

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

July 2014 Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

Ice Cream Social

Question: When is an ice cream social not an ice cream social?

Answer: When The Gardeners' Club holds its annual super-creative, over-the-top prize-awarding celebration of National Ice Cream Month.

We give prizes for those of you who bring wonderful toppings. Our judges, April Barclay, Marcia Meyer and Lise Bixler, start off with traditional prize categories but usually end up making up their own as unexpected ice cream toppings arrive. We love toppings from the garden—fresh fruit or herbs or flower petals, or cooked syrups or compotes, etc. Sample topping awards are “Best Flower Topping”, “Best Herbal”, “Most Unusual”, “Best Cooked Fruit Topping”, “Best Veggie Topping” and “Most Delicious”. We like toppings that help the creative sundae-makers in our group make “dirt sundaes”—crushed oreo cookies, toasted coconut (makes a great “mulch” on your sundae), etc. We also reward the more traditional toppings—the “Most Decadent” award usually goes to something rich and fudgy, either home-made or purchased. Wafers and cookie straws are welcome—we usually end up giving a prize for the “Most Architectural” sundae.

Our prizes are Succulent Sundaes, succulents planted in various styles of ice cream sundae cups. We'll have a generous amount of them to give away.

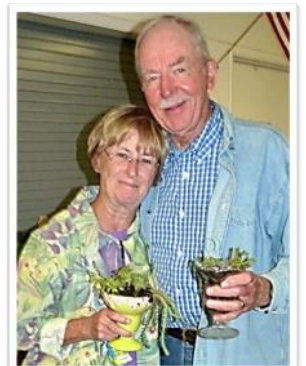
In addition to giving prizes for best toppings, we also give prizes for



best sundaes made at the event. In the past, we've given awards for “Best Dirt Sundae”, “Most Horticulturally Inspired”, “Most Floral”; “Just Peachy”, “Most Patriotic”; “Most Compost-y”, “Nuttiest Sundae”, “Most Beautiful”, “Most Traditional”, “Most Random”, etc. When you show us your sundae and we are impressed but stumped for a category, we are likely to give you a “Judge's Choice” or “Beyond Description” award.

Not interested in prizes? The competition is light-hearted, but if you just want to keep your sundae simple and spend your time socializing and observing, that's just fine. We'll have our plant table and a short business meeting, as usual.

You can bring a friend or a family member to the Social. We'll provide basic ice cream flavors, whipped cream, a few syrups and gummy worms. YOU are invited to bring your favorite toppings—chopped nuts, edible flowers, berries, fruit, herbs, preserves, veggie concoctions, syrups, crumbles, cookies, pastry straws, cones — we encourage your creativity. On the next page you'll find some recipes, if you need inspiration. But our past Ice Cream Socials have shown that you members don't need much help to bring the wildest and yummiest ice cream toppings



Thursday, July 10th, 7:00 p.m.
Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos



Strawberry-Rhubarb Compote with Vanilla & Cardamom

- 4 cups 1/2-inch-thick sliced rhubarb (about 1-1/4 lb.)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar; more to taste
- 6 Tbs. fresh orange juice; more to taste
- 3 Tbs. honey
- 1/4 tsp. plus 1/8 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 small vanilla bean
- 3 cups hulled and thickly sliced strawberries (about 2 pints)

Combine the rhubarb, sugar, orange juice, honey, all the cardamom, and salt in a heavy-bottomed stainless steel 3-qt. saucepan. With a paring knife, slit open the vanilla bean lengthwise, scrape out the seeds with the back of the knife, and add the seeds and the scraped pod to the saucepan.

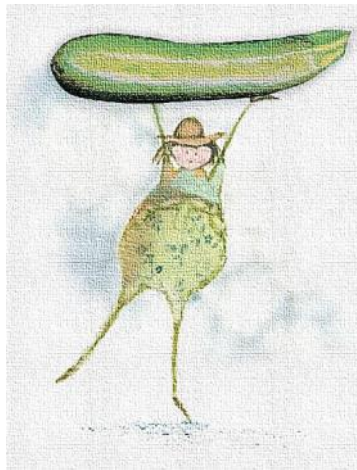
Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat, stirring often. Simmer until the rhubarb releases its juice and becomes tender but still retains its shape, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the strawberries and simmer until they start to soften and the rhubarb breaks down slightly, 1 to 3 minutes.

Pour the mixture into a bowl. Make an ice bath by filling a larger bowl with ice and water. Chill the compote over the ice bath at room temperature, stirring occasionally, until completely cool, 10 to 15 minutes. Discard the vanilla pod. Taste the compote and add more sugar and orange juice, if needed.

