

# The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

June 2013

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## Trees of Santa Cruz County



Red Horse Chestnut



Big Leaf Maple

## A Presentation by Peter Shaw

Peter Shaw, Instructor and Program Chair of the Cabrillo Horticulture Department, will be our speaker this month. Peter says, "I am very much a tree guy, especially old large ones that occupy public spaces". Santa Cruz County has a wide assortment of tree species grown and some great examples located in public spaces. Peter has started a project to inventory the diverse tree canopy and to inform the community of the trees that currently exist in our urban forest. He has started a blog, <http://treesofsantacruzcounty.blogspot.com/>. Trees on the blog are covered like a field guide but with extensive commentary by Peter. There are photographs of specimen trees and close-ups of their flowers, leaves, fruit, seeds, cones and more. Visit the blog and you'll be amazed at how much you will learn.



Peter is seeking help looking for excellent examples of tree specimens. At the meeting, you can nominate your favorite(s) and tell him about the best local trees you have seen. He hopes in the future to develop educational walking tours to see trees.

**Thursday, June 13th, 7:00 p.m.**

**Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos**

**Thank you to Lupe Allen for snack & Ellen Treen for dessert**

The June Board meeting will be held on June 24th at the home and garden of Robynn and Jerry Walters, 4000 Greenbale Lane, Soquel. We're excited to see their garden. You don't have to be a member of the Board to join us. The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m.



## selecting, Growing and Arranging Cut Flowers -- Sunday, June 9th



Join Zoe Hitchner of Everett Family Farm and Orin Martin, manager of the Alan Chadwick Garden, to learn how to select, grow and arrange cut flowers from your garden to create beautiful bouquets. The workshop will include both lectures and hands-on practice. Topics will include discussions and demonstrations of organic growing methods, recommended tools, how and when to properly harvest and handle cut flowers, how to extend their "vase life" and discussion of varieties that perform best in the Monterey Bay region's growing conditions. Hitchner will demonstrate the basic techniques and principles used to create beautiful bouquets and workshop participants will practice their own bouquet-making skills. This day-long workshop takes place at the Alan Chadwick Garden at UC Santa Cruz. The workshop begins at 9:30 am and will run until 4 pm. Please plan to bring a lunch, water, and gardening gloves (if you use them). Snacks, coffee and tea will be available.



Cost is \$85 for the general public, \$75 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members. Preregistration is required. Purchase tickets online using this site, or send a check made payable to UC Regents to: CASFS/UCSC Farm, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064. Attn: Cut Flower Workshop. For more information, call 831.459-3240 or email [casfs@ucsc.edu](mailto:casfs@ucsc.edu).



## Energize Your Garden With Feng Shui

June 8th, 10am-12, \$25, at Native Revival Nursery, 2600 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos

Pre-registration is required. Taught by Madhu Mati Brodkey, Black Tantric Buddhist and Master Feng Shui Consultant.

This workshop focuses on designing a garden to be in harmony with the local environment—both seen and unseen. Participants will learn how to adjust the energy of your garden to support good health, abundance and balance in your life; how to be in tune with their natural surroundings and work in concert with nature and the earth's energies without making excessive demands on the environment; how to map your garden to identify the different energy centers of your garden that effect prosperity, enhance relationships and more using Feng Shui methods; suggestions for supporting overall vitality and abundance. For more information go to [www.nativerevival.com](http://www.nativerevival.com) or call 684-1811.

## The Threat to Birds That No One is Talking About



We know that pesticides are probably bad news for honeybees and other pollinators, as growing research implies. But they are also a threat to birds and the insects they feed on.

Club member Elliot Dembner alerted us to a blog story by Tom Philpott, the food and ag blogger for [Mother Jones](http://www.motherjones.com). Here's an excerpt:

"Once again this spring, farmers will begin planting some 140 million acres—a land mass roughly equal to the combined footprints of California and Washington state—with seeds treated with a class of pesticides called neonicotinoids.

...Bees aren't the only iconic springtime creature threatened by the ubiquitous pesticide, whose biggest makers are the European giants Dow and Syngenta. It turns out that birds are too, according to an alarming new analysis."



To read more about the scary findings, go to <http://www.motherjones.com/tom-philpott/2013/03/not-just-bees-bayers-pesticide-may-harm-birds-too>. Although I try to garden organically and to avoid pesticides, I've been known to succumb to all-in-one systemic rose products when my roses are besieged by both fungal and insect infestations. This story strengthened my resolve to find other ways to take care of them, and to avoid buying anything with chemical pesticides in it.

