

# The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

January 2014

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## Growing Fruit Trees

Here on the California Central Coast, we can grow and enjoy fruit year round—but some of us are intimidated and could use help with the how-to's. Join us this month to learn the basics from one of our area's top orchard-growing experts, Matthew Sutton.

Matthew is an alumnus of UCSC's Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) apprenticeship training program. He founded Orchard Keepers in 2002.

Orchard Keepers strives to promote the edible landscape with the orchard as the backdrop. While perusing his website ([www.orchardkeepers.com](http://www.orchardkeepers.com)), check out the fruit tree section to get tips on planning, planting, growing and pruning - there is even a list of most reliable fruit tree varieties for our county. His services run from the gamut from restoring old orchards, pruning, grafting, introducing native plants to gardens, consulting, and designing, installing and helping maintain backyard food systems.

Through his work and by teaching community classes, Matthew's mission goes beyond fruit trees. His web site says it best:

*"We strive to promote the practice of eating locally through growing it locally; in this case, as local as your backyard. We understand that growing one's own food involves a commitment, one that we often take for granted. We want to promote an awareness of what it takes to grow food, whether it be pears and persimmons or spinach and broccoli. As part of our mission, we would like this generation and future ones to renew their relationship with the food that sustains them, as well as experience the harmonious felt-sense of nurtured land. We design and install backyard orchards, vegetable and ornamental gardens, as well as use masonry and carpentry skills to create garden structures. With an eye for aesthetic beauty and balance, as well as productivity, we instruct how to grow food for one's whole family."*

Come join us for an exciting, informative and inspiring presentation. In addition to our meeting, Matthew will be giving the following classes locally: Jan. 4, Q & A at Probuild (235 River St., Santa Cruz); Jan. 11, Q & A at The Garden Company (2218 Mission St., Santa Cruz); Jan. 18, Fruit Trees 101 at Sierra Azul Nursery (2660 E Lake Ave., Watsonville); Jan. 25, Fruit Trees 101 at UCSC Farm; Feb. 1: Basic Pome pruning at UCSC Farm; and Feb. 15: Basic Stone pruning at UCSC Farm. For more information on these classes and others sponsored by CASFS, call 459-3240 or email [casfs@ucsc.edu](mailto:casfs@ucsc.edu).



Thursday, Jan. 9th

7:00 pm

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Drive

Aptos

Refreshments will be served.  
Thank you to Lupe Allen for  
snack, Joanna Hall & Ilene  
Wilson for dessert and Sim  
Gilbert for juice.



## National Pie Day January 23rd



After you attend Matthew Sutton's fruit tree presentation, you'll be inspired to plant an apple tree. After you have an apple tree, you'll have fruit for apple pie. January 23rd is National Pie Day. Why don't you try this recipe?

### Vegan Pie in the Sky's Appleberry Pie

It may sound like a mystery fruit, but appleberry is the best of fruit pie worlds: the substantial, hearty texture of apples fused with fresh or frozen sweet, tart berries.

#### **Crust:**

1 recipe Olive Oil Double Crust prepared and rolled as directed (see below).

#### **Filling:**

2 cups fresh blackberries, raspberries, blueberries or a mix (about 10 ounces frozen berries)  
4 cups peeled Granny Smith apples, sliced 1/4 inch thick or thinner (about 1 1/2 pounds)  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2/3 cup sugar  
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
Big pinch of ground nutmeg  
4 tablespoons cornstarch

#### **Topping:**

2 tablespoons almond milk  
1 tablespoon sugar

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Combine the filling ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
2. Fit the bottom crust into the pie plate, pile in the filling, and gently press down to get everything in. Cover with the top crust, pinch the edges together, trim excess dough to about an inch, and crimp. Make five slits in the middle of the pie to let steam escape (a steak knife works great for this).
3. Brush the top of the pie with almond milk, and sprinkle with sugar.
4. Bake for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat to 350 degrees and continue baking 35 to 40 more minutes, or until the filling bubbles up through the edges. Place the pie on a cooling rack and let cool for about 30 minutes before serving.

Yield: One 9-inch pie.

