

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

July 2013

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Wow! It is hard to believe that National Ice Cream Month has arrived already. In keeping with tradition, we will celebrate it with our unique Ice Cream Social. What's so unique about it? Well, for one thing, it is a light-hearted competition—we give prizes! Our prizes are always Succulent Sundaes, ice cream cups planted up for winners to take home.

Our judges this year will be April Barclay, Lise Bixler and Guest Judge Joe Thompson. The criteria for prizes is pretty loose—we give prizes for both toppings members bring and for sundaes that are created at the event. At the topping table, we usually award best fresh fruit toppings, best cooked toppings from garden ingredients, best herbal and/or flowery, most unusual, most decadent, most delicious, etc. At the judging table where members present their sundae creations, it is pretty much "Judge's Choice". We've been known to give awards for Most Random, Best Dirt Sundae, Most Patriotic, Most Compost-y, Most Traditional, Most Original, Most Indescribable, etc.

The Club will provide basic ice cream flavors, whipped cream and gummy worms. YOU are invited to bring your favorite toppings—especially if they are from your garden or a farmer's market. Nuts, edible flowers, berries, fruit, herbs, preserves, veggie concoctions, syrups, crumbles, cookies—we encourage your creativity. On the next page you'll find suggestions and recipes for toppings, if you need inspiration. But our past Ice



Ice Cream Social

Thursday, July 11th

7:00

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos

Cream Socials have shown that you members don't need much help to bring the wildest and yummiest ice cream toppings to share.

The monthly meeting and plant table sale will happen before ice cream sundae creation and consumption.



Succulent sundae



Sim's granddaughter Charlotte won a "Best Floral" award



Judge April deems Lupe's sundae "Most Artistic"



"Prettiest"



Melita has won two years running, once for "Most Creative" and here for "Architectural Excellence" for her strategic use of vanilla wafers.



"Most Earthy"



Photo: "Game of Cones" ice cream shop competition (San Francisco & New York)

Whether you like traditional ice cream toppings, or want to adventure into new texture and taste ideas, here are some ideas and recipes.

Rosemary Spiced Pecans

- 3 cups pecan halves
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange pecans on a rimmed baking sheet and toast until fragrant, about 10 minutes; transfer to a medium bowl. Meanwhile, mix rosemary, cayenne and salt in a small bowl. Melt butter and brown sugar together in a small saucepan set over medium-high heat or in the microwave. Drizzle mixture over nuts and stir to coat well. Sprinkle with rosemary mixture and toss to coat. *Makes 3 cups of buttery, toasty, herby nuts.*



Found this flighty butterfly on top of a cupcake at bettycrocker.com, but wouldn't it be just as at home perched on an ice cream sundae? Looks like it is made out of broken cookies and various candies.

There are a variety of recipes for candied or sugared basil leaves—some just dipped in egg white, coated with fine sugar and left to dry—some baked for a longish time (45 minutes). Try this recipe from Harvard Common Press:

Candied Basil

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons water
- 16 fresh basil leaves, washed and thoroughly dried

Preheat oven to 175°F. Combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan over low heat until the sugar has completely dissolved. Remove from the heat and let cool so that it's just warm (not hot, or the basil will discolor). Soak the basil leaves in the syrup for 5 minutes.

Remove the leaves from the syrup and place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 10 minutes, or until crystallized.

MORE TOPPINGS

- Candy-coated sunflower seeds
- Crushed candy canes
- Malted milk powder
- Chopped candy bars
- Crumbled toffee or Almond Roca
- Crumbled cookies, from Oreos to shortbread and meringues
- Fresh fruit (berries, bananas, stone fruits and tropical fruits)
- Sprinkles
- Toasted coconut
- Chopped toasted nuts
- Diced crystallized ginger
- Brandied cherries
- Cheesecake bits
- Crushed peanut butter pretzels
- Candied mint
- Sea salt, pepper, cayenne
- Crumbled brownies
- Sautéed apples or pears
- Candied diced roasted squash
- Candied bacon
- Candied orange peel
- (Cinnamon- or chile-spiked fudge sauce
- Peppermint fudge sauce
- Malted milk chocolate sauce
- Spiced caramel sauce; dulce de leche
- Espresso
- Lemon curd
- Marshmallow cream
- Peanut butter
- Maple syrup
- Pomegranate molasses
- Olive oil
- Buttered, caramel or plain popcorn

