

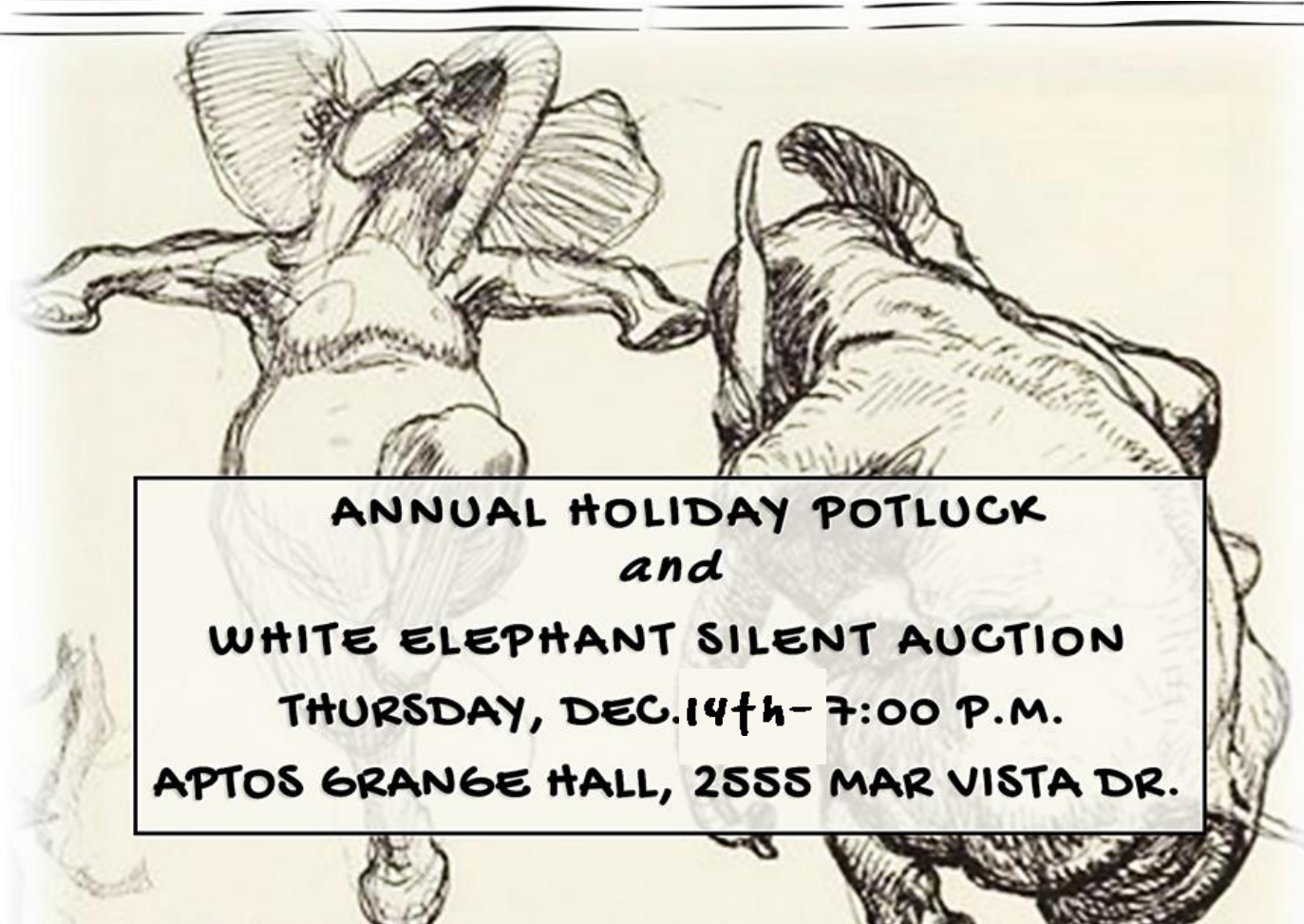


Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California

December 2023

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler
(lisebixler@sbcglobal.net)



**ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK
and
WHITE ELEPHANT SILENT AUCTION
THURSDAY, DEC. 14th - 7:00 P.M.
APTOS GRANGE HALL, 2555 MAR VISTA DR.**

Every December we gather to celebrate gardening, good food, good friends and the fine art of re-gifting. Bring a dish to share, labeled for the benefit of members with dietary restrictions. Please bring a serving utensil, and if you share a hot dish, please bring it already warmed. We'll provide plates, utensils and drinks.

