

The Gardeners' Club

October 2011

Fall Plant Sale & Swap

Thursday, October 13th, 7:00 p.m.
Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Drive



Ah, it's fall—and time for our not-to-be-missed Fall Plant Sale & Swap. It's an incredible opportunity to get free and bargain-priced plants and paraphernalia for your garden, and share your extras. Our members have been industriously dividing their perennials, potting up seedlings and extra plants, collecting seeds, bagging bulbs, gleaning surplus harvest, thinning tool and décor collections—all to make our trade and sale event a rich and rewarding experience. Come choose from a limitless variety of plants, bulbs, perennials, shrubs, seeds, small trees, tools, pots, vases, planters, knick-knacks and anything/everything garden. If you don't have plants to trade, you can buy stuff at ridiculously low prices. You are sure to discover something new to try. Don't miss out—see you there!



**Arboretum and California
Native Plant Society
Fall Plant Sale**



40 Free Plants!



Saturday, October 8th

The Arboretum and the Santa Cruz Chapter of the California Native Plant Society fall plant sales will at the Arboretum's Eucalyptus Grove. The sales are open to members only of both organizations from 10—12 and to the public from 12-4. The sale will feature plants from Australia and South Africa as well as California Natives.

People come from far and wide for this sale, but this year there is a special attraction—they will be giving away plants every hour on the hour from 11 am to 3 pm! You must be present to win one of the 40 to 60 plants to be given away. Wow! How can you resist?

**DIY Hypertufa Pottery
October 15th, 2:00 PM**



Join concrete art master Katrina King from 5 Feet from the Moon Concrete and Metal Designs for this hands on workshop on how to make your very own hypertufa pots. They make great homemade gifts in one of a kind shapes, sizes and colors! Perfect for succulents. You will make 3 small pots to take home with you! \$40 includes

instruction and 3 pots. DIG Nursery, 420 Water Street, Santa Cruz. Sign up at <http://diggardensnursery.com/events/> or call 466-3444. Other DIG workshops this month include fall container design, rainwater harvesting and making terrariums.

**2011 Ecology Series
Sponsored by the Ecological
Landscaping Association**



**Native Plants: The Low
Tech Landscape Water Conserving Solution**

Tuesday, October 18th, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Part 1: Introduction & Orientation with discussion, question and answer and site analysis/home base plan development review.

Tuesday, October 25th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Part 2: Residential Design Studio Workshop where participants focus on using home site analysis data and base plan to develop drought-tolerant native plant designs for their residences.

Instructor: Darrin Miller, M.L.A. Landscape Designer & Project Manager, Ecological Concerns, Inc., Central Coast Wild. Both Sessions: \$45

Graywater Clarified

Sat., October 22nd, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Santa Cruz
DIY installation of laundry to landscape watering system. Instructor: Ken Foster of Terranova Ecological Landscaping. Cost: \$45

Rainwater Harvesting

Sat., October 29th, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Santa Cruz
DIY installation and tour of infiltration galleries, basins, and bio-swales to harvest rainwater.
Instructor: Golden Love of Love's Gardens
Cost: \$45

**To register for any of these
classes: www.ecolandscaping.org
For further info call Golden Love at 471-9100**

Last reminder—get your photographs to Lise Bixler for the November slide show of members' gardens! We'll take them in any form—on a memory card or CD, emailed by attachment, regular old paper prints or uploaded to a site like Flickr (www.flickr.com). Please share your favorite garden moments with us for our November armchair garden tour—2 pictures or 20, let us see your garden!



Tradition has it that if you blindfold yourself on Halloween evening, go out into the garden and pull up Kale, the roots will tell you whether or not your future wife or husband will be tall or short, old or young, or healthy or unhealthy.