(from Fine Cooking magazine)

Board member Joanna Hall is British, and she told us “marrow and ginger” jam is a popular English treat. A marrow is a squash, so if you’ve got a sneaky giant zucchini lurking under the leaves in your patch, here’s a yummy use for it (after you’ve eaten it with ice cream, try it on toast).

This isn’t Joanna’s recipe, but a USA version. We’re sure you can find other variations on the web.



Zucchini Ginger Preserves

- 2 1/2 pounds peeled, seeded very large zucchini, cut into approximately 3/4” cubes
- 1/4 cup strained lemon juice
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 T. minced fresh ginger
- 3 1/2 cups sugar

Mix all ingredients together in a preserving pan and let the mixture stand at room temperature for 24 hours. Most of the sugar will dissolve during this period. Note: use a large pan because the zucchini produces a lot of water that will need to be boiled down later.

Place the pan over medium heat and heat the mixture until the sugar is completely dissolved.

Raise the heat to medium-high and boil the mixture uncovered until it begins to get syrupy; this will probably take about 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir until the boiling stops. Let the preserves cool in the pan; the zucchini chunks will plump as they cool.

Warm Brown Sugar-Fig Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups packed brown packed brown sugar
- 8 Mission Mission or Kadota Kadota or Calimyrna Calimyrna figs , trimmed and quartered
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon fresh lemon juice

Directions

In a 2-quart saucepan, bring brown sugar and 1/2 cup water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to medium and boil until slightly thickened, 7 to 10 minutes.

Remove saucepan from heat and gently stir in figs, butter and lemon juice.

Let cool 15 minutes, or until just warm. Serve over vanilla ice cream. Makes 4 servings.



Photo: Richard Jung

(from Oprah magazine)

July and the Myth of the Hammock

They say that July is the month to lie in your hammock and restfully enjoy your garden. That's a nice thought, but some of us still have lots to do. We can do as many chores as we can in the cool of the morning, including harvesting vegetables and picking flowers. We can continue planting summer vegetables, such as beans, beets, carrots, corn, radish, summer squash and sunflowers, until mid-month. Later in the month, we can put in early crops of winter vegetables.



Most plants don't need fertilizer during the summer, except for roses, camellias, warm-season lawns if you've got them, cymbidiums, summer annuals and plants in containers. If you've got a container plant that keeps wilting in the heat, it probably needs repotting. You can knock the plant out, untangle and trim some of the roots and put it back in the same pot with fresh potting soil. Or move it up to a pot 2-4" wider. Not too much bigger, though; overpotting can cause plants to rot. If your citrus tree leaves are yellowing, that's a sign of chlorosis, and you should feed with trace elements such as iron or zinc.

Weeding and mulching and deadheading flowers are continuous tasks. If invasive plants show up in your garden (yellow star thistle, Scotch broom, Pampas grass, etc.), yank them out and throw them in your green waste can. Autumn-



Raised bed in hammock

blooming bulbs will show up in the nurseries this month, and if you plant them now they'll bloom in the fall. If you have irises, they'll be entering their semi-dormant period, so you can start dividing them if they need it. Usually irises need to be divided every 4 years to keep blooming.

<http://blog.raisedbeds.com/2013/04/08/elevated-gardening/>



www.rhubarb-central.com



Guiding Hands

Every member of our Board of Directors originally joined The Gardeners' Club to learn more about plants, forge friendships with other gardeners and to get plants that were interesting and affordable. None of us set out to be leaders, just to lend a helping hand to a club we love and enjoy. We work hard to make the Club meet the needs of our members, but we are trying to figure out better ways to hear your ideas and suggestions. Over the years our club has changed some. We used to be a small and friendly group with very few funds. We are still friendly, but we are no longer small, and we make enough money to give some support to our community. Who shall we support? What are our priorities?

Every month we have a Board meeting at the garden of one of our members, and every month we invite the rest of you to attend and be a part of our discussions, but hardly anyone ever comes! Not only do you miss seeing wonderful gardens and sharing delicious food, but you miss the opportunity to make your voices heard and to help us grow.

We invite you to join us at our July Board meeting at Lydia Johnson's home and garden, 4747 Cherryvale Avenue, Soquel. Lydia lives right next door to Tiedemann Nurseries—what a treat! Call Lydia (475-0912) if you need directions.

Mon., July 28th, 6 p.m.