Tom Philpott is the cofounder of [Maverick Farms](http://maverickfarms.com/) (<http://maverickfarms.com/>), a center for sustainable food education in Valle Crucis, North Carolina. He was formerly a columnist and editor for the online environmental site *Grist*. To read his blog and articles, go to <http://www.motherjones.com/authors/tom-philpott>.



# 2013 Home Gardening Boot Camp

Monterey Bay Master Gardeners invite you to the 3rd Annual Boot Camp! Classes are filling up—register soon!

Boot Camp is a day of seminar-style education for the basic and advanced home gardener taught by experts in horticulture. **Pre-Registration is Required** and classes are first come first served. Please indicate your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices for each

session. Register Online at <http://mbmg.org/participate/mbmg-boot-camp/> or contact Barbara Olsen at (831) 763-8007 or [bootcamp@mbmgs.org](mailto:bootcamp@mbmgs.org).

Many of the most popular classes and instructors from previous years will return, including propagation, pruning,



**Saturday June 15, 2013**  
**8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**  
**Cabrillo College Horticulture Dept.**  
**6500 Soquel Dr., Aptos**

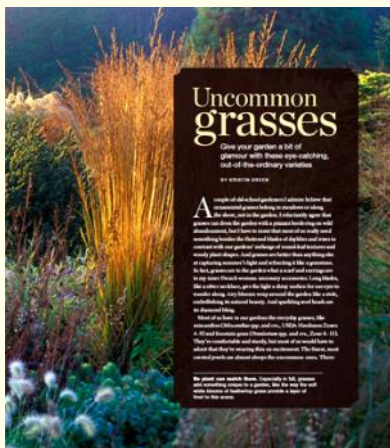
composting, and more. There will be several new Integrated Pest Management (IPM) classes. Other new offerings include edible landscaping classes, and cooking from the garden with Joe Schultz (of India Joze restaurant).

The Keynote Address will be **Garden Myths and Legends: The Science Behind Gardening in the Monterey Bay Area**, given by UC Cooperative Extension Farm/Master Gardener Advisor Steve Tjosvold.

Bring your own or purchase lunch from the Cruz'n Gourmet Catering Truck (food from around the world) and enjoy a view of the Monterey Bay from the Cabrillo Horticulture Center terrace or stroll around the sage garden.

After class, stick around for the silent auction and raffle with loads of garden items, plants, gift cards and more. Event proceeds help support MBMG educational activities and are shared with Cabrillo Horticulture Department.

## FREE Publication from Fine Gardening!



You may be thinking of nothing but tomatoes and glads right now, but remember to get your grasses in the ground too! See the best selections in this free article download sponsored by Santa Rosa Gardens. All you need to do is sign up with an email address.

[http://www.finegardening.com/downloads/uncommon-grasses-pdf-download?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=eletter&utm\\_content=fg\\_eletter&utm\\_campaign=fine-gardening-eletter](http://www.finegardening.com/downloads/uncommon-grasses-pdf-download?utm_source=email&utm_medium=eletter&utm_content=fg_eletter&utm_campaign=fine-gardening-eletter)



## Sticky Ginger Candied Rhubarb Topping

Our Ice Cream Social is a whole month away, but if you've got rhubarb growing in your garden NOW you might want to plan ahead by trying this unusual recipe, from Mother Earth News.

**Ingredients:** Rhubarb; Water (about 1/4 cup for every two stalks of rhubarb); Raw sugar (1 tbsp per two stalks) (you can substitute honey or agave syrup) ; Fresh ginger, grated (1 tbsp per two stalks)

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cut rhubarb into 1-inch pieces, plus 1 or 2 longer pieces for an attractive garnish. Then spread the pieces out one-layer deep in a baking dish.
- Pour water over rhubarb pieces until about halfway submerged, then sprinkle ginger and sugar evenly over the top.
- Bake for about 30 minutes, until quite soft, turning a couple of times during baking.

Spoon this warm or chilled over ice cream, shortbread, pound cake or other goodies. If you'd like it smoother, run it through a food processor.





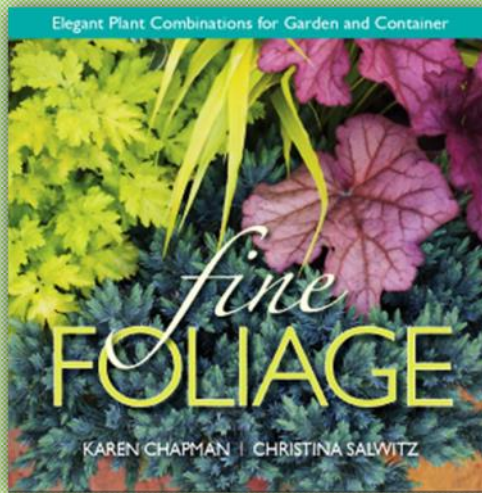
"Unacceptable Behavior" by Kenny Farrell

## Sculpture IS Begins June 1st!

It's back! After skipping a year, Sierra Azul is bringing back its fantastic sculpture show. This is their 7th show partnered with the Pajaro Valley Arts Council (PVAC).

Fifty local and other California artists will be presenting over 100 outdoor sculptural works of art in the garden and nursery.

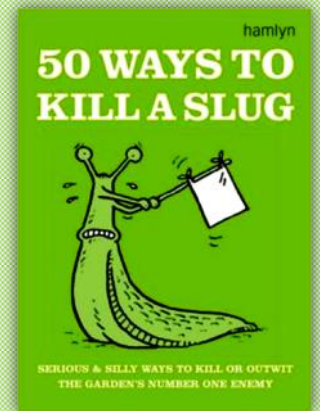
Most of the pieces will be for sale throughout the event which ends October 31st. Please come and visit over the next 5 months and pass the word along to your family and friends. This unique show in our community is well worth seeing! Picnic tables with umbrellas provide a great place to relax and have your lunch or a snack when you visit. And as always their wonderful plants are for sale at the nursery.



It's a book; it's a blog; it's inspirational.

Foliage comes in a mind-boggling variety of color, shape and growth habit. But which plants complement each other to add style and energy to a garden or patio setting? Fine Foliage gives the home gardener 60+ examples of plant combinations that work for every purpose, whether in sun or shade, path or meadow, porch or poolside. Each plant combination is introduced with full page on-site photograph and a "Why This Works" text, accompanied by individual close-up photos and quick-tip info about care, site, soil, zone and season: a complete "recipe" that even a beginner gardener can follow. Fine Foliage brings elegant, expert design and style to the garden and patio. There are full color photographs throughout; there's an index.

To accompany the book, authors Karen Chapman and Christina Salwitz have a blog focused on foliage based design. Visit and subscribe at <http://fine-foliage.com/>. Both the book and the blog are great tools to help you think differently about plants, giving consideration to texture and contrast in exciting ways.



Serious and silly ways to kill or outwit one of the garden's biggest enemies

Take a stand against slugs with 50 alternative, organic, natural, chemical and humane solutions to slug problems. Trick, flick and frighten slugs out of your garden, leaving you with pest-free plants. Stop slugs in their tracks and make their slimy trails a thing of the past. Ranging from the totally impractical to more tried and tested methods of slugicide, this book will have gardeners crying tears of laughter. This little book is a great present for all gardeners and may potentially be worth its weight in gold. Stop slugs in their tracks and make slimy trails a thing of the past, thanks to author Sarah Ford.



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"...the most beautiful plant I've ever seen..."

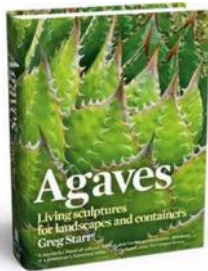
I love you more  
than agave



## Agave Love

By Lise Bixler

As do most of my "enthusiasms", this one started innocently enough. Last December I received an announcement from Timber Press about a new publication, Agaves: Living Sculptures for Landscapes and Containers by Greg Starr.



"Gardeners and garden designers are having a love affair with agaves. It's easy to see why—they're low maintenance, drought-tolerant, and strikingly sculptural, with an astounding range of form and color. Many species are strikingly variegated, and some have contrasting ornamental spines on the edges of their leaves. Fabulous for container gardening or in-the-ground culture, they combine versatility with easy growability."

Of course, I had to order the book to be able to review it for you readers. Starr profiles 75 species, with additional cultivars and hybrids, best suited to gardens and landscapes. The number of profiles is just a taste—but since there are over 200 species, a more comprehensive tome would be too heavy to carry. Each plant entry includes a detailed description of the plant, along with its cultural

requirements, including hardiness, sun exposure, water needs, soil requirements, and methods of propagation. Agaves can change dramatically as they age and this comprehensive guide includes photos showing each species from youth to maturity, a very useful feature.

I don't have a whole lot more to say about the book, other than after it arrived, my agave lust went out of control. Visiting my mother in the San Fernando Valley, I found a nursery specializing in bargain agaves\* and bought over a dozen species.

A couple of years ago, when I heard this song performed by the Goddess Flora Chorus and Deadheading Society\*\* of Portland, Oregon, I didn't understand it, but now I do:

**Agave!** (*Sung to the tune of "Maria!" from West Side Story*)

The most beautiful plant I've ever seen...  
Agave, Agave, Agave, Agave, Agave!  
And the cost of this plant is quite obscene...  
Agave, Agave, Agave, Agave, Agave!  
Agave!  
I just met a plant named Agave,  
And suddenly I've found  
There's gravel all around  
My house.  
Agave!  
I just keep on planting Agave,  
We have a drought, you know,  
And nothing else will grow  
Out there!  
Agave, with its thorns it keeps  
children from playing,  
And those spines will stop small  
dogs from straying.  
Agave, I'll never stop planting  
Agave!  
The most beautiful plant I've ever  
seen...  
Agave!

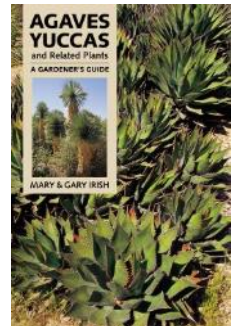
(Lyrics by Linda Beutler)

I think it was the Agave 'Blue Glow' I purchased at Far West Nursery that sent me over the edge.

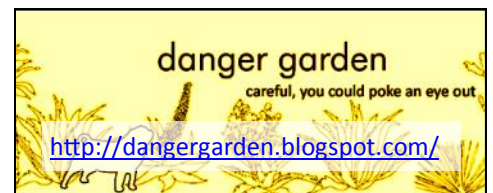


A. 'Blue Glow'

As my agave collection grew, I found I needed greater help with identification. I purchased a second Timber Press book, Agaves, Yuccas, and Related Plants: A Gardener's Guide by Mary Irish and Gary Irish, which serves as a more complete reference book.



Most agaves can be easily grown in pots or containers, like this Agave 'victoriae reginae'. This picture is from a blog any serious agave enthusiast will want to visit:



Loree Bohl, who writes Danger Garden, says, "Nice plants are boring – my love is for plants that can hurt you. Agave, yucca, anything with a spike or spur!"

Cont'd.



For those of you who DON'T like the sharp tips of agaves, or who want to protect children or grandchildren, you can cut off the sharp tips with nail clippers (dog nail clippers work on the big spikes).

You can have an entire agave collection in pots, but the landscaping possibilities for agaves planted in the ground are endless, and you can combine them with grasses (my favorite, for the textural contrast) and succulents and salvias and penstemons, and mulch them with rocks or polished glass or gravel. So many creative possibilities. Agaves need good drainage, and the people at Yucca Do Nursery (<http://www.yuccado.com>) have a wonder article on making a dry garden. They recommend planting on top of the existing soil level and using recycled construction material (broken bricks, tiles, and concrete) to raise the planting foundation as high as possible. On top of that they add 2-4" rocks or pea gravel, then a soil mixture of two parts ground pine bark, one part coarse concrete sand, one part pea gravel and a well-balanced organic fertilizer. They say, "When planted high and dry, most desert plants can thrive in areas of high rainfall and low temperatures as far north as Boston."

I'm fighting very hard not to order something from Yucca Do, but I'm afraid it's a losing battle. I need one of their introductions, Agave gentryi 'Jaws' (Jaws Hardy Century Plant).



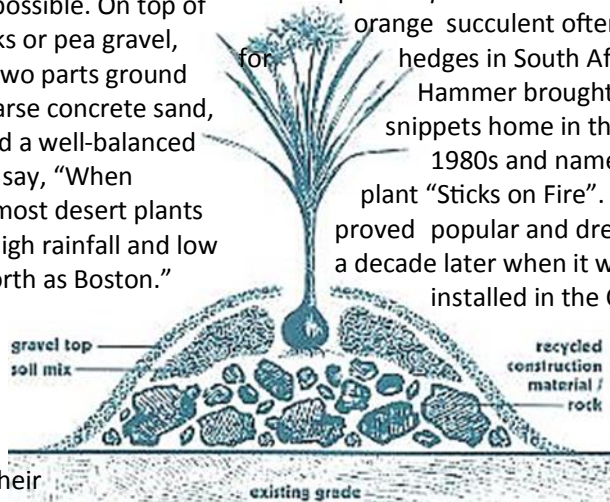
A. gentryi 'Jaws'

The agaves I bought last December have waited patiently in their pots for me to divide and plant them (a testament to how tough they are). I chose ones that had lots of "pups" so I can share them with the Gardeners' Club. I

wear gloves when I'm working on them, not only because of the "owie" factor, but because some of them have agave juice that provokes skin irritation. But if they'll forgive me for neglecting them for so long, I'll forgive them for the extra care they make me take.

\*The nursery I bought my original agaves from is called Worldwide Exotics (<http://www.worldwideexoticsnursery.com>), located in Sylmar, California, and only open on Saturdays. It's owner, Shelley Jennings, who operates the nursery with the help of her daughter, has been collecting, growing and propagating drought tolerant perennials from all over the world for almost 20 years. A lot of the agave stock came from the discoveries of the original owner, Gary Hammer. Gary was a plant explorer focused on mainland Mexico, which at the time had a wealth of undocumented plants. On plant-finding missions, he also traveled to destinations such as Thailand, Greece, New Zealand and South Africa, another country he favored for its plant diversity. He died after being hit by a car in 2011, but the legacy of the plants he discovered and shared lives on. An example is *Euphorbia tirucalli*, a bright

orange succulent often used for hedges in South Africa, Hammer brought two snippets home in the late 1980s and named the plant "Sticks on Fire". It proved popular and drew raves a decade later when it was installed in the Central



Garden at the Getty Center. He helped popularize variegated plants, especially phormiums such as 'Maori Sunrise', Westringia, Australian carex and ornamental grasses, drought-resistant ground covers and more. Shelly inherited Gary's stock. "We found so many new things on our last Australian collecting trip," she says, "I still haven't had a chance to propagate them all." You can read more about intrepid Gary in a Pacific Horticulture article (<http://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/gary-hammer-a-tribute/>).



A. x leopoldii  
"Hammer Time"

\*\*Thanks to the magic of YouTube, you, too, can be entertained by the Portland Hardy Plant Society Goddess Flora and Deadheading Society Chorus singing "Agave!". Just click here, and don't forget to sing along: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8-kTBcAkfw>.



## Gnome-Bashing

While you are watching YouTube videos to take a rest from gardening, here's another one that you shouldn't miss—an IKEA musical video ad. A family is trying to transform their garden with IKEA outdoor stuff, but they face off a growing and somewhat scary army of garden gnomes who'd rather keep things the way they were. The Palace Of Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and The Heritage Singers perform Mötley Crüe's "Time for Change" to set the mood. Be forewarned: British consumers have been complaining the "gnome-bashing" is too violent.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9xROONPy6Y>



# Plan Your Planting for Maximum Nutrients: Nutrient Dense Food

Not all calories are equal, and some things we grow in our gardens have more health benefits than



others. If you've shopped in Whole Foods, you might notice something called ANDI Scores posted for some of their foods. This is a ranking scale, which measures vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and antioxidant capacities in the food on the scale from 1 – 1000. ANDI stands for Aggregate Nutrient Density Index and it was created by Dr. Joel Fuhrman.

ANDI measures vitamin and mineral content, but in addition it takes phytochemical content into consideration. The higher the score, the more nutrients are provided in relation to the caloric content. The foods that contain the most nutrients per calorie are ranked the highest.

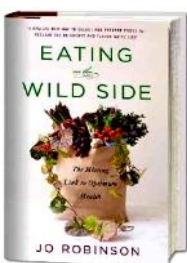
What are phytochemicals? Examples are flavonoids or carotenoids, plant substances that have beneficial health effects. According to an article by Jo Robinson in the Sunday New York Times (*"Breeding the Nutrients Out of Our Food"*) - <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/26/opinion/sunday/breeding-the-nutrition-out-of-our-food>), phytonutrients are "the compounds with the potential to reduce the risk of four of our modern scourges: cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and dementia."

Here are a few ANDI scores to compare : kale—1000; collards/mustard/turnip greens—1000; bok choy—824; broccoli rabe—715; spinach—739; Chinese/Napa cabbage—704; Brussel sprouts—672; arugula—559; cabbage—481; romaine—389; broccoli—376; cauliflower—295; red pepper—366; artichoke—244; carrots—240; asparagus—234; strawberry—212; tomato—164; blueberries—130.