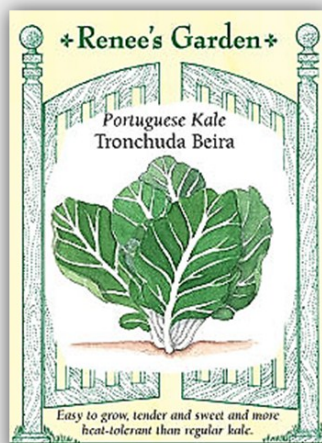
Now that we're on the subject of kale, we can think of other ways it's been used in the past. Did you know that Seakale (*Crambe maritima*), a perennial cabbage native to the coast of Great Britain, was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson at his Monticello garden? The stalks were blanched by keeping them under ceramic pots, then bundled and prepared like asparagus. Jefferson was probably inspired to grow sea kale after reading Bernard McMahon's *The American Gardener's Calendar*, 1806, sometimes called his "Bible" of horticulture. McMahon's directions for sowing sea kale seed were closely followed by Jefferson in his 1819 "Kalendar": "Oct. 19. Planted Seakale 6. Rows 100. F. long, 16 l. apart, & the seeds 16. l. dist. In [the] row making 6. Rows of 75. Holes each ' 600. Holes or plants. 6 seeds in each hole." You can order seeds for seakale, a very ornamental perennial with sculptural blue-green leaves and flowers that draw beneficial insects with a scent of honey, from <http://www.bountifulgardens.org> or from J. L. HUDSON, SEEDSMAN, BOX 337, LA HONDA, CALIFORNIA 94020 (www.jlhudsonseeds.net), a public access seedbank established in 1911. Hudson also has a related plant, *Crambe cordifolia*, 'GIANT SEA KALE' or 'COLEWORT', a striking foliage plant with large wavy-margined leaves to 3 feet long.



Nothing tricky about planting 'Hellcat' Hybrid F1 Spinach this fall — just sow and mulch it well for a fresh treat next spring. 'Hellcat' has small dark green leaves, warm weather tolerant and slow to bolt—an ideal choice for salads. Available from www.2BSeeds.com.

There's a new kale in town, too. Renee's Garden has a new offering, Portuguese Kale.

www.reneesgarden.com



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Tender, sweet and much more heat tolerant than other kales, this traditional heirloom comes directly from Portugal where it is a center stage vegetable beloved for its mild but rich flavor and easy culture. Portuguese kale forms 12 to 18 inch tall heads of paddle-shaped, deep blue-green leaves. This vigorous variety has a milder and sweeter flavor than other cole crops. We find it one of the best tasting, most nutritious greens to grow and enjoy throughout the season.

HAUNTINGLY HEALTHY HALLOWEEN TREATS



Apple slice goulash grins dipped in citrus juice and fangs made of almonds; carrot fingers with sliced almond fingernails glued on with cream cheese. How frighteningly simple! Go to Family Fun Magazine for more (<http://familyfun.go.com>).

The Art and Science of Making a Hugelkultur Bed

Transforming Woody Debris into a Garden Resource

by Melissa Mile

Used for centuries in Eastern Europe and Germany, *hugelkultur* (in German *hugelkultur* translates roughly as “mound culture”) is a gardening and farming technique whereby woody debris (fallen branches and/or logs) are used as a resource.

Often employed in permaculture systems, *hugelkultur* allows gardeners and farmers to mimic the nutrient cycling found in a natural woodland to realize several benefits. Woody debris (and other detritus) that falls to the forest floor can readily become sponge like, soaking up rainfall and releasing it slowly into the surrounding soil, thus making this moisture available to nearby plants.

Hugelkultur garden beds (and *hugelkultur* ditches and swales) using the same principle to:

- Help retain moisture on site
- Build soil fertility
- Improve drainage
- Use woody debris that is unsuitable for other use

Applicable on a variety of sites, *hugelkultur* is particularly well suited for areas that present a challenge to gardeners. Urban lots with compacted soils, areas with poor drainage, limited moisture, etc., can be significantly improved using a *hugelkultur* technique, as *hugelkultur* beds are, essentially, large, layered compost piles covered with a growing medium into which a garden is planted.