Grilled Fresh Figs

Recipe by Tony Rosenfeld from *Fine Cooking*



- 12 to 16 fresh Black Mission figs, stemmed and halved lengthwise
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 to 2 Tbs. aged balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbs. granulated sugar

1-1/2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme

About 1/2 cup honey

5 large mint leaves, thinly sliced (optional)

Heat gas grill to medium low or prepare a low charcoal fire. Set the figs cut side down on a baking sheet; brush rounded side with oil. Flip; brush the cut sides of the figs with the balsamic vinegar. In small bowl, toss sugar with thyme, sprinkle over the figs. Set figs on grill, cut side facing up. Cover grill and cook until the sugary tops start to bubble and brown and the bottoms of the figs get light grill marks (without burning), 5 to 8 minutes. Drizzle with the honey and sprinkle with the mint, if using.

Awesome! Easy Candy Flower Sundae Toppers

Buy flat jelly candies. Cut them up like the picture on the left. Put them together like the picture on the right.





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July Board Meeting

We've visited some stupendous gardens at our spring and summer meetings this year, leaving inspired and full of new ideas. We enjoy it when non-Board members join us; you are welcome. The next meeting will be on Monday, July 22nd at the home of Melita Israel. Those of you who come to our monthly meetings regularly will know Melita as the person who always brings wondrous bouquets to the blossom table—we are eager to see where those flowers and shrubs come from. Melita is a dancer, artist and Master Gardener. The still life below is one of her paintings.

Melita's address is 1970 Cox Road, Aptos. We will begin our tour of her garden at 6:00 p.m.



Rhubarb Madness

You can support Public Radio by buying this book. Fans of "A Prairie Home Companion" know that mama's little baby loves rhubarb, rhubarb. Published in Minnesota, where people often have more rhubarb than they can handle, this cookbook features more than 200 recipes for the versatile summer treat, from Rhubarb Honey Muffins to Rhubarb Salsa, Strawberry-Rhubarb Lemonade, and that old standby, Rhubarb Pork Chop Casserole.

Softcover, 246 pages, spiral-bound. Comes with two red plaid kitchen towels—cheery, practical, and 100% cotton. Go to Pretty Good Goods to order (<http://www.prettygoodgoods.org/products/4266>).

Workshop: Compost, Vermiculture & Soil Fertility

Saturday, July 27, 2013

2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

\$49 PLUS small materials fee of \$10



Using your own home-made compost is the single best thing you can do to increase your garden's fertility, ward off pests, and keep diseases at a minimum. Worm castings have also been shown to be a similarly powerful tool. Great gardeners will have both an active compost bin and worm bin up and running at all times. They know the benefits to their garden are enormous. Using your own compost and worm castings will also drastically cut down on the amount of soil amendments, fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides that an organic gardener usually needs to purchase to maintain their vegetable plot.

Come to Love Apple Farm and learn what these benefits are, how to properly build a compost pile (we build one ourselves during class), learn how to harvest it and use it on your garden.



The second half of the workshop is devoted to vermiculture: how to start, maintain, and use to full benefit a proper worm bin. See how we feed our worms, harvest the castings, and even make a fabulous worm tea for use as a supplemental fertilizer. **Students will take home a worm bin, complete with starter worms!**

ALL CLASSES ARE HELD RAIN OR SHINE!

