



Newsletter of The  
Gardeners' Club,  
Santa Cruz County,  
California

JUNE 2017

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## DAZZLING DAHLIAS - HOW TO GROW THEM

Dahlias can inspire frenzied delight in gardeners, and growing them can be addictive. Kristine Albrecht of Santa Cruz Dahlias will tell us about the journey her passion for this flower has taken her.

Her Blackbird Farm began in 2007 when she planned to reclaim a half acre in Live Oak. The weed-choked plot had been fallow for several years. Kristine planned a diverse dahlia garden and planted over 1,000 tubers.

Today, she is president of the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society and travels with her blooms to local and national dahlia shows.

Kristine says, "When I do something, I typically go all out." That's an understatement! In 2014 she won the best small bloom at the National show as well as winning both the Derrill Hart Award and the Lynn P. Dudley award for her own cultivar, KA's Cloud. In 2012 and 2016 Kristine was awarded the trophy for the largest dahlia shown in the U.S.

Locally you can see many of her blooms at the Santa Cruz County Fair each September and at the Monterey Bay Dahlia Show. This year's local show will be held at the Museum of Art and History in downtown Santa Cruz, August 6th and 27th, 2017.



Kristine now has 1,200 dahlias plants and supplies three florists with blooms. She also has a farm stand, and grows blooms for designers throughout Northern California.

She says, "I have kept the business part of the farm intentionally small as I want to have time and energy to grow dahlias for show and to cultivate new hybrids." Learn more about her and her business at <http://www.santacruzdahlias.com/>.

Kristine's talk will take everyone through a typical growing season. She will cover basic organic pest controls. She will also have a showing of dahlia blooms and bring in a few early season dahlias.



**Meets the 2nd  
Friday of each month  
at Simpkins Community  
Swim Center ,  
Room 979 , 17th Ave,  
Santa Cruz. Potluck dinner  
at 7:00 pm., meeting at  
7:30 pm.**

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

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society

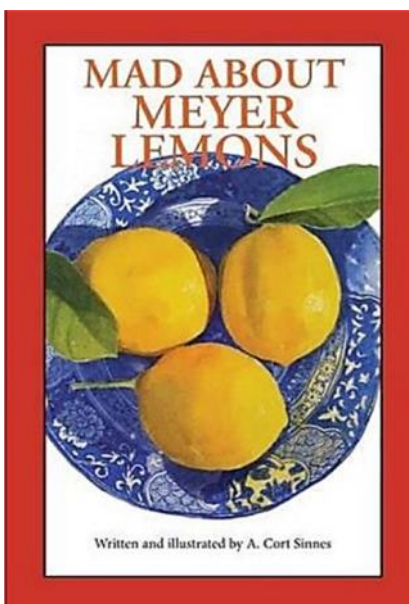


Thursday  
June 8th  
Aptos Grange  
2555 Mar Vista Dr.

7 p.m.

Refreshments will be served. Thanks to Jean Favre for snack, Julie Prendergast for dessert and and Joanna Hall for beverage.

J.J. Grandville, " Les Fleurs Animees"



## MAD ABOUT MEYER LEMONS

“When life gives you lemons, paint ‘em,” A. Cort Sinnes writes. This, the Napa author/artist does splendidly in his book, Mad About Meyer Lemons. Not only are the recipes luscious—the artwork is, too.

“I think it’s safe to say that most artists are obsessed to one degree or another,” Sinnes writes, citing Claude Monet who painted 25 versions of haystacks, and Katsushika Hokusai who published “36 Views of Mt. Fuji.” He says, “I wouldn’t say I’m obsessed with Meyer lemons but I am deeply impressed by them. For me, they embody an effortless perfection and the very essence of living in a climate like that of California.” So he created 36 views of Meyer lemons — lemons on branches, lemons in bowls, lemons on the grill — which he combined with simple yet sophisticated recipes, both sweet and savory, along with humor and ruminations, lore and history.



Meyer lemons, found in China by Fred Meyer in 1909, are a cross between a lemon and an orange. They are known for their thin skin, comparatively sweet flavor, extreme juiciness and perfume-like fragrance. One tree produces an abundance of fruit, and a Meyer lemon can even spend its whole life growing in a container.

Go to <https://www.madaboutmeyerlemons.com> to see all of the paintings in the book, or to order prints. Below is one of his recipes for you to try this summer.

