

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz Co. unty

February 2015

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler

Attracting Beneficial Insects to Your Garden

Stephanie Ripple, an organic garden and Integrated Pest Management specialist, has been giving talks to garden clubs throughout California for the past nine years. At our next meeting, she will discuss the key benefits of using organics in the garden and how to reduce the use of toxic pesticides by utilizing beneficial insects to keep a healthy balance in the garden. She will talk about the importance of good soil health and the differences between synthetics and organics and how these might influence insect and disease issues in the garden.

Stephanie provides retail support for independent garden centers for The Espoma Company .

Espoma is a fourth generation family-owned business with a rich history, pioneering natural gardening solutions. They offer a comprehensive line of organic plant foods and pesticides. They are committed to educating and supporting the gardening community and being environmentally and socially responsible. Their products utilize a vast array of renewable and sustainable ingredients that work in harmony with nature, preserve natural resources, and make a safer world for future generations. Stephanie will be bringing free samples for us!



Our Newsletter: The Pantone Issue

MARSALA
PANTONE 18-1438

Pantone is a global color company known for its standardized color matching system. Pantone named Marsala, an "earthy red wine" inspired hue, the 2015 Color of the Year. I love playing around with

their yearly colors, and I'm so enamored with this one, which reminds me of smokebush and heucheras and so much

more, that I'll be using it throughout the February issue. Apologies of you who get the B&W printed version, but you can go to our web site (www.thegardenersclub.org) to see it in color. Or maybe this is the year you'll go **GREEN** and subscribe electronically!

Winter Gardening Tasks

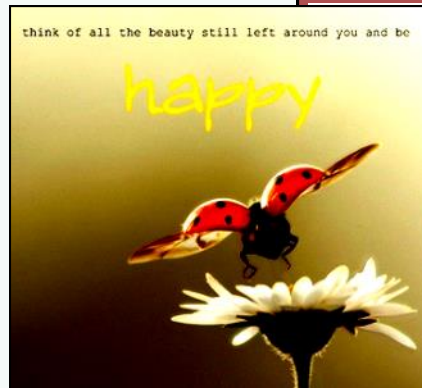
Plan your spring and summer garden—get out all of those gardening books you didn't have time to read when the weather was warmer, look them over, take notes, make resolutions. Buy seeds. Order potatoes.

Plant bare root fruit and shade trees, roses, shrubs and vines, bare root artichokes, asparagus, blackberries, grapes, raspberries, rhubarb and strawberries.

Start seeds (indoors) of cool season leafy vegetables (lettuce, Swiss chard, spinach, etc), Brassica family crops (broccoli, spring cabbage, cauliflower, etc.) and leeks. Later this month, you can also start seeds (indoors) of warm season crops requiring 4 - 8 weeks of growth before setting out, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and basil.

Sharpen your pruners! Prune dormant deciduous plants such as flowering vines, fruit and shade trees, grapes, fuchsias and hydrangeas. Prune salvias, penstemons, butterfly bush, California fuchsia and other summer-blooming perennial shrubs. Roses still blooming? Prune them anyway—they need a rest, and it's good for them.

Consider whether your fruit trees need a dormant oil spray if you have had problems in the previous growing season.



Thursday, February 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Aptos Grange

255 Mar Vista Drive

Refreshments will be served.

Thanks to Alan Neymark for snack, Ellen Green for dessert and Dian Reed for beverages.

The 7 stages of gardening with deer.

1. Shock



2. Denial



3. Anger



4. Bargaining



5. Guilt



6. Depression



7. Acceptance and Building a fence



www.greensparrowgardens.com

Joseph Tychonievich

This deer cartoon was in Green Sparrow Gardens, the personal website of Joseph Tychonievich (www.greensparrowgardens.com). In his blog, following the cartoon he asked readers, "Which stage are you in?" When I emailed him for permission to reprint this deer cartoon, I told him, "I'm in Stage 8. That's when the fence keeps the deer out but the rabbits crawl under it". Joseph said he's also in Stage 8, but with hedgehogs instead of rabbits (he lives in Michigan).

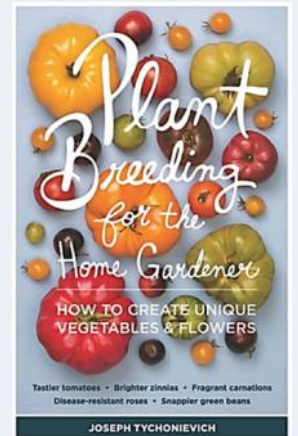
Joseph was named one of "six young horticulturists who are helping to shape how America gardens" by *Organic Gardening* magazine, and he is part of the popular collaborative Garden Professors blog at <http://blogs.extension.org/gardenprofessors/category/joseph-tychonievich/>.