ALL CLASSES REQUIRE ADVANCE REGISTRATION, EVEN FOR GIFT CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

Workshop will be held on the farm at 2317 Vine Hill Road, Santa Cruz, CA. To register, email loveapplefarms@gmail.com or call (831) 588-

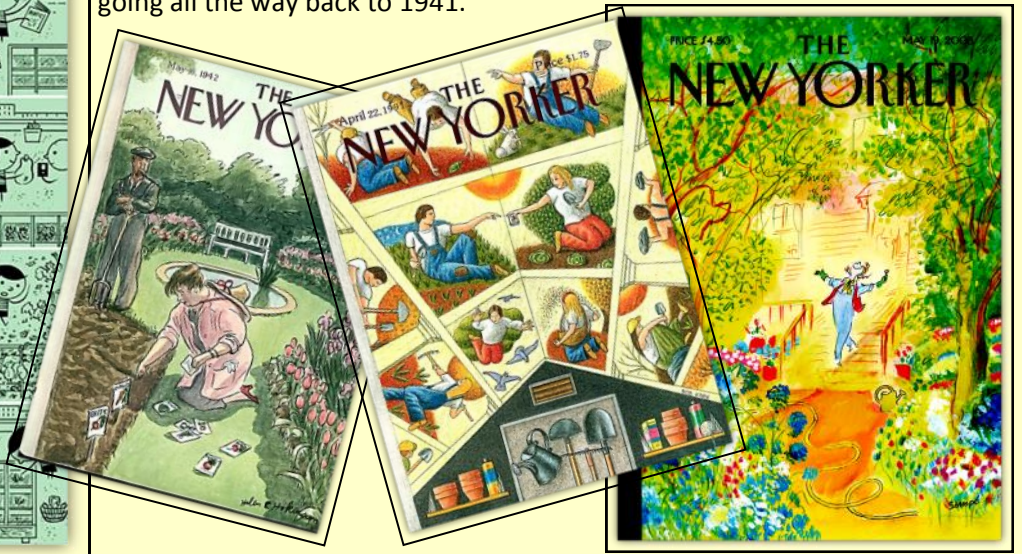
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For healthy, strong pants, try watering them and spraying their foliage with compost tea. Mix a shovelful of compost in a 5-gallon bucket of water or a bucketful of compost in a 45-gallon barrel of water and let it sit for a week or so. Dilute it until it looks like weak tea, and then use it. You can do the same thing with worm compost. I've also done a variation with what I call "thistle soup" - I yank out thistles roots and all, put in a container of water and cover to keep out insects, and wait until it turns into a mucky greenish thick fluid. Then I dilute the liquid and use as above, throwing the thistle residue on my compost pile.



It is worth getting a copy of the July 1st issue of *The New Yorker* for the garden cover alone, created by artist Ivan Brunetti. An added treat is going online to <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2013/06/cover-story-urban-bliss-ivan-brunetti.html?printable=true¤tPage=all> for a slide show of past *New Yorker* covers that celebrate the joys of gardening, going all the way back to 1941.



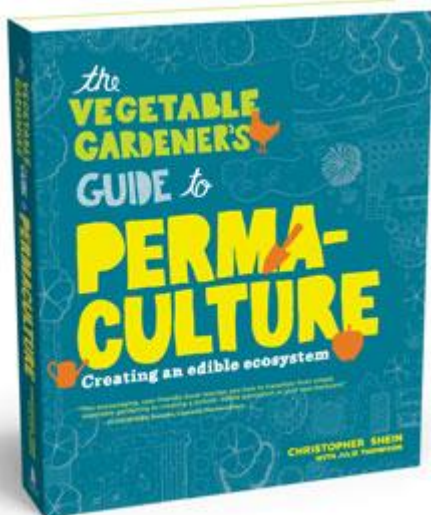
Speaker to Address Permaculture

Christopher Shein, author of the newly published [The Vegetable Gardener's Guide to Permaculture: Creating an Edible Ecosystem](#), will give a talk and book signing from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, July 8 at the new Common Ground Center at UC Santa Cruz's Kresge College.

Shein has started dozens of community, school and market gardens, and currently teaches permaculture at Merritt Community College in Oakland. He attended UCSC, where he was introduced to agroecology through the Alan Chadwick Garden and helped launch BASIL (Bay Area Seed Interchange Library). Shein owns Wildheart Gardens in Berkeley, a permaculture landscape business that designs and builds sustainable gardens.