### ‘Meyer’ Limonana



*“There are lots of variations on this national drink of Israel and I’m here to put a further ‘Meyer’ twist on it. The first time I tried it, I was with my daughter in a middle eastern restaurant in Berkeley. She was an old hand at it; it was completely new to me—green, minty lemonade—who knew? It’s not meant to be overly sweet, so the natural sweetness of the ‘Meyer’ lemon comes in handy here. If you’re feeling particularly frisky, add a shot of gin or vodka to the mix. Serves two. L’chaim!”*

1 cup ‘Meyer’ lemon juice, approx. 7-8 lemons; 1/2 cup roughly-torn or chopped fresh mint  
1 cup water; 4 T. granulated sugar; 2 cups ice cubes; fresh mint sprigs for garnish

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend at high speed until the ice is well crushed. Serve in tall glasses, garnished with fresh mint sprigs.

## SCAVENGER HUNTS WITH KERMIT THE BOOK MOBILE

A shiny, green bike-mobile is joining the Santa Cruz Farmers Markets for a fantastic, fun-filled series of farmers’ market hunts. Check in at KERMIT the bicycle book mobile or at the farmers’ market information table to get your activity sheet. Then scour the market for all the right things; think alphabet and rainbow themes. The prize is a basket of berries. You can also walk away with books from the library and a library card. What a great partnership—the Santa Cruz Farmers’



### Downtown Santa Cruz Farmers’ Market (2-5pm)

\*All but the June 21st hunt line up with [FoodShed Project](#) Events!

Wednesday, June 21th; Wednesday, July 12th

Wednesday, August 9th; Wednesday, September 13th

### Scotts Valley Farmers’ Market (10am-noon)

Saturday, May 20; Saturday, June 17

Saturday, July 15; Saturday, August 19



### Felton Farmers’ Market (3-6pm)

Tuesday, May 2nd \*Also Opening Day & Strawberry Shortcake Give Away

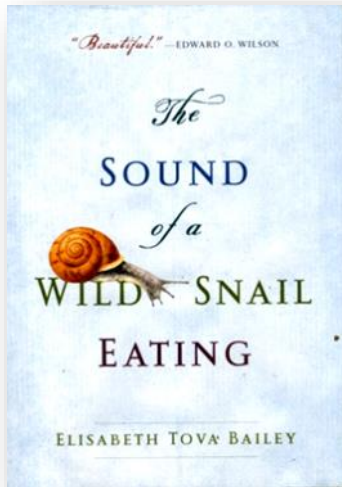
Tuesday, June 13th \*Also Children’s Day

Tuesday, July 18th

Tuesday, August 15th

Tuesday, September 19th \*Also Apple A Day Event





## The Earthly Adventure of a Woman and a Gastropod

A Book Review by Sirleen Ghileri

Elisabeth Tova Bailey was ill and unable to do anything except lie flat in bed when one day a friend brought her a woodland snail in a pot filled with a violet plant. She put it on her nightstand and became intimate with the snail's life and habits. It would venture out of its pot at night and return during the day to sleep. The snail was put into a terrarium later so it would have a more confined home and so she wouldn't worry about someone stepping on it.

Bailey says "Though holding and

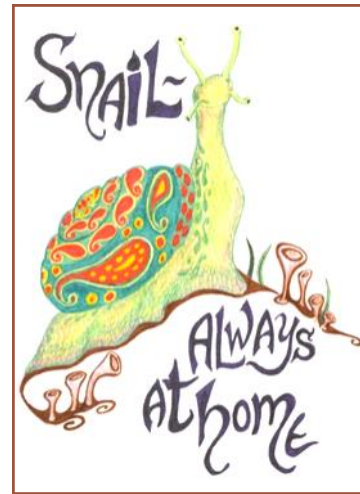
# Read

reading a book for any length of time involved levels of strength and concentration that were beyond me, watching the snail was completely relaxing. I observed without thinking, looking into the terrarium simply to feel connected to another creature; another life was being lived just a few inches away. She discovers (who would have guessed) that snails groom themselves.

As her health improves she does research into snails and discovers that they have 2,640 teeth that renew themselves in rows as the front row wears out. I think that any gardener that finds all the bedding plants gone the morning after they were planted would guess that snails aren't lacking teeth!!

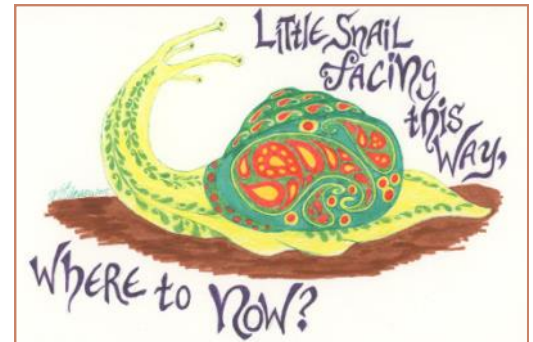
After a while her snail laid eggs and she watched the minute baby snails hatch and grow. All 118 of them were eventually released into the wild. Bailey found out that her

snails loved portobello mushrooms and liked to have a few crumbled egg shells to eat to get the calcium to grow their shells.



