

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

April 2012

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler

lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

Plant Sale & Swap

Thurs., April 12th

Aptos Grange
2555 Mar Vista Dr.

7 p.m.

Got plants ready to divide, or ones you are replacing? Been so enthusiastically sowing that you've got seedlings to share? Pots you don't need any more? Garden art that needs a new home? Looking for free or low-cost treasures for your garden?

Clean out your tool shed, thin your perennial beds, make space on your bookshelf, finish your garden crafts...and bring your goodies to our amazing annual spring event.

Our members offer a limitless variety of bulbs, annuals, perennials, shrubs, seeds, small trees, tools, planters, knick-knacks and anything/everything garden. You'll find plants you've never heard of and plants you've always wanted to try.

See the inside back cover for more information. If you don't have plants to trade, come to buy at bargain prices.

Don't miss out – see you there!



Contest Results



April is **National Poetry Month**.

In March, I announced a contest for readers to contribute a favorite poem. No one contributed anything! So the winner of the elegant etegami fan by dosaankodebbie is...your editor, me. Who has made this issue as poetic as possible.



Increased lifespans have led to population aging and brought attention to health care concerns associated with old age. Research published in the [American Chemical Society's Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry](#) (Marshall G. Miller and Barbara Shukitt-Hale) shows strong evidence that eating blueberries, blackberries, strawberries and other berries can benefit the aging brain. Eating berries may help prevent age-related memory loss and other changes such as attention span, reasoning, spatial orientation, and processing speed. In addition to their high levels of antioxidants, they change the way neurons in the brain communicate. These changes in signaling help to prevent damaging inflammation and help improve cognition and motor function. Smoothies, anyone?



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The March newsletter was as always absolutely stunning. Here is some feedback for you on one newsletter item. Was interested in the "let's grow veggies" site so signed up for the free planting chart. But was very disappointed to see that whoever cobbled up the recommendations for planting times in my zip code was so far off as to be laughable. For example, the chart says I should be planting corn, squash and beans this week as well as tomato transplants. We know from long experience that putting those heat-loving vegetable seeds in this early will result in rotted seed and not much else. And tomato starts put in now will just sulk rather than grow - they will never have the vigor that starts put in a month from now will have, even if protected with Wall-O-Water or something similar - the soil is just too cold. The person(s) who created that chart must think that Aptos conditions are similar to those in far southern CA or the desert southwest where anything can be planted at any time. Would love to have that person come stand in my garden, take the soil's temp (even before the current rainy weather began) and rethink his/her advice. Like so much gardening advice that makes it into print or on the web, I'm suspicious that it originated in the northeast US where people often have a very warped and ignorant understanding of the wildly varying California growing conditions.

Sharon Hull



Horticulture's print magazine has been in continuous publication since 1904. Now they have created a free online magazine for the gardening community. The debut issue of *Gardeners on the Go!* will be sent to subscribers on April 4th. To get it, register now at <http://www.hortmag.com/subscribe/gardeners-on-the-go>.



What's Happening...

Spring Plant Sale Marks
California Native Plant
Week
Saturday, April 21st

The Eucalyptus Grove at
the Arboretum at UCSC
High Street at Western Dr.
10 am - 12 noon: members only
12 noon - 4 pm: everyone



The plant sales of the UCSC Arboretum and the Santa Cruz Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) will present several thousand colorful native and drought tolerant plants. The spring sale is an ideal time to see the plants in bloom and with new growth. The sale offers a wide variety of native plants including ones for shady areas and some local selections. The Arboretum will offer a range of unusual exotics, especially from South Africa and Australia, all screened to be noninvasive. Knowledgeable members will be on hand to help you select the ideal plant for your location. Memberships, as well as books and posters, will be available at the sale.

CNPS will be featuring a selection of Ribes, the genus of currants and gooseberries, and one of the best of California's spring bloomers for gardens. Most of the species on offer grow natively in our county, which means they have high value for local wildlife. All provide early spring nectar for hummingbirds; their berries are relished by local birds; and they are so pretty!



