

October 2010

# Fall Plant Swap & Sale

Aptos Grange, 255 Mar Vista Drive

Trade

Seeds

Buy

(TRY

Something

NEW)

Pots

Plants

Books

EASY!

Share

Yard

Art

Bulbs

(see inside back cover for more details)

## October in Our Gardens

### Were your tomatoes under-achievers?

If you had success with your tomatoes, bring some to the next meeting to show us what kinds grew well in your garden. If enough of us were lucky, and weren't plagued by this year's tomato russet mite, perhaps we can even have an informal tomato testing.

But if you had discouraging results with your summer veggies, read some advice from The Garden Company Garden Center (Westside Santa Cruz):

"We are so fortunate to be able to grow some kinds of herbs and vegetables all year long. Hot weather crops were a big disappointment this year due to the absence of summer, but fall is almost a sure bet in the vegetable patch. Just about all of the root crops, leaf crops and head crops will thrive in the shorter days and cooler nights of autumn. We have a great selection of lettuces, Asian greens, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, collards, sprouts, [Swiss chard](#), spinach and more. There is still time for another crop of peas and annual herbs like cilantro and parsley. And of course, you can always plant perennial herbs such as rosemary, sage, rhyme, mint, oregano and tarragon. We have onions in sets and seedlings, garlic bulbs and shallots too. Don't give up! on your garden just because your tomatoes were under-achievers."

### Rest for the Roses

The official window for fertilizing roses is Valentine's Day through Halloween. If you give your roses some slow-release organic fertilizer, or scratch in alfalfa pellets and Epsom salts, your roses should be good until spring. After their last flush of fall bloom, it is time to let them rest—water sparingly and stop deadheading. Let them make their beautifully decorative rose hips.

### Wintersowing Flower Seeds

It seems counterintuitive to be sowing flower seeds this month, but go ahead! You can plant calendula, California poppy, cornflower, foxglove, hollyhock, nasturtium, nigella, portulaca, scabiosa, stocks, sweet alyssum, sweet peas and more.

And, you can plant larkspur and delphiniums! I had good luck sowing larkspur from seed this year, for the first time in my gardening history. I stuck the seeds in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks with some moist growing medium, then sowed them outside in beds and pots covered with a layer of vermiculite. They took forever to germinate and didn't really bloom until August, but they are still blooming now, and setting seed as well. They are beautiful and come in so many colors. I am pleased to learn that they will do well sown outdoors in the fall. They need darkness to germinate, so cover them with layer of topsoil or compost, and then they will wait to germinate until the weather is cold. And then you'll have a multitude of plants, and they will flower earlier in the season. My favorite place to order larkspur and delphinium seeds is Swallowtail Garden Seeds ( [www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com/perennials/delphinium.html](http://www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com/perennials/delphinium.html) ).

You can plant flowers from transplants now, too: those marvelous and intriguing hellebores, Iceland poppy, pansies, snapdragons, stocks and violas.

### Fertilize Rhododendrons

Fertilize rhodies and azaleas now for spring bloom. The plants are just beginning to set buds, so be gentle. Rake and remove any fallen leaves, prune away dead branches and groom plants for yellow leaves. Use an acid fertilizer or one that is specifically formulated for these particular plants and dibble it into the top few inches of soil around the drip line.



WATSONVILLE WETLANDS WATCH  
Proudly Presents its Second Annual



**NATIVE PLANT SALE**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>  
10 AM – 1 PM

@ the Fitz Wetlands Educational Resource Center

If you're looking for eye-pleasing, water-wise plants that thrive in this area, this is the sale for you! Proceeds benefit restoration of the wetlands of Watsonville, an international treasure, and the wetland educational programs throughout the Pájaro Valley School District.

COASTAL BUCKWHEAT • BEE PLANT • CA ASTER • CA ROSE •  
EVENING PRIMROSE • YARROW • DOUGLAS IRIS & MORE!



500 HARKINS SLOUGH ROAD, WATSONVILLE, CA 95060,  
AT THE TOP OF PAJARO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS

[MAP & DIRECTIONS](#)

[www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org](http://www.watsonvillewetlandswatch.org) • (831) 728-1156

## COMMUNITY-WIDE GARAGE SALE WEEKEND

**October 2nd &  
October 3rd**

This is a grassroots public awareness campaign to promote reuse, repair and resale opportunities in Santa Cruz. The City and County invite residents to join their Community-Wide Garage Sale.



There is a sub-group of The Gardeners' Club members who seem to run into each other every weekend at yard sales and such—comparing our great finds, like shovels and edgers for only \$1 or cheap gopher traps or bargain decorative pots or...did I tell you about the small plow I got for only \$5 last month? Frugal gardeners will have a field day on this special weekend.

