

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

January 2013

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Mediterranean Mounds in the Garden

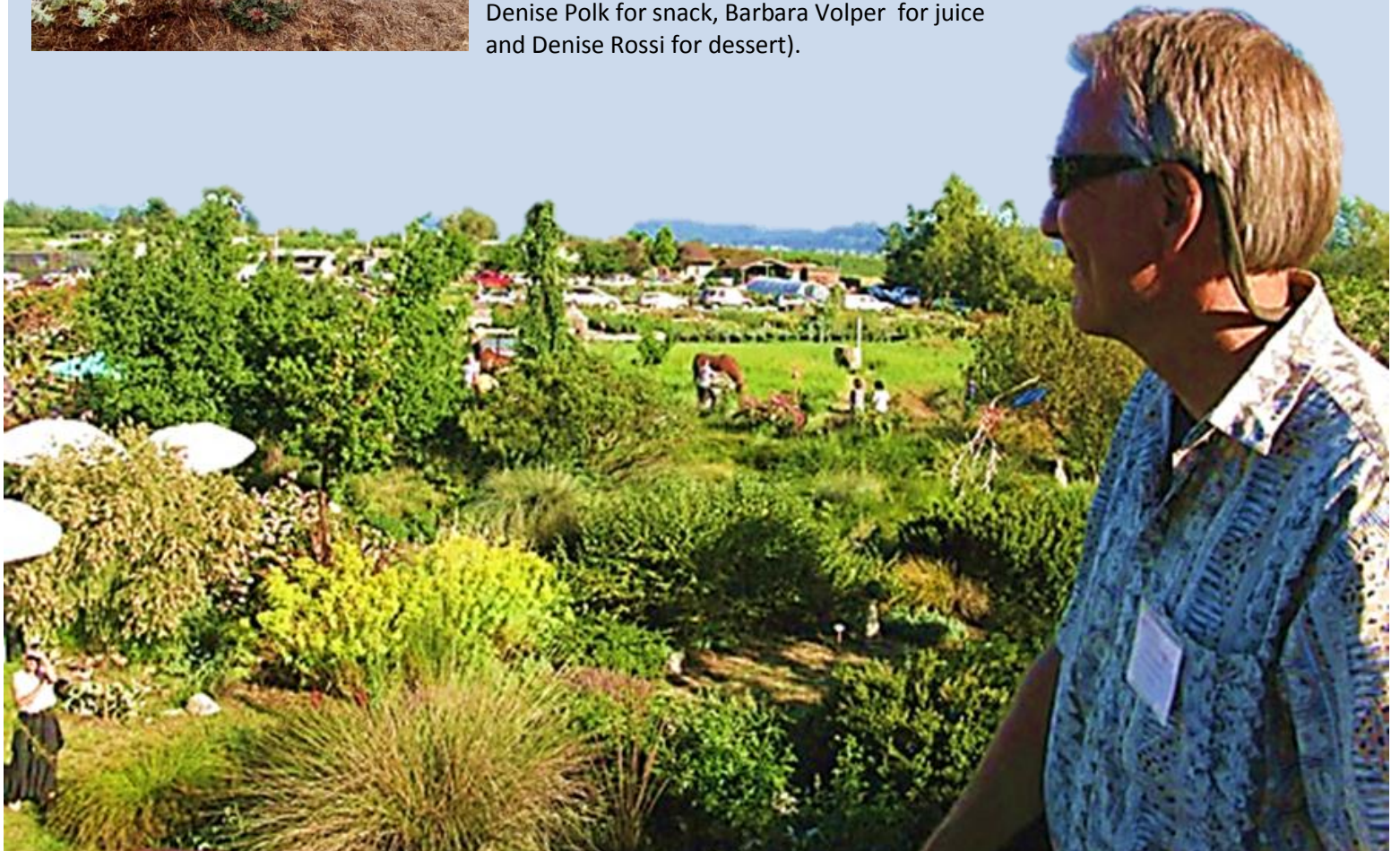
Thurs., Dec. 10th, 7:00 p.m.—Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Dr.



If you've visited Sierra Azul Nursery and Gardens in Watsonville, no doubt you've wandered the paths admiring their beautiful mound plantings. Creating a Mediterranean mound like theirs using a variety of water-conserving plants combined to produce year-round color, contrast and textural beauty is a rewarding experience.

