

The Gardeners' Club

May 2010

We have long been anticipating a visit and talk from Paul Licht, the Director of the University of California Berkeley Botanical Garden. The Garden is a non-profit research garden and museum for the University of California at Berkeley, having a notably diverse plant collection including many rare and endangered plants. It has a long and distinguished history, established in 1890 to form a living collection of the native trees, shrubs, and plants of the California, with the intent to gather in as rapidly as possible those of the neighboring states of the Pacific Coast. It then expanded both its scope and collection to encompass plants from all continents. Today the Garden, which is open to the public year round, has over 13,000 different kinds of plants from around the world, cultivated by region in naturalistic landscapes over its 34 acres.

The Garden has an exceptional and very interactive web site (<http://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu>). I particularly enjoyed going on line for a virtual tour, complete with narration, by Paul. His informal and informative style makes me feel like I know him already.

Dr. Licht joined the UC Berkeley faculty in the Department of Zoology in 1964. He became Dean of Biological Sciences in 1994 and Executive Dean of the College of Letters and Science in 1998. He says, "I was not very interested in gardens or gardening at the time. In fact, this interest in gardens really first started to blossom when I went into the Deans office. I began with a modest garden patch in my relatively large weedy back yard and this activity grew into a fanatical love of gardening and gardens as I expanded my efforts. It was during this period that I really rediscovered and fell in love with the UC Botanical Garden and became more intimately involved in its operation. During my tenure as Dean I was first involved in recruiting the Garden Director and I then actively raised funds for the UC Botanical Garden. I stepped down from the Deans office at the end of 2002 with the intent of taking a restorative sabbatical and then retiring. However, when the opportunity arose to step into the role of Director at the Botanical Garden, I couldn't say no. The rest is history, or will be."

Paul's talk will explore the world of plants and gardens and specifically address the issue of when a garden becomes a significant plant collection. He will also discuss how a botanical garden or arboretum can play multiple roles including a research, conservation and a resource for gardens and gardeners.



Monthly Meeting

Thursday

May 13th

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Drive

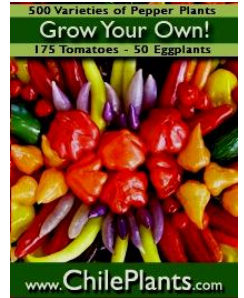
Refreshments will be served, thanks to Melita Israel (snack), Eileen Balian (dessert) and Marcia Meyer (juice).



Have you planted a salsa garden yet? Wouldn't that be an excellent way to celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

Set aside an area in the vegetable garden to grow salsa veggies. Get creative in the salsa garden by arranging the plants in concentric circles, with the star ingredient, the tomato, in the centre of the design. Onions planted around the edge of the circle form a border, while ripening pepper plants interspersed with cilantro form the middle layer. A salsa garden can also be grown easily in containers, especially on a warm, sunny deck. Make sure you choose a big enough pot (a half-barrel would be ideal).

One of the seminars at the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show was "How to Grow Peppers in Containers in the Bay Area". The presenter was Dave DeWitt, who calls himself the "Pope of Peppers". He has a TV show called Fiery Foods and a web site of the same name, www.fierly-foods.com. The web site has many articles, including one on container growing. In Dave's experience, the smaller-podded varieties adapt best to container growing. He also recommended a mail-order company, Cross Country Nurseries (www.chileplants.com) that specializes in chile, eggplant and tomato seedlings, and sends them out to you, well-rooted and ready to plant. Of course, even though I've started a zillion seedlings this year, I became eager to experiment with some really hot peppers and some new eggplant varieties. They arrived in great condition, and I can't wait to get them in the ground. The minimum order is 12 plants (you can mix and match) – maybe you want to split an order with a friend?



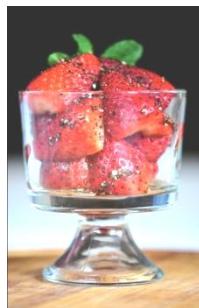
The soil isn't warm enough for peppers yet, but it IS strawberry season. Ninety percent of Americans eat strawberries; California grows about 75 percent of all strawberries.. Eight medium strawberries have only 50 calories but supply 140 percent of the daily requirement of vitamin C. They also taste great! How about trying a couple of Mexican-influenced strawberry recipes? The first one is from the web site mentioned above.

Strawberries with Tex-Mex Tequila & Black Pepper

This is a shocking dessert if there ever was one, with the sharp flavors of the pepper tequila and black pepper strangely complementing the sweetness of the strawberries.

6 cups halved strawberries
1/2 cup orange juice
1/4 cup chile-infused tequila (or soak crushed piquin chiles in tequila for a few hours and strain)
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
Mint sprigs for garnish

Combine the strawberries, orange juice, tequila, black pepper, and balsamic vinegar in a bowl and toss well. Cover and chill for 3 hours, stirring occasionally. Spoon the mixture into 6 small glass bowls and garnish with the mint sprigs. Yield: 6 servings.



Strawberry Salsa

Serve this scrumptious salsa made with strawberries, pineapple, fresh mint and cilantro and jalapenos. with either blue corn tortilla chips or top grilled chicken or pork chops.

2 Tbs. lime juice
2 Tbs. red wine vinegar
2 Tbs. fresh chopped mint leaves
2-3 Tbs. fresh chopped cilantro
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
1/4 tsp. salt
1 pint strawberries, hulled and chopped
1/4 C. diced pineapple
1/2 C. chopped sweet onion



Combine olive oil, lime juice, vinegar, mint, cilantro, jalapeno, pepper and salt in medium bowl. Toss in strawberries, pineapple and onion. Yield: 8 servings.

Love your Mother Earth



This illustration is by Canadian artist Bobbie Palanuik. Go to <http://bobbiese.rightpalanuik.wordpress.com> to download a free coloring page version, and to see more of her work including her environmental children's book, An Earth Day Story: Mother Earth is in Trouble.

Spring Plant Sale Mother's Day Weekend

Cabrillo College Environmental Horticulture Center & Botanic Gardens

6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos (831) 477-5671

Over 1000 different annuals, organic vegetable seedlings, bedding plants, culinary & medicinal herbs, cut flowers, natives, perennials, salvias, species & hybrid fuchsias, succulents and vines. All plants are student-grown. Proceeds fund the Environmental Horticulture Facility for the upcoming school year.

May 7, 2010 (Friday), 3-7 p.m. - Friends of the Garden members Presale & Silent Auction:

The Silent Auction features rare and unusual plants donated by local gardeners and nurseries. Family memberships available at the entrance for \$25.

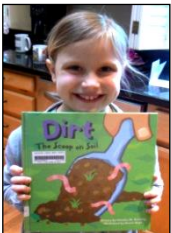
May 8, 2010 (Saturday), 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Public Plant Sale

May 9, 2010 (Sunday), 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Public Plant Sale

Plant sale parking: Follow the signs to the top of campus. Please park in parking lots F & G just off the upper perimeter road and take the shuttles up the hill. Purchased plants may be picked up with your vehicle at the designated hold areas.

Quick Tips

Stop Bad Bugs from Hiding in Your Pots. Slugs, small snails, earwigs, millipedes, and sow bugs love to hide in the drain holes in pots. Over time, soil falls out of the drain holes, creating nice little caves for leaf-eating bugs to hide in during the daytime. They then crawl out at night to do their dining damage. *Prior* to adding soil to the pot, cut a piece of shade cloth of ample size to cover the single drain hole inside the bottom of a clay or plastic pot (about 3" by 3"). (From Lingle's Herbs, www.linglesherbs.com.)



Book recommendation from Olivia Henne. "I got this book because it reminds me of you, Bubbe!" said Olivia. Dirt: The Scoop on Soil (Rosinsky and Boyd) is splendid - incredibly informative, even for adults, with vibrant and lively illustrations.



Looking for green Mother's Day gifts? Here are a few suggestions.

Gas-powered lawn mowers crank out 5% of the nation's air pollution; it's time to consider alternatives. Take a look at the Fiskars Momentum reel mower. It's "InertiaDrive" technology stores energy like a flywheel to provide a power boost through tough patches, it works in tall grass and doesn't need constant sharpening.



A less pricey gift idea is a spiffy pair of gardening gloves. *West County Gloves* offers a green gardening glove made with a PET mesh fabric made from recycled water bottles. Each pair of *West County Gloves* removes one 8 oz water bottle from landfills. The Garden Company on Mission Street in Santa Cruz carries them.

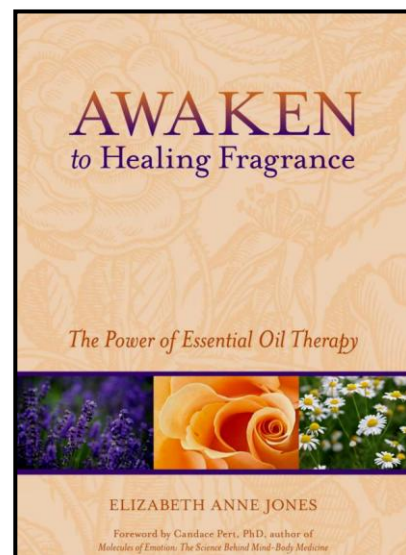


Made from hand applied, crushed earth-friendly recycled glass, this Mosaic Feeder is a kaleidoscope of color and light, rivaling the brilliant iridescence of hummingbirds. From Plow & Hearth, www.plowhearth.com.



NEWS FLASH!

Kudos to Club member Elizabeth Jones, who after years of determined effort has completed and published a uniquely beautiful and informative book on essential oil therapy, *Awaken to Healing Fragrance*. As gardeners, we are perhaps more highly appreciative of and attuned to fragrance than others. Elizabeth, though, understands the link between fragrance and the health of the human body in ways that most of us don't even begin to grasp. Elizabeth began researching the historical part of the book about 8 years ago. The book is divided into three parts: past, present, and future. It time travels with fragrance. Much of the complexity of the book comes from Elizabeth's teaching experience in such classes as Botany, Mind-Body, Chemistry and Energetic Healing at the College of Botanical Healing Arts in Santa Cruz. Elizabeth says, "I wanted to write a unique book about plants and their products: essential oils, herbal tonics, aromatic gardens, etc. I wanted it to further the field of plant medicine for preventative health care." She has managed to give us a book that is full of information, yet eloquent, poetic and lovely. Wouldn't an autographed copy make a special Mother's Day gift? Ask your local bookstore to order the book from Random House or go to Amazon.com.



New Leaf Markets Community Day in Support of the 2010 Grow a Farmer Campaign

Thursday, May 27, 8 am - 9 pm – all locations. Help support the Apprenticeship training program at the UCSC Farm & Garden by shopping at Santa Cruz-area New Leaf Markets on May 27. New Leaf will donate 5% of profits from the day's sales to support the 6-month Apprenticeship course in organic farming and gardening.

Mothers in Haiti. Just a reminder that the need for food and revitalization of agriculture continues in Haiti. My gifts to the mothers in my life this May will be donations and a card, like this one offered by the Lambi Fund of Haiti (not endorsing this organization in particular, but this card is theirs, so I WILL make one of my donations to them!)



In your honor, a gift has been given to the Lambi Fund of Haiti. Your gift will help transform entire communities as poor families in rural Haiti gain economic independence and restore their environment. Hopefully, this gift brings a smile to your face. For the Impact you are making is truly meaningful.

Tour the Secret Gardens of Bonny Doon

Who doesn't love to explore other people's gardens? How many times do you get to see special ones in the Santa Cruz Mountains? A not-to-be-missed garden tour, to benefit the Bonny Doon Elementary School, will take place on Saturday, May 22 and Sunday, May 23 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Take a leisurely drive up the coast and experience the very special place that is Bonny Doon.