### **Olive Oil Double Crust**

Olive oil produces a light, flaky crust with a surprisingly neutral taste. The secret is to place the olive oil in the freezer beforehand, so that it becomes partially solid. This helps the fat blend into the dough in little pockets, creating the flakiness that pie lovers crave.

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
2/3 cup olive oil, partially frozen (see instructions below)  
4 to 8 tablespoons ice water  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

1. About an hour before beginning the recipe, place the olive oil in a plastic container. For best results, use a thin, light container, like the kind used for takeout food. Freeze the oil until it is opaque and congealed but still somewhat soft, like the consistency of slightly melted sorbet. If it gets too frozen, that's fine; just let it thaw a bit so that you can work with it.
2. In a large mixing bowl, sift together the flour and salt. Working quickly, add the olive oil by the tablespoonful, cutting it into the flour with your fingers or a pastry cutter, until the flour appears pebbly.
3. In a cup, mix together 4 tablespoons of the ice water with the apple cider vinegar. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of the water and vinegar mixture into the

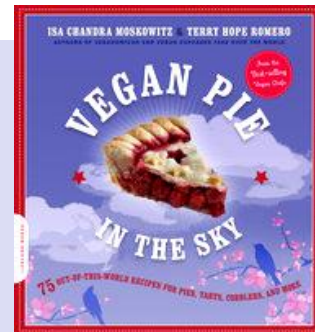
dough and stir, using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. Add more water, a tablespoon at a time, until the dough holds together to form a soft ball. Take care not to knead the dough too much.

4. Divide the dough in two. Press each half into a disc about an inch thick and place each disc between two 14-inch long pieces of waxed paper. Using a rolling pin, roll each piece into a circle about 1/4-inch thick. Repeat with the other half of the dough. Refrigerate the rolled dough wrapped in waxed paper until it is ready to use, or as directed in the recipe.

Their research says life is 100% better any day pie is involved.

#### Vegan Pie

in the Sky by Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope Romero's oozes with 75 recipes for delicious and pies, tarts, cobblers, cheesecakes and more—all made without dairy, eggs or animal products.



## Board Meeting

The next meeting of The Gardeners' Club Board will be an outstanding potluck at the home of President Cherry Thompson, 3315 Putter Drive, Soquel. We know it will be "outstanding" because Chef Extraordinaire Joe Thompson (also our webmaster and Cherry's husband), will be cooking up a special new soup recipe for us. Did I forget to mention that January is National Soup Month? You don't have to be a member of the Board; come join us for a feast, conversations and a brief discussion of Club activities and goals. Monday, January 27th, at 6:00 p.m. Need directions? Call 475-0991.



## Growing Onions

Bountiful Gardens is a non-profit organization and a project of Ecology Action of the Mid-Peninsula. Bountiful Gardens sells untreated open-pollinated non-GMO seed of heirloom quality for vegetables, herbs, flowers, grains, green manures, compost and carbon crops, offering many varieties as Certified Organic, Natural, Biointensive or Grow Biointensive™ sustainable seed. To buy seeds or to find out more about biointensive gardening or Ecology Action, go to [www.bountifulgardens.org](http://www.bountifulgardens.org). They also are a good resource for information about growing, and below is their advice about planting onions. This is a good month to start yours in flats.

Many gardeners prefer to grow their onions from seed because they have a finer flavor than onion grown from sets and may keep better. Start seeds indoors in January or February. Onions do best in fairly rich, light, well-drained loam. They don't like clay or acid soils. Harvest when the tops begin to dry up and fall over.

Have you ever planted onions from seed and gotten tops but no bulbs? It is important to select a variety of onion that is right for your area. As there are short-day and long-day types of onions, grow only those adapted to your day length. If a line were drawn between San Francisco and Washington, D.C., residents on the north side would grow long-day onions while those living on the south side would rely on the short-day onions for best results. The formation of an onion bulb is triggered by daylength, which

varies according to how far north your garden is, since daylength increases with latitude.

The "short day" varieties offered by Bountiful Gardens, needing 10-12 hour days to begin bulbing, are Red Torpedo, Southport White or Red Globe.

There are also intermediate varieties, often called "day-length neutral" because their range of successful latitudes is fairly broad. These include Red Torpedo, Ailsa Craig and Giant Zittau. In addition, the size of the bulb is related to the number and size of the green leaves present when the formation of the bulb begins, so it's best to get an early start with onions so that the plants are of a good size when bulbing begins. At the Bountiful Gardens research gardens in Willits, onion seeds are started in flats in mid-January, the earliest vegetable crop to be started in the new year, the of the annual cycle.



Giant Zittau heirloom, good keeper

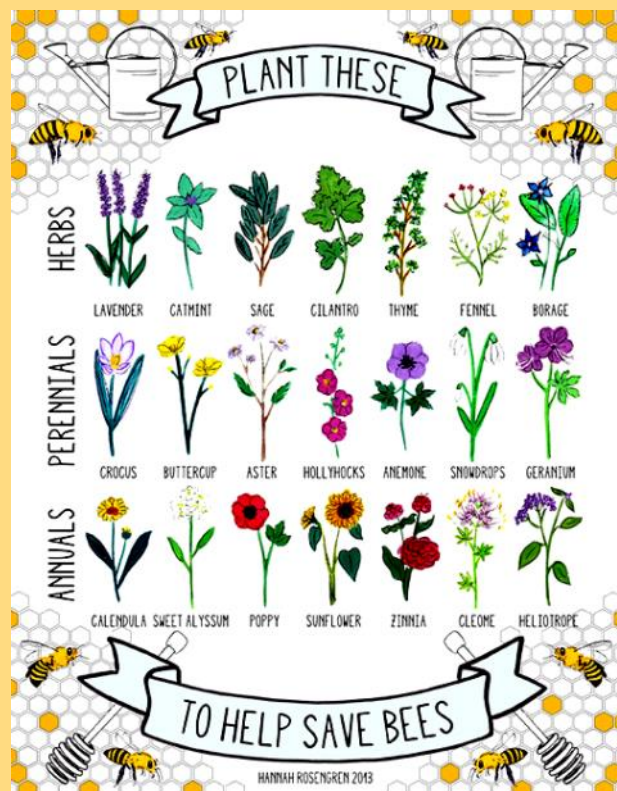
## In the News

Club Member Elliot Dembner often shares articles of interest to gardeners. Thank you, Elliot. Here are two that you might want to explore:

Michael Pollan wrote "The Intelligent Plant" in The New Yorker ([www.newyorker.com/reporting/2013/12/23/131223fa\\_fact\\_pollan](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2013/12/23/131223fa_fact_pollan)). Evidently plants have some "mental" capability. The article is long, but covers the history and current thinking on this subject. A quote defines plant intelligence as "an intrinsic ability to process information from both abiotic and biotic stimuli that allows optimal decisions about future activities in a given environment."

In "The Year The Monarch Didn't Appear" in The New York Times ([www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/sunday-review/the-year-the-monarch-didnt-appear.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/24/sunday-review/the-year-the-monarch-didnt-appear.html?_r=1&)) says that this is the first year that the monarchs didn't appear in the central forests of Mexico for the Day of the Dead. It's part of the cultural tradition there that the annual migration of monarchs to their winter home in the mountains of Mexico represents the souls of the dead. A primary cause of the monarch's disappearance is the destruction of milkweed in the Midwest, the monarch's only food. The article discusses other factors such as Roundup-drenched fields of corn replacing native habitat and massive deforestation in Mexico. But it also includes encouraging and do-able examples of efforts worldwide to save the monarchs.

It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised, the mosquito is swatted. – Mary O'Connor



You can buy your own copy of this poster by illustrator Hannah Rosengren, in English or Spanish, at [www.etsy.com/shop/NiftyGnomes](http://www.etsy.com/shop/NiftyGnomes).



## January & February: Prime Time for Pruning Roses



It's another confusing years for those of us who grow roses—some are blooming, some are frost-damaged by the recent sustained cold spell we had. But it is time to don our protective gear and start pruning. Remember, it's for their own good!

Each rose is different, so look over the plant carefully to see what needs to be done. In general, eliminate any branches that are weak or spindly, anything dead or diseased, or branches that are crossing. Thin out all branches thinner than a pencil. Generally, a rosebush is cut back by about a third of its height. Don't make cuts on teas or grandifloras below your knee, unless you are removing the cane completely. Leave as many primary canes as the plant can handle.