Jeff Rosenbaum, owner of Sierra Azul and creator of many differently-shaped and variously planted mounds, has renovating some of the 17-year old mounds at the garden, and in the process has been giving how-to workshops at the nursery. Several of us who have attended them have learned so much and been so inspired that we asked Jeff to bring the workshop to us, and he has generously agreed to do so at our January meeting.

Jeff will follow his guide "Creating a Mediterranean Mound", which you can find on the Sierra Azul website (www.sierraazul.com/mounds.html). He will tell us how to build a mound—shape choices, soil types, boulder additions, etc. He'll talk about the criteria for choosing plants and the many plant selection options, bringing along plant possibilities for us to look at. Drip irrigation, soil preparation and mulching will also be covered. Refreshments will be served (thank you to Denise Polk for snack, Barbara Volper for juice and Denise Rossi for dessert).





Mountain Feed and Farm Supply in Ben Lomond is a gardener/homesteader heaven. Besides plants, including fruit trees, vegetables, berries, natives and all sorts of ornamentals, they have a fantastic selection of food making and preserving supplies, cheesemaking kits, beekeeping stuff, pet food and toys, gifts, etc.. At their store and at their booth at the Aptos Farmer's Market, they've brought their unique "Homestead Housewares" and provided classes and demos. Now they are bringing their goodies to the wider world by opening a brand new ONLINE store. Visit their site to find everything you'll need to turn your harvest into something special and long-lasting. They aim to serve people who are inspired by the idea of preserving healthy, natural foods at home. Check it out at www.mountainfeed.com!

My New Year's Resolution: See the Poetry

An aged apple tree lives on the edge of our property. Several years ago, when we were having some tree work done, we considered cutting it down. "It is rather poetic", said the tree guy, so we spared it. Last month I was walking some people around the property and someone commented on the old tree. "That's our poetic tree", I answered, and we walked on. It was only a few days after, while working on another project in the yard, that I stopped and actually looked at the tree, actually SAW it. I love poetry. But I am struck with the realization that reading poetry and seeing poetry are two entirely different things. The poetry in this tree is in the curves of its stooped trunk; in the pattern of sapsucker holes ringing it, a

reminder of years of the rhythmic music and percussive energy of certain birds; the twisted and contorted branches, each one a story unto itself; the dead twigs at the bottom of the tree shaded by the new green leaves at the crown, such a metaphor for life and death. I resolve to attend to the poetry in the garden, in addition to the poetry in books.



Ode to Clover

by Patti Trimble

How extraordinary is form, how fine is the clover
that could be no other than clover
and inside the whorl an eccentric room
an architectural assurance as grand as Notre Dame.

I live here in color. I see I've been wrong
about rooms of meaning and forms my thought
might take, I didn't understand

before, why we say the seed of idea,
the blossom of thought.

For here lies of solemn order, foolish gaiety,
innocence, mathematics, poise,
irrational love

from leaf unfurled to the full run
of a good idea, to collapse of petals—
thought opens easy in time.

My mind yearns to take this shape,
flowerets in a round head.



I share with you my favorite holiday greeting this year, from Lerner Seeds:

A Metaphor for the Holidays

We wish you a human reflection of the California wildflower seasonal model of the year. Take some time to experience quasi-dormancy in yourself - roots quietly and invisibly deepening, using the cool nourishment of the fall and winter rains. Store energy and power now, the better to burst forth in the spring with blossoms of unimaginable beauty.

This is a wonderful month to plant wildflower seeds. Visiting the website of Lerner Seeds (www.lernerseeds.com) is a great way to get inspiration and to order a variety of seeds. Their philosophy is to promote the riches of our California flora, through supplying seeds, plants, books and advice. Their goal to bring to the California gardener "the perspectives and information of the whole humming world of natural history as it applies to the California landscape".



The next board meeting will be held January 28th at the home of Cherry Thompson, 3315 Putter Drive, Soquel. It will be a potluck, and you don't have to be a Board member to attend. We'll start at 6 p.m.—eating, schmoozing and perhaps even getting around to talking about The Gardeners' Club business.