About Joseph's book, *Plant Breeding for the Home Gardener*:

Looking for a plant that perfectly matches your tastes and the conditions in your garden? You're not likely to find it at your local garden center. You're going to have to create it yourself. But don't worry — it isn't hard. After all, gardeners have been doing it for centuries, simply by saving seeds of the varieties that tasted or performed best. In this book you'll learn how to set achievable goals in your breeding program; the ins and outs of genetics; how to pick the best parent plants; how to cross-pollinate; the best techniques to use for popular vegetables and flowers; and how to harvest and store seeds.

There is a great interview with Joseph by Margaret Roach at <http://awaytogarden.com/catalog-shopping-think-like-seed-breeder-says-joseph-tychonievich/>. Joseph says, "Even if you're just saving seed you're really breeding."

The cartoon on Page 3 is also by Joseph.



Land Art by 2nd Graders, "Mother Nature": YES Fundraiser Project by cproppe on Flickr



One of Joseph's self-sown violas

seed catalogs



SOW TRUE SEED

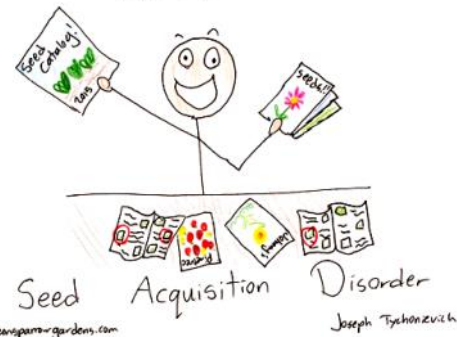
This beautiful catalog cover art is by Beatriz Mendoza, who received a graduate degree in scientific illustration from UCSC. Beatriz says, "This past summer I had the beautiful opportunity to grow a flower garden, and watch it fill to bursting with pollinators. In turn, I had the chance to fill my studio with their graceful anatomy and furry legs. I feel so blessed to be surrounded by such a necessary and hard working bunch, and to illustrate the vision of sustainability and balance as put forth by Sow True Seeds forward thinking."

<http://sowtrueseed.com/>



Egyptian Walking

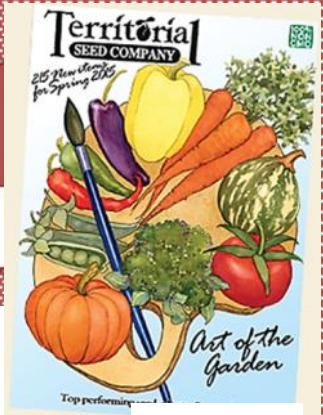
The short, dark winter days
cause me to suffer from
S. A. D.:



www.greengarden.com

MARSALA
ANTONE 18-1438

Potatoes are shipped between February and May—order yours now! Originally cultivated in the Andes where there are still over a hundred varieties.



www.territorialseed.com/



Purple Haze Carrots



Organic Heirloom Cranberry Red Potatoes
Renee's Garden

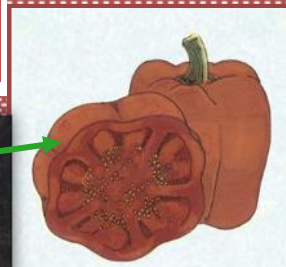
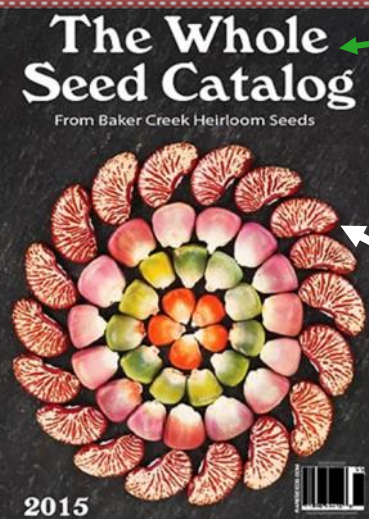
www.reneesgarden.com/seeds/potato.htm



Baked Potato Chips

Red potato chips? Yes, if you use potatoes with red insides. Wash potatoes; cut thin slices and blot dry. Scatter them on a baking sheet sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Drizzle the potato slices with olive oil; season with sea salt if you want. Bake the potatoes until they are crispy (500 degrees for 7-8 minutes—watch closely so they don't burn).