This is a charming small book that might make you wonder if you'd like a pet snail of your own... It would make a lovely gift for anyone interested in nature or for yourself - to curl up in a

comfy chair and be taken away to Elisabeth Tova Bailey's world.



Haikus by Issa; Art by Meredith Eliassen

## Fruit Drop and Thinning



You may experience "June drop" this month—unexplained dropping of fruit from your trees. This is normal—no worries! It is nature's way of preserving trees' resources.

June is the month to follow this lead and thin the fruit on your trees. It may hurt to do it, but removal of fruit will actually give you a better crop and will help prevent biennial bearing (producing fruit every other year). Thinning will help prevent limb damage, improve size of the remaining fruit and discourage more early fruit drop. For trees with peach leaf curl, thinning trees will divert the energy from fruit production into fighting off the disease and regrowing leaves. Start to thin when the fruit is about an inch in diameter (but not larger). This is a great time to thin as the trees are usually through with their natural drop and the fruit has sized up.

## HOW ORNAMENTAL GRASSES AND SEDGES CAN PLAY A ROLE IN POLLINATOR GARDENS

—Adapted from an article by Janeen Wright at [www.greenhousegrower.com](http://www.greenhousegrower.com).

Grasses and sedges play an important role in pollinator gardens in less obvious ways than other plants. They provide food, shelter, and support for pollinators and the birds and mammals that keep insect populations in balance.

Ornamental grasses are tremendously popular because they are easy to grow and provide three seasons of interest, says Peggy Anne Montgomery of American Beauties Native Plants, who says they act as host plants for butterflies and skippers and provide cover in the winter. They are also a good seed source for birds.

“People still aren’t thinking about grasses and sedges in the context of pollinator gardens because they don’t have obvious flowers,” says Shannon Currey of Hoffman Nursery in Rougemont, NC.

Native ornamental grasses are starting to take off, with a continuing need for varieties with better ornamental appeal to keep the movement going, says Josiah Raymer of Emerald Coast Growers. Fortunately, breeders are beginning to show more interest in native grasses, with the result that grasses such as *Andropogon*, which landscapers once considered more of a workhorse than a looker, is now both. They’re also bringing out highly ornamental varieties of *Panicum* and *Schizachyrium*.

“Where before many of the native cultivars tended to be similar and mainly had incremental improvements, we’re now seeing leaps in cultivar appeal,” Currey says. “For example, little bluestems with deeper, richer color and resistance to lodging or flopping over when placed in rich or well-irrigated soils. These new selections are getting people excited about native plants...”

In non-native grasses, Emerald Coast’s John Friel says there’s a growing interest in new infertile varieties of the most popular, established genera — *Miscanthus* and *Pennisetum*.


There is also a surge of interest in *Carex*, not technically a grass but in the grass category. While *Carex* aren’t as flashy as other ornamentals, they can be incredibly useful in pollinator gardens as host plants and as support for successful plantings, Currey says.

“There is a sedge for just about any site condition, and many sedges provide wildlife services,” says Kyle Banas, Pizzo Native Plant Nursery (Leland, IL.) “Sedges with great landscape potential...provide food for an astounding variety of wildlife, including pollinators.”




Prairie Winds® 'Cheyenne Sky' Red Switch Grass - *Panicum virgatum* (Proven Winners). Dense, upright clump; petite red grass ideal for containers.


**Carex pansa**  
“California Meadow Sedge”



Native to the Californian Pacific Coast, this low-maintenance species is said to be an excellent lawn substitute! It's not aggressive, but it does spread by rhizomes and it can be mowed. It is also described as **very tolerant of traffic and diverse soil types including both sand and clay**. Growing just 4-6" unmowed, it's the perfect foundational plant for creating your own native meadow. Drought tolerant and evergreen, it can handle light shade but looks better in more sun.