Pink flowering
currant. For more
about Ribes, read
an article by Jackie
Pascoe at [http://
www.cruzcnps.org/
ribes.html](http://www.cruzcnps.org/ribes.html) .



*everything goes bee,
sun exploding into green,
the mad sky dive
through shards of diamond light,
earth veering left, then right,
then left, sweet scented,
the honing in,
the buzz,
the yes no dance,
the quantum leap into
open swoon of calendula,
yellow orange delphinium starflower,
ultraviolet milkweed forget-me-not,
caress of corolla carpel calyx....*

-Di Brant, eco-poet, "Interspecies
Communication", Now You Care

The Board Meeting will be at 6:00 on April
23rd at April Barclay's, 7158 Freedom Blvd. Everyone is invited; you don't
need to be a Board member. We'll tour April's garden before the meeting, and
see what survived the winter frosts.

Bees & Beekeeping Workshop

Saturday, April 14

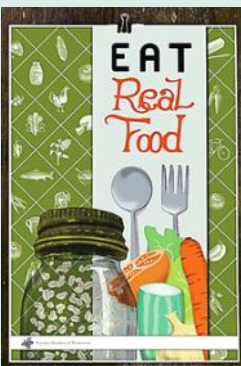
10 am to 1 pm

Louise Cain Gatehouse, UCSC Farm

Join James Cook of GroundSwell Farm to
learn the basics of bee keeping. Wear com-
fortable shoes and bring a snack. No pre-
registration necessary. \$20 for Friends'
members, \$30 general public, \$5 for UCSC
students, payable the day of the workshop.



Vegetables



Poster by Joe
Wirtheim. See
more of his
"artful advocacy"
at [http://
victorygarden
oftomorrow.com](http://victorygardenoftomorrow.com)

<i>The country vegetables scorn To lie about in shops, They stand upright as they were born In neatly-patterned crops;</i>	<i>You pick an apronful of peas And shell them on the spot. You cut a cabbage, if you please, To pop into the pot.</i>
<i>And when you want your dinner you Don't buy it from a shelf, You find a lettuce fresh with dew And pull it for yourself;</i>	<i>The folk who their potatoes buy From sacks before they sup, Miss half of the potato's joy, And that's to dig it up.</i>

by Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

Baker Seed Company

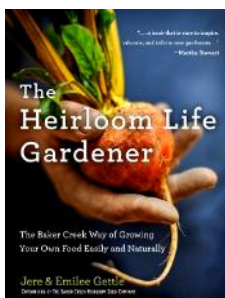


Many Californians are stepping forth to gather the requisite signatures needed to get the the California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act of 2012 on

the November ballot. The initiative would require food sold in retail outlets to be labeled if it is genetically engineered or if it contains GE ingredients. It does not ban the sale or research of GE food, just disclosure through labeling.

Jere Gettle, founder of Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, has designed a seed packet to support this campaign. The seed packets, packed with Baker Creek's non-GMO San Marzano Tomato seeds, are being distributed free all over the state of California! We will have a supply of them at our April meeting for those of you who want them, or would like to distribute them in support of this effort.

Jere and his wife Emilee have recently published The Heirloom Life Gardener; The Baker Creek Way of Growing Your Own Food Naturally. How could you not want to buy a book written by the man the NY Times called "the Indiana Jones of seed collecting"? Written in a personal voice and full of gorgeous photographs, it has a wealth of knowledge and an introduction to some amazing varieties many people have never seen. If you order the book from their web site (<http://rareseeds.com/the-heirloom-life-gardener.html>), you'll also get a one-year subscription to Heirloom Gardener Magazine.



Poet's Marigold

'The Marigold that goes to bed wi' th' sun, And with him rises weeping.'

William Shakespeare,
Winter's Tale

It isn't a marigold at all, but it *has* inspired poetry. You probably know this wonderful herb with bright orange flowers by its Latin name, *Calendula officinalis*. If you don't have it in your garden, it is easy to grow— you might want to plant some seeds. It tolerates poor soil and will come back every year. It reseeds. The petals and stems are edible. Try using it to make a French salad like this one, posted by The Secret Chef at <http://www.french-recipe.co.uk/making-french-salads/#ixzz1myVvgmKx>.



