

# The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

April 2014

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## Infinite Possibilities - A Succulent & Cactus Collector Share His Tips

The speaker for April is Stan Verkler. He is the past President of the Monterey Bay Area Cactus and Succulent Society. He has a collection of hundreds of cacti and succulents from all over the world. He will bring and talk about his favorite succulents, and discuss care, propagation and soil mixtures. You may also purchase your favorite varieties.

Stan has had a large interest in growing these plants for the past 30 years, mainly as a hobby. He first saw cactus and Joshua Trees in Twenty-nine Palms in the late 1950's. His grandparents had homesteaded 5 acres out in the desert, and his family would visit them a few times each year. When he was twelve his family moved to Vista, California, and growing up there he saw many friends and neighbors had large varieties of cactus and other plants that could take summer heat with little water, yet survive and come back lush and beautiful in the winter months. He observed this but had no real interest in growing them then.

In the '70's, Stan moved to Santa Barbara to attend UCSB college. Santa Barbara long had a cultural affinity with succulent plants and many lush private and public gardens with exotic plants. Living in Santa Barbara for 10 years, Stan became familiar with many native succulent plants in the canyons and mountains behind the town. Also while walking through the many neighborhoods he saw fantastic landscapes surrounding private homes. The gardens and plants in town are very exotic with unique world



wide specimens.

That was 30 years ago. When Stan came to Santa Cruz, he says, "I started with several favorite cactus and succulent plants in pots, which I would keep outdoors in yard at the various places I lived in town. They were portable this way and I could take them with me when needed. In the past 22 years I have been fortunate to live in a wonderful house near downtown Santa Cruz, with a very large backyard and front yard, too, for that matter. The home owner is thrilled that I like plants, and has pretty much given me free reign to use the space for my collection. Over time this collection of plants has grown from about 45 plants to the range of several thousand. Mostly I raise these in containers so I can move them as necessary into protection from weather extremes. The more mature and hardy ones I will plant in the yard, if I feel they can take the full rigor of our climate, when the winter nights and moisture can be dangerous to many this far north".

"I am by no means a botanist or expert in the many thousands of varieties of these plant types. I have learned over the years from trial and lots of error about the different families of plants, their evolution, climate, exposure, and water needs. I will talk about these things and be happy to answer questions your members might have on what to watch for, and grow them with success."

Stan says you can visit him and he will give you a tour of his backyard collection. We're sure, after his presentations, he'll have plenty of takers for his generous invitation!



Thursday, April 10th 7:00 pm  
Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Drive Aptos

Refreshments will be served. Thank you to  
Janine Canada for snack and Pelissa  
Peckinpah and Deanne Lange for dessert.

# Vermicomposting Class at Mountain Feed and Farm Supply



## Vermicomposting-Composting with Worms!

Saturday April 26th

Price: \$25.00

9-11 am

Mountain Feed and Farm Supply, 9550 Highway 9, Ben Lomond

Phone: 336-8876

Learn the magic of composting with worms! Angus Mills, soil health expert will be discussing the process of vermicomposting, maintenance of your "worm herd" and the different worm bin systems that are available for both small and large scale uses. Students will go home with worms, worm castings and a brief worm composting guide. See more, and check out other classes and supplies, at: <http://www.mountainfeed.com/vermicompostingcomposting-with-worms-saturday-april-26th-p-1355.html#sthash.sAXQKDus.dpuf>



## PLANNING for PRESERVATION FAIR

Saturday April 12  
12:00pm to 4:00pm

preservation demos  
live music  
organic veggie starts  
samples and more!

9550 Hwy. 9 Ben Lomond - 851.536.8876



The Local Food Movement starts at home. If you want to preserve the bounty of your own home-grown organic produce you have to plan ahead. Vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers may not ripen for canning and preserving until August but the time to plant them is now. Mountain Feed will take you from planting to preservation with all of the tools, equipment and know-how. Can your own tomatoes, ferment your own pickles, make your own spicy hot sauce and so much more!

The Preservation Fair will have a variety of homestead and preservation demos such as canning tomatoes, making pickles, making feta cheese and much more. You'll be able to sample preserved goodies and listen to some good old fashioned live Bluegrass music while you browse organic veggie

starts. The nursery staff will be on hand to field questions on planting times, feeding routines and vegetable varieties just right for preserving. There will also be baby chicks available for sale (while supplies last) if fresh eggs are in your plan for the future. This event is free and should be fun for the whole family!

