

# The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

June 2012 — Part II

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If you planted garlic last fall, chances are the lower part of your garlic stalks are browning and— yay! It's the start of garlic harvesting time. You can bend the leaf stalks over and let the plants put energy into building the bulbs for a few more weeks, or pull out the plants when 2/3 of the bottom leaves have browned. Bundle plants in groups of five to ten plants and hang inside, out of direct sunlight and with good air circulation. Don't leave freshly dug bulbs in direct sunlight for more than a few minutes or they may actually cook! Plants and bulbs cure completely in 3 to 4 weeks.

Planting garlic around rose plants benefits you, the garlic and the roses. If you like growing garlic, or are ready to grow it for the first time, consider ordering garlic seed NOW for the best selection for fall planting.

**Filaree Garlic Farm** has been an independently owned grower and supplier of premium quality garlic seed for 25 years. As keepers of the largest privately held collection of garlic in North America, their mission is to preserve and provide others with the opportunity to grow more than 100 varieties of garlic- collected from throughout the world. Their web site is a wonderful resource not only for learning about types of garlic and ordering it, but for growing it successfully. Their page of links and resources will keep you busy and learning.

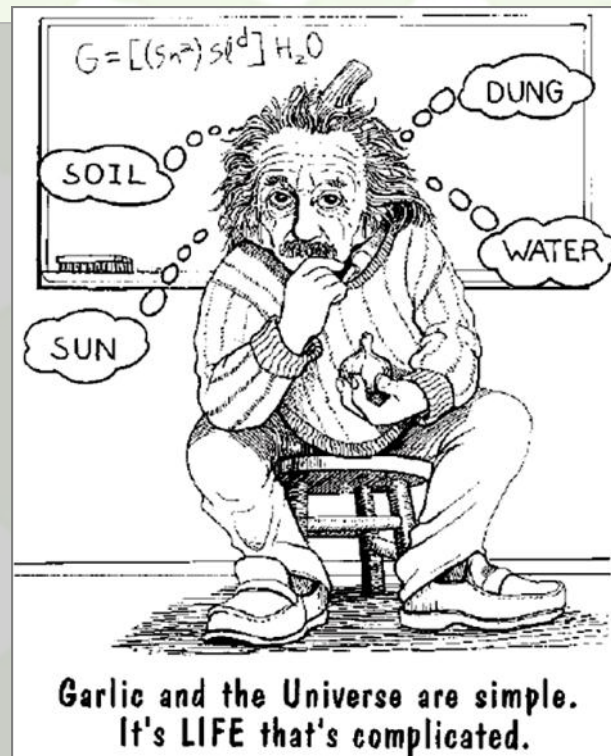


[www.filareefarm.com](http://www.filareefarm.com)



*Oh, garlic bulb,  
Oh, little cloves --  
You never die,  
but grow and re-  
grow  
and multiply  
from original cells  
of some ancient  
Mother Bulb...*

*Excerpt from "My  
Little Clove" by  
Ron Engelland*



Have you ever climbed a stepladder to do a job and found yourself sinking into the soft earth? This can be dangerous. Member Dee Weybright suggests a solution. Save your coffee cans and put one under each of the ladder legs.

Here's another way to avoid the problem. Round up four metal pie containers and use them as feet for the ladder. If you have a wooden ladder, lay it down and push a thumbtack up through the bottom of one of the pie pans into the bottom of one of the ladder legs.



Are you keeping your camera handy to capture magic moments in your garden? In November, we'll have an encore of our "Untour" photo presentation of members' gardens. We're expanding it to include gardens that inspire you, so you can also share pictures of public gardens you've visited or gardens of friends or mentors. Gardens are full of sound—the buzz of a bee, the rustle of leaves and—the snap of a shutter!

The Ice Cream Social is only a month away. What prize-winning topping shall I bring?