January is **National Soup Month**. Have you considered a soup garden? Think carrots, think beets, think cabbage; think kale, arugala, chard, spinach and bok choy.

It's time to prune roses. Strip the leaves, clean dead leaves off the ground and around the plant, and put all of them in your green waste, not your compost. Spray with horticultural oil to fight insects and fungal diseases in spring. Fertilize with Epsom salts and alfalfa pellets or meal, or an organic time-release granular rose fertilizer or something like Sustane, and mulch with compost.

Need help learning rose pruning techniques? Members of the Monterey Bay Rose Society can help you at one of their clinics (all of them start at 10 a.m.): Saturday & Sunday, January 12 & 13, MBRS Display Rose Garden at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, Watsonville—bring your gloves, shears, hats; Saturday, January 19, Alladin Nursery, 2905 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville, 724-7517; Saturday, January 26, Probuild Garden Center, 235 River Street, Santa Cruz, 423-0223. On Saturday, January 19th, from 10 a.m. to noon. The Garden Company will be holding a rose pruning and organic care clinic conducted by in-house rosarian Lance Reinert. Learn how to prune bush, climbing and tree type roses, and how to deal with common insect and disease issues using earth-friendly products. Seating is very limited, so be sure to reserve a space (429-8424).

This is the ideal time to buy and plant bareroot roses. Check your local nurseries, or if you are adventurous visit Heirloom Roses at <http://www.heirloomroses.com>. In addition to their usual vast tempting offerings, they have recently acquired Cliff Orent's inventory from EuroDesert Roses,



offering rare, unusual and never heard of varieties. You have room for one more, right? Call 1-800-820-0465 for a print catalog.

It's also time to prune fruit trees and smother overwintering eggs and insects

January in the Garden



by spraying with horticultural oil. Dormant sprays are a generic term for any spray applied to leafless deciduous trees during fall, winter, and early

spring. Some dormant sprays are applied to control over-wintering insects, while others are used to prevent disease infection. Dormant sprays are applied from late November to the latter part of February. Dormant season application of a fungicide is sometimes added to prevent and limit the spread of fungal diseases.

Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden and the Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems are again cosponsoring a series of fruit tree care classes. Call 459-3240 for more information. **Fruit Trees 101: Basic Fruit Tree Care:** Sat., Jan. 5 (Rain-out date Jan. 12), 10 am – 2 pm at UCSC Farm, UC Santa Cruz. Basics of fruit tree planting, irrigation, fertility, pest management, and winter pruning from Chadwick Garden manager Orin Martin and Orchard Keeper founder Matthew Sutton. Wear warm clothes; heavy rain cancels. \$15 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members; \$20 general public, payable the day of the workshop—no pre-registration necessary. You have 3 opportunities to bring your fruit tree questions free Q&A sessions 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. For the first two dates, Friends of the Farm & Garden members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases. **Fruit Tree Question & Answer Sessions** are scheduled for Sat., Jan. 13, 10 am—2 pm., at the ProBuild Garden Center, 235 River Street, Santa Cruz; Jan. 19th, same hours, at [Sierra Azul Nursery & Gardens](#), 2660 E. Lake Ave (Hwy 152), Watsonville; and on Jan. 26th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Garden Company,

2218 Mission Street, Santa Cruz.

This is a good month to regain control of large overgrown vines like honeysuckle, pink jasmine, morning glory, passion vine, potato vine and trumpet creeper by radically thinning or cutting back low to the ground if they hopeless messes. But wait until after flowering to heavily prune spring-blooming vines such as wisteria.

Cut back hydrangeas if you haven't already done so. Apply soil sulfur, aluminum sulfate or other acidifier if you want to encourage blue flowers. Cut back summer flowering deciduous shrubs and vines. Don't prune spring flowering varieties like lilac, flowering cherry, plum and crabapple, rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, weigela and spirea until after flowering (unless you are cutting for bouquets).



The last Saturday in January (that's the 26th this year) is National Seed Swap Day. Check out [UC Santa Cruz Demeter Seed Library \(www.demeterseedsproject.org\)](#). The

Demeter Seed Library of UC is composed of local farmers, gardeners, students and biologists who believe in the importance of preserving the genetic heritage of our food. To borrow seeds from the seed library become a member by signing up at a seed swap or by contacting library@demeterseedsproject.org.