Visit twelve very diverse gardens with such features as ponds, waterfalls, chicken coops, vegetable, herbs, and rose gardens, trellises, pergolas, fruit trees, bonsai collections and some gardens that blend natural growth with professional landscaping. Enjoy gardens that highlight family outdoor recreation, gardens that have been nurtured for over 30 years, and very young gardens that show how quickly one can transform barren land into beautiful, informal gardens.

Tickets are \$20 and can be used for one or both days. Purchase tickets at ProBuild, Santa Cruz; The Garden Company, Westside Santa Cruz; PlantWorks, Felton; Scarborough Gardens, Scotts Valley; Aladdin Nursery, Watsonville; or at Bonny Doon Elementary School (1492 Pine Flat Road at Ice Cream Grade) the days of the event.

Gourmet lunches by Bonny Doon Catering will be available for purchase at the school; there will also be a plant sales table; and an Art & Wine Festival preview tent.

Call Nancy at 831-469-0688 or Vallorie at 831-423-7728 for more information.



Inspire Students, Gardeners & All Plant Lovers: Support the educational, horticultural and research goals of the UCSC Arboretum!

Arboretum Gardening Marathon

30 hours of gardening fun



May 14 -15, 2010

9am Friday to 3pm Saturday

The UCSC Arboretum, as part of its fundraising efforts, will be having a work party at the Arboretum that will go on for 30 hours straight. The majority of the work will take place during reasonable hours (9am-9pm), but there will be crews that work in shifts through the night. Most people will do two to three hour shifts. A marathon with sponsors works by having people reward the efforts of the volunteers. Even if they end up getting no donations or sponsorships, volunteers will have gotten real work done at the Arboretum. Steve McCabe, Director of Education, is planning to personally donate 20 hours during the marathon and hopes to get lots of sponsors. If you don't

want to get on your knees to weed there are many ways to help, including feeding the weeders, getting the word out about the Marathon or sponsoring a participant.

As Steve says, "The spring will be a marathon, but we aim to make it a memorable and enjoyable one where there will be time to stop and smell the boronias and roses"!

Sign up for 2 or 3 hr shifts

- Weeding parties or planting
- Laminating signs, labels
- Sweeping paths, trail maintenance
- Carpentry: raised bed repair.
- Cleaning signs, buildings, or windows

Saturday starting at 9:00 am they will take drop-ins to work. You must sign up for Friday crews, night work crews and some Saturday crews. Email arboretum@ucsc.edu to sign up. Bring gloves, weeding tools, rakes, or push brooms, & a hat & sunscreen. Bring a flashlight or headlamp if you are signed up for gardening at night. Volunteers may get sponsors per hour. Celebrate the success of the Marathon, starting at 3:00 pm Saturday with a party and rare plant auction. To get more info on how to participate and how to donate, go to the website <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu>.

Board Meeting

The next Board meeting will be on Monday, May 24th, hosted by Bill Patterson with a tour of his garden at 6 pm and the business meeting at 6:30. His address is 444 Baker Street, just off 24th near 26th St. Bill's garden won an award from the Soquel Water District for water conservation a couple of years ago, and when we last visited he was digging a large water catchment basin in his backyard. Bill gives us this update: "The back yard garden was totally torn out and remodeled a year and a half ago. We used a consensus of 25 plans from students in the Landscape Architecture Class at Cabrillo College in its restructuring. Last summer the many plants from Cabrillo Horticulture Department developed, grew, and spread seeds while being watered in September and October with runoff rain water collected from the winter rains and stored in my water catchment basin. In late fall, Pat McVeigh and I spread two yards of composted horse manure over the gardens. The 32 inches of rain over the winter percolated this rich resource deep into the already highly composed loose soil. Early spring with its wonderful mix of warm sunshine and periodical rains has promoted a full garden of enthusiastic flowers and vegetables". As always, you don't need to be a member of the Board to come to a meeting. We encourage anybody who has the interest to join us – it is a great way to connect and to learn more about local gardening and gardens. We love having the input of more of our members at our meetings – come join us!



We Get By With A Little Help from Our Friends

You don't have to be on the Board to help the Club, especially at our monthly meeting. We could use help at the front table greeting people and furnishing name tags and information about our club, and we also need assistance at the Plant Table, taking in money. And people who come early to help set up tables & chairs and those who stay to help clean up are always appreciated.

The Traveling *Birder* Gardener

by Lise Bixler

"Let's go see the spring bird migration in Texas for a few days," says my husband. We haven't been birding in a long while, so, in the interest of marital harmony, and despite a deep yearning to get my tomato plants in the ground, I agree to go. Off we go to High Island, which is neither high nor an island. It is a salt dome, 38-feet above sea level, on the Gulf of Mexico. Its trees invite birds on their migratory path to "fall out" and stay awhile when the weather gets iffy. Its birdyness attracts birders from all over the world.

Any good gardener benefits from being out in the wild, to remember how nature makes her gardens. As we walk a Texas trail, the birder behind me says, "There's a warbler in the honey locust tree



beyond the hackberry." "Are you a plant person?" I ask. "Yes," he says, "Although I'm trying to become a bird person". I give the warbler a brief glance through my binoculars and notice a wonderful vine with mottled leaves. "Steve, do you know what this is?" "Smilax bona-nox", he answers. "Isn't it Cat-briar?" says the woman behind him. "Zarzaparrilla" says someone else, and I hear "Greenbrier" from another. "It's in the lily family," says Steve, "And it's edible." He stuffs some in his mouth. "We don't have smilax in



California," I say wistfully. But actually, I'm wrong. Smilax californica, Greenbrier, is a perennial herb that is one of our natives.

The air is thick with the scent of honeysuckle, which grows rampantly. Although beautiful, it is quite invasive, and I sniff in disapproval. And look at all of the thistles! But wait – this is not like the thistles I battle in my garden. This is...well, kind of special. The Houston Audubon Society has set up a table with books and brochures at the entrance to the woods, so I go back to see what this is. Well, I'll be...it's a native, *Cirsium texanum*. A.A. Milne's Eeyore greeted visitors with "Welcome to my little thistle patch," and I am so happy with my thistle patch that I take photo after photo. A member of the sunflower family, bees love this plant. The pollen is right on the end of each flower, easy to get to.



A sign promising gumbo is posted in front of a blooming rose. All this birding and botanizing has made us hungry, and we head back to the nearby town of Winnie, where we are staying, to eat a Cajun lunch. After, I walk into an antique shop while Cliff rests in the car. I find a few treasures, and Don Spencer, the owner, wraps them carefully. Born and raised in Winnie, having taught school there for 40 years, I have learned much of his life story just from overhearing conversations of his customers, most of whom were at some time his students. "Here, take a look at this while you are waitin'", he says, thrusting a 4" x 6" photo album stuffed with hundreds of photos at me. They are all pictures of his garden, which is

across the street. I'm wearing binoculars and a birding hat with bird patches but my camouflage hasn't worked; he's sensed a gardener nearby. I promise to visit his garden the next day. And I also promise to myself to make my own garden photo "brag book" to carry with me, so I can share my garden with strangers.



We go back to the meadows and the woods. Spring wildflowers are busting out everywhere. Red-and-yellow blanket flowers, *Gallardia pulchella*, make me miss my own garden. At home they are planted in "the red area" of my garden. But here they are swathed in a field of lavender-colored flower spires, a color combination I have never tried. Delicious! I visit a labeled butterfly garden. Swallowtails and monarchs swoop by, but the garden is in bad shape because the soil has become too salty. Reconstruction of the garden is in progress. In our home gardens, using too much chemical fertilizer can result in the same problem.