Pt.Sun/Shade  Low/Avg.water

CA Native Perennial Grass  
USDA Zones 8-11



**Annie's Annuals  
&  
Perennials**



## 2017 Scholarship Awards

What a great turn-out we had for our April meeting! For the first time we were able to award scholarships to both the Cabrillo College horticulture students and to the high school students recommended by the Farm Bureau the same evening. The room was overflowing with joy and pride—how nice to have the recipients' friends, boyfriends, family members, teachers and school principals celebrating them. After each recipient was given her award certificate (the scholarships were increased to \$500 each this year), each was able to share her experiences and her future plans. It was quite inspiring and we

were so impressed by these hard-working, forward-thinking students.

Peter Shaw, Chair of the Cabrillo Horticulture Department, presented awards to Jamie Bossio and Kirsten Fleming, praising their roles and achievements at Cabrillo. After finishing her A.S. at



Jamie Bossio, Kirsten Fleming, Peter Shaw

Cabrillo, Kirsten plans to go to Cal Poly for a degree in landscape architecture. Thank you, Bill Patterson, for your hard work and encouragement, working with Cabrillo to make these scholarships happen.

Many thanks, too, to Marcia Meyer, for again working closely with the Farm Bureau and Jim Howes of the Santa Cruz County of Education Regional Occupational Program to identify remarkable high schools deserving of our scholarships awards. Deisy Avila is an honor-roll student at Watsonville High who has also been an active member of Future Farmers of America, participating in and taking a leadership role in that organization for years. Her teacher emphasized her

compassion and her community involvement. She plans on going to a 4-year college majoring in agriculture/ornamental horticulture.

I was surprised to learn that our high school students reach out to younger students, visiting middle schools to encourage them to explore horticulture interests and opportunities.



Aaliyah Wilson and teacher Kimberly Woodland

Aaliyah Wilson is an exemplary student at Costanoa High School who is enrolled in teacher Kimberly Woodland's ROP Agriculture Production class. The students in her class work with elementary students to learn gardening. Before

Kimberly presented Aaliyah, she described her class and its many community partnerships and projects. I was amazed, and hope to learn more from her about this in the future.

Aaliyah is a highly motivated student who organized the school's Harvest Festival last year. She has been a junior staff member of Food What?, a youth empowerment and food justice organization using food, through sustainable agriculture and health, as a vehicle for growing strong, healthy and resilient teens, partnering with low-income and struggling youth to grow, cook, eat and distribute healthy, sustainably raised food

and address food justice issues in the community (see more about FoodWhat" on following page). Aaliya's goal is to start a specialty landscaping business. At our meeting, she told us she wants everybody to be able to open your back door and "step into your own grocery store"!

Another big thank you goes to all of the Club members who gave donations during membership time to make our scholarships possible.



Kirsten Fleming, Scholarship Chair Bill Patterson, Jamie Bossio, Scholarship Chair Marcia Meyer, Deisy Avila, Aaliyah Wilson.



Attending the scholarship presentation meeting, I was struck by how much we learn from the young people we encourage on their paths forward. Ailiyah and her teacher mentioned FoodWhat?, which I didn't know about. FoodWhat serves low-income and struggling teenage youth across Santa Cruz County who suffer from common problems associated with poverty: diminished school success, severely limited employment options, personal or family trauma, low self-esteem and compromised health. FoodWhat was founded in 2007 to tackle these issues from an empowerment perspective and to provide a safe space for Santa Cruz County youth with the least access to opportunities and resources. Through healthy food, meaningful work, and a deeply connective and supportive group of people surrounding them, the youth in FoodWhat carve out a different path for themselves. They choose to live healthy, productive lives as they find their voices, cultivate their skills, and develop lasting confidence in themselves.

FoodWhat uses food as the vehicle for youth to build power, uses healthy sustainable food and farming as mediums for providing a bountiful, relevant toolkit that youth use to step into their power and break cycles of poverty.




FoodWhat programs are held on a half-acre organic farm at the UCSC Farm & Garden and on a partner farm site in Watsonville, Discovery at Live Earth Farm. Youth from all over Santa Cruz County join the FW crew through a Spring Internship, Summer Job

Training Program, Fall Project Management Program, Winter Community Education Program and through organizing large community events on the farm.

I was particularly wowed by the "Youth Voices" page on their web site, which features what former participants took away from the program and what they were doing now. For instance, Jose, pictured above, grandson of Mexican farmers and son of farmers here, is now on Assistant Farm Manager at Dirty Girl Farms, on the road to having his own business one day. In fact, after I read this page, I made a donation. I encourage you to do the same!