No business meeting this month, and no plant table, either. After we feast and catch up on conversation, the liveliest part of our meeting will start. We'll browse the silent auction tables and discover items we didn't know we needed, and find perfect gifts for family and friends.

Bring unwanted oddities, jewelry, dishes, pottery, special plants, clothing, gardening items, gourmet goodies, birdfeeders, tools, chotzkes, bricabrac, vases, books, objets d'art and objets d'junk. You'll be thrilled whether you want to get rid of things or want to find bargains and treasures. You are welcome to bring friends, guests, spouses, significant others and people who are interested in our club. See you there!

What To Do in the Garden DECEMBER

Winter Tree care

We can help our trees prepare for the colder months ahead. Consider the following tips.

Rely on mulch. Put composted organic mulch under your tree in the fall or early winter to help retain water and reduce temperature extremes in the soil. A thin layer of mulch will act like a blanket and give the tree's roots a little extra protection.

Give your trees a drink. Winter droughts require watering as much as summer droughts. If temperatures permit, an occasional watering during the winter on young trees can be a lifesaver.

Prune your trees. Now is a good time to prune your trees. Not only are trees dormant in the colder months, but it is also easier to see a tree's structure when there are no leaves on the branches. Proper pruning is vital to the health of trees and plants, in part because it helps relieve stress on trees and keeps them growing. But be aware that each tree is different, and pruning at the wrong time or the wrong way can injure a tree.

Plant more! This is a prime time to plant new trees. Conditions are perfect now for stimulating root growth in new trees. Once roots are established throughout the fall and dormancy of winter, spring showers and summer warmth encourage new top growth. —Content provided by the International Society of Arboriculture, a non-profit organization dedicated to tree-care research and education.

Is it Time to Use Dormant Sprays on Your Backyard Fruit Trees?

According to the UC Master Gardener Program of Contra Costa County, this year was particularly bad for peach leaf curl and other fungal infections in fruit trees because of the wonderful rain we had last winter and spring. It looks like we

might have another wet winter,

“Dormant sprays” or “delayed dormant sprays” are terms used for the application of pesticides when the tree is dormant or just coming into bud swell. The pesticide could be a fungicide used to help manage fungal disease or a horticultural oil or oil in combination with insecticides to kill insects. Fruit tree diseases that can be managed by applying a fungicide dormant spray include peach leaf curl, brown rot, and shot hole disease.

Peach leaf curl affects only peach and nectarine trees. It shows up in spring after the tree has leafed out. Leaves are thickened, curled, and colored red or yellow instead of normal green.



If your tree has had significant peach leaf curl in prior years, dormant spraying with a fixed

copper spray just after all the leaves have fallen from the tree (usually December to January) may prevent or reduce the severity of the disease.

For more information on the other diseases that can plague your fruit trees go to <https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=58361>.



Use That Compost!

If you make compost, now is the time to apply it. If it's dark, friable, and evenly broken down, it's ready. If some of it needs to decay further, sift it and toss the big clumps back into the pile. Trees and shrubs, like apples and roses, should be fertilized now. These plants can be winter-dormant but nutrients gradually released

by microbial breakdown will be available to plant roots in February when both begin to produce new growth. A top-dressing of 4" of compost does it. You can scratch or dig it in, or let the earthworms do that work!

Now is a time for reflection and dreaming. It's a time for browsing seed, rose, and dahlia catalogs, reviewing the past year's gardening successes and failures, and dreaming about and planning ahead for the upcoming growing season. There's always room for another rose, they say—how about a David Austin? If you have an irrigation system, does it need repair or tweaking? What will you do differently with your tomatoes next year? Tell us about your gardening year at our December get-together!



Santa Cruz Garden Exchange

The Santa Cruz Garden Exchange aims to take place monthly on the fourth Saturday, from 8 to 9 a.m. and once a month on a random Tuesday from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Live Oak Grange parking lot, 1900 17th Ave. Please check newsletter and Santa Cruz Sentinel Home & Garden Digest for specific dates and times. Gardeners are welcome to bring anything from their garden to give away to like minded neighbors. One need not bring anything in order to participate and you must take away anything not given out. Hope to see you all out there going plant crazy! Tea and coffee often provided, bring a mug! Next meeting will be December 23rd.



using a food processor with a grater attachment to make this a 30-minute meal. It's possible to use a hand grater, but you'll get tired of it quickly, especially if you have a large enough family for a double batch.

