

The Gardeners' Club

January 2011

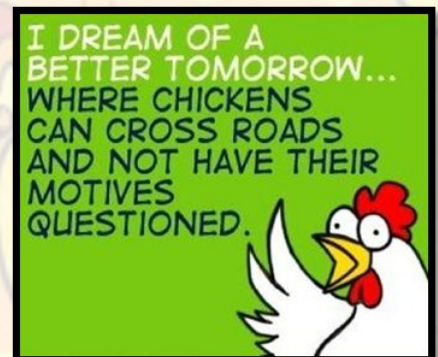
January Meeting
Backyard Chickens:
Crossing Your Road in Style
Thursday, January 13th, 7:00 p.m.
Aptos Grange Hall
2555 Mar Vista Drive

We gardeners love fresh, local, seasonal produce, whether grown in our own gardens or by growers at our local farmers markets. Along with the growing popularity of vegetable gardens, there is another burgeoning trend: more and more people are determined to harvest home-grown eggs. This month our own Bill Patterson will lead a discussion focused on the chicken's place in garden permaculture, benefiting families and becoming an integral part of a sustainable suburban lifestyle. Those of us who already raise chickens will join the forum.

You may have questions that you hope will be answered at the meeting, such as: Why raise chickens? How do I get started? Where do I buy chicks? What breed is best? How do I build or buy a coop? Is chicken poop a good garden fertilizer? Well, these questions and others WILL be addressed, but Bill feels we must first answer the primary, age-old chicken question: Why did it cross the road?

The audience will be invited to contribute answers. A prize will be awarded for the most surprising answer — one dozen pure fresh organic eggs from Bill's cherished chickens. Bill cautions, "No foul jokes, please". In order to help you prepare, he offers the following examples:

- What do you call a chicken crossing the road? Poultry in motion.
- Why did the chicken cross the road halfway? To 'lay it on the line'.
- Why did the rubber chicken cross the road? She wanted to stretch her legs.
- Why did the Roman chicken cross the road? She was afraid someone would caesar!
- Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the Shell station.
- Why did the chicken cross the road? To see a man lay bricks.



Three more egg-cellent incentives to attend this meeting: 1) Bill will bring one of his lovable, personable chickens as a guest. 2) A handout booklet full of resources will be available and will be used to prompt a wide ranging discussion. 3) Refreshments will be served, thanks to Melissa for dessert, Ellen for snack and Barbara Vorlop for juice.

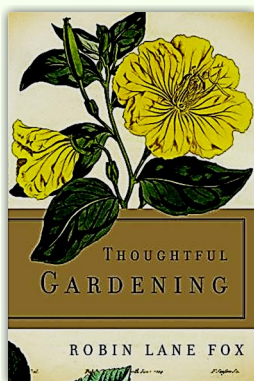
What's cookin' in the New Year

A Note from the Editor

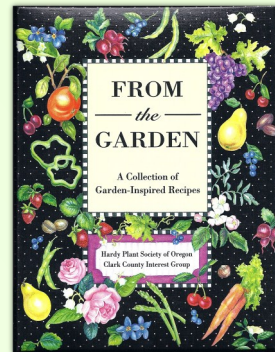
Here we are in the month of Janus, the ancient Roman deity, the doorkeeper, presiding over the entrance or beginning of things. He is represented with a face on both the front and back of his head. He inspires some of us, at the beginning of a new year, to also look in two directions. We can reflect on the year past and then, we can make plans or resolutions for the year ahead. Or not.



Last month I asked all you members of The Gardeners' Club to share your gardening New Year's Resolutions with me for the January newsletter. I received not one! From this I shall conclude that we as a group have no time for such tomfoolery, and that we must all agree with the late Hal Borland, who pronounced, "Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us". For those of you who DID make New Year's resolutions but didn't have the time or the inclination to share them, you may be relieved to know that there is an official holiday to abandon them. **Ditch New Years Resolutions Day** arrives on January 17th each year.



I, though, have already made my first New Year's Resolution ("I will not buy any more gardening books until I've read some of the ones I already have") and broken it. I ordered Thoughtful Gardening by British gardener Robin Lane Fox, after reading his first chapter, "New Year Resolve", on Google Books. How could I resist a book that The Chicago Tribune deems "... that rarest of species that makes us not merely keener gardeners, but wiser human beings"? Fox says, "My new year is full of good intentions that it would be optimistic to call resolutions".



So, foolishly, fearlessly and optimistically, I add another "good intention" to my own list. It is not a resolution, just an idea I hope others will help me grow to fruition. Because my offspring live in Portland, Oregon I am a frequent visitor there, and I'm a member of the Hardy Plant Society. This club is a non-profit volunteer organization which has 2,000 members throughout the Pacific Northwest. Because they are so large, they have special interest groups, and the last time I went to one of their events they were selling a wonderful cookbook that was a project of one of the groups. It is lovely, and I like that it is in loose-leaf format so you can keep adding to it. I thought, "Our garden club can do this!", so I will propose it formally at the January Board meeting. I envision it as more than a cookbook, including gardening tips, almanac-y info, stories and vignettes of local gardeners. If it is a "go", we'll need a small group to work on it together. You'll notice that this newsletter issue has an abundance of recipes—perhaps they will inspire you. President Cherry Thompson suggested that we make the January Board meeting, which will be at her home, a potluck to test drive a few recipes. You don't have to be a member of the Board to attend. Won't you join us?

Board Meeting & Potluck, Monday, January 24th, 7:00 p.m.

3315 Putter Drive, Soquel



Have you renewed your membership?

Last call for membership renewals— if you haven't renewed, this will be your last issue of the newsletter. Don't miss a single issue! Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are only \$12.00. The membership year is January 1—December 31, 2011. Dues entitle members to

all club educational programs, our special events, plant trades and our monthly newsletter. The "green" option is to choose to receive an electronic PDF full color version of the newsletter. If you choose snail mail, you'll get a paper black-and-white newsletter. Send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address, as well as your preference for either an electronic or paper version of the newsletter, with a check for \$12 made out to "The Gardeners' Club", to our new Membership Chair Suzanne Mercado, 1633 Quail Hollow Road, Ben Lomond, CA 95005.

National Pie Day

Rhonda Fleming Hayes wrote about National Pie Day last year in her blog *The Garden Buzz*, including a most wonderful recipe for pear pie, and has generously agreed to let us re-print her article. Apologies to those of you who made "Lose weight" a New Year's resolution.



greasy and good, eaten with your hands, and even better cold.

Any day with pie would be a little bit happier. But here's a pie to honor the spirit of the American Pie Council's special day. It was inspired by the pear tree that grew by our old limestone house in Kansas. It provided shade, honey-scented blossoms and voluminous quantities of lumpy little green pears every other year. I miss it, now, every year.



Pear Tree Pie

Use your favorite crust recipe or buy a ready-made frozen one, I won't tell, it's only for the bottom.

Let me be the first to wish you a Happy National Pie Day! Who knew? The American Pie Council designates January 23 for this auspicious occasion to help in "preserving America's pie heritage and promoting American's love affair with pies". Their aim is to "raise awareness, enjoyment and consumption of pies". Heck, I'm there.

What, you say? Is *The Garden Buzz* going all foodie? Occasionally. In this case, I don't think it's that far from the pie pan to the garden, or vice versa. Name a pie that doesn't need produce to produce its filling. Cherry, berry, or kumquats, it all starts in the dirt. Chocolate cream? Little cocoa groves in West Africa. Rum raisin? Vineyards and cane fields. Chess pie? Maybe you got me there, but I like mine with a little lemon zest.

And lest we forget. Bees make pies. Every bite is just buzzing with bee-power. Without pollination, what could we look forward to; wheat pie, corn pie?