Happy Pie Day! Plant bareroot berry plants now, including strawberries, and have sweet dreams of pies to come.



Eating Seasonally: Winter

“Eating seasonally does not mean gorging yourself on pumpkin muffins and gingerbread lattes. Simply put, it means save your berries for the summer and eat your root veggies *now*. It's also good for the environment, your health, and your wallet. If you have already embraced seasonal eating, well then it's a gold star for you. For those of you who have not, please give it a try. Your food will taste 100% better.”

The above quote is by Emilie at her blog “The Clever Carrot” where recipes for fresh seasonal food, photographs, creative tips and stories flourish abundantly. (www.theclevercarrot.com). Emilie says the skins of acorn and butternut squash are edible when roasted – they get soft and sticky. No more peeling! Try this elegant wilted salad. Manchego is a sharp, hard Spanish sheeps milk cheese. You could substitute parmesan, romano, or a very sharp, white, english cheddar.



Warm Squash Salad with Apricot & Manchego Cheese

Ingredients

Glaze:

2 heaped tbsp. apricot jam
2 heaped tbsp. whole grainy mustard
1 tsp. olive oil

Salad:

2 acorn squash
4 handfuls of mixed greens
1 c. pomegranate seeds
¾ c. manchego cheese shavings

Lemon Vinaigrette

2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
⅓ c. good quality olive oil
salt & pepper

Instructions

Preheat your oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Slice the squash, unpeeled, into wedges discarding the seeds. You should be able to get 16 wedges total.

Mix together the apricot jam, mustard and olive oil and coat the squash with glaze.

Spread evenly onto the baking sheet and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 20 minutes or until tender.

While the squash is roasting, make the vinaigrette. Whisk the lemon juice and the olive oil together until emulsified. Season with salt and pepper.

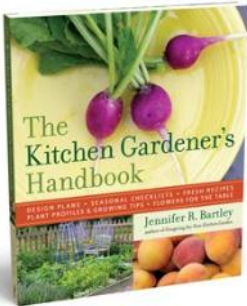
When the squash is done, wait 5 minutes for it to cool slightly.

In a large bowl toss the squash, mixed greens and some of the vinaigrette together. Give it a taste and adjust with more vinaigrette, salt and/or pepper.

Add the pomegranate seeds. With a vegetable peeler, shave some fat strips of manchego over the top.

Serves 4.

Find out what other gardeners are doing with their harvest on the [organicgardening.com recipe exchange](http://organicgardening.com/recipe-exchange). Another on-line resource is the blog The Gardener's Pantry: All Things Related to Food and Gardening (<http://nicholsgardennursery.wordpress.com>).



Butternut squash tacos? Who would have thought?!

No longer content with separating the plants grown to eat and plants grown for beauty, gardeners are

discovering the pleasures of incorporating both edibles and ornamentals into their home landscapes. The Kitchen Gardener's Handbook makes it easy by showing how a well-designed landscape can yield both bounty for the table and beauty for the soul. Whether she's sharing tips on planting radishes in spring, harvesting tomatoes in summer, or pruning perennials in winter, Jennifer Bartley's friendly advice gives gardeners the tools they need to build and maintain a kitchen garden. Readers will learn how to plant, grow, and harvest the best vegetables, fruits, greens, and herbs for every season. They'll also find seasonal recipes that celebrate the best of the harvest, monthly garden chores, eight sample garden designs, and information on using cut flowers for decoration. This is a guide

for gardeners who want it all — the freshness of fruits and vegetables and the beauty and simplicity of hand-picked bouquets.

Winter Tacos

This is a great winter dish which can be made from the vegetables you grew in the summer and are storing in the winter. Serves 6.

1/2 cup dried pinto beans
2 cups water
1/2 butternut (or other winter) squash
3 small potatoes
1 medium sweet onion
3 sweet potatoes
Olive oil
1/2 tsp. coarse sea salt
1/2 cup (1 bunch) fresh cilantro, finely chopped
6-8 green onions, chopped
1 small jalapeno pepper, chopped
16 soft corn tortillas
1/2 cup white cheddar cheese, grated

To prepare the beans: One day before, combine beans and water in bowl and let soak overnight. The next day, cook the beans and water over low heat until the beans are soft, about one to two hours.