If you are interested in holding a garage sale at your home, you can contact the City or County for a free garage sale kit. Kits include: signs, labels and a brochure of helpful hints. City of Santa Cruz residents can call 420-5160; County residents can call 454-2160.

## Arboretum at UC Santa Cruz and California Native Plant Society FALL PLANT SALE Saturday, October 9 Arboretum Eucalyptus Grove



**10am – 4pm for Arboretum and  
California Native Plant Society Members  
Noon – 4pm for the general public**

*Not a member of the Arboretum or CNPS and want to get in early? Memberships for both organizations will be available at the gate.*

This sale is a wonderful opportunity to take home some of the astounding color of the Arboretum, expand your collection of California native plants and support two great community resources.



### Rhododendron Cutting Exchange



**Rhododendron Society of Monterey Bay  
Oct. 23, 10 a.m.  
Pro-build Garden Center  
235 River St., Santa Cruz, 423-0223**

Rhododendron expert Mike McCullough will demonstrate how to create a plant from a cutting. This will be a hands-on project, in which you can create plants you can take home. Featured will be cutting material from Maddenii series and Vireya series rhododendrons that thrive in our climate.

## Plant Whatever Brings You Joy

Last month I shared with you an article by Kathryn Hall, although I misspelled her name (sorry, Kathryn!) I'm a great admirer of her blog, Plant Whatever Gives You Joy, <http://plantwhateverbringsyoujoy.com>, and visit it often. And I admire her even more after reading a copy of the book she wrote, Plant Whatever Brings You Joy: Blessed Wisdom from the Garden. It is not a book about gardening; it is a book written for spiritual people about how gardening can inspire and teach wisdom. Kathryn has taken 52 metaphors from the garden and used them as seeds for her life stories. And what an active and varied life she has lived! This book is not aimed at irreverent people like me, so I am amazed how much HER reverence impressed me – her unwavering reverence toward life and growth, both in gardens and the realm of spirit and understanding.



One of the things I like best about this book is how Kathryn doesn't give answers, but instead ends each story with questions designed to provoke thinking and self-examination. For instance, the essay titled "Invest in Trees" vividly tells the story of how she created a living Halloween tree for her

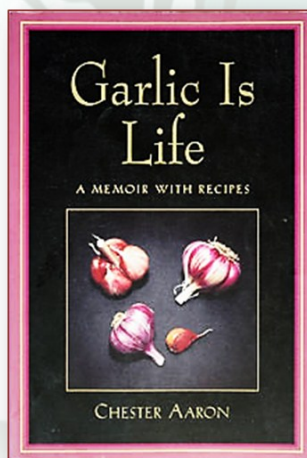
adult daughter during an October visit. After the story, she asks us to consider the *proverbial* trees in our life, the traditions that have long and deep roots. She asks the reader what "...are the trees of your life that lend substance, courage, strength, rootedness, and meaning?"

With the giving season fast approaching, you might want to consider this as a present for a spiritual gardener. To buy, go to Bookshop Santa Cruz or [www.estrellacatarina.com/ordering-2/](http://www.estrellacatarina.com/ordering-2/).

## Garlic is Life

Here is a different sort of hybrid life-story/gardening book. As Amazon describes it, "Garlic is Life is loosely the story of how a divorced, middle-aged Jewish professor of English moved from San Francisco to rural Sonoma County, California, and found fulfillment in the ups and downs of garlic farming. This intensely personal narrative describes the interplay of generations and cultures in Northern California. It should have particular appeal for garlic heads, would-be writers, middle-aged men in transition, feisty septuagenarians, and touchy-feely types.

Along with fiercely prejudiced discourses on garlic, Chester Aaron presents his sentimental story in crisp, no-nonsense prose loaded with Woody Allen-esque asides and self-deprecating observations." In addition to the whimsy and practical tips, the book gives us 40 recipes. Consider this one:



### Chester's Quick, Simple and Elegant Pasta

- 1 pound linguine
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 Spanish Roja garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup whole, salted cashews or walnut halves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 basil leaves, shredded
- 1 tablespoon chopped Italian parsley
- Grated hard cheese of your choice (Parmesan is good)

1. Cook the linguine in a large pot of boiling water until tender, about 7 minutes. While the pasta is cooking, place the oil in a skillet over medium heat. When warm, add the garlic, tossing, for 2 minutes. Add the nuts and season with the salt and pepper.

2. Drain the pasta. Toss with the nut sauce. Add the basil and parsley. Adjust seasoning and serve with grated cheese on the side. Serves 6-8.





# A BOO-TIFUL HALLOWEEN

Hopefully you are having a boo-tifully bountiful harvest of cucurbitaceae – cucumbers, melons, squash, gourds and pumpkins. If not, partake of the abundance at local farmers' markets. The bright orange color of pumpkins tells you that they are loaded with the antioxidant beta-carotene, which is converted to vitamin A in the body. An easy way to cook a pumpkin is in the microwave. Puncture or cut it first, and then cook it 7 minutes per pound. Puree the cooked pumpkin and use it for soup or pie.