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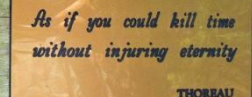
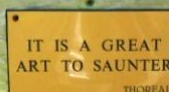
I'm impressed that the Houston Audubon Society is selling hummingbird- and butterfly-attracting plants at the entry to woods. I buy one Turk's Cap plant, fantasizing about whorls of vermilion red flowers. The woman next to me says, "Hummingbird magnets!" and buys two. I'm less impressed by their booklet, "Inviting Hummingbirds Into Your Yard on the Upper Texas Coast", which seems to emphasize non-native plants. Of course, at home my hummingbird garden is a hodge-podge of plants from all over the world, so who am I to judge?



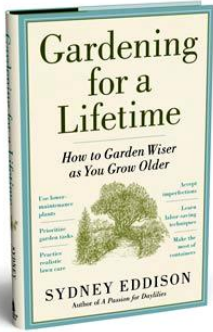
On the birding trail, we look for flycatchers and orioles. Ibises and egrets fly overhead. A woman named Kelly stops in her tracks and says, "This is awful, just awful!" She starts yanking plants out of the ground. They are Chinese rain tree seedlings. The rain tree, *Koelreuteria elegans*, is a common street and yard tree that is now taking over native habitat. Kelly talks about her frustrating volunteer efforts to help reestablish native meadows. She recommends a book, Bringing Nature Home by Douglas Tallamy, which focuses on the role of suburban gardens in sustaining diversity.

Finally, we head back to Winnie to find Don's garden. It is behind The Arboretum Nursing Home. This facility was planning on building a garden for its residents, but didn't, so Don took on the task seven years ago. The entry sign, festooned with Easter decorations, says "The Secret Garden". Don explains that name was chosen after a family contest, but it really doesn't fit. His is a story garden. "That bird feeder was made by my nephew, who builds BBQs in Houston," says Don. It is huge, suspended in a wooden tower with wire squiggles for bird perches. "Here's an idea you can take back to California", he says, pointing to the repurposed papasan chairs he has hanging everywhere. He gets them free, mostly, lines them with fabric or screening, throws in some empty plastic water bottles as filler so they don't need so much potting soil, and plants them with tall plants in the center and cascading ones on the edges. Don is a collector, so there are statues and found objects and antiques everywhere. "My mother was fond of poetry," he says, and

throughout the garden there are copper signs with sayings and quotations. I am in a state of awe in this garden, so full of soul, a garden with not only a sense of place but a sense of time. There are memorial signs to people gone and celebratory signs for family and friends ("In honor of our five grandchildren" and "In honor of the birth of our first great-grandchild"). Don talks about the trees he lost to Hurricane Ike and mourns the many hibiscus he lost in a recent historical freeze, when the temperature plummeted to 17 degrees. He's finding it hard to keep up the garden and his antique business in this, his supposed retirement, but the man never stands still. I could write a book about him and his garden; maybe someday I will!



Gardening for a Lifetime



Are you finding it harder and harder to keep up on your garden? Here's a book that might help. The author, Sydney Eddison, says, "In A Patchwork Garden, published 20 years ago, I wrote about turning overgrown Connecticut farmland into a garden. My charming, funny, not-gardening English husband not only indulged my gardening habit but aided and abetted me. It was a labor of love. Gardening for a Lifetime continues this story and is dedicated to my late husband. In his absence, the challenge has been to maintain the property and our garden creation. There are many gardeners who have done as I have — made gardens they love but with advancing age can no longer care for as they once did. Even much younger gardeners have a similar problem. Having returned to the work force, they haven't time to do as much gardening as they once did. Gardening for a Lifetime was written for these gardeners. Their struggles have been my struggles, but slowly and sometimes painfully I have found ways of simplifying the garden to keep it going. Gardeners insist on gardening, just as dancers insist on dancing. Diana, one of the dancers in the musical *A Chorus Line*, said it all: "We did what we had to do./Won't forget, can't regret/What I did for love."

Whoopy! A New Gardening Show!

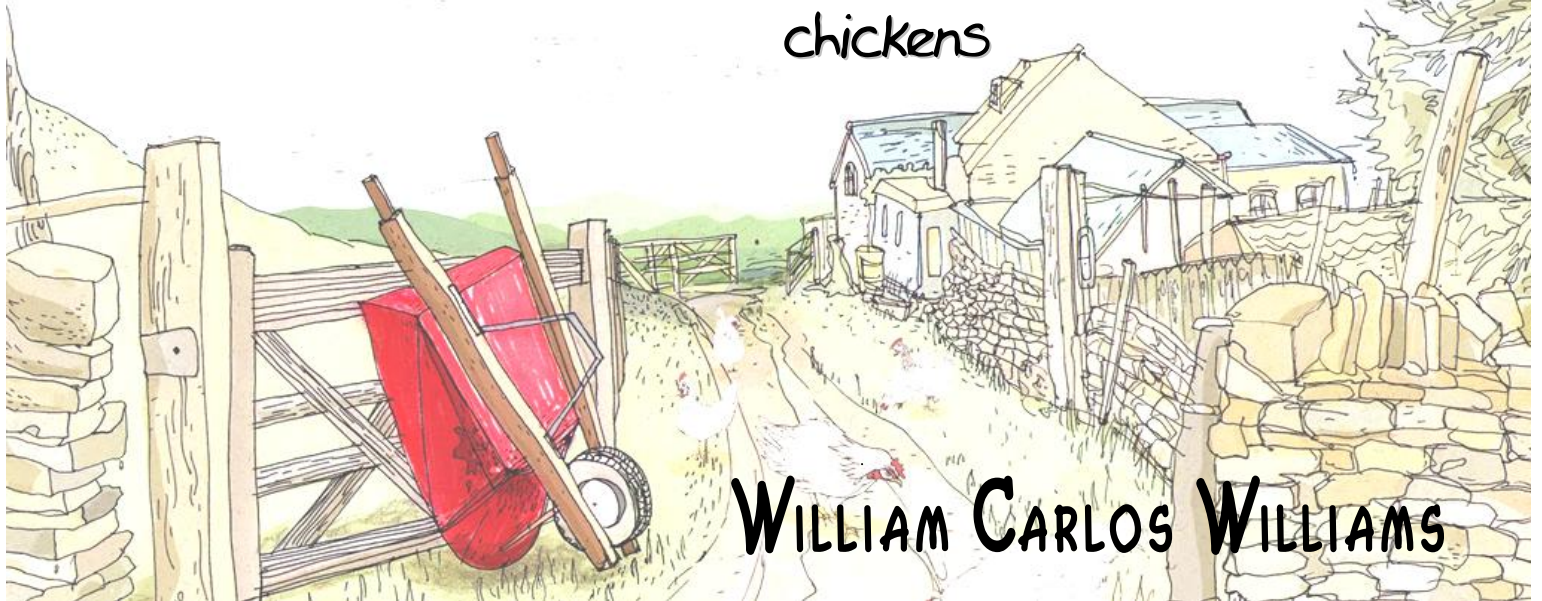


The new PBS show "Growing a Greener World" is being touted as a groundbreaking new television series that delivers the latest trends in eco-friendly living mixed with traditional gardening know-how to a modern audience. The series will inspire viewers of all ages with stunning HD video, a fresh and engaging style, and always a compelling story. Each episode will feature the people, organizations, and events that are making a difference in our world today by raising awareness and influencing others to better stewardship of the environment we all share. Growing a Greener World is intended for national distribution the week of May 15th.

Viewers and gardening personalities will join the conversation, and additional on-demand content will be provided through a web site and blogs, interactive podcasts, websites like YouTube and Hulu, social networks like [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and downloadable videos that viewers can access anytime on the web or mobile devices. Combining the expertise and engaging styles of veteran television host and nationally-recognized authority on gardening and sustainability, Joe Lamp'l, a.k.a. [joe gardener®](#), with the freshest and "Most Watched Gardening Personality on the web", "Garden Girl" Patti Moreno, and celebrity chef Nathan Lyon (host of Discovery Health and Fit TV's hit series, "A Lyon in the Kitchen"), each episode aims to be compelling, informative, and fun to watch for all.

so much depends
upon
a red wheel barrow

glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens



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