Got rhubarb? Got too MUCH rhubarb? Freeze rhubarb so you can enjoy it when it's out of season. Cut stalks into 1-inch pieces; lay them flat on a parchment-lined baking pan.



Freeze for a few hours until firm. Put in freezer bags and store in the freezer for up to a year. Use frozen rhubarb the same way as fresh—in sauces, pies, crisps, etc.



A new, exciting gardening publication is coming this fall, and you can subscribe now (\$25 for 4 issues). It will be a beautiful quarterly full color newspaper and digital magazine that shares the grit & beauty of gardening. The co-founder and editor is Rochelle Greaver, of the popular Leaf Magazine.

“PITH and VIGOR” is thought to be the etymological root of the saying “piss and vinegar”. Where with the later, we mean that something is a bit of a firecracker, PITH + VIGOR meant something a little different. The PITH, being the central cylinder of the stem, is the essential heart of a flowering plant. It is a source of strength, vitality, VIGOR. You can’t logically have the later without the former. But if you did have VIGOR without PITH (as the original was perceived to mean) it would be like strength, with an absence of fear or concern. PITH + VIGOR - believing that nothing can stop you.

The Pith + Vigor site says, “We (the greater gardening community) need a media outlet that shares all the great stories and adventures that are part of an emerging gardening culture in a way that helps build local communities, excites newcomers, and helps nurture and encourage a budding interest in growing and gardening. PITH + VIGOR will be a garden publication that is real and seductive, and it will celebrate and educate those with dirt under their nails. But we won’t take ourselves too seriously; we are also working satirical and humor stories, personal essays, and garden writing that frankly doesn’t look or sound like garden writing. It will be modern and beautiful and local – because all gardening is local..” And it will be a newspaper rather than a magazine because you can recycle it—each issue will include a tip for just that.

www.indiegogo.com/projects/pith-and-vigor-newspaper-and-digital-magazine

UCSC ALAN CHADWICK GARDEN WORKSHOPS

CREATING THE HOME-GROWN BOUQUET: SELECTING, GROWING AND ARRANGING CUT FLOWERS

July 19th, 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Join flower growers Sky DeMuro and Molly Dillingham for a workshop on growing and arranging cut flower bouquets. Learn how to select, grow, harvest and arrange cut flowers from your garden to create beautiful bouquets using organic techniques. The workshop will include both lectures and hands-on practice as you make a bouquet to bring home. Cost: \$40 general admission (pre-registered) or \$50 (at the door); \$30 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members (pre-registered) or \$40 (at the door); \$25 for UCSC students and limited-income (pre-registered) or \$35 (at the door). Cost includes a \$10 materials fee. Location: UCSC Chadwick Garden.

MAKING AND USING COMPOST IN THE HOME GARDEN AND LANDSCAPE

July 12th, 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Compost can do wonders in the garden, from improving soil fertility and structure to conserving the water you apply. On Saturday, July 12, from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, join Orin Martin and Sky DeMuro of the Alan Chadwick Garden to learn how to make and use compost to enhance the health and productivity of your garden and landscape. The workshop includes both a lecture and hands-on practice in building a successful compost pile. Workshop Cost: Cost of the workshop is \$30 general admission (pre-registered) or \$40 (at the door). Discounts for Friends, UCSC students, and limited-income.

SUMMER FRUIT TREE PRUNING

July 26th, 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Summer pruning is one of the best ways to ensure the health and productivity of your fruit trees, and maintain their ideal size and shape. Learn summer pruning techniques from Matthew Sutton, founder of Orchard Keepers and Sky DeMuro of the Chadwick Garden at this lecture and demonstration workshop. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a snack. This workshop takes place at the UCSC Farm. Cost: \$30 general admission (pre-registered) or \$40 (at door). Discount for Friends, students and limited-income.

If you prefer to pre-register for this class by mail (no service charge), please send a check made payable to UC Regents to: Amy Bolton, CASFS, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (Attn: Workshop) Please include your contact information (phone and email) with your check. For directions and more info, please see the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems website at <http://casfs.ucsc.edu/>

Summer Reading

We frequently feature recommended books **about** gardening in this newsletter, but, hey, it's summer—time to give you a list of garden-related fiction to read while on vacation or during afternoons relaxing in the garden. Below are suggestions provided by the Douglas County (Oregon) Library System. Did we miss any good one? Click here to send YOUR recommendations or reviews and we'll print them next month:

lisebixler@sbcglobal.net.