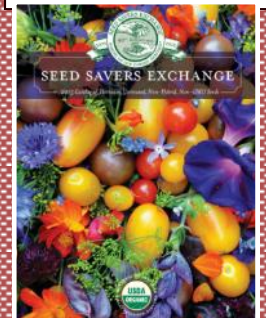
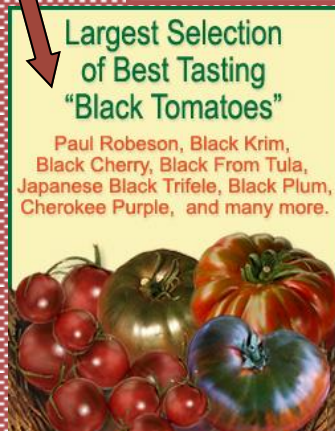
www.tomatofest.com/



Chocolate Beauty Pepper



'Flame'



Red Thumb Fingerling Organic Potato
www.groworganic.com/





MARSALA
PANTONE 18-1438

Mad About Hellebores

It is easy to see why some gardeners are passionate about hellebores. They are gorgeous! They flower in the drear of winter. They require little attention the rest of the year.



To bring them indoors, the simplest way to arrange them is to float them in a bowl of water. I love Martha Stewart's idea (see her photo below) of putting individual blossoms in

glasses. But longer stems also look beautiful in vases. Some people make them last by conditioning them before they put them in an arrangement. After you bring them indoors, cut the bottom of the stem one more time, and strip the leaves from below the likely water line. Sear the hellebores as soon as you can by lowering the stem ends into boiling water for 30 seconds.



Using a preservative in the vase with your cut hellebores will make them last longer. Commercial preservatives use carbohydrates, such as sugar, for cell metabolism; a biocide, such as bleach, to combat bacteria; and an acidifier to adjust the pH of water to facilitate and increase water uptake. You can make your own; here's a recipe for a home made preservative to increase the longevity of cut flowers.

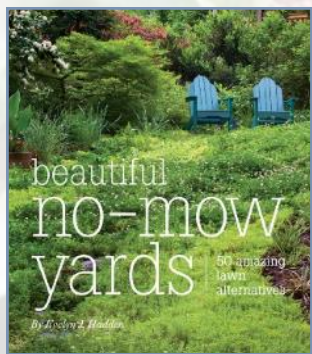
Homemade Flower Preservative

Home mixes can be as effective as commercial preservatives. This one is easy-to-make; it will become your favorite.

- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon household bleach
- 2 teaspoons lemon or lime juice
- 1 quart lukewarm water

Beautiful No-Mow Yards: 50 Amazing Lawn Alternatives

In this ultimate guide to rethinking your yard, Evelyn Hadden showcases dozens of inspiring, eco-friendly alternatives to demanding green turf. Trade your lawn for a lively prairie or replace it with a runoff-reducing rain garden. Swap it for an interactive adventure garden or convert it to a low-maintenance living carpet.



Melissa J. Will, a.k.a. The Empress of Dirt, is a writer, artist, organic gardener sharing frugal and creative ideas and tips for the home and garden, and an ebook, and craft ideas galore using repurposed items. Go to <http://empressofdirt.net/>.



Non-lawn Grass Care

Phormiums, carex (sedges), that rambunctious grass you picked up at The Gardeners' Club sale table and forgot to label—it can be daunting to know how to prune, trim or divide, or whether or not to, or when! Here's a wonderful online resource for you: <http://northcoastgardening.com/2015/01/pruning-ornamental-grass>.

There two ways to approach Flax (Phormium) and clumping varieties of festival grass (Cordyline). You can keep them looking nice by using your hand pruners to individually remove any blades that are brown, snail-damaged or faded. Put on some eye protection, then cut each blade as far down into the base of the plant as possible. The second method is to ignore them until they are unattractive and oversized, and every few years whack them to the ground.

Maiden grass (Miscanthus), feather reed grass (Calamagrostis) and Giant pheasant's tail grass (Stipa gigantea) go fully dormant and actually benefit from being pruned down to about 10 inches tall this time of year. Start by putting on some gloves and long sleeves to prevent cuts, then tie the grass into a bundle with a spare bit of rope, lay a tarp next to the plant, and use your powered or handheld hedging shears to give them a quick buzz cut. (Don't prune off just the tops and flowers in fall. That takes away the loose, airy beauty of the fall and winter flower display and does nothing to address the buildup of old foliage within the plant.)