Creating a *hugelkultur* garden bed is a relatively simple process:

1. Select an area with approximately these dimensions: 6 feet by 3 feet
2. Gather materials for the project:
 - Fallen logs, branches, twigs, fallen leaves (the “under utilized” biomass from the site). Avoid using cedar, walnut or other tree species deemed allelopathic.
 - Nitrogen rich material (manure or kitchen waste work well and will help to maintain a proper carbon to nitrogen ratio in the decomposing mass within the *hugelkultur* bed).
 - Top soil (enough to cover the other layers of the bed with a depth of 1 – 2”) and some mulching material (straw works well).
3. Lay the logs (the largest of the biomass debris) down as the first layer of the *hugelkultur* bed. Next, add a layer of branches, then a layer of small sticks and twigs. *Hugelkultur* beds work best when they are roughly 3 feet high (though



Wooden debris will decompose faster (and be transformed into a resource) when hugelkultur techniques are employed.

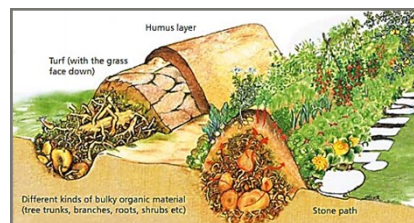
this method is forgiving, and there is no fixed rule as to the size of the bed. That is where the “art” comes in!)

4. Water these layers well
5. Begin filling in spaces between the logs, twigs and branches with leaf litter and manure of kitchen scraps.
6. Finally, top off the bed with 1 – 2” of top soil and a layer of mulch.

The *hugelkultur* bed will benefit from “curing” a bit, so it is best to prepare the bed several months prior to planting time (prepare the bed in the fall for a spring planting, for example, in temperate northern climates), but *hugelkultur* beds can be planted immediately. Plant seeds or transplants into the *hugelkultur* bed as you would any other garden bed.

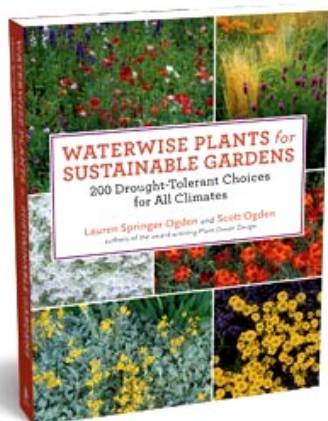
Happy *hugelkulturing*!

The benefits of *hugelkultur* include incredible water holding capacity and increased fertility. This article was originally published August 3, 2010 on the website of The Permaculture Research Institute of Australia (visit it at <http://permaculture.org.au> — lots of interesting things to learn). The Institute won the international Humanitarian Water & Food Award last year.



Want more? Read Sepp Holzer’s article on *hugelkultur* raised beds in the British *Permaculture Magazine* (www.krameterhof.at/pdf/presse/permaculture-pm68.pdf).

Read



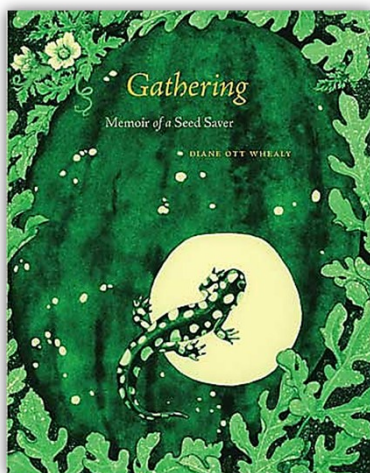
Waterwise Plants for Sustainable Gardens: 200 Drought-Tolerant Choices for All Climates by Laura Springer Ogden and Scott Ogden

If you're one of those lucky gardeners who has had enough rain this summer, don't gloat — chances are that, sooner or later, you're going to have to deal with a scarcity of water. It might be a dry spell that lasts just a few weeks or it might be a major drought that goes on for months. Whatever the scenario, it doesn't make sense to fill your garden with plants that need constant, copious irrigation. Not only will you be running up heart-stopping water bills, you'll be contributing — needlessly — to the diminishment of a precious, limited resource.

There's only one sensible way to address this situation, and that's to start using more plants that can get by on less water. Some people worry that their gardens will suffer as a result. But less water doesn't have to mean less beauty and less interest. You can see the truth of this statement on every page of this book.