I love pie. I love how it is all contained in a crust, sort of like the perfect packaging of an egg. I love making pies; the fluting of the crust, paring apples, peeling peaches, or whisking the filling in a big bowl, and finally the finished piece. I love how it looks in the kitchen, the ultimate symbol of domesticity. I love slicing it in eight perfect portions and feeding it to people to watch them swoon. If I had one of those wide windowsills like in the cartoons, I would make pies just to see them sit there.



I remember some pies better than people; that purple raspberry/rhubarb/custard from last year that still elicits sighs and haunts us with its elusive qualities, the sweet-tart gooseberry pie at Kansas family reunions, the sweet potato pie when I grew my own, the dainty lemon meringue my mother-in-law makes. Yet my mom never made proper pies, but rather these messy, misshapen fried apricot pies,

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

- * 6-8 Bartlett Pears (or whatever kind is available) peeled and sliced
- * 3 T. Lemon juice
- * 1/2 C. Sugar
- * 2 T. Flour
- * 1-2 T. Chopped crystallized ginger (this is what makes it good, I think more is better)

Combine fruit and other ingredients in a bowl, then spoon into pie crust. Sprinkle with **crumble topping**:

- * 1/2 C. Flour
- * 1/2 C. Sugar
- * 1/2 t. ginger and 1/2 t. cinnamon and 1/4 t. nutmeg

You can add oats or chopped nuts for more flavor
Combine and then cut in 1/4 C. Butter



You must check out Rhonda's blog, full of inspirational articles, at www.thegardenbuzz.com. She says she has been gardening in some form or fashion since she was a child at her grandmother's side. After leaving her native California, this "horticultural nomad" has gardened in various locations in the South, the Midwest and England. She has been an Extension Master Gardener for 10 years, currently with the University of Minnesota. Her passions are kitchen gardening and growing habitat for wildlife. She says she "still innocently believes that gardening is the way to world peace". Well, we agree, don't we?

Fruit Tree Care Classes

Perhaps, after finishing a slice of pear pie, you are motivated to grow your own fruit. Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden and the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems are cosponsoring a series of fruit tree care classes that can help .

Fruit Trees 101: Basic Fruit Tree Care

Saturday, January 8, 10 am – 2 pm

Location: UCSC Farm, UC Santa Cruz

Description: Learn the basics of fruit tree planting, irrigation, fertility, pest management, and winter pruning from Chadwick Garden manager Orin Martin and OrchardKeeper founder Matthew Sutton. Wear warm clothes; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members; \$20 general public; \$5 UCSC students with valid student ID, payable the day of the workshop—no pre-registration necessary. Rainout date: January 22 at Sierra Azul Nursery, Watsonville.



Fruit Trees 101: Basic Fruit Tree Care

Saturday, January 22, 10 am – 2 pm

Location: [Sierra Azul Nursery & Gardens](#), 2660 E. Lake Ave (Hwy 152), Watsonville

Description: A repeat of the January 8 workshop, this time at the Sierra Azul nursery, located across from the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. A Q&A session with Sierra Azul staff will follow the workshop. \$15 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members; \$20 general public; \$5 UCSC students with valid student ID, payable the day of the workshop—no pre-registration necessary. Heavy rain cancels. Friends of the Farm & Garden members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases .

Fruit Tree Question & Answer Session

Saturday, January 15, 10 am—2 pm

Location: ProBuild Garden Center, 235 River Street, Santa Cruz

Description: Bring your fruit tree questions to this free Q&A session with fruit tree experts from the UCSC Farm & Garden. Learn about varieties that perform well on the Central Coast, along with fruit tree care tips. Friends of the Farm & Garden members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases.



The CENTER for AGROECOLOGY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

For more info: 459-3240

In-Depth Winter Pruning, Pome Fruit Trees

Saturday, January 29, 10 am – 2 pm

Location: UCSC Farm, UC Santa Cruz

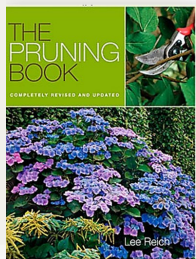
Description: Orin Martin and Matthew Sutton will show you how to prune your plum, peach, apricot, and other stone fruit trees. Wear warm clothes; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members; \$20 general public; \$5 UCSC students with valid ID, payable the day of the workshop. Rainout date: Saturday, February 19, 10 am – 1 pm, UCSC Farm .

In-Depth Winter Pruning, Stone Fruit Trees

Saturday, February 12, 10 am – 2 pm

Location: UCSC Farm, UC Santa Cruz

Description: Orin Martin and Matthew Sutton will show you how to prune your plum, peach, apricot, and other stone fruit trees. Wear warm clothes; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends members; \$20 general public, \$5 UCSC students with valid student ID, payable the day of the workshop—no pre-registration necessary. Rainout date: Saturday, February 19, 10 am – 1 pm, UCSC Farm.



Pruning Basics

Pruning can be a confounding business, but the completely-revised new edition of Taunton's award-winning The Pruning Book explains it all, from houseplants to ornamental grasses. With straightforward prose, over 250

photographs, and 135 drawings, this essential reference walks gardeners through the process of pruning everything from ornamental trees and bushes to topiaries and bonsai. The author, Lee Reich, is a respected horticulturist who writes frequently on gardening subjects. Here, he demystifies the timing and techniques that result in the most successful pruning for healthy growth and good form.

Fruit Tree Scion & Plant Exchange

Jan. 16th, 12-3 p.m., Cabrillo College Horticultural Center

Each year, the Monterey Bay chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers hosts an exchange of scions and plants of more than 500 varieties of common, rare and experimental plants from all over the world. Demonstration of grafting techniques, sale of apple rootstocks, Q&A by experts. Bring gallon-size plastic bags, masking tape and marking pens for your acquisitions. Optional: bring dormant scion wood to exchange. Cut a day or two in advance, seal in a plastic bag and refrigerate. Admission is \$5. For more Information, contact Dave Shaw at 429--1013.

Persimmons: Food of the Gods

The botanical name of persimmons is Diospyros, meaning “food for the gods”. They are native to China, having made their way through Asia and eventually to the United States in the 1800’s. There are hundreds of varieties, but the types we are most familiar with here are Hachiya and Fuyu.

Hachiyas are the ones that people always seem to have lots of to give away, the “astringent” ones with the pointy end that you have to let ripen until they practically fall apart, and then slurp up enthusiastically. To some people, they are ambrosia.

Fuyu persimmons, which are the squat, flattish kind, shaped like a tomato, are quite different. “Fuyu” means “winter” in Japanese. You can treat Fuyus like apples—peel, slice and eat. At the December Club potluck, Melita Isreal brought them fixed in a salad, and we got so many requests for her recipe we are printing it here.



Melita Isreal's Persimmon Orange Salad

Wash and let dry one Fuyu persimmon per person to be served. (If you come across Tamopan persimmons, which are sweet like the Fuyu but

larger, they can be substituted.)

Remove the calyx and the skin at the bottom of the fruit, Since the fruit is flattened this removes most of the skin. Slice the fruit into small pieces and add to your salad bowl.

Grate the rind of 2 oranges and add to the bowl.

Add 1/2 cup for orange juice.

Add a small sweet red onion or as much as you like to your taste. This adds crunch and a bit of sharpness to the sweet fruit.

Add moist cranberries that have been sweetened or dried cherries. I've also used raisins that have been plumped up by added hot water to the raisins and let steep under soft.

Add salt to taste. Mix and serve.



Art by Deng Jiafu



seeds to supper series

This is a series of books written and illustrated by Jack Hazelton. Thin spiral-bound paper backs, 30ish pages long, they are chock-full of information and illustrations, each one focusing on a single



produce type. Each book clearly explains the history, varieties, cultivation, irrigation and recipes for that vegetable or fruit. Jack's catalog of books includes persimmons, squash blossoms, eggplants, cucumbers, melons and gourds, avocados and more. One fascinating book in the series is Okra, Roselle, Aibika, & Kenaf (Other Edible Hibiscus) – too bad my attempt to grow okra in Bonny Doon last summer failed. There is one on tomatillos and cape gooseberries. The eggplant book explores varieties from all over the world, and offers recipes such as roasted eggplant soup and eggplant linguine. The average price of the books is \$14.95; you can also get them in interactive PDF format for \$5.95. Look at excerpts and ordering information at www.seedtosupper.com.

santa cruz orchid society show & sale

Saturday, January 29 – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sunday, January 30 – 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Soquel High School,
401 Old San Jose Rd., Soquel

This event includes exotic indoor and outdoor orchids for purchase, cultural information, expert advice, potting demonstrations and a raffle. For more information, contact Bridget Binko (831) 338-4220.

In the rose garden...



In our part of California, January is the prime time for pruning roses. Pruning puts roses into dormancy to provide a good bloom cycle in the spring. Most varieties bloom on new growth.

Marin Rose Society Master Rosarian Lenore Ruckman says, "Remember the following: *dead,*

diseased, crossing and skimpy. Use these four words as a guide to remove canes for all hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, shrubs, miniatures and repeat blooming old garden roses. The exception is once blooming old garden roses; prune these after the spring bloom."

Stripping all of the foliage from rose plants is a good way to prevent fungal diseases like blackspot. To further prevent diseases and insect infestations, you can spray with neem or horticultural oil, or a lime sulfur mixture. Concentrate on canes and around the base of plants.

After pruning, you can fertilize your roses and mulch them. A few feeding choices are Epsom salts and alfalfa meal or pellets; gypsum; compost or worm castings; kelp or fish meal; a slow-release organic fertilizer like Sustane.

Done? Treat yourself to another rose (there is always room for one more). January is a fine month for planting bare-root roses, and the nurseries will have their best selections.

The Monterey Bay Rose Society has many events this month. They offer free rose pruning clinics at 10 a.m. on January 8th and 9th, at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, on January 15th at Alladin Nursery (2905 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville) and on January 22nd at ProBuild Garden Center (235 River St, Santa Cruz). On Friday evening, January 28, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Drive their monthly meeting will feature rosarian Bill Grant presenting a special viewing of the BBC documentary and discussion, "*The Quest for the Rose*" by Roger Phillips & Martyn Rix. A light dinner and beverages will be served. The society will also hold its Annual Rose Raffle, and admission is free. Admission. For further information, please contact Janey Leonardich at (831) 721-7958 or leos940@charter.net. The web site address of the Monterey Bay Rose Society is www.montereybayrosesociety.org/.

On the windowsill...



It's nice to have fresh parsley growing — in the garden, in a planter on the deck or in a pot on a windowsill — all year. Parsley is a biennial plant, meaning if you planted it from seeds or starts this year it will winter over in our climate and continue to produce next year. But somehow slogging through the rain and cold to where the herb grows is not appealing on many winter days, so we can supplement our outdoor supply with pots of parsley indoors. Both curly-leaf parsley, with its mild flavor, and the flat-leaf Italian type, whose flavor many prefer, can be grown indoors. Bring home a seedling or plant from your local nursery, put it in a decorative pot with drainage, and give it some direct sun, at least 5-6 hours a day. If you can't put it in a south- or west-facing window, growing parsley under artificial light will work.

Starting parsley from seed in the winter is a little trickier—it needs some heat or stratification. If you are interested, visit the Garden of Eaden at <http://gardenofeaden.blogspot.com/2009/05/how-to-grow-parsley-from-seed-indoors.html>.

You can use parsley as a main ingredient in salads or make a parsley sauce for chicken or fish. At our recent holiday potluck, members clamored for the recipe for Marie Beckham's Swedish meatballs. Did they love her dish so much for the meatballs, the sauce or the parsley garnish on top? Try out the recipe and see.