## Board Meeting

Want to give your ideas or feedback to The Gardeners' Club Board? Want to have an evening of excitement and snacks with an extra-avid group of gardeners? Want to tour an exceptional garden? Come join us at our April Board meeting at Lupe Allen's, 103 Danube Drive, Aptos at 6pm on Monday, April 28th. You don't have to be a Board Member—all are welcome.





# LOOKING FOR DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS? COME TO THE ARBORETUM AND CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SPRING PLANT SALE!

**SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2014**  
**UCSC ARBORETUM EUCALYPTUS GROVE**  
**10AM - NOON FOR MEMBERS OF FRIENDS OF**  
**THE ARBORETUM**  
**AND CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**  
**NOON - 4PM FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

The Arboretum will be highlighting their most drought tolerant plants at this spring's sale including California natives, succulents, and plants from Australia and South Africa. If you are looking to replace plants you may have lost during the freezing temperatures in early December or are considering replacing a lawn with an attractive low maintenance/low water usage landscaping, come to the sale for plant suggestions and growing advice.

Two treasures that may sell out in the member's sale are red telopeas and deep sky blue lechenaultias. Telopeas are gorgeous, shrubby, Australian members of the protea family. They will offer two or three selections, including a hybrid cross between *Telopea oreades* and *Telopea speciosissima* that will be available for the first time.



For its United States distribution it will be called *Telopea* X 'Fireball'. One of the parents, *Telopea speciosissima*, was used in the winner's bouquets at the Sydney Olympics. Telopeas are drought tolerant, but do prefer cool roots. Paint your black pots white or

plant in the ground where the roots will get afternoon shade.

Blue is such an uncommon color in plants that people will often fudge the definition of blue. For example, the "blue hibiscus" is clearly purple. Some of the "blue roses" are



barely pale lavender.

However, the lechenaultias at this sale are true blues. In the distant past, they may have sold a few of these as *Lechenaultia* – deep blue Moora named after a small town in West Australia.

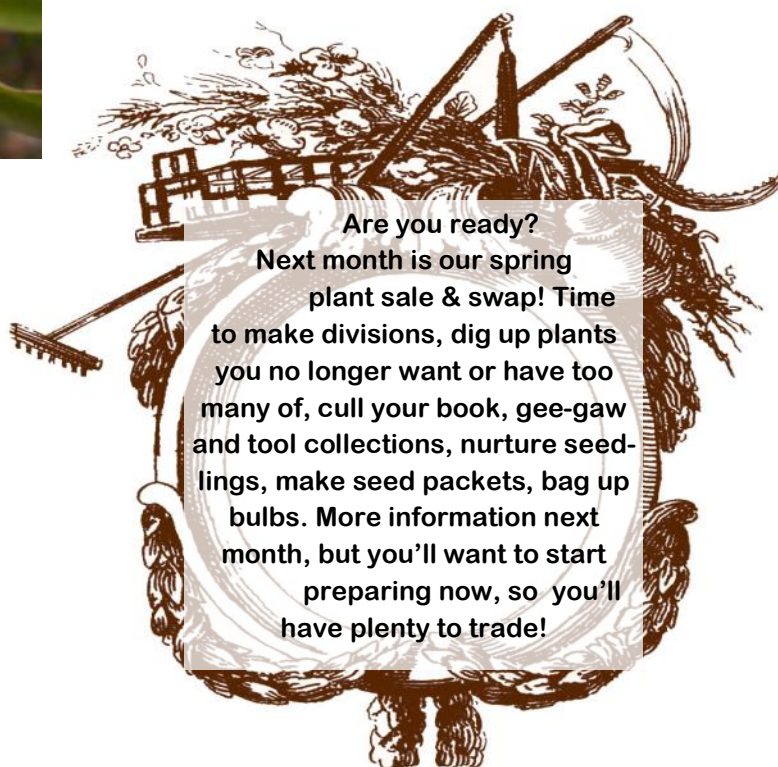
They are formalizing the name of this rock garden selection as

*Lechenaultia biloba* 'Ray's Moora,' incorporating the place name and the name of the late Ray Collett, who with Australian horticulturists, Rodger and Gwen Elliot, are responsible for getting the plants to the U.S.