Cuts should be made just above an outward-facing bud so that the new growth will grow away from the interior of the plant.

Climbers and old roses need less pruning—some people go at them with their hedge shears!

After you've pruned, all leaves should be stripped from the plant. The old leaves will harbor diseases like black spot, so be thorough. Make sure all leaves and debris are cleaned up after you prune, and don't put this in your compost pile—throw it in your green waste bin.

Not everyone sprays their roses, but if you do, now is the time to apply a nonpoisonous dormant spray containing an oil to smother pests and a natural fungicide to kill diseases.

You don't have to worry about feeding roses now—you can wait until new growth starts appearing.

Members of the Monterey Bay Rose Society hold rose pruning clinics at various locations this month and next. Check their web site for dates ([www.montereybayrosesociety.org/](http://www.montereybayrosesociety.org/)).

Usually in our mild climate, we don't have to worry about winterizing our roses, but after our early cold front we might want to be extra careful this year. Heirloom Roses (<http://www.heirloomroses.com>) has a suggestion — protect the roots. Dormant canes have very little water left in them and can tolerate cold weather. The roots, on the other hand, have water in them and will be in danger of dying if they freeze. Own-root roses, unlike grafted roses, are less susceptible to this and more winter hardy because their crown has not been weakened. On a grafted rose, the bud union is the most cold-vulnerable spot, and can be easily damaged during a hard winter. Own-root roses, in contrast, can freeze all the way to the ground and because they have their own root system, come back as the same rose you purchased. If you have grafted roses, pile or 'hill' up loose soil around the base of the plant. It should cover the center of the plant and form a mound

## ELEGY WHILE PRUNING ROSES

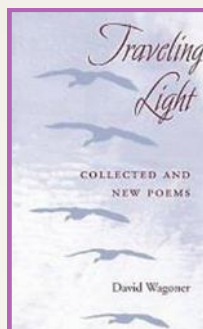
By David Wagoner

*What saint strained so much,  
Rose on such lopped limbs to a new life?*  
—Theodore Roethke

I've weeded their beds, put down manure and bark dust.  
Now comes the hard part: theoretically  
It has to be done, or they spend their blooming season  
In a tangle of flowerless, overambitious arms.  
So here go pruning shears in spite of the thorns  
That kept off browsers for all the millennia  
Before some proto-dreamer decided roses  
Were beautiful or smelled their unlikely promise.

Reluctantly I follow the book and stunt them  
In the prescribed shapes, but throwing cuttings away  
Over the fence to die isn't easy.  
They hang onto my gloves and won't let go,  
Clutching and backlashing as if fighting  
To stay in the garden, but I don't have time or patience  
To root them in sand transplant them, and no room  
In an overcrowded plot, even supposing  
They could stand my lame midhusbandry.  
So into limbo with all these potential saints.

Already the ladybugs, their black-dotted orange  
Houses always on fire, are climbing for aphids,  
And here come leaf-rollers, thrips and mildew  
To have their ways. I've given up poison:  
These flowers are on their own for the spring and summer.  
But watching the blood-red shoots fade into green  
And buds burst to an embarrassing perfection,  
I'll cut bouquets of them and remember  
The dying branches tumbling downhill together.



*The natural environment of the Pacific Northwest inspires much of David Wagoner's poetry. Wagoner is admired as a master observer of both the natural and the human worlds. This poem is from his collection Traveling Light (1999).*

at least 12" high and wide. Do not scrape the soil from around the plant as this could disturb the roots near the surface and may subject them to winter injury. After you hill them, cover the soil mounds with mulch. Straw, conifer boughs or branches work well

Done pruning? Reward yourself with a new rose—there is always room for one more. Nurseries carry their best selections of roses now, selling many bare root from sawdust-filled bins or bags at low prices.

# The Gardeners' Club Membership

Please renew your membership NOW. Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$12.00, due by January 31st. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2013. 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.

Consider sharing your passion for gardening, and supporting our club, by giving your favorite gardening enthusiast an opportunity to connect, share and learn with us. A gift membership is a gift nobody will want to return!

*Come grow with us!*

## Your Membership

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

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

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

## Gift Membership

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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

# The Gardeners' Club

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