Susan Wittig Albert – China Bayles series; Darling Dahlias series

Sarah Addison Allen – Garden Spells

Reginald Arkell – Old Herbaceous: A Novel of the Garden

Kage Baker – In the Garden of Iden

M.C. Beaton – Agatha Raisin and the Potted Gardener

Elizabeth Buchan – Consider the Lily

Jill Churchill – Mulch Ado About Nothing

A. Carmen Clark – The Maine Mulch Murders

J.M. Coetzee – Life and tTimes of Michael K.

Alisa Craig – The Grub-and-Stakers series

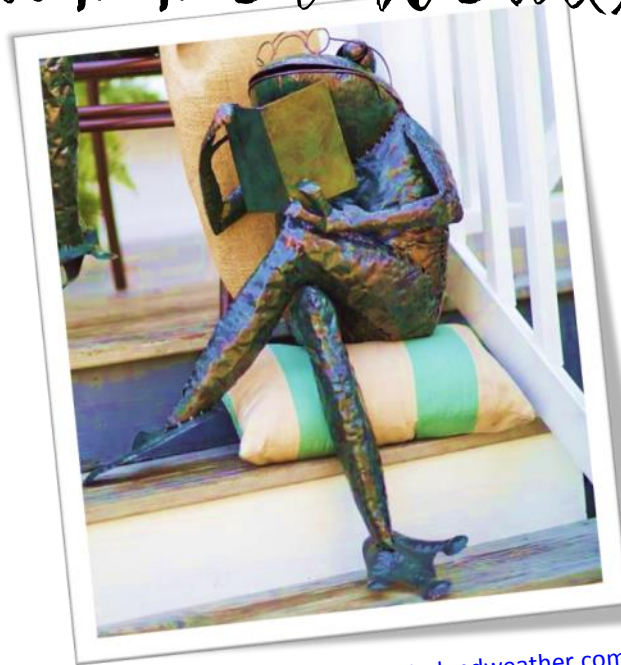
Sandra Dallas – Alice's Tulips

Anthony Eglin – English garden mystery series

Marianne Fredriksson – Two Women

Jan Gleeson – The Serpent in the Garden

Philippa Gregory – Earthly joys series



Small reading frog sculpture: windandweather.com

Peter F. Hamilton – The Nano Flower

Gerald Hammond – Down the Garden Path

Karen Harper – The Thorne Maze

Rosemary Harris – Dirty business mystery series

Janis Harrison – Bretta Solomon series

Patti Hill – Garden gates series

J. Lynn Hinton – Hope Springs series

Naomi Hirahara – Mas Arai series

Maureen Howard – Big as Life: Three Tales for spring

Linda K. Hubalek

Helen Humphreys – The Lost Garden

Prue Leith – A Lovesome Thing

Jo-Ann Mapson – Bad Girl Creek series

Sujata Massey – The Flower Master

Patricia McKillip – Od Magic

L. Joan Medlicott – The Gardens of Covington

Barbara Michaels – The Dancing Floor

Robin Pilcher – An Ocean Apart

Ann Ripley – Gardening mysteries series

Francine Rivers – Leota's Garden

Louise Shaffer – The Ladies of Garrison Gardens

John Sherwood – Celia Grant series

Leslie Silko – Gardens in the Dunes

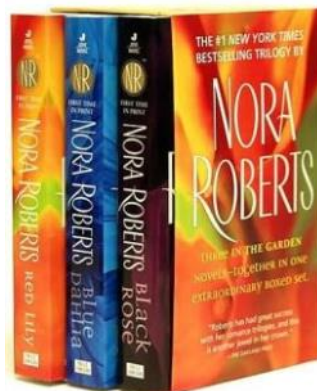
E.L. Swann – Night Gardening

Nancy Thayer - Everlasting

Gail Tsukiyama – The Samurai's Garden

Lori Wick – The English Garden series

Marcia Willett – The Prodigal Wife



Cherry Thompson recommends this series for an entertaining read: the "In the Garden Trilogy" by popular writer Nora Roberts. The author takes you to a historic Southern mansion that houses a gardening business—and a ghostly presence—in this winning trilogy of romance and suspense.

With the assistance from the [UC Davis Extension Land Use and Natural Resource Program](#), the [Water Board Training Academy](#) and the [Storm Water Program](#) have produced a film titled, "Slow the Flow: Make Your Landscape Act More Like a Sponge." This informative and entertaining film brings to life practices and projects that individuals and communities have created to steward our watersheds and slow the flow of storm water, one of the largest contributors of pollution into our waterways.