There are ice cream socials and then there are **ice cream socials**. OUR annual event is one-of-a-kind, home-grown and uniquely flavored. Although we'll give you more details in the July newsletter, we thought you might want to have a few recipes to stimulate your own ideas. And, yes, the Succulent Sundae prizes will return. Will you be a proud winner of one? Prizes will be awarded for toppings brought from home, especially made from garden or farmers' market bounty, as well as sundaes created at the event.



If you have a bearing fig tree, or know someone who does, you might be interested in this recipe. Although it is called a compote, it is thick and syrupy, almost like a fig caramel sauce.

### Fig Compote (Makes 1 cup)

#### Ingredients:

1/2 pound fresh figs  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
3 tablespoons dark brown sugar  
3 tablespoons honey  
Pinch of kosher salt

#### Directions:

Preheat your broiler. Cut stem off each fig, slice fig in quarters, and set aside. Add butter, brown sugar, and honey to a cast-iron pan or a medium broiler-proof saute pan. Cook for about 1 minute over high heat, stirring frequently, until syrup begins to bubble. Add figs and stir to coat them with the syrup.

Place pan under broiler to caramelize

figs. Protecting your hand with an oven mitt or towel, swirl the pan a few times over the next 5 minutes to prevent sugar and figs from burning. The figs are done when the syrup is thickened slightly and amber in color, and the edges of the figs are dark and glossy. Remove the pan from the broiler and serve figs while they're still warm.

From *Good to the Grain* by Kim Boyce

Peaches with pepper? Why not? Here's a recipe to try if you don't feel like cooking a topping.

### Blackberries and Peaches in Balsamic Pepper Syrup

¼ c honey  
3 T balsamic vinegar  
¼ t pepper  
2 c sliced peeled peaches  
2 c blackberries



Combine first 3 ingredients in large bowl, stirring with whisk. Add peaches and berries, toss gently to coat. Let stand 5 min. Serve over ice cream or pound cake. Serves 10.



## ORGANIC CUT FLOWER GROWING AND BOUQUET MAKING WORKSHOP



Most weekends, you can find organic flower grower Zoe Hitchner arranging stunning made-to-order bouquets at Santa Cruz-area farmers' markets. On **Saturday, June 30**, Hitchner will share the tricks of her trade when she teams with gardening expert Orin Martin of UCSC's Alan Chadwick Garden to teach you how to grow and assemble your own beautiful flower arrangements. The "Cut Flower Growing and Bouquet Making" workshop will take place from 10 am to 1 pm at the UCSC Farm at UC Santa Cruz. Workshop topics will include discussions and demonstrations of organic growing methods, recommended tools, how to properly harvest and handle cut flowers, and how to extend their "vase life." Hitchner and Martin will also discuss varieties that perform best in the Monterey Bay region's growing conditions. Hitchner will demonstrate the basic techniques and principles used to create beautiful bouquets. Hitchner and her fellow flower farmer Carra Duggan grow more than 50 varieties of organically raised cut flowers at Everett Family Farm in Soquel.

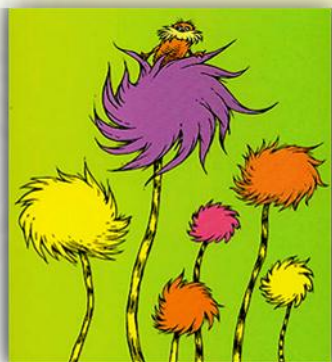
Growing cutting flowers in a farm or garden landscape makes biological sense. Showy flowers attract beneficial insects that pollinate crops and help control pests. "Fewer crop pests are found as the plant species diversity of a farm or garden increases," says Martin. Growing your own flowers or buying locally grown flowers can also reduce your "carbon footprint," as many cut flowers are imported from Central and South America. Cost for the workshop is \$30 for the general public, \$20 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members, and \$5 for UCSC students. Memberships are available at the workshop. Cash or checks only for workshop fees please; no pre-registration necessary. A limited number of bouquets will be for sale at the workshop. For more information, call 831.459-3240, email [casfs@ucsc.edu](mailto:casfs@ucsc.edu), or see [casfs.ucsc.edu](http://casfs.ucsc.edu).