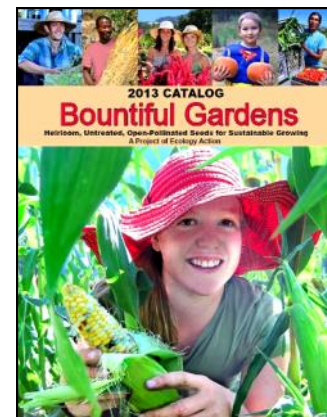
June 13th is "Pull A Weed Day". But some of our weeds, such as dandelions, are pretty nutritious. Robinson's NY Times article reminds us that foraging for greens and herbs used to be, and can still be, is a good way to get dense nutrients. Whether

you add lamb's quarters or purslane or other "weeds" to your diet, or prefer to grow parsley and other superfoods in your garden, you'll be growing a healthier diet.

Robinson, who has a great web site called Eat Wild (<http://www.eatwild.com/jo.html>) has a few more suggestions. Grow green onions (scallions) and use them instead of regular onions. She says, "They resemble wild onions and are just as good for you. Remarkably, they have more than five times more phytonutrients than many common onions do. The green portions of scallions are more nutritious than the white bulbs, so use the entire plant". She also suggests experimenting with using large quantities of mild-tasting fresh herbs in your recipes to bring back missing phytonutrients. For instance, if you are making burgers for a summer BBQ, try adding a cup of mixed chopped Italian parsley and basil to a pound of ground beef or poultry to make "herb-burgers." Look for Robinson's book, *Eating On the Wild Side*, coming out this month, for "the next stage in the food revolution—a radical way to select fruits and vegetables and reclaim the flavor and nutrients we've lost".

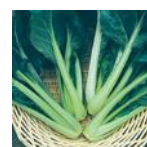


Okay, like me, you may decide to start growing more "superfoods", especially greens and herbs, but what to do in the heat of summer, when bolting spinach gets thrown on the compost heap? Bountiful Gardens (<http://www.bountifulgardens.org/>), seller of untreated open-pollinated non-GMO seed of heirloom quality for vegetables, herbs, flowers, grains, green manures, compost



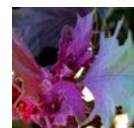
and carbon crops, has a special section on it's web site for heat-tolerant crops

They suggest trying chard, with its deep, drought-tolerant roots. Aztec Spinach and Calaloo (Amaranth, pictured) are both heat-loving and taste like spinach. Malabar Spinach is a vine that loves humid heat, and New Zealand Spinach is adapted to dry heat. Egyptian Spinach is actually a hibiscus, with beautiful creamy yellow flowers. Vitamin



Green (left) is a mustard that is mild enough for salad, and bolt-resistant for summer.

Below are pictures of Magentaspeen Greens (Magenta Lamb's Quarters) (left) and Strawberry blite or Beetberry Greens (right).



You may be interested to know that Bountiful Gardens is a non-profit organization and a project of Ecology Action of the Mid-Peninsula which does garden research and publishes many books, information sheets, and research papers. Ecology Action operates a research mini-farm in Willits, CA and promotes the GROW BIOINTENSIVE(TM) method of food production which teaches people in 130 countries around the world to grow food and build soil with less work, water, and energy by natural methods. Find out more at [www.growbiointensive.org](http://www.growbiointensive.org).



Don't forget to have fun while you are growing nutrient dense food.

*The Magic Onions* ("where the magic of nature and the wonder of childhood collide") (<http://www.themagiconions.com/2010/04/making-cute-garden-markers.html>) shows a great way to make garden markers with old spoons and catalog or magazine photos. Using polyurethane, glue the pictures to the inside of the spoons, then give them another coat of polyurethane to seal and waterproof them.





The summer solstice will be on June 21. Celebrate the day that has the most sunlight of the year!

SLOWER, SWEET JUNE

Slower! sweet June,  
Each step more slow;  
Linger and loiter as you go;  
Linger a little while to dream,  
Or see yourself in yonder stream,  
Fly not across the Summer so.  
Sweet June! be slow.

Slower! sweet June,  
Oh, slower yet;

It is so long since we have met,  
So long ere we shall meet again;  
Let the few days that still remain  
Be longer, longer, as they flow,  
Sweet June! be slow.

Slower! sweet June,  
And slower still...

—Julia H. May



Running out of garden space? Here's a creative solution.  
[5.media.tumblr.com](http://5.media.tumblr.com)



The Gardeners' Club

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