

The Gardeners' Club

February 2010

Succulent Love

*Making Creative
Container Gardens*



Ah, February...the month to celebrate love in all its forms. What's not to love about plants that are beautiful, forgiving and dependable? Succulents are a gardener's dream, and using them in containers opens a universe of possibilities. If we use our imaginations, "container" can mean anything – a pot, a cup, a rock, a chair, a drawer, a boot – you get the picture! Join us at The Gardeners' Club monthly meeting, which is going to be an exciting hands-on event. We'll start with a PowerPoint presentation showing many creative succulent container garden examples and techniques. Then Shelly Trabucco of Nest Egg Gardens will teach us how to make a succulent chair! You may have seen some of Shelly's absolutely amazing creations at the Cabrillo Farmers' Market on Saturdays – her work is astounding. We're going to have many succulents available at the Plant Table, some thrift shop planters and containers, a drilling-holes-in-a-pot demonstration, succulent container garden displays and, to top it off, a Make-and-Take table for those of you who want to make your own dish garden or succulent pot to take home. Maybe you'll make something perfect for a Valentine? If you have them, bring succulents to share, a succulent planting to display and/or a planter or container you'd like to plant up. We'll have potting soil at the meeting.



We're very excited to have Shelly join us at our meeting. Visit her website at <http://nestegggardens.com>. You'll find so many ideas, and see the succulent garden gifts she create, like the ones in these photos.



Monthly Meeting

Thursday

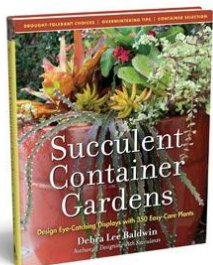
February 11th

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Dr.

Refreshments will be served,
thanks to Carol Rieber (snack),
April Barclay (dessert) and Joanna
Hall (juice).

New Books!



After our meeting you'll want to know more, much more, about succulent container gardening. Get to your local bookstore as quick as you can, because just in time, Debra Lee

Baldwin has come out with her second book on succulents, Succulent Container Gardens. It is chockfull of ideas, techniques, plant information, resources and stunning photos. Debra also has online resources for you. She's got two websites, www.debraleebaldwin.com and her new one, www.succulentchic.net, which celebrates container gardening. And she blogs with other garden writers and photographers at GardeningGoneWild.com.



It was your resolution for 2010, right, to enjoy your garden more and be exhausted less? Well, help is here: get your hands on The New Low-Maintenance Garden. The subtitle says it all: "How to Have a Beautiful, Productive Garden and the Time to Enjoy It". Val Easton

helps us to garden in a whole new way that doesn't sacrifice style. You won't have to give up your favorite plants or settle for a yard of bark nuggets. Just unlearn some bad habits and pick up some good new ones.. This book doesn't just *tell* you how to garden in a whole new way — it *shows* you, through profiles and beautiful photographs of real gardens that embody low-maintenance techniques. The pressures of life are not likely to ease up anytime soon, but the lessons of this book will help you banish guilt over undone garden chores and revel in your garden successes. Val Easton also has a very informative blog called Plant Talk at www.valeaston.com.



Keeyla Meadows is who I want to be when I grow up. She melds art and gardening in a unique style that encourages you to think-out-of-the-box – actually, outside of the crayon box. If you went to the San Francisco Garden Show last year, you'll remember her Matisse-influenced garden. There is only one word to describe her new book: zowie! Learn how to pick colors that work together; how to play with the colors of walls, benches, containers, and garden art; how to organize garden spaces through the use of color; and how to translate your personal color loves into tangible form in the garden. Fearless Color Gardens: The Creative Gardener's Guide to Jumping off the Color Wheel also features a new way of looking at color with "Keeyla's Color Triangle"; easy-to use tips on growing edibles in color-themed gardens; and Keeyla's favorite plants for specific colors. Each section has "Try this!" suggestions, exercises to help you explore color. One favorite suggestion is to have seating places throughout the garden so you can flit and sit, like a butterfly – her



painted benches are an example. The pictures of Keeyla's gardens (her own and those she's designed for others) will inspire you to look at gardens, art and color in new ways – and her originality might inspire you to try something new – be fearless!.Keeyla's web site is <http://keeylameadows.net>. She'll

be at the SF Garden Show again this year in March with a display called "Fabulous Container Garden". And I can't wait to actually visit her garden this year. Starting in March and ending the end of July, she'll have Open Garden Days from 1-4 p.m. on the first two Sundays of each month. Her garden is in Albany, 1137 Stannage Avenue (phone 510-559.1026, e-mail KeeylaMeadows@gmail.com).

Haiti: *Tè a fatigue*

by Lise Bixler

When the horrific images of the Haiti earthquake are too much, I go to the garden for solace. But it is hard to celebrate the beauty and bounty of a California garden while thinking of the Haitians' plight. Gardening teaches me generosity, and so I have donated what I can to Doctors Without Borders, Partners in Health and to the Red Cross. Generosity can be an antidote to despair, but it doesn't seem enough. What more can I do? Perhaps by learning more and writing about it, I can help by keeping Haiti in people's thoughts.

The fault line that caused the earthquake is named, ironically, the "Enriquillo-Plantain Garden Fault". Long ago, Haiti was a lush island garden. As early as the 1700's, botanists such as Pierre Turpin were collecting Haitian plants and documenting flora.



Haiti still has one of the most diverse flora in the Caribbean,

with 4000-6000 flowering and conifer plants. Oaks and pines grow in the mountains and elsewhere, mahogany, bog wood, palm, yucca, grapefruit, orange and lime trees grow.



Market bound. (1967) Photo: Lynn Pelham/Life Magazine "When Haiti Was Young"

Once a paradise with pines and broad leaf trees, today only about 2 percent of the country has tree cover. There is deep history of deforestation; it now occurs principally because the poor need cooking fuel.

Farmers cultivate vegetables, herbs, coffee and sugar. In a land where medical care is scarce, herbs are grown for medical treatments. But farming gets harder and harder, and both arable land and food supplies scarcer. Deforestation has led to soil erosion, lowered productivity of the land, heightened droughts and desertification of once fertile ground. The farmers say, "*Tè a fatigue*." "The earth is tired."



Prior to the earthquake, Haitians were building flood protections and establishing urban gardens. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization had 23 programs for growing food in the region most affected by the quake. All will now have to be relaunched.

The world struggles to provide immediate aid for the people of Haiti. When the earthquake fades from the news, we must not forget that it is the land and flora that will sustain the country in the future. A Haitian proverb tells us, "Men anpil, chay pa lou", meaning many hands lighten the load. Gardeners are some of the most generous people I know --- who hasn't shared zucchini with their neighbors? We give time and resources to local causes. The Santa Cruz mantra is "think globally, act locally". But these are exceptional times, and we are all world citizens. Some of us are not able to give money, or choose not to. But each of us can be a "zanmi", the Haitian Creole word for a friend, supporter or partner. To nurture the seed of hope, keep learning about what is needed to restore Haiti and her people to bloom.



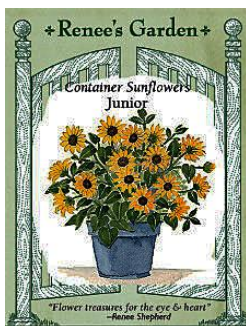
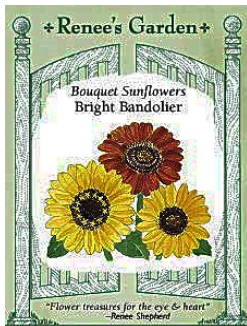
Seed Starting



It's the middle of winter. Why has a sunflower seed decided to germinate in the wooden stem of an old rose? Perhaps to remind us that many seeds can be direct-sown in

the garden even in February. Not sunflowers, usually, but cool-season vegetables such as beets, carrots, leaf lettuce, peas, arugula, spinach and turnips. And flowers such as calendulas, English daisies, godetia, pansies, poppies, snapdragons, sweetpeas, wildflower mixes and violas.

Speaking of sunflowers, Renee's Gardens has seeds for some exclusive varieties that you may want to try. Some of the new cultivars were developed for bouquets and growing in containers. Others you'll want to grow just for their exuberant size and color.



Go

to www.reneesgarden.com to see what other new seed offerings Renee has for 2010. How about Tapas Peppers "Spanish Padron" or Pom Pom Hollyhock "Apricot-Peach Parfait" or Gourmet Kohlrabi in a two-color selection?

Growing plants from seeds might seem like a lot of effort, but you probably won't find tapas peppers at your local box store nursery. You don't need a greenhouse or any fancy equipment. There are many benefits to growing from seed indoors and then transplanting into the garden. You don't have to worry about losing emerging seedlings to competition from weeds or marauding birds, slugs, and snails, and you plant healthy seedlings into each garden at just the right spacing.

On Saturday, February 13th, from 10 am-12 pm, ProBuild Garden Center will be hosting a free "Seed Starting 101" class with Renee Shepherd herself. She'll teach the basics on selecting and growing vegetable, herb, annual and perennial seeds for your garden.

Graywater Workshop

Sat., Feb. 27th, 10am-2pm

Laundry to Landscape Graywater Workshop

Cost: \$25 - 75 sliding scale

In this workshop we will be demystifying greywater and explain its importance to our state and community. Current regulations, building standards, and codes will be discussed. Everyone will get a chance to plan and participate in the installation of these systems at a residence in Santa Cruz. Space is limited, so register today!

LOVE'S gardens

(831) 471-9100
golden@lovesgardens.com
www.lovesgardens.com

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Last year Golden Love, who operates Love's Gardens, an environmental landscape business, came to one of our meetings and gave us an amazing, informative and inspiring presentation. This month he and co-facilitator LeAnne Ravinale will give a hands-on demonstration of how to hook up your laundry machine. Your washer is the only household plumbing fixture that does not require a permit for graywater according to new regulations, so you can now use that water to irrigate your yard. The workshop will be held at an Eastside home, and the cost will be on a sliding scale at \$25 to \$75 per person with lunch included. For questions and to register call 471-9100 or e-mail goldenlove@cruzio.com.

Daylilies for Dinner

Life is but a day...
-John Keats

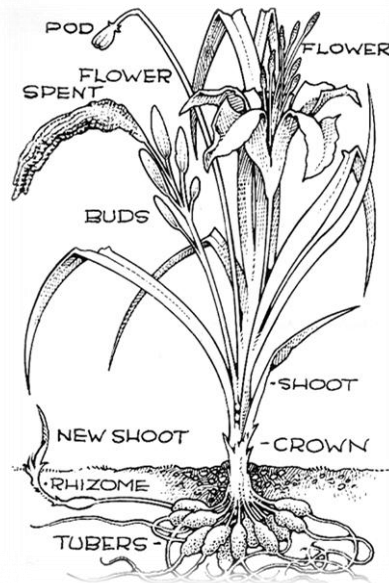


Most of us grow daylilies for their colorful ephemeral flowers. They are so easy to grow. The scientific name *Hemerocallis* translates to “beautiful for a day”. OK, easy and beautiful, that’s probably enough for most of us --- but did you know they can also serve as a perennial vegetable? For centuries, daylilies have been a respected part of Chinese cuisine, much like the potato has been part of western gardens. If you’ve ever eaten Mu-Shu or Hot and Sour Soup, you’ve probably eaten daylily. All parts of the daylily --- the sprouting leaves, the small root tubers, buds and blossoms --- are edible. Like other vegetables, daylilies may be eaten fresh, cooked or dried.

The flower buds may be cut and prepared like green beans, simply sautéed in olive oil. They are best collected in the morning when nearly full grown and about to bloom. Pull the stamens, rinse them and shake them dry. Then put them in a plastic container until you are ready to use them. Picking the buds results in more flowers!

Half-opened, fully-opened and even day-old daylily blossoms may be dipped in a light batter of flour and water and fried in a wok tempura style. You can add

chopped daylily flower petals to blueberry pancakes. You can stuff flowers with crab salad or sherbet and cream.



Go slow with your first daylily meal, to make sure they agree with you. They can have laxative effect for some people. To avoid allergies, remove the pollen-bearing parts of each flower (the pistils and stamens). In Asia, daylilies have been used as medicine for centuries for various ailments. And recipes for daylilies were included in the early editions of [Joy of Cooking](#)! Here’s a recipe to get you started:

Chicken Daylily Commotion

- 4 T. Butter
- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 C. sliced mushrooms
- 2-3 C. daylily blossoms
- ½ C. chopped onion
- ½ C. snow peas, cut diagonally into 1-2” pieces
- 1 ½ T. cornstarch
- ¼ C. chicken broth
- 2 T. soy sauce
- ½ tsp. ginger, powder or grated fresh
- 2 T. dry sherry
- 1 T. honey
- Salt and pepper

In a wok or skillet, melt butter, add sliced chicken and cook 3-4 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add mushrooms, daylilies, onion, snow peas, cornstarch dissolved in broth, soy sauce, ginger, sherry, honey and seasoning. Continually stir-fry the ingredients for 3-4 minutes until fork tender but not limp. Serve over rice.



Want to plan your floral décor for the Lunar New Year? Plum blossoms symbolize luck; kumquat symbolizes prosperity; narcissus symbolizes properity; chrysanthemum symbolizes longevity; eggplant heals sickness; sunflower means to have a good year.

Chinese Gardening Proverb

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.

The Gardeners' Club

270 Hames Rd., #50, Corralitos, CA 95076

President

Cherry Thompson, 475-0991
cherrylea@comcast.net

Vice President

Patty Connoles, 335-4134
pattyconnolertr@aol.com

Secretary

April Barclay, 688-7656
AABarclay@aol.com

Treasurer

Sim Gilbert, 475-8162
simgilbert@baymoon.com

Membership

Kerry Skyles, 728-5076
KerrySkyblue@cruzio.com

Hospitality

Debbie Kindle, 462-6296
poppy-54@live-com

Publicity

Ilene Wilson, 724-4609
grywilson@aol.com

Plant Table

Virginia Saso, 423-8005
virginia@saso.com
Ilene Wilson, 724-4609
grywilson@aol.com
3rd position - vacant

Refreshments

Joanna Hall, 662-8821
jhavelock@sbcglobal.net

Cresthaven/PSAs

Monica Pielage, 460-0215
mpielage@yahoo.com

Newsletter Writer/Editor

Lise Bixler, 457-2089
lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

It's easy-peasy to join our club. Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to 270 Hames Road, #50, Corralitos, CA 95076. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange Hall, 255 Mar Vista Drive, Aptos. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