Marie Beckham's Easy Swedish Meatballs

This isn't my usual recipe, but it turned out surprisingly well! —Marie

2 cans cream of chicken soup; 3 cans water
1 pkg. Trader Joe's mini meatballs
1/4 t. ground allspice; 1/2 t. ground nutmeg
4-6 T. grated onion
8-10 oz. wide egg noodles

Empty canned soup into large saucepan. Add water. Stir to blend. Heat to a boil. add meatballs, spices and onion. Again bring to boil. Lower heat to medium and cook 15-20 minutes. In another pan, cook the noodles. When cooked, drain and place in large serving dish. Pour meatballs and sauce over noodles. Sprinkle with chopped parsley. Serves 8-10

Elizabeth von Arnim



1866-1941
online-literature.com

Originally published in 1898, the semi-autographical Elizabeth and her German Garden is the first book written by Elizabeth von Arnim, née Marie Annette Beauchamp—known all her life as "Elizabeth". Published anonymously, it was such a success that it was reprinted 20 times in its first year.

It is a grand old book to dip in and out of on a cold and rainy day. In a January entry she wrote, "The bills for my roses and bulbs and other last year's horticultural indulgences were all on the table when I came down to breakfast this morning. They rather frightened me. Gardening is expensive, I find, when it has to be paid for out of one's own private pin-money." Although the concept of "pin money" no longer makes sense to many of us, the problem of gardening expenses is still with us. Thank goodness for our monthly plant table, where bargains can be found.

Elizabeth had another issue she wrote about, one we might call today a "golden problem"

"I could only dig and plant myself! How much easier, besides being so fascinating, to make your own holes exactly where you want them and put in your plants exactly as you choose instead of giving orders that can only be half understood from the moment you depart from the lines laid down by that long piece of string! In the first ecstasy of having a garden all my own, and in my burning impatience to make the waste places blossom like a rose, I did one warm Sunday in last year's April during the servants' dinner hour, doubly secure from the gardener by the day and the dinner, slink out with a spade and a rake and feverishly dig a little piece of ground and break it up and sow surreptitious ipomaea, and run back very hot and guilty into the house, and get into a chair and behind a book and look languid just in time to save my reputation."



Remembering Aileen

If you have a succulent growing in your garden that you brought home from a Club meeting, it probably came from the garden of Aileen Sanders, who died on November 22nd. Aileen was a friend to many, a gardener of great generosity. We admired her warmth, vitality and enthusiasm. Many succulents are sempervivums— meaning "live forever". Aileen's memory will "live forever" with those whose lives she touched.



SEMPERVIVUM PUNCTI VAR. AQUALIENSE.
Végétation.

Our Board

The following nominees for The Gardeners' Club 2011 Board will be presented to the general membership for formal approval at the January 13th meeting: President, Cherry Thompson; Vice President, Ilene Wilson; Secretary, April Barclay; Co-Treasurers, Sim and Bob Gilbert; Newsletter, Lise Bixler; Hospitality, Debbie Kindle; Membership, Suzanne Mercado; Plant Table, Patty Connoles (more plant table members needed); Refreshments, Dee Weybright; Website, Kerry Skyles; Publicity/Glenwood House, Monica Pielage; Members-at-Large, Bill Patterson, Pat McVeigh and Joanna Hall. We thank all of the Board members, new volunteers and those who are continuing to serve. Our club would not be the exceptional one it is without their energy and ideas.



A new year is unfolding - like a blossom with petals curled tightly concealing the beauty within.

Rosa 'Double Delight' from the garden of Nanon Bixler (October 7, 1922-December 17, 2010)

The Gardeners' Club

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3rd position - vacant

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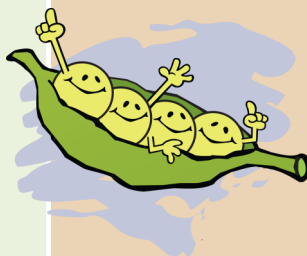
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www.thegardenersclub.org



It's easy-peasy to join our club!

Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to 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.

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