecting perennials and perennial combinations that give you a seamless transition from one growing season to the next. To sign up, go to <http://www.hortmag.com/smart-gardening-workshops>. If you miss the live event, later there will be free on-demand downloads.



## Only Two Months Until the Spring Plant Sale and Exchange!

Yes, it is wet and cold outside, but April will be upon us sooner than you think. You can start sowing seeds indoors, dividing perennials, rooting cuttings, sorting through your garden shed or seed stash for give-aways, etc.

### Board Meeting

The February meeting will be Monday, February 28th, 6:30 p.m., at the home of Debbie Kindle, 3320 Putter Drive, Soquel. Everyone is welcome—you don't have to be a Board member to attend.



### Have You Renewed Your Club Membership?

Don't dally...write a check for \$12 to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail it to Membership Chair Suzanne Mercado, 1633 Quail Hollow Rd., Ben Lomond, CA 95005.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail\_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter preference (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail newsletter—PDF in full color (the green option)

\_\_\_\_\_ Paper newsletter (black-and-white, snail mail)





[www.theaschultheiss.com](http://www.theaschultheiss.com)

Be not afraid of growing slowly, be  
afraid only of standing still.



## The Gardeners' Club

1633 Quail Hollow Road, Ben Lomond CA 95005

### President

Cherry Thompson, 475-0991  
[cherrylea@comcast.net](mailto:cherrylea@comcast.net)

### Vice President

Ilene Wilson, 724-4609  
[mygardensup@aol.com](mailto:mygardensup@aol.com)

### Secretary

April Barclay, 688-7656  
[AABarclay@aol.com](mailto:AABarclay@aol.com)

### Co-Treasurers

Sim & Bob Gilbert, 475-8162  
[simgilbert@baymoon.com](mailto:simgilbert@baymoon.com)

### Membership

Suzanne Mercado, 609-6230  
[Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com](mailto:Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com)

### Hospitality

Debbie Kindle, 462-6296  
[poppy-54@live.com](mailto:poppy-54@live.com)

### Newsletter Writer/Editor

Lise Bixler, 457-2089  
[lisebixler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisebixler@sbcglobal.net)

### Members-at-Large

Bill Patterson, 479-3729  
[wilderwill@comcast.net](mailto:wilderwill@comcast.net)  
Pat McVeigh, 475-9357  
[pmcveigh@baymoon.com](mailto:pmcveigh@baymoon.com)  
Joanna Hall, 662-8821  
[jhavelock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jhavelock@sbcglobal.net)

### Plant Table

Patty Connole, 335-4134  
[pattyconnolerltr@aol.com](mailto:pattyconnolerltr@aol.com)  
2nd position—vacant  
3rd position - vacant

### Refreshments

Dey Weybright, 426-3028  
[DEENART@aol.com](mailto:DEENART@aol.com)

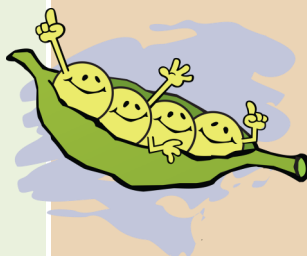
### PSAs/Glenwood

Monica Pielage, 460-0215  
[mpielage@yahoo.com](mailto:mpielage@yahoo.com)

### Website

Kerry Skyles, 728-5076  
[KerrySkyblue@cruzio.com](mailto:KerrySkyblue@cruzio.com)

[www.thegardenersclub.org](http://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 1633 Quail Hollow Rd., Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