The Ogdens' choices are arranged by plant type. In the section on trees, for example, you'll find dazzling, little-known plants like bigtooth maple (one of the only drought-tolerant members of the genus) and New Mexican olive, which turns a brilliant gold in fall and is hardy to Zone 4. Among the perennials are the aptly named 'Shimmer' evening primrose and long-blooming purple mountain savory. In other words, these

aren't the tired, scruffy-looking plants you might have associated with the phrase "drought-tolerant" — they're tough, top-performing, beautiful plants worthy of the most conspicuous place in your garden.—*Review by Tom Fischer, Timber Press.*



Gathering: Memoir of a Seed Saver by Dianne Ott Whealy

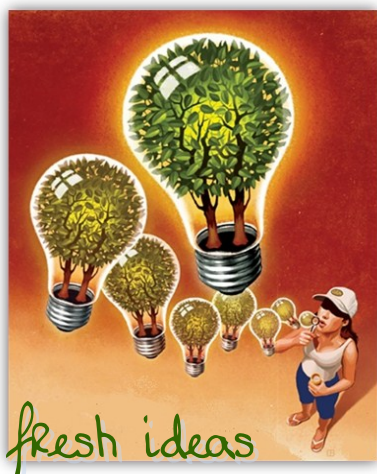
Daughter of Iowa farmers, Missouri homesteader, and mother of five, Ott Whealy never anticipated that one day she would become a leader in a grass-roots movement to preserve our agricultural biodiversity. The love for the land and the respect for heirloom seeds that Diane shared with her husband, Kent Whealy, led to their starting Seed Savers Exchange in 1975. Seed Savers Exchange, the nation's premier nonprofit seed-saving organization, began humbly as a simple exchange of seeds among passionate gardeners who sought to preserve the rich gardening heritage their ancestors had brought to this country. Seeds that Ott Whealy herself inherited from her paternal grandparents were the impetus for the formation of Seed Savers Exchange, whose membership has grown from a small coterie to more than thirteen thousand. Its influence has been felt in gardens across America.

Ott Whealy's down-to-earth narrative

traces her fascinating journey from Oregon to Kansas to Missouri then back home to Iowa where, in 1986, Heritage Farm became the permanent home of Seed Savers Exchange. Her heartwarming story captures what is best in the American spirit: the ability to dream and, through hard work and perseverance, inspire others to contribute their efforts to a cause. Thus was created one of the nation's most admired nonprofits in the field of genetic preservation.—*Review from goodreads.com.*



When I saw the "risk free" offer to get a free issue of The Herb Companion at www.herbcompanion.com (1-800-456-5835), I responded, and I haven't been so enthusiastic about a gardening magazine in a long time. Not only does a paper issue arrive every month, but so does an electronic one, and an e-newsletter. The magazine web site has blogs galore and other resources. The magazine include much more than its wealth of inspiring, unique recipes and sound growing advice. Here's a sampler of some topics from the last few issues: preventing hypothyroidism, including growing and cooking "goitrogenic" foods such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cassava root, horseradish, kale, millet, mustard greens, peaches, pears, radishes, rutabagas, soybeans, spinach, and turnip; five ways to preserve basil; how to grow stronger bones with herbal foods as delicious as herbal smoked gouda quesidillas and caprese salad; how to make tea time in the garden from delicious plants you've grown; how to tame tenacious thyme and use it in many delicious ways; a cauldron of recipes for autumn soups; growing big herbs for a bold and beautiful garden; and garden-y ways to grow your brain.



Although I couldn't attend the Oregon Association of Nurseries' Farwest Show, highlighting fresh ideas and trends in the ornamental horticulture industry, I was able to read about some of the highlights of it in their free Digger magazine and blog (www.diggermagazine.com). In the competition for "Best of Show", the award went to Flutterby Grandé™ Peach Cobbler Nectar Bush (*Buddleia* x 'Podaras'). Ball Ornamentals has bred the world's only



complete series of sterile *Buddleia*. This is great news for those of us who love *buddleias* but are dismayed by their invasive tendencies. The shrub has silvery foliage, grows to 4-6 feet tall and wide, bearing 14-16 inch blooms that start out bright pink and mature to a peach-pink blend. It will attract hummingbirds as well as butterflies. And I'm thrilled that there are two other colors in the series —oranges— that I don't have in my own *buddleia* collection—'Sweet Marmalade' and 'Tangerine Dream'.