**CREATIVE SCARECROWS**  
35 Fun Figures For Your Yard & Garden

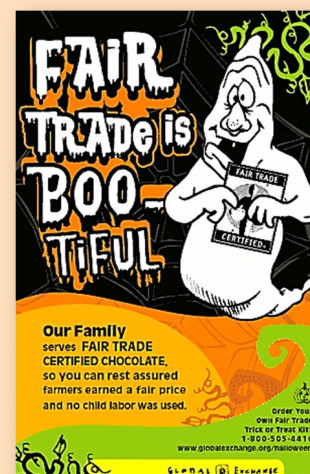
Be forewarned: if you buy Creative Scarecrows by Marcianne Miller, it is a slippery slope from scarecrows to permanent yard art sculptures. Some outrageously innovative artists contribute 35 wacky personalities that may attract more birds (as well as admiring people) than they scare away.



Don't neglect the birds when they come "twick or tweeting". Make an easy bird feeder out of a hollowed pumpkin shell.

## October is National Fair Trade Month

It's never too early to make the ghouls and goblins who come to your door on Halloween green-minded – after all, they are our future gardeners and farmers. October is National Fair Trade Month, and you can send trick-or-treaters away with more than just sweets. When you hand out fair trade certified chocolate, your offering represents a guaranteed fair income for workers who spend their days in the cocoa fields. You take a stand for fairness across the supply chain, and can help educate children and their families about fair trade. You can buy treat-sized chocolate, like Endangered Species minis, locally. Or go on line to [www.globalexchangestore.org](http://www.globalexchangestore.org) to buy a Fair Trade Trick or Treat Action Kit, which gets you chocolate, educational postcards, bags, streamers and other goodies to hand out, plus a very cool poster to hang on your door.



## Garlic: Protection from Scary Stuff

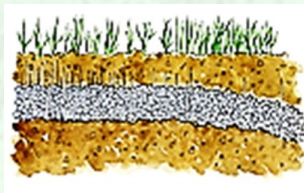
Everyone knows that garlic will ward off vampires, but did you know it might also ward off heart disease, high cholesterol and high blood pressure? Various studies have shown evidence of the antioxidant properties of garlic. When crushed, allin (a sulfur-containing chemical) is converted into allicin, which has many healing properties – antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal. You read about author and garlic farmer Chester Aaron on the previous page. Chester is still actively growing his garlic at age 87, and one of the things he's always done to bolster his health is to start his mornings not with coffee but by chewing up 3-4 cloves of garlic, sometimes with a touch of honey. Don't let that scare you from planting your own crop of garlic – you can use it like most of us do, in our favorite recipes. Now's an ideal time to plant. You can go to your local farmers' market, buy a few types to taste until you find one you like, and plant the rest. Plant the cloves tip up, head down, and harvest them in May or June, when they start to look like weeds. Here's a tip: you can snip the roots when you harvest and toss them in your salads.





## Renovating Lawns the Gravel Way

“Lose the lawn”, people say, but some of us still want our patch of green. After a hard summer of foot traffic, play, pets, drought, heat, gophers and mowing, lawns need rejuvenating. This is a good time, with cooler weather approaching, to do it.



The folks at Joy Creek Nursery in Scappoose, Oregon, devised a simple, efficient and relatively inexpensive method to revitalize a lawn. The Joy Creek lawn, after this method was applied, has remained green, healthy and resilient for years now despite heavy foot traffic. It requires half of the watering it used to. The secret ingredient: gravel.

Not just any gravel, though. Don't use pea gravel – that won't work. Use "quarter-10" gravel, which is crushed quarter-inch gravel put through a No. 10 screen. That removes the fines and smalls – you don't want the really fine stuff, because it can compact into concrete and make your drainage situation worse. Washed half-inch or even 5/8ths clean crushed gravel also will work. Crushed gravel has rough edges that help to break water surface tension, which allows water to penetrate even in dry summer weather. This month is ideal to try this method. Here are the steps.

1. Mow grass short.
2. Spread one inch of quarter-10 crushed gravel over the entire surface. Rake into grass, leveling as you go.
3. Spread 1 inch of compost mulch over the entire surface, working into grass and leveling. Usually a fair amount of gravel will show through.
4. Top-seed with a regionally appropriate blend if lawn is thin and spotty. Rake the seed in.
5. Top-fertilize with an organic fertilizer.
6. Water. Repeat watering as needed to keep surface moist until grass seed sprouts.
7. Don't mow again for six or seven weeks.

The old grass will grow up through the compost and gravel in about six weeks. Fresh, vigorous grass roots will keep the gravel in place, so it doesn't fly up dangerously during mowing. If your lawn is in really bad condition, this treatment can be repeated.