The free event, which will be held in Seminar Room #159, is open to the public. Parking is \$3 in the Core West Parking Garage. Kresge College is on the UCSC campus at 600 Kresge Court. The Common Ground Center's mission is Common Ground Center is on a mission to create cultural change for social justice, environmental regeneration, and economic viability. For details, visit kresge.ucsc.edu/commonground.

Timber Press, who published Shein's book, says:



"Once a fringe topic, permaculture is moving to the mainstream. Gardeners who are ready to take their organic gardening to the next level are discovering the wisdom of a simple system that emphasizes the idea that by taking care of the earth, the earth takes care of you.

[The Vegetable Gardener's Guide to Permaculture](#) teaches gardeners of every skill level — with any size space — how to live in harmony with both nature and neighbors to produce and share an abundant food supply with minimal effort. Permaculture teacher Christopher Shein highlights everything you need to know to start living off the land lightly, including how to create rich, healthy, and low-cost soil; blend a functional food garden and decorative landscape; share the bounty with others; and much more.

This inspiring, easy-to-follow, information-packed, practical guide will help you transform your garden into a food forest that feeds you for years to come."



CALIFORNIA

Seniors helping seniors

GREY BEARS

We have quite a few Gardeners' Club members who volunteer for California Grey Bears, one of the most efficient food distribution and recycling nonprofits in the country. Their recycling center at 2710 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz, is amazing—you can pick up compost there for “dirt cheap”, and even recycle the plastic garden pots that

have been piling up in your yard (remembering, though, that The Arboretum will take the one-gallon size for reuse, and Native Revival Nursery in Aptos will take most sizes if you drop them off during their operating hours). Grey Bears also has a worm composting demonstration area behind the main office. If you're interested in setting up your own home recycling with worms, or would like some of their worms to get started, vermiculture expert Paul McGillicuddy is there every Friday, 9:30-10:30am. You can email Paul for more information, teacherpaul10@gmail.com.

There is always something new and exciting happening at the Grey Bears site—they now have a new garden! A drought tolerant demonstration garden of California natives – from succulents to salvias – has been planted. Special thanks to the community service workers who amended the garden with Grey Bears generated compost, Jan Shaw for her landscaping design, her husband Peter who donated the plants from Cabrillo College's Horticulture Department, Marcia Meyer who engineered it all, and Brown Bag Coordinator David Fuentest for digging. May the growing begin!



A few months ago Marcia Meyer and I visited re-purposing heaven, the non-profit Building REsources in San Francisco (www.buildingresources.org), to stock up on recycled tumbled glass to use as top dressing “bling” for our ever-growing potted succulent collections. Marcia thought, “We could make this at Grey Bears!” and wasted no time proposing the project to Executive Director Tim Brattan. Tim consulted with Matthew Levesque, Program Manager for Building REsources and author of Revolutionary Yardscape: Ideas For Repurposing Local Materials to Create Containers, Pathways, Lighting, and More. Voila! Grey Bears' first batch of tumbled art glass is out, available in their

thrift store. It is 100% recycled, made in small batches, has no sharp edges and the color will never fade or have to be replaced. It is perfect for landscape, floral, and decorative applications—once you see it, you will see the myriad possibilities. Used as a mulch, it's a natural deterrent to snails and slugs, helps conserve water and maintains consistent soil temperature. The best part is the price: just \$2/pound! There will be more colors for your summer projects soon.

Interested in becoming a volunteer at Grey Bears, or learning more about their programs and services? Go to <http://www.greybears.org> or call 479-1055.