Premiering at the show was a new book that will make blueberry lovers rejoice. A straightforward, non-technical guide to growing blueberries anywhere in the U.S., you can dream of picking your favorite berries in no time. The

Gardener's Guide To Blueberries was written by world- leading blueberry experts at Fall Creek Farm & Nursery. This compact, comprehensive guide outlines steps to success with blueberries, from planting to plucking and everything in between.

Amelie Aust, daughter of Fall Creek's co-founders, Dave and Barbara Brazelton, says they wrote the guide because it was "important to us to bring our family's love of blueberries to home gardeners. Blueberries aren't just a food, or an ornamental plant. They represent so much more. They represent a lifestyle where you have an experience based relationship with your plants – where you're no longer just looking and admiring, but you're actually interacting with them. My brother and I spent countless hours grazing as kids, throwing berries in the air to catch them in our mouths, coming away with stained blue fingers and purple tongues." Aust notes that blueberries are much more than a shrub bearing summer fruit. "They're perfect for every season and every garden. They offer beautiful bell-shaped flowers in spring, luscious berries in summer, brilliant foliage in fall and vibrant cane color in Winter."

At the Farwest Show, the winner of the "Best Edible Plant" was a new blueberry variety from Monrovia, 'Bountiful Blue'. Monrovia says it "has a prolific fruit set of large, super sweet berries and the bluest foliage on any Blueberry we have ever seen. It will set fruit alone, but the berries will be more prolific if it is planted near another blueberry; we recommend 'Sunshine Blue'. It requires only 150-200 chill hours, and is semi-evergreen in warm climates".

In case you missed it, you can read the San Francisco article on other blueberries that thrive in the Bay area at www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/05/05/HO8R1IVS5H.DTL.



Blueberries thrive in acid soil. Some people recommend planting them in a soil-less planting mixture, such as a 50:50 mix of sphagnum peat moss and shredded pine, fir or spruce bark mulch or mini-nuggets. I wonder if I could substitute the bark mulch

with the scads of pine needles I have under my Monterey pine trees?

If you've got them, use pine needles to mulch your blueberry plants, or shredded oak or maple leaves.. Mulches should be at least 3 inches thick. and coarse so that water percolates through the mulch easily (that is why the oak leaves need to be shredded or chopped, otherwise they deflect water from the growing area).

Once established, blueberry plants should be heavily pruned each year to avoid over-fruiting which results in small fruit or poor growth. One of the biggest mistakes home gardeners make with their blueberries, says Fall Creek, is lack of pruning. Aggressive, annual pruning results in healthier, more vigorous plants and more prolific fruit production. To prune, remove low growth around the base; remove the dead wood, leaving bright colored lateral branches, cutting out any short, discolored branches; continue pruning until you have removed 1/3 to 1/2 of the wood out of your plants each year.

Club News

The October 24th Board meeting will be at Suzanne Mercado's home at 1633 Quail Hollow Road in Ben Lomond at 6PM for a garden tour and 6:30 for the business meeting. All are welcome. Contact Suzanne at 609-6230 or Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com if you need directions.

The Club's last Glenwood House Work Day will be Oct.8th, 10am—12. Contact Monica Pielage for details (460-0215 or mpielage@yahoo.com).

Tally Sheet & Instructions for Plant Sale & 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: 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.

Good luck, and have fun!

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 TICKETS: _____



Native Revival Nursery, the unique nursery across from where we meet at the Aptos Grange, is having a VERY exciting event on November 5th. Not only will you be able to enjoy an artisan fair, roam the gardens and browse native plants and enjoy food and music, but they are giving away something that will help you realize your fall planting dreams. Every attendee will receive a 50% off coupon which is good for an entire month—**50% off of an entire purchase!** What a great opportunity to get to know our neighbors, and to stock up on native plants, garden accessories and much more. See you there!

The Gardeners' Club

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Plant Table

Patty Connole, 335-4134
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2nd position—vacant
3rd position - vacant

Refreshments

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PSAs/Glenwood

Monica Pielage, 460-0215
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Website

Joe Thompson

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 1633 Quail Hollow Rd., Ben Lomond, CA 95005. 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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