That's as much of Genevieve Schmidt's advice that I'm comfortable extracting, so do go to her very fine website for more. You can also subscribe to receive new content, such as her recent article on attracting birds year-round to your landscape, at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/northcoastgardening>.



Pruning Ornamental Grasses:



The Ultimate Guide to Pruning Grasses - From giant Phormiums to tiny Carex, and everything in between...



www.NorthCoastGardening.com



MARSALA
PANTONE 16-143B



New Zealand Flax
'Amazing Red'



UCSC Arboretum Phenology Workshop: The Science of the Seasons

Saturday, February 21, 2015—2:00-4:00pm

Calling All Citizen Scientists! Hikers! Families! Students! Educators!

WHAT IS PHENOLOGY?

Phenology is the timing of life cycle events, for example: when plants first bloom, birds migrate and insects hatch. Timing of life cycle events can influence species interactions such as pollination and herbivory.

Do you enjoy watching plants change through the seasons? Would you like to help researchers study the effects of climate change? Workshops will teach volunteers to monitor plants and gather phenology data, including when plants leaf out, flower, form fruit and other seasonal changes. No experience necessary—Instructor Juliet Oshiro will provide hands-on training in the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum Native Plant Garden. The data you collect at this workshop will be uploaded to the USA National Phenology Network's database and is accessible to anyone, including researchers and policy makers. Workshops, which include short presentation of current phenology research and guided data collection tours, are held every 3rd Saturday of each month. The next workshop is on February 21st in the Horticulture II room. Space is limited, advanced registration for the workshop is required— <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu/education/phenology-walk/>.

Workshops at Dig Gardens

420 Water Street, Santa Cruz. Call 466-3444 for more information and to register.

Succulent Heart Wall Planter

Sat. February 7th 2PM \$70



Design and plant a heart shaped wall planter for a Valentine gift! The gorgeous succulents and the heart shaped planter made from redwood are both included in the

workshop fee. The planter is 10 inches high and 3 inches deep.

Orchids 101: Repotting and Reblooming

Sat. February 21 2PM \$25



If you've ever struggled to make an indoor orchid last or re-bloom, this hands-on demonstration workshop is for you! Learn how to care for and re-pot

orchids. Participants may bring one, non-blooming orchid to the workshop for a hands on repotting demonstration. Cost includes instruction and potting materials. Rare and beautiful orchids and pots will be available!

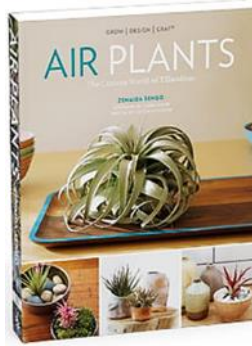
Kokadame: String Gardens, Sat.

Feb. 28 2PM \$45



Learn how to make a stunning display of hanging gardens for your home or patio. This ancient form of Bonsai, called "Kokedame" is gaining popularity with garden

enthusiasts worldwide. Each participant will be able to choose their favorite 4 inch houseplant from the nursery. We will then teach you how to use our special soil mix, string and moss to create these fun and fabulous displays. Please do not bring plants from home. Fee includes plant and all materials and more materials to try it yourself at home!



Air plants, also known as tillandsias, are having their moment. Known for their spiky shape and extremely low-maintenance needs, they are growing increasingly popular for crafting, design, and décor.

Because they don't need soil, you can dangle and perch them almost anywhere in your home. Mount them to shells, rocks, slate, or driftwood to display in your favorite nook. Or try your hand at creating hanging gardens to suspend in mid-air.

In *Air Plants*, tillandsia expert and artist Zenaida Sengo shows how simple and rewarding it is to grow, craft, and design with these modern beauties. The book features six step-by-step projects, including a wood mount and several unique terrariums.

(Editor's Note: Dig Nursery has quite a selection of tillandsias, epiphytes, bromeliads, etc. A neighbor of mine is growing quite a garden of them in his oak trees, and I'm going to give that a try. Has anyone had luck doing this?)



Home Grown: Citrus Workshop for the Home Gardener and Small-Scale Grower

Add some zest to your garden or small-scale orchard! Come Saturday, February 28, from 9:30 - 1 pm for a workshop at the UC Santa Cruz Farm focused on citrus. The workshop instructors are Orin Martin, manager of UCSC's Alan Chadwick Garden, and Daniel Paduano, owner of Abounding Harvest Mountain Farm. Daniel Paduano's farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains grows a wide variety of citrus for such local favorites as Penny Ice Creamery, Ristorante Avanti, and The Picnic Basket. In this lecture and hands-on workshop, participants will learn about the best varieties of citrus (lemons, limes, oranges, tangerines, and more) for the Monterey Bay region; how to select and

prepare a planting site; how to plant; and how to irrigate, fertilize, prune, and control pests and diseases in a range of citrus trees. The workshop will include a tasting of locally grown citrus.

Workshop Cost: \$55 general/\$45 Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden/\$35 UCSC Farm & Garden Docents/\$30 UCSC students and limited income. Coffee, tea and snacks will be provided. Register at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1045322>. If you prefer to register for this class by mail, please send a check made payable to UC Regents to: Amy Bolton, CASFS, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (attn: Citrus workshop)



New Coleus Introductions

Coleus is a species of flowering plant in the family Lamiaceae, native to south east Asia and Malaysia. Growing to 24-30 inches tall and wide, it is a bushy, woody-based evergreen perennial, widely grown for its highly decorative variegated leaves. Another common name is "painted nettle", reflecting the deadnettle family to which it belongs. It is a wonderful container plant. Terra Nova Nurseries has some thrilling new introductions—see them all at www.terranovanurseries.com/growers/coleus-c-82_295.html. Terra Nova also has new heucheras and coreopsis varieties—always room for more, right?

The Gardeners' Club Membership

The time has come 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, 2015. 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.



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.

Come grow with us!



Your Membership

Name: _____

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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

The Beauty of Death in the Winter Garden

<http://amycampion.com/the-beauty-of-death-in-the-winter-garden/>



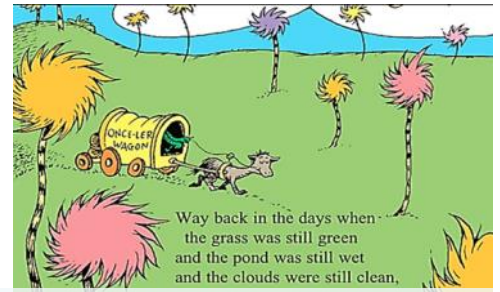
Amy's photo of a skeletonized English ivy leaf

"Winter forces us to look closer for beauty in the garden. No more cantaloupe-sized hydrangea flowers, no flamboyant dahlias, no voluptuous tree peonies. We look to the details to find beauty in unexpected places." Amy says, "I agree wholeheartedly with Emerson when he wrote, 'I please myself with the graces of the winter scenery, and believe that we are as much touched by it as by the genial influences of summer.' And I also believe that, 'To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again.'"

Fallen Roger's Red grape leaves in February (Photo: Lise Bixler)

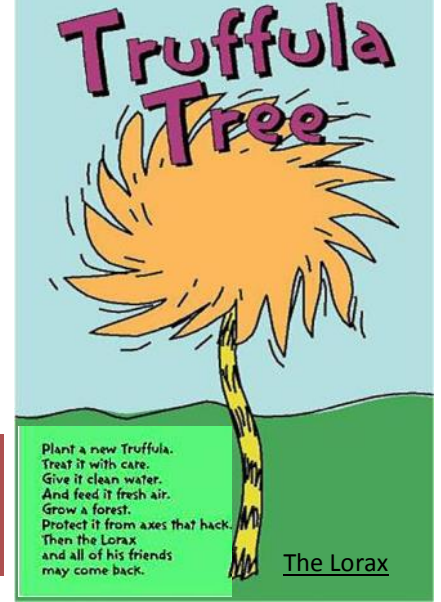


"Time is a four letter word and so is Life.
Slower is a six letter word and so is Garden."
— Adapted from an Indian saying by Mike Garofalo



Way back in the days when the grass was still green and the pond was still wet and the clouds were still clean,

Don't cry because its over, smile because it happened. —Dr. Seuss



Plant a new Truffula.
Treat it with care.
Give it clean water.
And feed it fresh air.
Grow a forest.
Protect it from axes that hack.
Then the Lorax
and all of his friends
may come back.

The Lorax

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www.thegardenersclub.org



Aptos.
Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange , 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Lomond, CA 95005. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to P.O. Box 3025, Ben

Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make
It's easy-peasy to join our club!



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