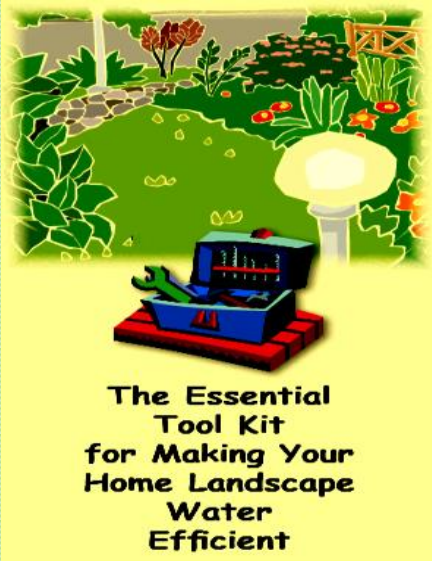
Marcia with fellow volunteer Heidi Ambiel



Smart Watering Month

Last week it rained and we didn't have to water our gardens at all; as I write this, we are in the midst of a heat wave. Those of us who don't have watering systems in place are either desperately watering by hand or watching our plants wilt in the heat. One of the biggest problems during these dog days of summer is the dry soil. Watering our lawns and plants is

tough because the water simply runs off instead of getting to the roots. Soaker hoses are your most affordable option. They let water drip out along the length of them to get a slow and deep soaking. Soaker hoses set up on timers would be a great for the plants and for me during the summer; I bought the soaker hoses months ago but haven't had the time to set them up—aaargh! Use other water saving equipment, e.g. rain or soil-moisture sensors, MP rotator nozzles, weather-based controllers, and low-volume irrigation (drip systems, including soaker hoses, and microsprayers). Here are some more tips for making your landscape more water efficient from the California Department of Water Resources.



The Essential Tool Kit for Making Your Home Landscape Water Efficient



Gardening Books: Sunset Western Gardening Book and Sunset Western Landscaping Book are helpful guides for selecting the right plants for your landscape. Bring them plant-shopping with you so you can choose plants according to climate, water needs, sun exposure, and plant size.



Water Pressure Gauge: When building a new sprinkler system or maintaining an existing system, an inexpensive water



pressure gauge can be used to check each faucet. Choose irrigation heads that will operate with the pressure you have; irrigation heads are labeled with the optimum pressure range. If the pressure is too low, reduce the number of heads on each valve (you may need to break up the system and add more valves) and run the zones one at a time. Low pressure causes uneven coverage and dry spots. If the pressure is too high to operate the system correctly, a pressure regulator is required. Excessive pressure damages irrigation equipment and wastes water by misting and

uneven coverage. Drip irrigation systems always need pressure regulation to operate correctly.



Mulch, Compost and Balanced Fertilizers:

These will help plants stay healthy and save water. Compost and mulch are available by bag or truckload or make your own from grass clippings and leaves. If you use fertilizer, choose slow-release fertilizers with balanced nutrients such as 5-7-2, 4-8-4 or 10-10-10.



High Nitrogen mixtures (the first number in the formula may be 24, 28 or 32) may burn your plants and cause fast growth that is attractive to pests. Apply fertilizers carefully; excess fertilizers may enter storm drains and creeks in rainwater or irrigation runoff.

Sprinkler Timer Manual: Become familiar with the timer's features and how to adjust the timer with the seasons. If you cannot find the manual, download it off the web.

Mower: Use a lawn mower with a mulching blade and grasscycle the clippings. If the clippings are too long to leave on the lawn, compost them. Keep the mower tuned up and the blade sharp. Consider buying an electric mower.

Screwdrivers: Small screwdrivers can adjust sprinklers. Large screwdrivers can

be used to determine soil moisture depth. Simply push a large screwdriver into the soil; dry soil will be difficult to push through. If the soil has moisture, the plants may not need water yet.

Computer: Visit the Department of Water Resources, Office of Water Use Efficiency website: www.water.ca.gov/

WaterUseEfficiency/landscape. You will find information about conservation programs, publications, and links to other informational sites. The Save Our Water website is a statewide public education program that offers ideas for conserving water: www.saveourh2o.org. Use the Save Our Water rebate finder. Your local water supplier may also have a website.



Broom: Use brooms to sweep instead of rinsing pavement.



Timer: Use a kitchen timer as a reminder to turn off the water when using a hoseend sprinkler. There is also a wide range of battery or manual wind-up timers that go right on the faucet and garden hose.