<https://www.kitchenstewardship.com/recipe-connection-potato-vegetable-pancakes-latkes/>



What vegetables to use? Anything you have on hand:

- spinach or other leafy greens
- sweet potato
- carrots
- zucchini or summer squash
- fall squash, raw
- broccoli, stems included
- cauliflower

Spinach will make the whole batch a shocking green, but I promise, you can't taste it. Zucchini, especially peeled, totally blends in. Broccoli and cauliflower will impart some flavor, so use in smaller amounts until you know how they come through. Once your family is convinced that potato pancakes are wonderful (you might skip anything green on the first attempt if you have veggie-phobic children), slowly adjust the 6-7 cups of shredded stuff so that the ratio of potatoes to vegetables gets lower and lower. Eventually, you should be able to have just 2 cups of shredded potatoes and 4 cups of shredded vegetables.

LATKES (POTATO PANCAKES)... WITH VEGETABLES!

**Author: Katie Kimball,
Kitchen Stewardship**

Yield: 4 (18-25 pancakes)

Ingredients

- 3 large potatoes (about 4 cups worth, grated)
- about 2-3 cups other vegetables, grated (see notes below)
- 3 eggs
- 2 Tbs. flour
- 1 medium onion
- 1 tsp. salt oil for frying (refined coconut oil is excellent)

Instructions

Wash, peel (optional) and grate the raw potatoes. Salt the gratings and allow to sit for 10-60 minutes (depending on how long you have before the meal), then drain the excess water that accumulates at the bottom of the bowl. If you're hurrying and must skip this step entirely, the pancakes will survive.

Grate or finely chop onion and add to potatoes, along with any other veggies you're using. (Grate = lots of crying; finely chop = only a few tears. Another reason I like the food processor to do the job for me. Use the regular blade to chop onions.)

Beat eggs well and add to the bowl (or just beat on top and then mix in).

Add salt and flour. Mix well.

Heat oil in frying pan or electric griddle at about 350F.

Spoon potato mixture into hot oil and flatten with spoon or spatula to create 3-4" circles:

Add a spoonful of the liquid that collects at the bottom of the mixing bowl right in the center. It's mostly egg and will remind you of a fried egg around the edges of the pancake:

This helps to hold everything together nicely so you don't end up just making veggie hashbrowns. Flip when the underside is golden brown, about 2 minutes. The second side won't cook quite as evenly brown, but when it starts looking like toasty hashbrowns, they're done (about 3-5 minutes).

Remove to a plate; drain with paper towel if necessary:

Traditional toppings include sour cream or applesauce, but they're also good with real maple syrup, homemade yogurt in place of the sour cream, or even ketchup. My son uses 3 of the 4, which makes my husband cringe, but hey – to each his own toppings as long as they're eating their vegetables!

Notes

I highly recommend



**GROWING GOOD KIDS –
EXCELLENCE IN CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE BOOK AWARDS PROGRAM**

Every year The Junior Master Gardener Program and the American Horticultural Society honor engaging, inspiring works of plant, garden and ecology-themed children's literature. Here are the 2023 winners—too many for me to

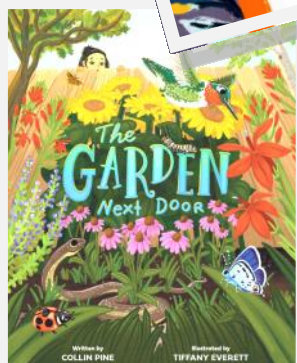
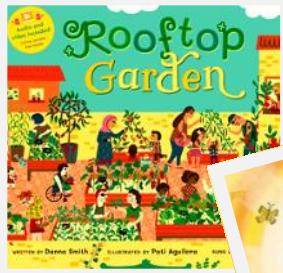


include synopses year, but go to <https://jmgkids.us/bookawards/> to more about them.



this
read

Thinking about gifts for the children in your lives? Think books!



From the author of Late Migrations comes a luminous book tracing the passing of seasons, personal and natural.

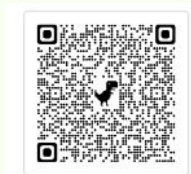
In The Comfort of Crows, New York Times opinion writer and bestselling author Margaret Renkl presents a literary devotional: fifty-two chapters that follow the creatures and plants in her backyard over the course of a year. As we move through the seasons—from a crow spied on New Year's Day, its resourcefulness and sense of community setting a theme for the year—what develops is a portrait of joy and grief. Joy at the ongoing pleasures of the natural world: "Until the very last cricket falls silent, the beauty-besotted will always find a reason to love the world." And grief at a shifting climate, at winters that end too soon, at songbirds growing fewer and fewer.