If you have leftover gravel, use it as mulch. It reflects heat, protects roots, maintains moisture, reduces the need for irrigation, and does not decompose and require replacement. A two-inch layer of gravel is the optimal thickness. It is especially great for gardens and perennial borders with xeric and very xeric plants. Gravel also encourages many perennials to re-seed themselves – plants like penstemons, agastaches and flax may naturalize. You can also use gravel as an ingredient for a homemade succulent soil mix: 2 parts by volume of a potting soil, 1 part perlite and 1 part small size gravel.

## First Workday at The Glenwood House



**October 17th—10:00 to 12:00**

Come join us for our first workday at the gardens of the Glenwood House, 11 Glenwood Drive, Scotts Valley. Glenwood is an assisted living home in Scotts Valley for adults with traumatic brain injuries, and this will be an ongoing public service project for our club. It should be a fun and rewarding day for everyone who takes part. Bring water and favorite tools. For more information or to sign up, contact Monica Pieage at 460-0215 or [mpielage@yahoo.com](mailto:mpielage@yahoo.com). You can also sign up for the workday at our October meeting.

## Board of Directors

Great news! Pat McVeigh has joined the Board as our second Member-at-Large. Pat has long admired our club and has been a member for the last few years. She is eager to serve—and we are equally eager to have her! Pat is the coordinator for the Lifelong Learners Horticulture Interest Group at [Cabrillo College](#), and has taken many horticulture courses there.

Our Board meetings have been splendid social occasions this summer, with garden tours and the occasional feast. Remember, you don't have to be on the Board to join us! This month the meeting will be on October 25th at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Debbie Kindle, 3320 Putter Drive, Soquel. We'll have a tour of Debbie's garden and a potluck dinner before the business meeting.



# The Gardeners' Club Plant Sale and Swap

You can take plants home by either paying bargain prices in cash, or by bringing plants and other items for trade tickets to use instead of cash. Fill out this form before the meeting if you are going to trade.

You may bring plants, seeds, bulbs, harvest bounty, books, tools and any other miscellaneous items of use or interest to gardeners. This is what you'll get for what you bring:

2", 3" & 4" pots: 1 ticket each  
6" pot or 6-pack: 1.5 ticket each  
1 gallon pot: 2 tickets each  
2 gallon pot: 3 tickets each  
Miscellaneous items are priced at the meeting.

Label your plants with their common or botanical names, and put your name on them in case purchasers have questions. Please don't bring loose,

dirty plants that would make a mess, or plants you wouldn't be proud to put your name on.

We appreciate all of you who come early to help set up – it's a lot of work! And if you can, plan on staying to help with clean-up.

We'll start accepting plants at 6:40 p.m. The purchase prices are:

2", 3", or 4" pots: 2 tickets or \$1 each  
6" pot or 6-pack: 2 for 3 tickets, or \$1..50 each  
1 gallon pot: 4 tickets or \$2.00 each  
2 gallon pot: 6 ticket or \$3.00 each



When there are multiples of the same plant available, please take only one until other members have had a chance to buy one. If there are multiples left over, then you can grab them! Plants that don't get sold or given away go home with the person who brought them.

**Important: Please complete this form at home and bring it with you to the meeting.**

Number of 2, 3 or 4" pots: \_\_\_\_\_ X 1 = \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

Number of 6" pots or 6-packs: \_\_\_\_\_ X 1.5 = \_\_\_\_\_ tickets (round up to whole number)

Number of 1-gal. pots: \_\_\_\_\_ X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

Number of 2-gal. pots: \_\_\_\_\_ X 3 = \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

Miscellaneous items (to be priced at meeting): \_\_\_\_\_ tickets

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Have fun!*





October is the month to plant bulbs and dream of spring all winter. October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Old House Gardens Heirloom Bulbs (<http://oldhousegardens.com>) is offering an opportunity to plant flowers and fight cancer with its Pink Ribbon Fall-Planted Bulb Sampler. They'll send you (or your mom, daughter, sister, or friend) a "pink and powerful" \$30 assortment of hardy, fall-planted bulbs, all labeled and specific to our zone. For each sampler, \$3 will be donated to the Live Strong Foundation.



## The Gardeners' Club

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2nd position—vacant  
3rd position - vacant

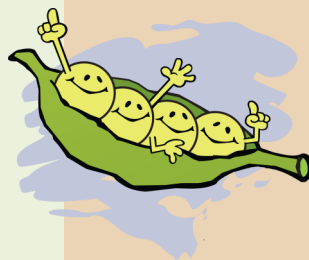
### Refreshments

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### PSAs/Glenwood

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**[www.thegardenersclub.org](http://www.thegardenersclub.org)**



### 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 Dr., Aptos.

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