Tuna Cans and Clock: To find out how long to run your sprinkler system, you can use several cans or straight sided containers, of equal size. Place them in a grid pattern between sprinklers on the lawn. Run the sprinklers for 15 minutes. With



a ruler, measure the depth of water in each of the cans. Add up the depths and divide the total by the number of cans. This is the average depth. Multiply the average by four to get the precipitation rate in inches of water per hour from the sprinklers. Ask your local water agency how many inches of water are required per week for your lawn. Once you know how much water is being put out by your system, your water agency should be able to help you determine a schedule to water your lawn in your area.

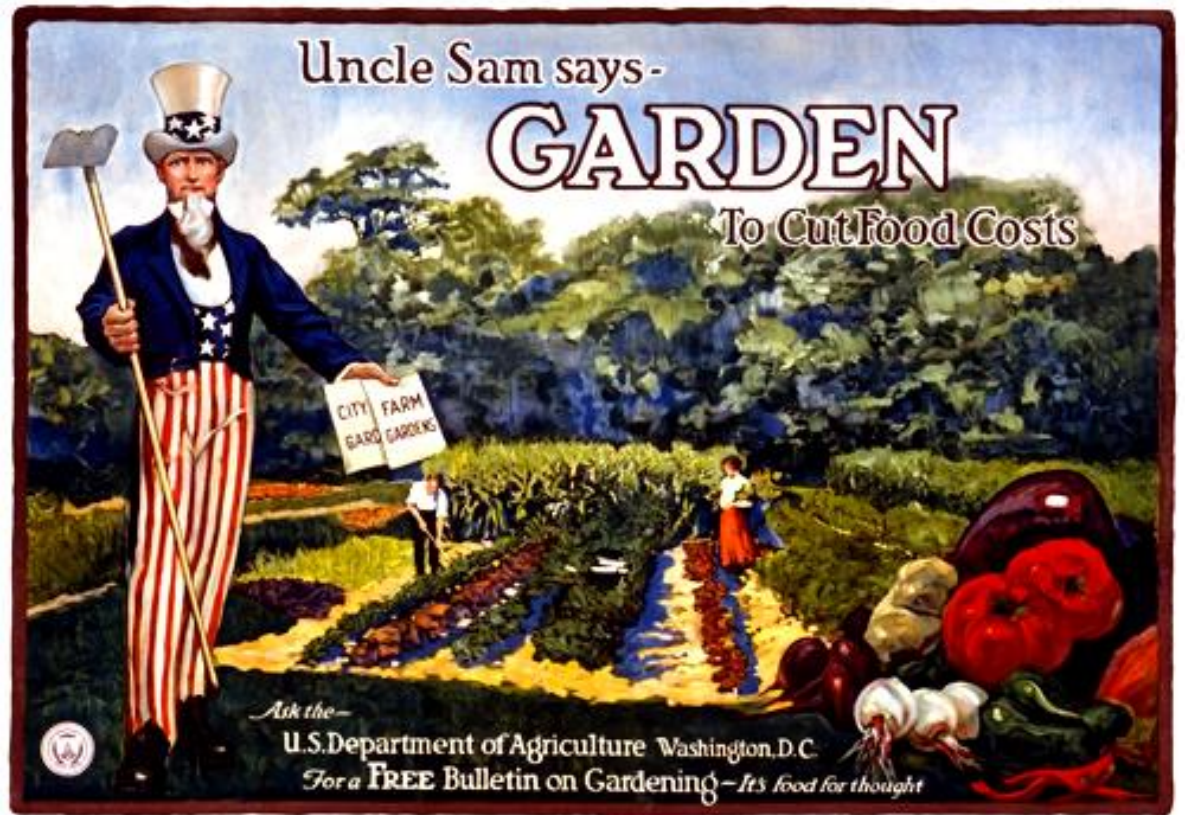
Another excuse
to garden
— it's
patriotic.

Happy 4th of
July!

"I have no need for
fireworks – my
garden celebrates
for me."

—Irene Virag

http://www.irenevirag.com/media/cur_cal.pdf



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