A well made French salad is meant to be fresh and light, almost a palate cleanser. You can make it larger and serve it as either a lunch dish or first course, but remember – "fresh" and "light". In the colorful spring salad pictured above, crisp apple, Belgian endive with a little mint, striking blue borage and yellow calendula flowers have been combined. Dress it with a simple vinaigrette.

No foolin'! Grow potatoes with kids



Growing potatoes in a recycled container, such as a clean garbage can, is perfect for small spaces, and will yield an abundant crop. Paint a face on the container, and when the leafy stems grow up and over the opening, they'll become "Mr. Potato Head"'s hair! This month and next are good for planting potatoes. Try red and blue varieties, which have more nutritive value – the color means more antioxidants. Read more on growing potatoes in containers at <http://www.gardenwiseonline.ca/gw/how/2009/08/29/growing-potatoes-containers/#ixzz1pHzVsJd8>.



We're all eager to make up for lost time in the garden, but here's a reminder to

do a few stretches before heading out to dig and delve—because not all of us are spring chickens.



Visit this engaging, inspiring, light-hearted, humorous and informative blog by Matti and Megan, who garden in "The Outerlands of San Francisco".
www.faroutflora.com

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Blue-Butterfly Day

*It is blue-butterfly day here in spring,
And with these sky-flakes down in flurry on flurry
There is more unmixed color on the wing
Than flowers will show for days unless they hurry.*

*But these are flowers that fly and all but sing:
And now from having ridden out desire
They lie closed over in the wind and cling
Where wheels have freshly sliced the April mire.*

—Robert Frost

Copper, American Painted Lady, Common Buckeye and Gray Hairstreak. Many types of pollinators visit, including bees, flies, butterflies, and moths.

Which buckwheat to choose? The Las Pilitas Nursery web site is full of information and resources about native plants, habitats and natural history. There you will find a fine overview of some of the species to help you make choices

(www.laspilitas.com/groups/buckwheat/california_buckwheat.html).

Here are some of the ones they describe and have available:

Eriogonum umbellatum polyanthum, Shasta Buckwheat, is a tidy, low growing buckwheat, with bright yellow sulfur colored flowers. It likes good drainage and can't tolerate clay. It is fairly hardy and can tolerate hot dry summers.

Eriogonum fasciculatum foliolosum, California Buckwheat, is very drought tolerant. The buds are pinkish and turn white when they open. They cluster in tight little balls on long stalks and turn a chocolate brown in the fall. It has green foliage. Many little animals and birds use it for cover. Coppers, blues and hairstreaks use it for nectar. In the wild, it grows in the chaparral in very dry hot conditions. Bee keepers value this plant so you might see stacks of honeybee boxes where California buckwheat covers hillsides.

Eriogonum arborescens, Santa Cruz Island Buckwheat, is a compact, fast

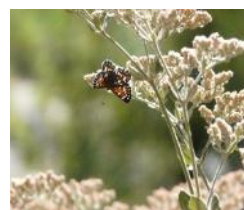


growing shrub, very drought tolerant having foliage with succulent-like qualities. Clusters of tiny pink flowers appear from late

spring through fall attracting bees and butterflies, turning chocolate-colored in winter. Even when not in bloom, the attractive twisting, peeling bark gives this plant year-round interest. Spreading up to 5' wide, the compact structure provides good cover for wildlife. It can tolerate seaside conditions as well as hot, dry interiors, and is very popular with hairstreak and blue butterflies.

Eriogonum giganteum,

Giant Buckwheat, is our largest buckwheat, in flower at least. It has huge flower clusters often more than a foot wide. It has large gray



foliage and grows about three foot tall and three foot high. It is at home in coastal conditions as well as hotter, dryer climes, being very drought tolerant. This is a species you can find at Native Revival Nursery in Aptos (across the street from the Grange, where we have our monthly Club meetings). Below are two more buckweats that you can also find at Las Pilitas or Native Revival.

Eriogonum grande

rubescens, Red Buckwheat, can tolerate coastal conditions. It has nice round leaves and very



pink flowers. It is smaller and more delicate than many of the other buckwheat, only growing about a foot tall.