Along the way, we also glimpse the changing rhythms of a human life. Grown children, unexpectedly home during the pandemic, prepare to depart once more. Birdsong and night-blooming flowers evoke generations past. The city and the country where Renkl raised her family transform a little more with every passing day. How can one person make a difference amid such destabilizing changes?

With fifty-two original color artworks by Billy Renkl, the author's brother, The Comfort of Crows is a lovely and deeply moving book from a beloved writer.

If the description above isn't enough, read the sensitive NPR review, describing it as "fuel to restore spirits in dealing with ecological grief", at <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/25/1206739932/book-review-margaret-renkl-the-comfort-of-crows>. The Comfort of Crows is a finalist for the Southern Book Prize.

Interested in reading The Comfort of Crows with your book club? Download the book club kit for recipes, discussion questions, and more. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f83bc17af2df32eb6070ad6/t/65295feda0766a526259b6ca/1697210350371/The+Comfort+of+Crows+FIN+%283%29.pdf>



The Gardeners' Club Membership

Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$15.00. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2023. 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.



ship, 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,

Ours is a club celebrating the joys of gardening, friend-

share and learn with us. A gift membership is a gift nobody will want to return!

Your 2024 membership

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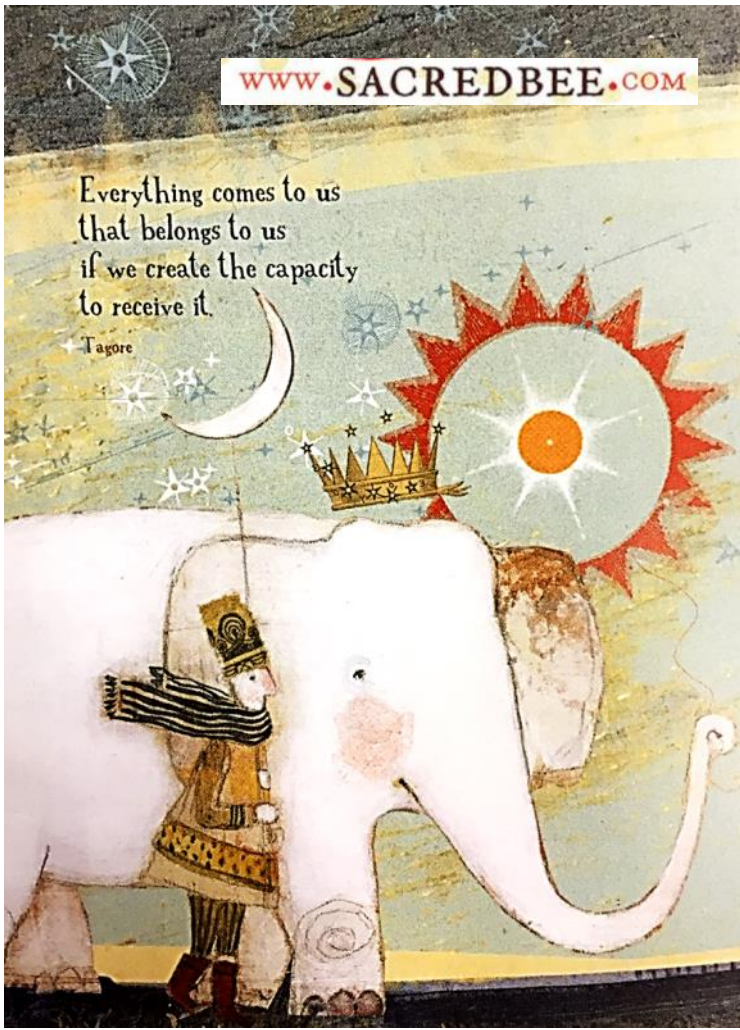
Enclose check for \$15 per member made out to
The Gardeners' Club. Mail to:

The Gardeners' Club % Suzanne Caron
P.O. Box 3025
Ben Lomond CA 95005

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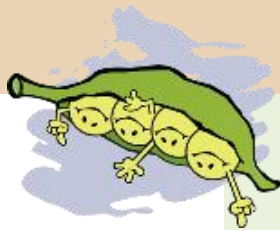
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The Gardeners' Club

It's easy-peasy to join our club!
Dues are \$15 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



Our front page logo is graciously shared with us by artist Lisa Zador. Order a print or see more of her work at her Etsy shop www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern.