

The Gardeners' Club

March 2010

The California Garden: Color, Texture, Art and Sustainability



Jeff Rosendale has been involved in all aspects of horticulture in the Bay Area and Central Coast for 40 years.

Most of us know him as the owner (with wife Lisa) of Sierra Azul Nursery in Watsonville (www.sierraazul.com). He is a past president of the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum Associates. His career has focused on the aesthetic use of Mediterranean climate and other appropriate plants in water-conserving California gardens and landscapes, and he is widely recognized for his introduction of many new drought tolerant plants. Currently Jeff is president of the Pajaro Valley Arts Council. Those of us who have had the thrill of visiting the Sierra Azul two-acre demonstration and sculpture gardens during the annual **"Sculpture IS"** exhibition know that his belief that plants, people and art belong together is more than just words.

Come join us at our March meeting when Jeff will discuss creating and sustaining a garden with California and the local climate in mind, as well as the importance of native plants, and working with the dynamics of color, texture and art. Jeff will bring some plants to the meeting to sell at a discount. And, of course, we'll have our usual bounty of member-contributed goodies for sale at bargain prices at the Plant Table.

Thursday, March 11th

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Drive

Refreshments provided. Thank you to Mary Wenslaff for dessert, Robyn Walters for snack and Cherry Thompson for juice

Play With Your Food

The weather is so variable this time of year. You may be eager to go outside and plant, but what to do if it is too soggy or drizzly? Or maybe you are laid up with an ailment or injury, and can't garden for a while. How about entertaining yourself with vegetable music in the meantime? You could watch a performance of The First Vienna Vegetable Orchestra, which performs music solely on instruments made of fresh vegetables. Using carrot flutes, pumpkin basses, leek violins, leek-zucchini-vibrators, cucumberphones and celery bongos, the orchestra creates a unique and diverse sound universe. And nothing is wasted – after their performances, their cook makes a big pot of soup or stew for the musicians and audience to eat. Pretty amazing! See the YouTube video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpFYt7vRHuY, including footage of the musicians at the farmers' market.



But wait...there's more! Go to www.carrotmuseum.co.uk/musical.html to find out about more vegetable musicians – there's a whole world of them out there. You can listen to carrot clarinet or carrot pan-flute music, or learn how to make a carrot kazoo. Really. Think of the possibilities when you tire of carrot cake this year.

Bonsai Show

Santa Cruz Bonsai Kai presents its 21st annual Bonsai Show on Saturday, March 20 and Sunday, March 21, 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., at the Scotts Valley Community Center, 360 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley. Demonstrations, plant sales, door prizes, refreshments and more. For more information, call 429-5205 or 469-0688.





25th Annual San Francisco Flower & Garden Show - Gardens for the Future

March 24th – 28th

San Mateo Event Center, 2495 South Delaware Street, San Mateo

10am -8pm Wednesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm on Sunday

<http://sfgardenshow.com> or (415) 684-7278

It's back! We were worried that last year's garden show would be the last, but to the joy of all of us who would be adrift without an annual visit to the third largest garden show in the country, the show WILL go on. The San Francisco Flower and Garden Show is considered one of the world's premier garden shows and on the cutting-edge for its stunning garden displays and educational offerings, including features for children. This year the show celebrates 25 years of inspiring California gardeners with the theme "Gardens for the Future". And, can you believe it, they are giving **US** a 25th anniversary gift – the ticket you buy is good for admittance not just one day but for all five days of the show! What a treat it would be to come back another day to see another educational seminar, revisit a garden you missed, meet a favorite author or buy that plant you didn't allow yourself to get yesterday. Gee, five days of horticultural glee - anyone want to share the cost of a hotel?

Wear comfortable shoes – there are acres of plants. This year there will be lots on eco-friendly and sustainable gardening practices, growing edibles, and farm-to-table programs, and there will be a full-sized outdoor Victory Garden! Dress in layers, so you'll be comfortable inside and out. You'll want to bring a camera to take pictures of the full-size display gardens created by top designers, horticulturists and artists, so you can review them later and share with envious garden friends. In addition to cutting-edge design, most will demonstrate green gardening practices such as permaculture, green roofs and walls and drought-tolerant plants. A special area for container gardening will have you taking notes (my fave Keeyla Meadows will be part of that display). There will be free talks, practical workshops and seminars by well-known gardening experts. There's also shopping for gardening products, garden art, tools and one-of-a-kind or hard-to-find specialty items, books and plants, plants and more plants, including the newest and hottest ones. It's fun to support some of our Bay area growers, like Digging Dog Nursery, Annie's Annuals, Corralitos Gardens (dahlias), Love Apple Farms, Succulent Gardens and so many, many more. By purchasing directly from local growers, artisans and craftsmen, we support the small businesses that make marketplaces like these unique. Make sure to bring a tote bag or one of those wheelie bag things. The show provides free holding areas for your purchases, so you don't have to schlep your impulse buys around to the seminars and displays. It's great to attend the show with a friend or buddies who share your horticultural enthusiasms, to ooh-and-ah together, to egg you on or hold you back in the marketplace, and to remind you to sit and take a break from all of the excitement once and a while.

If you've never been to a big garden show before, expect it to be busy. During peak hours (mornings and weekends) patient lines of amazed gardeners stroll through the displays. If you want fewer crowds and more space and time to linger, consider coming in the slower afternoons and evenings when things calm down. Take advantage of the quieter times to take more photos, to have leisurely chats with the garden creators or just sit and relish the experience with a cup of coffee or glass of wine. Tickets bought at the door are \$20; advance adult tickets at Bay Area nurseries through March 17 are \$16. Remember, they are good for all five days!

Hooked on Hellebores

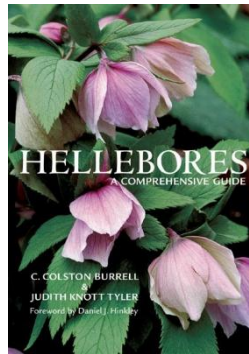
Want plants that give colorful, exquisite blossoms in the dreary winter months? Welcome to the world of hellebores! A decade ago, hellebores were considered connoisseurs' plants — subdued colors, hard to find, and the subject of snobbery. Today, though, they are among the hottest perennials, thanks to their early bloom, long-lasting flowers, shade tolerance, handsome foliage, and many new colors and forms that have recently become available.

Hellebores are easy to grow and require minimal care. They are long-lived perennials that bloom from late winter to spring, with flowers lasting for several months, some right into summer. And (this may seem too good to be true) hellebores are on the Monterey Master Gardeners Top Ten lists for BOTH gopher proof and deer proof plants! Hellebores are renowned for their tolerance of drought and neglect, although they thrive best when grown in a moist but well-drained soil. While naturally a full sun plant, hellebores they are perfect for a light shade woodland garden. Colors range from white, pink, burgundy-black to yellow and chartreuse, some in wild combinations and patterns, in single and double forms. After the flowers finally fade, the foliage stays fresh looking all year. A little cleanup in early spring, by removing any ratty foliage, is about the only real care needed. Their bold foliage provides contrast to spring bulbs. Later they look great with summer perennials and provide a green backdrop for fall-bloomers and deciduous shrubs. One of the reasons for their increased popularity is the ease with which they hybridize. This has allowed an increasing number of enthusiastic gardeners, professional plant breeders and specialist nurseries to continue development, creating many new and improved forms which are becoming increasingly widely available.

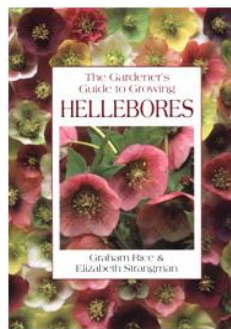


For further reference on hellebores, try these books:

[Hellebores, A Comprehensive Guide](#) by Cole Burrell and Judith Tyler. This is a great book on this genus, packed with up-to-the-minute, comprehensive information on growing, maintenance, design, hybridization and selection and trouble-shooting. Whether you are new to hellebores or an over-the-top collector, this book and its stunning photographs will captivate you.



[Gardener's Guide to Growing Hellebores](#) by Graham Rice and Elizabeth Strangman.



This book features a wealth of practical advice on cultivation and propagation, jargon-free accounts of species in the wild, descriptions of current varieties, and ideas on grouping them for maximum effect. Rice also has a useful website at www.hellebore.com.

Saturday Suggestion

Lance Reiners is the person I go to when I have a plant question at The Garden Company on Mission Drive. We share an enthusiasm for dark plants, especially those with bronze-purple-burgundy-black or other unusual-colored foliage, and I take his suggestions seriously. He called last week to say, "We have a plant I think you'll like. It's a geranium whose leaves are the color of dirty motor oil." "I'll be right there," I said. As I bought my chocolate-leaved *Geranium sessiliflorum* f. *nigricans*, as well as an *Euphorbia* 'Blackbird', Lance invited me to drive to his home nearby to admire his blooming hellebores and his astounding garden. When not at The Garden Company, Lance tends to his many plants and operates a small home business, Chimera Nursery, selling variegated and colored foliage plants



on Saturdays from 10 to 4, or by appointment. I was unprepared for the amazing diversity of his garden, the tapestry of color and textures, the artful, gleeful combinations and creative hardscape, multiple greenhouses full of treasures and collections of specimens from all over the world. Particularly if you like variegated plants, you MUST visit – he has an assortment you wouldn't believe. I felt new obsessions brewing. How could I not want a variegated parsley plant, now that I know there is such a thing? Or rare Japanese saxifrage plants, or plants with ruffles that feel like leather? Photographs can't convey

the wonder of this garden; go see for yourself! What better way to spend part of a Saturday? Chimera Nursery is at 231 Younglove Avenue (426-5433).



Follow-up to February Succulent Love

Wow, what a success our February meeting was! We had 63 attendees who enjoyed the presentation, learned how to make a succulent chair from Sherry Trabucco and admired her creations, bought every single one of the succulent selection collections prepared by Cherry Thompson and Aileen Sanders and went wild making their own succulent dish gardens. Thanks for everyone who worked so hard to make this happen. Since there was so much to do and see, we've had a request to have the resource books available at the March meeting for those who didn't get to look through them, and the presentation will be on a laptop for those who missed it. Speaking of which, I brought the slide show to share with my family in Portland when I visited. When I got to the final slide that said, "Are you ready for Succulent Love?" granddaughter Riley said, "I think I already have it". So off we went to the nursery so she and sister Olivia could make their own dish gardens extraordinaire.



Plant Request

Rita Ramirez asks, "I'm looking for cuttings or small rooted plants of the following bushes and was wondering if anyone in the club has them?" The plants are Beautyberry (*Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion') and Harlequin glorybower (*Clerodendrum trichotomum*). Let her know at the next meeting.

March classes will make you say "Mmm!"

Mark your calendars for upcoming workshops at Alladin Nursery in Watsonville (2905 Freedom Boulevard). A Fruit Tree Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 6th at 10 am. From new varieties to caring for your fruit trees...Lloyd from L.E. Cooke Growers will cover it all! There will be a Monrovia Class on, March 20th; Tomato Class on Sunday, March 21st; and Citrus Tasting on Saturday, March 27th. More information will be given as dates near - call 724-7517.

speaking of "Mmm!" - Recipe from the Winter Garden

You can direct-seed cool season vegies like peas, chard, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce, onions and other greens now, although the soil is still too cold for tomatoes and other warm season vegetables. Want to try something new with broccoli raab, which you may have in your garden now, or can find at the Farmers' Market? Although it has broccoli's name, it is not related to broccoli. Lots of broccoli-like buds appear here and there but a head never forms. It is grown as much for its long-standing, tasty mustard-like tops as for their multiple small florets . It's used extensively in Chinese and Italian cooking. The Italians call it "rapini", and you can make it into a pesto-like concoction to slather on a submarine sandwich or serve over grilled crostini.

Rapini Mojo Verde

1 bunch rapini (broccoli raab), washed and stems trimmed away

1 tsp. ground cumin; 1 clove garlic, crushed and minced

2 tsp. sherry vinegar; ½ cup extra virgin olive oil; salt to taste

(1) Roughly chop rapini into small pieces. (2) Heat a medium pan over medium–high heat and add rapini, tossing lightly for 3 to 4 minutes, until stems become soft. (3) Transfer to a food processor and pulse until rapini resembles a pesto base. (4) Add fresh garlic, cumin, and sherry vinegar and purée. (5) Add olive oil slowly, creating an emulsion. (6) Season with salt to taste. Spread the mojo verde on both sides of a sliced baguette for a sandwich, or on top of grilled crostini.



Movie Screening

The Rio Theater (1205 Soquel Ave., 423-8209) is presenting "The Garden", the 2009 Oscar-nominated documentary about the legal battle over a fourteen-acre community garden in South Central Los Angeles. Started as a form of healing after the L.A. riots in 1992, the South Central Farmers created a miracle in one of the country's most blighted neighborhoods, only to have it face a development bulldozer. Thursday, March 25th at 7:00p.m.; all proceeds benefit the California Food and Justice Coalition.



Remember all of the heirloom tomato seeds Lise Bixler brought to a meeting to share a few months ago? Well, be prepared: many of them are now healthy seedlings, and she'll be bringing dozens to the March meeting and the April plant trade. Save room in your garden for heirloom tomatoes!

Have you started your indoor seeds yet? Make sure and plant extras, because the April plant swap and sale is coming right up. Here's an easy way to start seeds: put them in a wet coffee filter, fold it up, stick it in a plastic zip-lock bag (this acts as a greenhouse) and put in a warm place (next to a heater vent or on top of a hot water heater will do). The seeds will germinate in no time flat; as soon as they do, plant them in small pots and give them plenty of light until it is warm enough to harden them off and plant them outside.

This is a good time to divide your clumping perennials to share, too. It's not too early to start potting things up to bring for the trade that you've got extras of, or are ready to replace in your garden.

Aileen Sanders would like to request that members bring plastic pots to the March meeting. She needs them to pot up her contributions to the trade.

March Board Meeting

Come join us on March 29th at Joanna Hall's home, 2200 Cox Road, Aptos. A tour of her garden will begin at 6 p.m. and the meeting will start at 6:30. All are welcome to attend; you don't have to be a member of the Board.

Spring Fling at Filoli's Gardens

Saturday, Mar. 20th, 10:00 am – 3:30 p.m.

Filoli in Woodside, with its 16-acre English Renaissance garden set in a 654-acre estate of rolling hills and oak woodland, is one of the most beautiful gardens in the country. Walk spring paths of camellias, magnolias and hundreds of tulips. Family activities, live music, delicious food and much more. Reservations and tickets at (650) 364-8300, extension 508 or www.filoli.org.

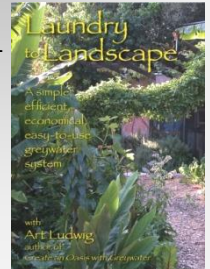
Backyard Greywater Workshop Laundry to Landscape Oasis

March 27th, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Laura Allen of Bay Area Greywater Action will teach participants how to divert household greywater from the sewer to the garden, and install a "laundry-to-landscape" greywater system that sends greywater from the washing machine outside to irrigate fruit trees. The class will cover greywater principles, the best plants to water with greywater, common pitfalls and how to avoid them, and how to install a system that is legal under the new California code.

Sliding scale. Class will be at 2591 Mattison Lane, Live Oak. Call 464-9664 for details.

Want to learn more about laundry-to-landscape? Visit Oasis Design at www.oasisdesign.net/greywater/laundry.



Snail Alert

It's breeding time, so be vigilant and make snail and slug containment part of your spring gardening ritual.

Upon a Snail

She goes but softly, but she goeth sure,
She stumbles not, as stronger creatures do.
Her journey's shorter, so she may endure
Better than they which do much farther go.
She makes no noise, but stilly seizeth on
The flower or herb appointed for her food,
The which she quietly doth feed upon
While others range and glare, but find no good.
And though she doth but very softly go,
However, 'tis not fast nor slow, but sure;
And certainly they that do travel so, he prize they do
aim at they do procure.
John Bunyan (1628 - 1688)



At 2 a.m. on March 14, 2010, groggy gardeners should turn their clocks forward one hour, marking the beginning of Daylight Saving Time.



The Gardeners' Club

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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, 2555 Mar Vista Drive, Aptos. Printed on 100% recycled paper.