The half hour high definition documentary features a Sacramento landscaper who shocks his neighbors by pulling out his traditional front yard lawn and cement driveway, and putting in rain gardens, swales, native landscaping, and permeable paving; a suburban community that votes in a bond measure to pay for their school district to move to green multi-benefit watershed landscape practices and low impact development at all their schools; and a non-profit which is helping an urban neighborhood remove concrete and put in sidewalk gardens and median parks. The projects and approaches highlighted are very low-tech, green, habitat-enhancing, and beautiful – making a good argument for kicking back and not raking the leaves or watering the lawn. The film educates viewers on how storm water is created, and the associated problems. While the statistics peppered throughout the film are sobering, Slow The Flow offers solutions that any homeowner or municipality can put into place, and shows that individuals can make a difference.



If you've ever thought, "I should label all of my diverse plants", here's an offer you may not want to pass up.

www.GardenLabelsRUs.com



Paw Paw Everlast Garden Markers are great, and now you can get customized cut and peel labels attached to them. Made of a special weather resistant material, they are extremely durable in all kinds of adverse weather conditions, and they remain legible for years. Garden Labels R Us is running a limited time special, offering 100 custom labels with 100 plates only for \$60.00. Of course you can order fewer.



Life Lab Community Tour

with Executive Director, Don Burgett

Friday, July 25th, 2014
10:00am to noon

Come experience
Life Lab's programs in
our Garden Classroom!

You will:

- ☀ See a Summer Camp in action
- ☀ Observe a Teacher Workshop
- ☀ Hear how our local, regional, and national programs are changing lives.

See you soon!

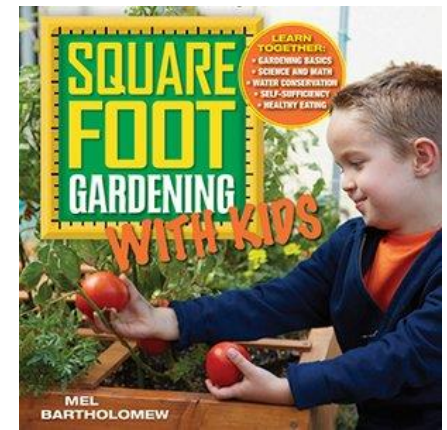
RSVP online at
www.lifelab.org/tour
or contact Emily at
emily@lifelab.org or
(831) 459-3833

Call or email for special parking
and accessibility needs; all are
welcome and accommodated.



1156 High Street,
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
www.lifelab.org

Life Lab is an independent 501(c)(3)
non-profit organization located at the
UCSC Farm.



Square Foot Gardening with Kids

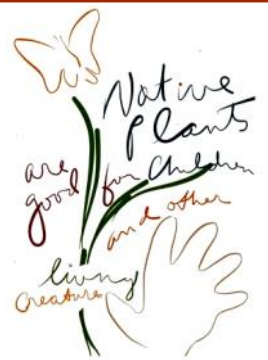
Forty years ago, Mel Bartholomew pioneered a new system for growing vegetables: square-foot gardening. Now, with his newest book Mel tailors his revolutionary growing technique to the littlest of gardeners. A clever resource, this book is a must-have for educators, parents, or anyone that wishes to introduce the world of gardening to children with a fun, proven method. The book includes:

- ☀ Easy, step-by-step guides on how to plan, build, plant, and care for a Kids' Square-Foot Garden
- ☀ Beautiful full color photographs and useful diagrams to help children visualize and learn
- ☀ Gardening tips, tricks, and fun activities that teach important life lessons like healthy nutrition and water conservation
- ☀ Complete Kids' Guide to veggies and herbs – with botanical and growing information for a successful harvest.

“ I was intrigued when I first heard that my local natural history museum was considering handing out packets of seeds to schoolchildren so that they might plant their own backyards with native vegetation to attract butterflies — thus helping bring back butterfly migration routes. There was something enchanting about this plan — the idea of entering intimate participation in the life currents of the world, through the modest doorway of a suburban backyard or window box in an inner city...

...gardening has taken on a role that transcends the needs of the gardener. Like it or not, gardeners have become important layers in the management of our nation's wildlife. It is now in the power of individual gardeners to do something that we all dream of doing: to 'make a difference'.

—Richard Louv.



Read more of Louv's post, including a review of the Doug Tallamy's book "[Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens.](http://blog.childrenandnature.org/2014/05/26/the-backyard-revolution/)" , at <http://blog.childrenandnature.org/2014/05/26/the-backyard-revolution/>.



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www.thegardenersclub.org

Printed on 100% recycled paper



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, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos.

