

The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County

April 2015

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler

Garden to Table with Cindy Lepore Hart



Cindy was the owner of Seychelles Restaurant in Santa Cruz, California during the 80s & early 90s. She began cooking while attending college at the University of California, Santa Cruz. After graduation at the age of 21, she acquired Seychelles, and was the head chef/owner for over 12 years. She has been in the food business for over 20 years, catering, teaching, growing organically, and cooking, long before it was the trend.

Now Cindy is using her skills and expertise to promote healthy eating, cooking and organic gardening with Cindy's Garden to Table blog and Facebook page. Through the use of video and photo, Cindy teaches and motivates people interested in health and wellness to grow, harvest and cook at www.cindysgardentotable.com. There is a lot to see and learn on her wonderful Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cindysgardentotable?fref=ts.

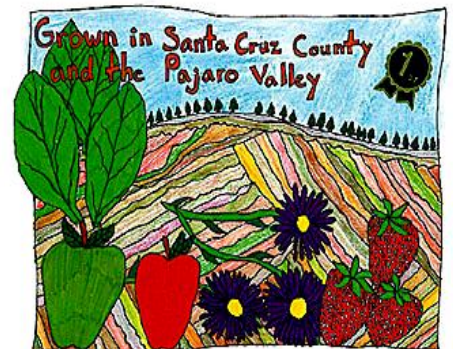
Cindy will talk about how to plant a home organic vegetable garden, and then cook and use the produce we grow. She looks forward to sharing her love for organic gardening and cooking with our club. She says, "My motto is plant, harvest and eat"!

At our April meeting, we will also have a short ceremony to present four \$300 Gardeners' Club Scholarship Awards, two for students who are currently excelling at the Cabrillo College Horticulture Program, and, new this year, two for high school students who have been studying horticulture and will be matriculating to the Cabrillo Horticulture Program this fall. Cabrillo Students Laura Palmer and Rachel Golden, accompanied by selectors Andrew Hall and Kathy Navarez of Cabrillo, will introduce themselves and speak briefly of their current horticulture experiences and their future plans.

Originally, we were only going to award one high school student scholarship this year. But donations poured in to honor our recently deceased member and dear friend, Pat Williams. It was decided to create a second high school scholarship using those donations to remember Pat as the horticultural treasure she was. If any of you still want to contribute funds in her memory, these will go toward another high school horticulture scholarship to be issued to honor Pat next spring.

This year's high school winners were selected by members of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. They are

Tryston Cruz, Coast Redwoods School at San Lorenzo High and Yuritza Arciga of Watsonville High School. We will present them with their awards and honor their teachers. Hooray for our future horticultural leaders!



Thurs., April 9th—7:00 p.m
Aptos Grange
2555 Mar Vista Drive
Refreshments will be served.



Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Sale

April 18-19, 2015

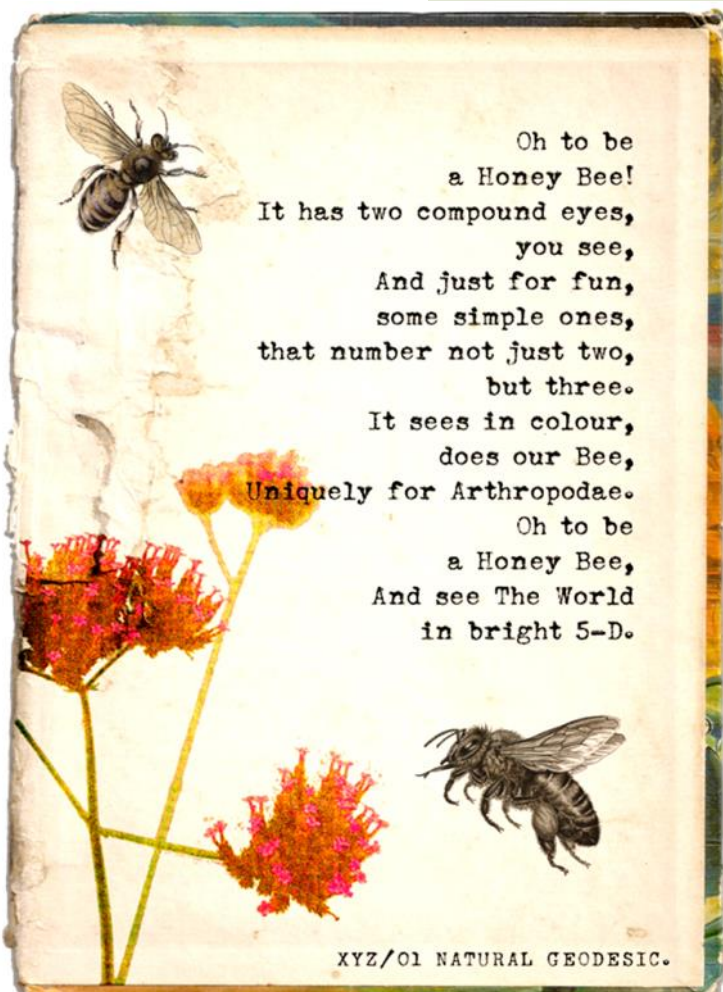
San Juan Batista Community Hall, 10 San Jose Street, San Juan Batista