Eriogonum arviolium, Cliff

Buckwheat, is a bushy coastal buckwheat, with pinkish flowers and gray foliage. It does well under



seaside conditions. It can also do well in clay and in hotter areas.

Photo: Fred Bentler,

www.bentler.us/



Multiple broods of this butterfly, the Acmon Blue (*Plebeius acmon*), can be seen throughout the spring and summer months in our yards and gardens. Acmon Blues are small, having a wingspan of about an inch more or less, and the upper wing surface on males is powdery blue while females are brownish. Both males and females have an ornate orange and black-dot arc on their upper hindwing. These butterflies are adapted to rely on various wild buckweats as host plants for their caterpillars to feed on. Adult butterflies gather nectar from various flowers including host buckweats.

Buckweats are one of the most diverse and interesting genera in California. About 115 species occur in California, of which 46 are endemic.

Eriogonums, in general, are nectar plants not only for blues but also for other butterflies such as Tailed

Poetry in Orange!



As if growing heirloom vegetables wasn't interesting enough, there are also antique flowers to try. This one, in keeping with our celebration of poetry this month, is called Irish Poet Tassel Flower (*Emilia javanica*). Baker Seeds says, "These flowers have once been described as the windswept hair of an Irish poet". The plant was introduced to England from Asia in 1799 and was also known as "Flora's Paintbrush" in Victorian times. Thomas Jefferson grew it in his Monticello garden.

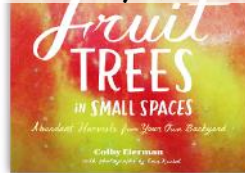
Tassel flower makes a beautiful addition to borders, garden corners, along rock walls or fences. You can plant it in containers. It is a favorite with bees, butterflies and birds. Fresh or dried, its airy form makes a great addition or filler for bouquets.

I came across this flower in a catalog from Select Seeds Antique Flowers. This company offers gardeners a fabulous selection of unique, high-quality flower seeds and plants, specializing in old-fashioned fragrant varieties, flowering vines, and rare and "antique" cottage garden annuals. Antique flowers are open-pollinated varieties that originated fifty or more years ago. Open-pollinated flowers are fertilized by insects, hummingbirds or wind, and the resulting seeds will produce plants that are identical or very similar to the parent plant. Many antique flowers are hard-to-find heirloom flowers, passed from one generation to another.

Select Seeds is a small, family-owned business, located on 50 acres of mostly forest that is enrolled in the USDA Forest Stewardship program. They are located in Union, CT, part of The Last Green Valley, a National Heritage Corridor of

35 towns working locally to preserve the land, water, and cultural resources of the region. The goal of Select Seeds is to make certain every generation can enjoy the blossoms that were grown yesterday and long before that. Their catalog has a wealth of information about antique and heirloom flowers and how to grow them. Request one at www.selectseeds.com/ or call 1-800-684-0395.

Arbor Day March 27th



This Arbor Day I'm learning the difference between semi-dwarf, dwarf and genetic dwarf fruit trees so I can squeeze more fruit trees in my garden, and use them in containers. To help I'm reading the Timber Press "deliciously encouraging guide which cuts the subject down to size", Fruit Trees in Small Spaces. For gardeners yearning for the pleasures of home-grown fruit plucked straight from the tree, Colby Eierman, garden designer and fruit expert, shows how trees can easily be tucked into the tiniest spots for a mini-orchard.

If you are interested in growing other types of trees in pots, check out this article from Digger magazine online, www.oan.org/associations/4440/files/digger/Digger_201202_pp24-32_web.pdf. You can plant small cultivars of conifers, dwarf ginkos, Japanese umbrella pine, smoke bush, Japanese maples, witch hazels trained as small trees, bay laurel, 'Little Gem' magnolia, Red Obelisk European Beech — there are endless



Photo: Iseli Nursery

possibilities. You can grow full sized trees in pots for a few years, then root-prune them and repot them, or transplant them into the ground.