Abundant choices of tough and beautiful plants from the Native Plant Society will be there, too. Treat yourself to a native you haven't tried before!

**Annual Tuber (Root)**  
**Sale, April 5, 2014 at**  
**Deer Park Shopping**  
**Center (behind the Red**  
**Apple Cafe).**

**Monterey Bay Dahlia Society**



**Are you ready?**  
**Next month is our spring**  
**plant sale & swap! Time**  
**to make divisions, dig up plants**  
**you no longer want or have too**  
**many of, cull your book, gee-gaw**  
**and tool collections, nurture seed-**  
**lings, make seed packets, bag up**  
**bulbs. More information next**  
**month, but you'll want to start**  
**preparing now, so you'll**  
**have plenty to trade!**



# California Native Plant Week

April 12-20, 2014

Varying Locations Across the state



## The Benefits of Native Plants

Native plants are those species that have evolved within California's complex patchwork of ecological conditions, such as climate, soil types and rainfall. These plants continue to co-evolve with native animal species that depend upon native plants as familiar sources of food, shelter and refuge. As water becomes a more limited resource, native plants represent the quintessential choice for sustainable and ecologically sound gardening, since natives are able to flourish with minimal irrigation beyond normal rainfall, and require little to no fertilizer, pesticides or maintenance.

## CUSTOMER REWARDS COUPON

### Customer Rewards Coupon

**\$20.00 off ALL purchases of \$100 or more**

Coupon good thru April 30th

### Native Revival Nursery

(831) 68401811

2600 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos

[www.nativerivale.com](http://www.nativerivale.com)

The California Native Plant Society Santa Cruz County Chapter ([www.cruzcnp.org/](http://www.cruzcnp.org/)) reminds us that, even if we are watering less frequently in our gardens, to remember to continue providing water for our birds.



## Going Native Garden Tour 2014

**North: Sat, April 26, 2014, 10:00am to 4:00pm**

**South: Sun, April 27, 2014, 10:00am to 4:00pm**

*A free tour of native gardens in Santa Clara Valley & Peninsula, San Francisco Bay Area*

*Organized by the California Native Plant Society (Santa Clara Valley Chapter) in association with UCCE Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County.*

Since 2003, the Bay Area's pioneering native garden tour has showcased gardens featuring California native plants. This community-based tour is free of charge to the public. Each tour features 40-70 gardens, most of them private home gardens, which are open on tour day in a do-it-yourself, open house format.

The gardens on the tour demonstrate reduced water use, reduced chemical and pesticide use, improved habitat, and the unique aesthetic appeal of gardens designed with California native plants. Their website also provides resources to help Bay Area gardeners to "go native" in their own gardens. For more information or to register, go to <http://gngt.org/GNGT/HomeRO.php>.



# April National Poetry Month

Boy with a Healthy Hear Garden by Amy L.V.



## At April

By Angelina Weld Grimké  
(1880 – 1958 )



Toss your gay heads,  
Brown girl trees;  
Toss your gay lovely heads;  
Shake your brown slim bodies;  
Stretch your brown slim arms;  
Stretch your brown slim toes.  
Who knows better than we,  
With the dark, dark bodies,  
What it means  
When April comes a-laughing and a-weeping  
Once again  
At our hearts?

## Heart Garden

If you spend time  
sowing  
growing  
fields of flowers  
in your heart  
you will always  
have a flower  
to give  
to one in need.



Amy VanDerwater is a poet, a children's author, a writing teacher. Go to her blog "The Poem Farm" ([www.poemfarm.amylv.com/](http://www.poemfarm.amylv.com/)) for more poems and inspiration. Consider buying her first book, Forest Has a Song.

And when you are  
the one in need  
you too can hold  
a flower  
from a garden  
that no one  
can see  
but grows  
inside of you.

© Amy Ludwig VanDerwater



**Sunday, April 27**  
**1:00–3:00 pm**

At this water conservation workshop, UCSC Farm and Garden staff will discuss how to make sure you're using the right amount of water for your vegetable and ornamental plantings. Concepts covered are: *basic irrigation systems* and *scheduling*, *soil moisture*, *field capacity*, and *evapotranspiration*, especially as these concepts apply to home gardens. The City of Santa Cruz mandatory water rationing makes this an important workshop for any home gardener!