Saturday 9 am - 5 pm, Sunday 9 am - 4 pm

In February, Horticulturalist Peter Wakowiak, who is famous for his rare succulent and cacti garden, and his expertise, shared his recipes for soil succulents soil and fertilizer in the Monterey Bay Area Cactus & Succulent Society newsletter. Here they are:

Soil for Succulents: There are three ingredients for my soil mix. You can substitute other materials and those will be listed below. There are three materials to avoid, peat moss, sand and kor. Both peat moss and kor (coconut husk) are not composted and when they do it turns to muck. Sand compacts and does not dry out or allow good air penetration. Soil 60% Perlite #3, substitute pumice; this should be completely wetted and mix, do not remove fines unless excessive. 20% Compost, substitute good potting soil, I get my compost from the green recycling at the local dump and let age for a month minimum. 20% DG (decomposed granite); use 1/8 screen to remove gravel from fines. Gravel is for top dressing and fines for the soil mix. Mix DG and compost together. Add this to the WET perlite and mix till blended and no white is showing from perlite. Soil is ready to use. Always use moist soil and never water newly transplanted succulents.

Fertilizer 0-50-30 Grow More water soluble fertilizer 15.5-0-0 Calcium Nitrate, water soluble form White vinegar, 2 tablespoons per gallon, PH of 6.0 to 6.5 Increase nitrogen in the early spring and late summer, decrease during heat waves, mid summer and winter.



Poem and illustration from Joanna Tilsley's science poetry



Play Visions Club Earth Fly Eyes available at Amazon

Tips: Seeds sown directly into the garden will take longer to germinate than those started indoors, but the plants will be stronger. Wondering what to do about that foamy mass on some of your plants? It is spittlebug. Just wash it off. Coastal gardeners can still plant cool-weather crops such as spinach, cabbage and broccoli.

Are you getting 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 books, gee-gaw and tool collections, nurture seedlings, 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!



Haven't tried this myself, Lee Wismer at www.recyclart.org says that stones painted as strawberries when put around strawberry plants in the spring will keep birds from eating your berries because the birds will think the ripened berries are stones. For complete instructions on how to make these, go to http://imageevent.com/leewismer/directionsforstrawberryrocks;jsessionid=tnyb9fnx74.tiger_s.

[leewismer/directionsforstrawberryrocks;jsessionid=tnyb9fnx74.tiger_s](http://imageevent.com/leewismer/directionsforstrawberryrocks;jsessionid=tnyb9fnx74.tiger_s).



April 11-19th

Spring Plant Sale Sat., April 18th

LOOKING FOR DROUGHT-TOLERANT PLANTS? COME TO THE ARBORETUM AND California Native Plant Society SPRING PLANT SALE!

**The Eucalyptus Grove at the Arboretum at UCSC,
High St. at Western Dr.**

10 am - 12 noon: members only; 12 noon - 4 pm: everyone .

The plant sales of the UCSC Arboretum and the Santa Cruz Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) will present several thousand colorful native and drought tolerant plants. The spring sale is an ideal time to see the plants in bloom and with new growth., offering a wide variety of native plants including ones for shady areas and some local selections. . Memberships will be available onsite.

The sale is the best place to get water-wise small trees, shrubs, flowers and succulents and the information about caring for them. You will find plenty of California natives and unique varieties found no other place. Arboretum experts will be on hand to help you find plants right for your gardens that will save water, attract wildlife and look beautiful in your garden. Featured this year is the California native *Arctostaphylos pumila*, a Monterey Bay endemic manzanita. Also featured are water-wise *Banksia ericifolia* 'Fireworks', *Boronia heterophylla*, *Darwinia citriodora* 'Seaspray', and *Hakea salicifolia* 'Gold Medal'. In limited quantities, the popular *Telopea* 'Fireball' will also be available!

The sale will be highlighting our 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.



English Oak Tree

Member Debbie Joyce shares some pictures of and information about a magnificent oak tree. "There is a beautiful tree on our property which was recently identified by local botanist Randy Morgan to be a *Quercus robur* (English Oak). He states that this oak was a popular and fairly wide-spread European tree (despite its name-English). It was a favorite in Spain. The estimated age of this specimen make it almost certain that it was planted by early Spanish settlers of Villa de Branciforte sometime between 1797 and the early 1800's. It is unique botanically in that it has naturalized in this location. In the photos, you will see it has an offspring to the left of the tree. Here are a few photos of it, including a close-up of its leaves, which demonstrate how different it is from our California oaks"



**Annual Tuber
(Root) Sale, April 4, 2014 at
Deer Park Shopping Center
(behind the Red Apple Cafe).
9-11 a.m.**

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society



Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting will be on Monday, April 27, at 6 p.m. We'll meet at the home of Patty Connole, 6510 Cooper Street, Felton, and tour her garden before the meeting. All Club members are invited to attend.

Smart Gardening Fair

UC MASTER GARDENERS OF MONTEREY BAY

MORE INFO:
mbmg.org

FREE event

All levels welcome!

Ideas, tips & information

Purchase plants, services
supplies, books & more

Enjoy food, live music,
activities for kids!

**Saturday
April 4, 2015
9:00 to 3:00**

**EXPERT SPEAKERS
LIVE DEMOS**



RIO ROAD @
HIGHWAY 1
NEXT TO
CROSSROADS
CARMEL



Sunflowers and Wild Bees

by Niki Hayden

www.frontrangeliving.com



For several years I've tried to lure wild bees into my garden by providing food and habitat. Scientists believe populations of our native wild bees to be in decline. Single-crop farming has contributed to wiping out their habitat. And while many gardeners, including me, have worried about the plight of honeybees, wild bees suffer in silence. Their disappearance barely is noticed by any but a handful of entomologists.

Now there is a renewed effort to study their demise. News report from a study in the journal *Science* indicate that pollination by wild bees is more important than previously understood. And there is an awareness that losing wild bees may mean the loss of valuable pollinators essential for both native plants and food crops. Here is where sunflowers come to the rescue.

I grow native flowering plants for pollen, native grasses for habitat. I never use insecticides or herbicides and my garden has some luscious blooms from spring to fall. A few wild bees arrive and possibly nest. But not many.

Everything changed the year I planted a forest of sunflowers, *Helianthus*

annuus, but only sunflowers that manufacture pollen. Sunflowers planted for seeds fall into this category. The many new decorative pollenless sunflowers are of no help because wild bees evolved to harvest sunflower pollen. That relationship goes far back in time.

Sunflowers are native to North America and once covered our wild lands and especially the prairie Midwest—the very place where massive farming has led to vast single crops. However, there's a sunflower for nearly every state. More than a century ago, sunflowers left our shores and set up shop in places around the globe, supplying oil and seeds for humans, silage for animals. They supplied pollen and nectar for insects as well.

Once my forest of sunflowers bloomed I noticed more wild bees than I could count—far more than I could identify. And they appeared to get along with each other. Often one large bloom could accommodate five varieties of wild bees—some with velvety bodies, plump noisy bumblebees and tiny nearly transparent bees—all intent on their busyness of collecting pollen. Most wild bees are solitary and don't build the gigantic hives of honeybees; many live in underground bungalows.

Rarely do they sting. And some don't possess stingers that can penetrate human flesh. Our typical garden stingers are wasps. This mix-up results in homeowners killing harmless bees rather than targeting wasps as the true bullies. Since most wasps feed on other insects or decomposing organic matter, you can buy wasp traps that will attract only wasps and not bees.

By the end of summer, my vegetable and fruit gardens were amply pollinated. I saved many of the seeds of the sunflowers to plant the next summer. As sunflowers are bee pollinated, they may cross and not come true to the original sunflower. But you can always buy more of the cultivar you like and plant it alongside your saved seeds as a science experiment. The bees will love both.

There is one caveat: birds and squirrels will love the ripening seeds, too. I attracted as many goldfinches as bees when the seed heads began to form. They were welcome to the seeds. But when squirrels jumped on the stalks and tore apart the forming seeds I had to take action. I covered many of the seed heads with paper bags held onto the stalks with twist ties or rubber bands. Occasionally the squirrels would tear through the paper but I was able to harvest plenty of seeds for the next spring.

Plant sunflower seeds directly into the soil after the danger of frost has passed. They won't transplant well from a pot because of a fragile taproot. Usually gardeners plant the seeds about two to three inches deep. They'll emerge within five to 10 days and grow quickly. Water regularly when they are growing fast. Once they reach their mature height they are somewhat drought tolerant. If they need water they will let you know by wilting dramatically.

Large mammoth sunflowers create a magical garden for children. And because sunflowers face east, as to greet the sun, they appear otherworldly. Best of all, you may be creating a haven for some of nature's most valuable and unsung heroes in the natural world.

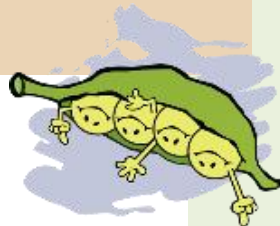
NEWS RELEASE—APRIL 1, 2015

Research Shows Gardener Mimicry Attire Achieves Better Results for Pollinators

(Santa Cruz, California) A year-long study at the Institute of Creative More-To-Culture in Monterey Bay has demonstrated that when gardeners don attire mimicking pollinators, more pollinators are attracted to their gardens and yields of vegetables, fruits and flowers are increased by as much as twenty-ish percent. More than three-fourths of the world's flowering plants rely on pollinators, such as bees, birds and other insects. Pollinators help produce one out of every three bites of food Americans eat. Researchers have concluded that when gardeners disguise or camouflage themselves as pollinators they exude ephemeron which fool real pollinators into a state of elated relaxation, encouraging them to visit attractive, welcoming gardens.



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



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