# DR. SEUSS-ish FLORA

## Fact or Fiction?

Any of us who grew up reading Dr. Seuss, or read his books to our children or grandchildren, have no problem enjoying outlandish and sometimes fictional plants. Last year I wrote about Edward Lear and his Nonsense Botany, so you know I am a great fan of imaginary flora.



Truffula tree (from The Lorax)

When I received an email from member Elliot Dembner last month about the amazing flora on Socotra in Yemen, I was reminded that there is sometimes a very thin line between fact and fiction.

Socotra is a small archipelago of islands and islets in the Indian Ocean off the coast of the Horn of Africa. It is one of the most isolated landforms on the planet. Like the Galapagos Islands, it is teeming with extremely rare species of flora and fauna found nowhere else on Earth.

Socotra is home to more than 800 species of plants, some 40 of which are endemic to the island, and there are certainly many more plant species that have yet to be discovered. The climate is harsh, hot and dry, and yet - the most amazing plant life thrives there.

For example, the Dragon's Blood tree (*Dracaena Cinnabari*), so named because it yields a marvelously red sap used historically as a dye and medicine. The bizarre shape of the blood tree helps it survive arid conditions and areas with limited soil. The shading helps the seedlings survive in the harsh environment.



There is also the Desert Rose (*adenium obesum*) which has been described as

an elephant leg in bloom. And one more, pictured at left:



*Dorstenia gigas*, which seems to not require any soil and sinks roots

straight into bare rock.

Hmm...but doesn't the plant in the photo above remind you of the illustration here? This plant is *Sigurya barbulata*, an entirely imaginary plant drawn by



children's book author Leo Lionni in his only adult work of fiction, Parallel Botany, published in 1977.



The study of parallel botany, states T.J. Nelson in his review of the book, "*has often been under appreciated and ignored by other biologists, almost, one might say, a*

*backwater in which progress has been slow and difficult. There are, of course, many reasons for this; but chiefly, the principal difficulty with studying parallel plants is their lack of a basic property possessed by the vast majority of other, non-parallel plants, namely the property of 'existence'.*" The entire arcane book, text and illustrations, can be perused at [http://www.sivatherium.narod.ru/library/Lionni/01\\_en.htm](http://www.sivatherium.narod.ru/library/Lionni/01_en.htm).

Those of you who truly delight in plant lunacy will be happy to know the hybridization of science fiction and horticulture continues to thrive with the



recent publication of A Field Guide to Surreal Botany, edited by Janet Chui & Jason Erik Lundberg (Two Cranes Press). This is a unique and

charming book, an anthology of fictional plant species contributed by over four dozen writers. Delicate Lear-ish illustrations by Chu, Latin names, notes on ecology and life cycle and seemingly aged paper combine to make you feel like you are reading an old-fashioned botanical treatise. Within the pages

(continued)





(Dr. Suess-ish, continued)

of this small book you'll find delightful plants such as the Kvetching Aspen (the only known tree with a mating cry), the Wind Melon (which can levitate), Couch Kelp (*Siturfatarscea velvetorleva monthlypaymetis*), a floating seaweed with an inflatable bladder resembling a sofa; the Big Yellow Flower of Unnecessarily Obvious Information (*Explanatum obviosis*), a plant with a flower that is big and yellow; Twilight Luon-Sibir (*Russica spectrata*), which has an extremely short life cycle and exists in a state of probability, and many, many more. You can order your own field guide to silliness at <http://www.twocranespress.com/botany/>.