Check periodically so beans do not burn. Add more water if necessary.

To prepare the veggies: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut unpeeled squash into larger chunks. Peel and cut the potatoes, onion and sweet potatoes into bite-size pieces. Drizzle with olive oil, mix well, sprinkle with salt. Roast for 25-30 minutes. Onions should begin to caramelize and squash will be tender. Cool slightly; cut squash into bite-size pieces, discarding rind. Combine beans, veggies, cilantro, jalapeno & green onions. Stir to combine, adding salt & pepper.

To prepare the tortillas: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Brush cookie sheet with olive oil. Place tortillas on sheet and brush each with more olive oil. Heat for a few minutes until soft and hot; turn over and heat for a few more minutes. Do not overcook. Stack and cover warm tortillas with foil until ready to use.

To assemble tacos: Place small amount of filling in each tortilla, sprinkle with cheese. Fold and place in casserole dish. Repeat with other tortillas. Bake at 350 degrees until cheese is melted, about 30 minutes. Can be served with a favorite red chile sauce.

This is an excerpt from a new book by Margaret Roach, *The Backyard Parables*, which will be out on January 15th.

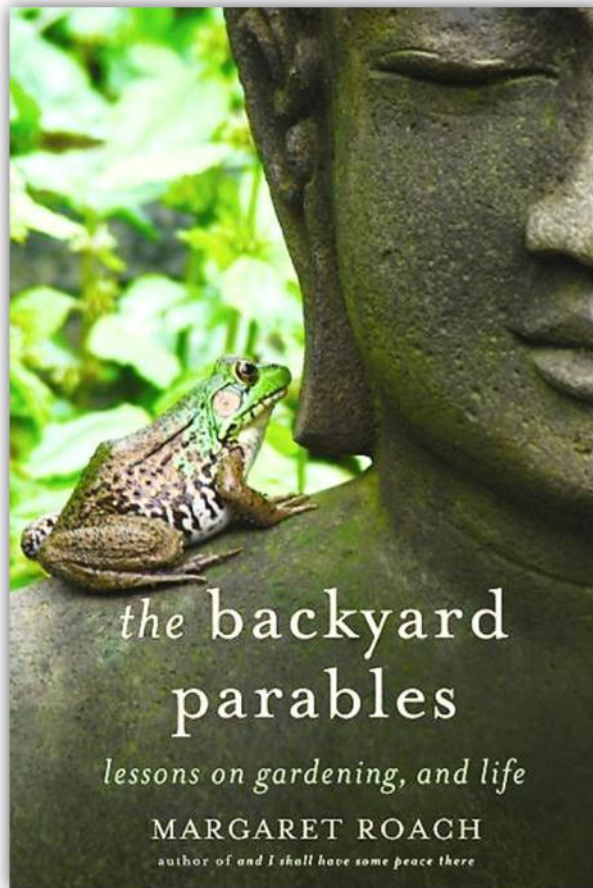
ONCE UPON A TIME,
A faithless twenty-five-year-old
got down on her knees and
fashioned her first garden. It was
a sorry thing, but also a matter of
great pride, this perennial
checkerboard imprinted on a
sloping bit of ground outside her
family's kitchen door.

As if pricking through a
preprinted canvas pattern of
counted cross-stitch, she
populated the tiny strip of
inadequately cultivated soil with
an equal number of two kinds of
perennials. Half were low-
growing, succulent rosettes
called *Sempervivum*, or hens
and chicks, houseleeks, or live-
forever—since as she tucked
these first roots in, she
unwittingly entered a world
where all the characters masquerade
behind multiple nicknames, and
where art and science collide so that
there's no straight answer to
anything (which miraculously
somehow makes everything perfectly
clear).

The others were *Kniphofia* (a.k.a.,
red-hot poker, torch lilies, or
tritomas) a tall thing with vaguely
obscene wand-like flowers striped in
hot sunset shades.

She did not leave proper space
between, nor note the light
conditions either plant required. But
for that moment, there was peace on
earth, and trust in her heart.