Very Tall Trees

by Laura J. Bobrow

One day I stood under a very tall tree. The leaves were so high I could hardly see them, and I'm certain the leaves couldn't see me. "Well," I thought, "I'd like to be higher." So I went and got the wheelbarrow, a rickety old box, and a rubber tire. It took a lot of thinking to get them arranged just right, And they almost reached to the very first branch ... but not quite. So then I got a telephone book, the watering can and a chair. And when they were all together, I said to myself, "There." I said to myself, with one foot in the barrow, "I'll just climb up this tree and go visit a sparrow." There's no trick to balancing on a rickety old box. If you know how to rick when the rickety box rocks. If Mother could see me, I thought, on this tire, "Why, where in the world are you going?" she'd inquire. And I practiced my very most I-Don't-Care look. As I stood on one hand on the telephone book. But then, when I got to the watering can, It wasn't as easy as when I began. I had one foot on the handle, and one on the spout, And I wasn't afraid. I was looking about. I waved to the birds. I breathed some air, And I could have made it up on to the chair, When along came the breeze, Which tickled my knees, And I started to sneeze, And kerplunk! I fell down as nice as you please.



Which is what is the matter with very tall trees.

Boy falling illustration from Shel Silverstein's Falling Up

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**

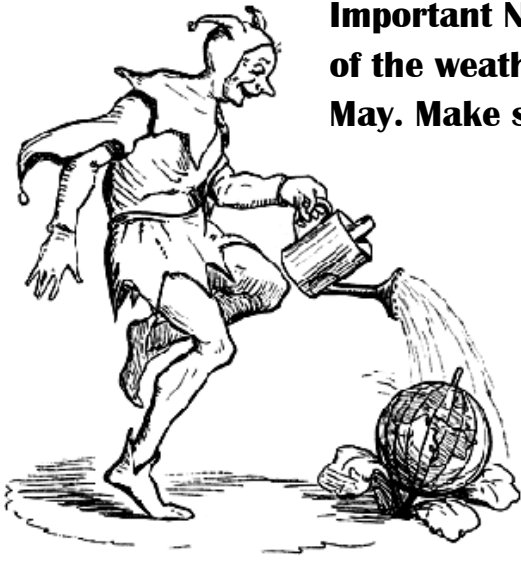
Number of 6" pots or 6-packs: _____ **X 1.5 =** _____ **tickets (round up to whole number)**

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: _____



Important Notice: Due to the extreme mood swings and confusion of the weather this year, April Fool's Day has been postponed until May. Make sure and reset your calendars.

The first of April, some do say,
Is set apart for All Fools' Day.
But why the people call it so,
Nor I, nor they themselves do know.

But on this day are people sent on purpose for pure merriment.--*Poor Robin's Almanac* (1790)



The Gardeners' Club

P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005

President

Cherry Thompson, 475-0991
cherrylea@comcast.net

Vice President & Publicity

Ilene Wilson, 724-4609
mygardensup@aol.com

Secretary

April Barclay, 688-7656
AABarclay@aol.com

Treasurer

Sim Gilbert, 475-8162
simgilbert@baymoon.com

Membership

Suzanne Mercado, 609-6230
Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com

Hospitality

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

Newsletter Writer/Editor

Lise Bixler, 457-2089
lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large

Bill Patterson, 479-3729
wilderwill@comcast.net
Pat McVeigh, 475-9357
pmcveigh@baymoon.com
Joanna Hall, 662-8821
jhavelock@sbcglobal.net

Plant Table

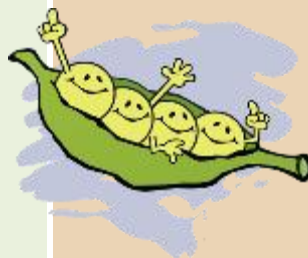
Patty Connole, 335-4134
pattyconnolelrtr@aol.com
2nd position—vacant
3rd position - vacant

Refreshments

Dey Weybright, 426-3028
DEENART@aol.com

Website

Joe Thompson



It's easy-peasy to join our club!

Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to P.O. Box 3025., 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.

Printed on 100% recycled paper



www.thegardenersclub.org