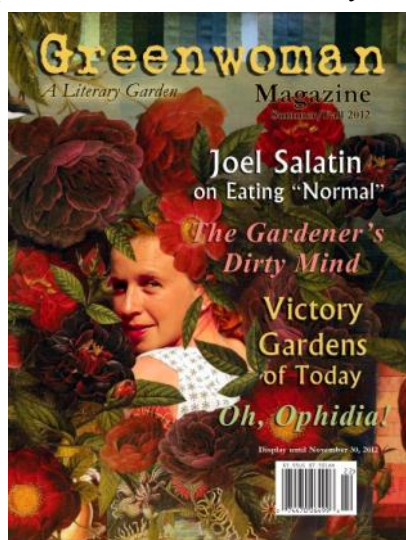
Because the primary interest of most members of The Gardeners' Club is real gardening in the real world, it's back to some botanical news that may sound like science fiction but is fact. Plants can communicate with each other by sound, say researchers at [The University of Western Australia](http://www.thewesternuniversity.edu.au). Plants not only react to sounds, but they can also communicate with each other via "clicking noises" made by their roots. Plants swaying in the breeze may be actually chattering to each other.



Read more: [Plants Can 'Talk' To Each Other by Clicking Their Roots | Inhabitat - Sustainable Design Innovation, Eco Architecture, Green Building](http://www.inhabitat.com).

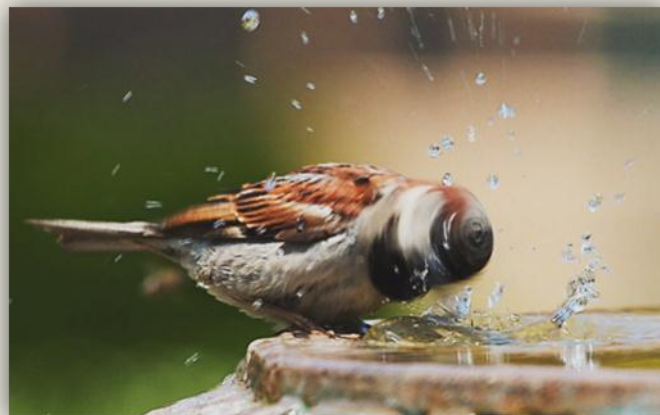
Message from Sandra Knauf, Editor and Publisher, Greenwoman Magazine, [www.greenwomanmagazine.com](http://www.greenwomanmagazine.com):

I'm writing today to announce that Issue #3 of this biannual publication will be available by June 21st. I'm very excited as



we will be featuring: An entire chapter excerpt of Joel Salatin's incredible new book-- Folks, This Ain't Normal: A Farmer's Advice for Happier Hens, Healthier People, and a Better World; a feature by LaManda Joy on the history of WWII Victory Gardens in Chicago and how we can learn from the past to create our community gardens today; a very sexy essay on the relationship of gardeners and the dirt they love by Elisabeth Kinsey; great fiction and nonfiction pieces by a half-dozen talented authors; amazing poetry, fabulous art, cute and corny comics and more.

Available at Bookshop Santa Cruz.



Offer a supply of clean, fresh water to birds that are nesting or foraging for food in your garden. They'll reward you by staying around to help eradicate insect pests.

Moving water will attract more birds because the motion catches their eyes and they can hear any dripping, sprinkles or splashes. A hose dripping into a dish or pond can have a similar effect and will attract more wild birds. Here's a novel solution—add a jiggler accessory to a standing birdbath. It adds motion easily and you can even get models that include the sound of a babbling brook !

(<http://www.duncraft.com/Water-Wiggler-with-Ceramic-Cover>





Our Board is *amazing*.

Oh, right—that's not news, you already know that!

At the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, President Cherry Thompson presented our annual Virginia Saso Award to two outstanding students of the Cabrillo College Horticulture Department. Kimberly Emigh and Kevin Landaw each received our warmly expressed admiration and scholarship stipends of \$300. Both students plan on continuing their meritorious endeavors at Cabrillo next year, bolstered by our recognition of their dedication and effort.