In the practice of blind devotion to
living things called gardening, that is
where I got started: assuming a
posture of supplication and gridding
out an alternating arrangement of
plants that should never be
combined, but what did I know? Just
one thing, really: I knew that the
postage-stamp-sized color photos on
their plastic nursery labels had made
lust rise up in me. Over all the other
choices at the garden center where I



had innocently wandered that
morning, seeking a distraction from
things at home, I wanted these
beauties for myself.

This is how it begins: with the deadly
sin of lust. Then you kneel a lot, and
when you finally get up again, you're
not meek or humble quite yet but
filled with the germ of another
transgression—that of pride, which is
said to be the worst of all and often
the root of the others. Like the knees
of your trousers, you will never quite
recover.

Thinking back, I wonder: What was I
greedily praying for as I knelt that
very first day? Was it for the
thousands of hapless perennial
seeds—the entire contents of each of
many packets whose cunning cover
photos had also won my heart during
that same nursery shopping trip? I
had planted them in too-close
quarters, set them in a porch where
they'd be guaranteed too little light,
and overwatered for good measure.

As I poured instead of pinched them
into place, like a kid happily
suffocating cookies with sprinkles or

a card for Mom with glitter, I
was imagining riot-of-color,
meadow-sized beds that never
stopped blooming. I don't
think I knew enough to know
what trouble the seeds, and I,
were in.

No, I had probably come to
these first two naïve,
concurrent experiments of
mad science seeking
something with at least a little
hope attached. Inside the
house, just beyond that
kitchen doorway and the ad
hoc propagation porch, these
were not sunny days but ones
where a loved one struggled
with illness, and would not get
well. I flailed in various ways
as I tried to find the answer
to *why*, and sought any shred
of optimism—the powerful
potion of possibility or, better
yet, belief. I got a garden (such
as the wretched patch was),
which in itself can feed the
soul and even the body, but I

also got occupational therapy, then
eventually faith in the bargain, faith
cultivated by a sequence of life
lessons that all the digging and
weeding and watering that followed
brought to the surface.

Even now, thirty years in, new ones
are turned up, and my collection of
backyard parables—deceptively
simple, instructive stories from a life
spent digging ever deeper—grows.
Preposterous as it seems, since we
are not exactly quoting catechism but
merely talking about lily-beetle
larvae (revolting) or what deer won't
eat (nothing) or how to keep a fifteen-
foot *Viburnum* in a spot that can
only accommodate six (you do the
math, then cut it down), the parables
illuminate and help me puzzle out
every corner of my existence,
providing a lens sharper and brighter
than the default one I came with.

"I believe in parables," Barbara
Kingsolver wrote in *Small Wonder*. "I
navigate life using stories where I
find them, and I hold tight to the
ones that tell me new kinds of truth."

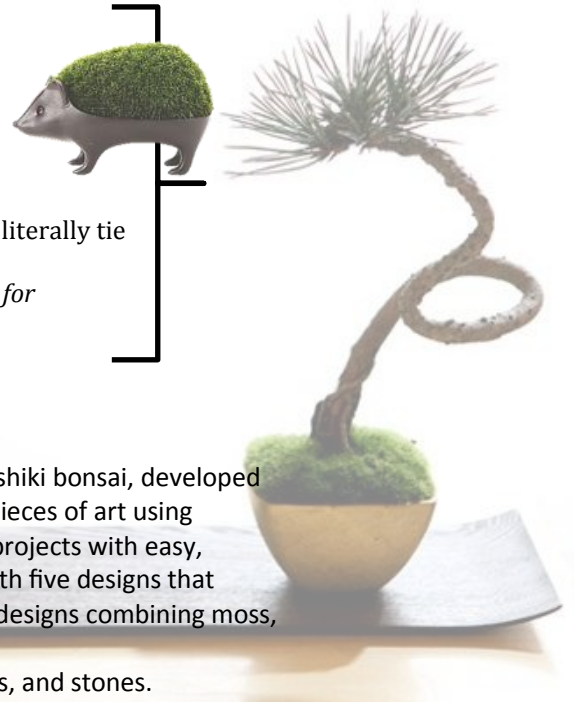
Me, too; me, too.

Modern Bonsai



HAVE YOU RESOLVED TO TRY SOMETHING NEW IN 2013?

"Breaking with traditionalists who prefer their carefully cultivated dwarves to be hundreds of years old, Kobayashi is happy to tease young, tender plants into Seussian contortions. His whimsical creations include miniature landscapes, hedgehogs that grow moss on their backs and pine seedlings that literally tie themselves into knots to please him."
- from <http://gardenista.com> ("a sourcebook for cultivated living")



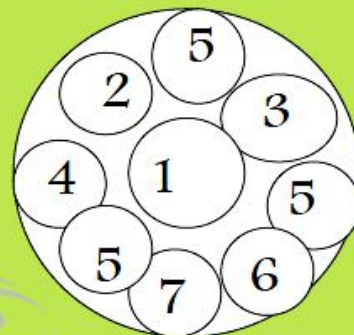
Traditional bonsai can be complicated, time consuming, rulebound and expensive. But at its simplest, it's really just a planting done in a container. Keshiki bonsai, developed by Kenji Kobayashi, is a revolutionary approach that involves creating living pieces of art using readily available plants and containers. This dazzling book features 37 stylish projects with easy, step-by-step instructions that anyone can follow. The projects start simple, with five designs that feature moss combined with unique containers. Readers then move on to six designs combining moss, small trees and containers. The next ten projects add perennials to the mix, and the final projects have it all: moss, trees, perennials, and stones. Projects are made with a wide variety of containers, from the most delicate, artisan clay pot to a repurposed ramekin and a simple box.



Portland Nursery in Oregon posts a "Recipe Card" each month for a container design. On their website, you can explore archives for monthly ideas going back years. The recipe cards include planting directions, information on upkeep and suggestions for substitutions if you can't find a particular cultivar. For this design, by Jemae McCanna, you can choose many other types of hellebores, saxifrage and ferns. An ivy would be another evergreen trailing option, and you could tuck in pansies in available in an array of color and sizes.

<http://www.portlandnursery.com/plants/container-gardens>

January



Winter Wonderland

1. *Helleborus* "Red Lady"
2. *Polystichum munitum*
3. *Bergenia* "Bressingham Ruby"
4. *Vinca major* "Maculata"
5. *Viola/Pansy* Copperfield, Yellow
6. *Saxifraga* s. "Harvest Moon"
7. *Carex m.* "Ice Dance"

PORTLAND
NURSERY

Design of the Month



The Gardeners' Club Membership

Time for membership renewal. Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$12.00, due by is January 1st. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2013. Dues entitle members to all club educational programs , our special events, plant trades and our awesome monthly newsletter. The "green" option is to receive an electronic PDF FULL-COLOR version of the newsletter by checking the newsletter e-mail option below.



'When gardeners garden, it is not the plants that grow, but the gardeners themselves.'—Ken Druse

Come grow with us!

Ours is a club celebrating the joys of gardening, friendship, community, learning, nature and growth. Renew your membership now so you won't miss a thing...you'll be glad you did.

And...with gift-giving season here, consider sharing your passion for gardening, and supporting our club, by giving your favorite gardening enthusiast an opportunity to connect, share and learn with us. A gift membership is a gift nobody will want to return!

Your Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

Newsletter Preference (check one): _____ Full color PDF via e-mail _____ Paper copy (B&W) via snail mail

Gift Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

Newsletter Preference (check one): _____ Full color PDF via e-mail _____ Paper copy (B&W) via snail mail

Enclose check for \$12 per member made out to *The Gardeners' Club* . Mail to
The Gardeners' Club c/o Suzanne Mercado, P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005.

"Janus was a Roman deity with two faces who presided over the threshold of endeavors. As Janus, looking forward and looking back, you can use both foresight and hindsight to plan your garden."

*-The Maritime Northwest
Garden Guide, Seattle Tilth*



"The most noteworthy thing about gardeners is that they are always optimistic, always enterprising, and never satisfied. They always look forward to doing something better than they have ever done before."

-Vita Sackville-West

The Gardeners' Club

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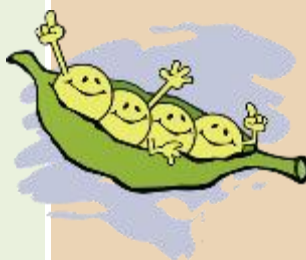
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www.thegardenersclub.org



It's easy-peasy to join our club!

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

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