Workshop held at the **PICA A-3 Classroom**  
near the UCSC Farm and Garden  
**FREE** to all members of the community

For more information, directions  
and to **pre-register**, please contact  
[casfs@ucsc.edu](mailto:casfs@ucsc.edu) | 831.459-3240

UC SANTA CRUZ / CENTER FOR AGROECOCLOGY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS  
<http://casfs.ucsc.edu>  
Sponsored by the Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden

# creative critter control



Here's a new site for gardeners and others who want to approach critter control with insight and understanding.

Information on effective, non-toxic, humane control of: Gophers, Moles, Voles, Deer, Tree Squirrels, Ground Squirrels, Raccoons, Skunks, Opossums, Mice, Roof Rats, Wild Rabbits, Wild Turkeys, and other common wildlife can be found at [www.creativecrittercontrol.org](http://www.creativecrittercontrol.org). The philosophy of the site is summarized below.

"The purpose of this site is to give you suggestions to deal with unwanted wildlife in your home or on your property based on the premise that there are alternatives to harming or killing them. John Hadidian, Ph.D., Senior Scientist for the wildlife program of the Humane Society of the United States, says, "...in most cases the conflicts between wild animals and humans can be resolved without harm to living creatures [and nonlethal methods] often are the cheapest and the most practical and lasting of solutions." Most troubling wildlife situations can be prevented or eliminated by removing or modifying attractants, installing physical barriers, and using repellents. If you do not have immediate results, try another humane method or a combination of humane methods. Don't give up. One must have patience when working in harmony with nature. In time, these methods lead to success."

## Scholarship Awards

This year the Gardeners' Club will be awarding three scholarships of \$300 apiece to exceptional students enrolled in the Cabrillo Horticulture Program. The presentation of these awards will be at the beginning of our April meeting, so join us as we say "well done!" Bill Patterson, who organized these awards (thanks, Bill!), will presents the scholarships. The illustrious recipients are Jessica Vaugan, Bethany Empert Guenther and Nathan Bessera. Bill will introduce them, and they will tell us a little about themselves and their hopes and plans.



## Containerology Tip

Should you put gravel in the bottom of your containers to improve drainage? While it seems like this practice should help, it actually has the opposite effect because of the physics of water movement in soil. Water won't move across the boundary of finer-textured soil into the coarser textured gravel until the soil is completely saturated, so the soil above the gravel actually stays wetter longer. For the best drainage, fill containers with a uniform soil mix. And, of course, be sure your container has a drainage hole in the bottom. More tips like this from the experts at the National Gardening Association at [Garden.org](http://Garden.org).



'Topicana Black' canna in container—Photo by Tesselar.



## ...a shady pastime...

It not being quite warm enough to put my tomato plants in the ground, I looked for distraction, and was pleased to find this while roaming the aisles of Bookshop Santa Cruz.

Sink your teeth into this juicy game of fierce tomato farming! Try to harvest the most tomatoes while defending your patch from a garden variety of intruders like weeds, varmints, and even the dastardly tomato zombie.

Oh, and did we mention flying hippos?! Haul the most tomatoes to market by the end of the game and you're a slice above the competition!



## Will this be your last newsletter?

Last call for membership renewal! Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$12.00. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2014. Dues entitle members to all club educational programs, our special events, plant trades and our awesome monthly newsletter. The "green" option is to receive an electronic PDF FULL-COLOR version of the newsletter by checking the newsletter e-mail option below. Ours is a club celebrating the joys of gardening, friendship, community, learning, nature and growth. Renew your membership now so you won't miss a thing...you'll be glad you did.

### The Gardeners' Club Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Preference (check one): ☐ Full color PDF via e-mail ☐ Paper copy (B&W) via snail mail

Enclose check for \$12 per member made out to *The Gardeners' Club*. Mail to  
The Gardeners' Club c/o Suzanne Mercado, P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005.



Relatable Post #1992

Roses are red, violets are blue...  
Wait... aren't violets violet?



so-relatable.tumblr.com

Q. Do you know all about April 1st?

A. Yes, I'm fooly aware of it!

Q. Why is everyone so tired on April 1?

A. Because they've just finished a long, 31 day March!



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[www.thegardenersclub.org](http://www.thegardenersclub.org)

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It's easy-peasy to  
Join our club! Dues

are \$12 per calendar  
year. Make check to

"The Gardeners'

Club" and mail to

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