## YOUTH VOICES



"Working at FoodWhat my communications skills and my confidence went up which I didn't have at the beginning. I started eating healthy. FoodWhat taught me how to cook and prepare new foods to taste good that weren't in my Mexican diet before. That's made me want to eat healthier. My grandparents were farmers in Mexico. My parents are farmers here. When I came to FoodWhat I knew I wanted to be a farmer and have my own place and business one day. I know it's a hard job, but it's really rewarding. At the end of the day, you feel good for what you've done. FoodWhat opened the door for me to meet new people and organic farmers and that led to me getting the job at Dirty Girl."

-Jose, 2013 Crew

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

I am the Assistant Farm Manager at an organic farm Dirty Girl Produce. I'm most proud of myself, in coming from my background of immigrant farmers, of having the job that I have right now—I'm happy and proud of what I do

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





# Enchanting Gardens in the Valley



**Tour and enjoy seven beautiful, unique and inspiring gardens in Felton and Ben Lomond. Benefit for Valley Churches United, a grassroots non-profit serving those in needs in the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley and Bonny Doon since 1982.**

**Saturday, June 24 ~ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at Scarborough Gardens, Mountain Feed & Farm Supply, The Garden Company and San Lorenzo Garden Center

This tour features some extraordinary gardens, including garden art sculptures and water catchment systems. Mountain Feed's demonstration garden and onsite aquaponics greenhouse are included as part of the tour, with the bonus that if you purchase something and show your ticket at checkout you'll get a 10% discount.

Event sponsored by Mountain Feed and Farm Supply and KSCO

## TIP of the WEEK



Tip of the week is from Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply. For a full video on how to grow garlic, go to [www.groworganic.com/organic-gardening/videos/how-to-grow-garlic](http://www.groworganic.com/organic-gardening/videos/how-to-grow-garlic).

### When is Your Garlic Ready to Harvest and What are Those Curly Things?

"When your garlic scapes have curled down and into a circle you can remove them. Save them and cook them up in a little butter or olive oil. A few weeks before harvesting you should stop watering the garlic. When the garlic plant has about 3-4 dead leaves on the bottom of the plant is when you should at least dig up one bulb to see how it has sized up. If the bulb has plump cloves, then dig them up. If not leave them in the ground a little longer."

- *Tricia* (Gardening Enthusiast & Spokesperson of Our How-to Videos)

## Are Pest Problems Bugging You? Basics of Integrated Pest Management

June 17, 2017, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Sponsor: Monterey Bay Master Gardeners

Location: UC Cooperative Extension  
Demonstration Garden

Learn a less toxic strategy for long-term prevention of pests and their damage with methods that keep health and environmental risks as low as possible.

Not just about insect pests, IPM also focuses on weeds, wildlife, fungi, bacteria, viruses, and more. Join UC Master Gardener Debbie Muth for this FREE workshop that will cover the basics of pest identification, how to determine if your pest is likely to become a problem, the four methods of pest management, and information on pesticides. Also included will be online handouts and resources for further information. Contact: Tina Heitzman, [tina.heiztman@gmail.com](mailto:tina.heiztman@gmail.com)

## Board of Directors News

Our dues have not been raised for more than a decade. The Board decided on a modest increase, from \$12 to \$15 per year, effective for the 2018 membership year. We are pleased that many of our members are checking off the "additional donation" box when paying their dues, which enables us to give more to the community.

Our next Board Meeting will be on Monday, June 26th at 6:00 p.m.. We will meet at the home of April Barclay, 7158 Freedom Blvd., Aptos, and we'll tour her garden. All are welcome to attend; you don't have to be a member of the Board.

## Sculpture Is: 2017 "In the Garden"

**June 1 – Oct. 31, 2017**  
**Reception: June 29th**  
**5 – 7pm**

Presented by Pajaro Valley  
Arts, Curated by Susana Arias

The eleventh annual Sculpture  
IS: exhibition is taking place  
on the beautiful two-acre  
Sierra Azul Nursery  
demonstration gardens with  
over 90 sculptures. This  
critically acclaimed exhibit  
showcases work in steel,

"Umbels" by Jenni Ward

wood, ceramics, bronze, glass and concrete. Come visit  
the gardens!

**Sierra Azul Nursery and Gardens**  
**2660 East Lake Avenue**  
**Watsonville**

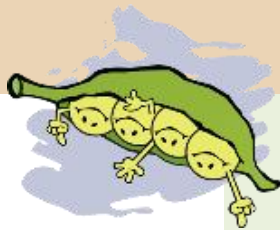


Pollinator Parnership <http://www.pollinator.org>

[www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern](http://www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern).

Our front page logo iis graciously shared with us by artist Lisa Zador. Order a print or see more of her work at her Etsy shop

**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, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos



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