There is an anonymous quote that seems to perfectly express the philosophy of giving practiced by The Gardeners' Club:

*"If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life."*

For the third year, The Gardeners' Club will give a donation to the Santa Cruz City County Public Library, with a list of books suggested by our club. Are there books for adults or children related to

## Board News

gardening, ecology, sustainability, nature, etc., that you would like to see at your local branch? Your suggestions are eagerly welcomed.

The Board also encourages members to share their ideas for community donations. Each year the Board considers a variety of giving opportunities, and we appreciate and encourage your input.

Our webmaster Joe Thompson has been updating our website. Check out the "special events" and featured garden links at the top of the redesigned page ([www.the.gardenersclub.org](http://www.the.gardenersclub.org)). Very nice—thank you, Joe!



The Aptos Grange—Our Gathering Place

Member-At-Large and Club Librarian Bill Patterson has been working with Aptos Grange Manager Randy Nelson to identify additional storage space for us at the Grange. Our Club Lending Library has grown too large for Bill to take in and out of his car each meeting. An additional closet was found for us. The Grange Hall had a work party on May 26<sup>th</sup>, and Bill was one of the volunteers.



Bill replanting a post at the Grange. He says, "It looks dead, but with lots of watering it may survive".

The Aptos Grange is a relatively young chapter, at 50+ years

of age, but the Grange itself is the nation's oldest national agricultural organization, established in 1867, with grassroots units established in 2,700 local communities in 37 states. All Grange activities are for the purpose of developing leadership, improving community life and expanding opportunities for all people. The history of the Grange is fascinating. It was the first national organization to support and promote women as equal voting members. Grange Halls across the country provided a place for women to unite in their crusade of suffrage over a period of 40 years. If you are interested in joining or finding out more about current causes, projects and activities, check out these web sites: [www.aptosgrange.org](http://www.aptosgrange.org); [www.CaliforniaGrange.org](http://www.CaliforniaGrange.org); [www.grange.org](http://www.grange.org); or call Randy at 688-3974 or 566-2590.



The May 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting was held at the home of Pat McVeigh. The Board toured Pat's well-planted garden and the gardens of the surrounding neighbors. A nice supper of soup and salad was also served. A few of us left with pots of succulents, extras from Pat's collection (some of which will be recycled into the "Succulent Sundae" prizes at for the Ice Cream Social). Thanks, Pat!

The next board meeting will be June 25<sup>th</sup> at the home of Carolyn Nelson, 221 El Sereno Dr, Scotts Valley. Everyone on the Board is very excited to visit, or revisit, Carolyn's garden. When asked to describe it, Board members got wistful-eyed about the water gardens. Debbie Kindle said, "The only word to describe it is 'magical'".

Tour of the garden starts at 6 p.m. Remember, you don't have to be a Board member to join us!





# pollinator WEEK

June 18th - June 24th  
www.pollinator.org

POLLINATOR  
PARTNERSHIP



If you have the financial resources, consider donating \$150 to the Pollinator Partnership. A Bee Smart School Garden Kit will be donated to the school of your choice to help grow a bee-friendly garden as a living class-room-- a hands-on way for kids to learn the importance of bees in our ecosystem and spread the buzz. For more

information, go to <http://pollinator.org/shop.htm>. While you are there, you can also download for FREE their new



BeeSmart Gardener Pollinator app.

## The Gardeners' Club

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### Plant Table

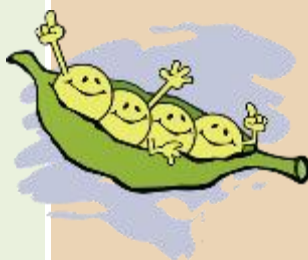
Patty Connole, 335-4134  
pattyconnolerltr@aol.com  
2nd position—vacant  
3rd position - vacant

### Refreshments

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### Website

Joe Thompson  
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### It's easy-peasy to join our club!

Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to P.O. Box 3025., 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



[www.thegardenersclub.org](http://www.thegardenersclub.org)