

# The Gardeners' Club

Santa Cruz County, California

June 2016

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler

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## A Seedy Business

Renee Shepherd is the president of Renee's Garden Seeds, with over 25 years of experience in the heirloom garden seed business.

Wikipedia calls her "a gardening entrepreneur and writer known for heirloom seed advocacy and garden-based cooking using home-grown herbs". At our

June meeting, Renee will give us an overview of where home garden seeds come from, how they are produced and distributed and how new varieties are chosen and developed specifically for the home garden market. She will cover important related issues such as the difference between heirlooms, open pollinated and varieties, discuss GMO's and home gardening, and talk about pollinators from seed to enrich backyard habitats. She'll share new trends in growing from seed, including her favorite picks for gourmet kitchen gardens and cottage garden flowers. She'll also be bringing some give-away seed packets for you to take home.

Renee is also the author of three astounding cookbooks featuring recipes using herbs and homegrown produce, with growing tips included. She'll be bringing copies of her newest, [The Renee's Garden Cookbook](#), which you'll be able to purchase at the meeting.



Renee earned a doctorate from the University of California, Santa Cruz in the early 1980s and then taught environmental studies there. Shepherd lives on a four-acre site in the San Lorenzo Valley, north of Santa Cruz, where she cultivates trial gardens. She has additional trial gardens

in California, Seattle, Vermont and Florida. She tests hundreds of seed varieties each year, and doesn't release them until two years of trials. She has collected varieties from around North and South America, Europe, Asia and New Zealand. Her company is a signatory to the "Safe Seed Pledge" of the Council for Responsible Genetics, and her selections are mainly open-pollinated, heirloom, and "garden-worthy" hybrids.

Renee says, "I don't sell anything that I don't really love," she said.

Visit Renee's website (<http://www.reneesgarden.com>) not only to buy seeds but to read informative articles, find recipes and resources and to read her great blog.

Thursday, June 9th, 7 p.m.

Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Dr.

Refreshments will be served. Thanks to Mike for snack, Dottie Lechtenberg for dessert and Pat McVeigh for beverages.

We will also be awarding scholarships to Cabrillo Horticulture Students at the June meeting!

# Planting in the June/July Garden

by Renee Shepherd

Gardening is an ongoing process, and, while timing is important, don't be overwhelmed by a sense of being too late to plant by some arbitrary date. All too often, I hear gardeners use a day of a particular month as though it was written in stone—for example, Northwesterners think sweet peas must be sown by Valentine's Day and New Englanders consider Memorial Day the "do or die" critical garden planting day. In truth, each season is different and garden planting dates have been even harder to peg down than the traditional wisdom would lead one to believe! I want to emphasize that it's not too late to plant a great garden, even in June and July.

**What to plant:** While it is true that fruiting plants like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants need to be set out now, many, if not most, summer producers will grow even more quickly from seed planted in early summer when the soil is well warmed up and teeming with life. You'll be surprised how fast seeds will come up and explode with growth. Don't hesitate to plant seeds for cucumbers, beans, edamame, summer and winter squashes, pumpkins, melons, beets, carrots, chard and scallions. Start a crop of "cut and come again" salad mix, braising mix, mild mustards, stirfry mix or any of our mesclun blends in a spot with bright light but out of the full, hot sun. Plant heat- and sun-loving herbs like basil, marjoram, chives, oregano, thyme and sage with abandon, keeping the seed beds well moistened. Don't neglect to plant some fragrant scented basil in containers to heighten summer afternoon gardening pleasure

**Second crops:** Even if you already have beans, squash, chard, carrots and basil in the ground, and your plants are growing well, June is a fine time to start a second crop to have ready for another bounteous late summer harvest when the first crops of these staples have finished up. I usually start seeds every month, finishing sowing summer-producing vegetables in late June. In July and August, I start seeds for fall crops like all kinds of lettuces and mesclun blends, spinach, radishes, kale, leeks, peas, Broccoli Raab, braising mix, carrots, and asian delicacies like mild mustards, stirfry mix and pak choi.

You can still plant flowers, too! Planting later crops in June also applies to flowers! Plant more marigolds, sunflowers, cosmos, zinnias, four o'clocks, nasturtiums, etc. --all of the annuals that usually burn out by late summer. This way, you'll have a marvelous second flush of bloom and can cut armfuls for Labor Day!

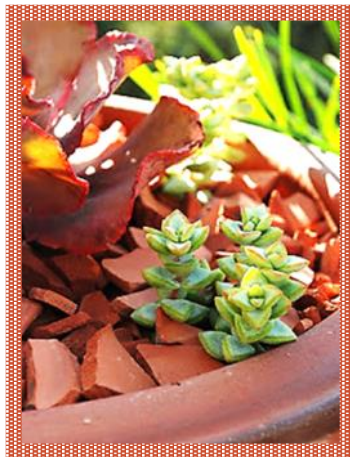
June and July are also good times to start seeds for perennials and biennials to bloom next spring. I sow seeds in a protected seed bed and then transplant seedlings in fall to overwinter, then bloom, ensuring me a wonderful spring greeting in the garden next year.

(Copyright 2012 Renee's Garden Seeds)

## Terra Cotta Gravel

Do you have a pile (or a small mountain) of chipped and cracked terra cotta pots just lying around the garden waiting either be tossed or used for an unknown purpose some day? Here's a use: make terra cotta gravel. It's easy to do, and you can use it the same as any other gravel mulch.

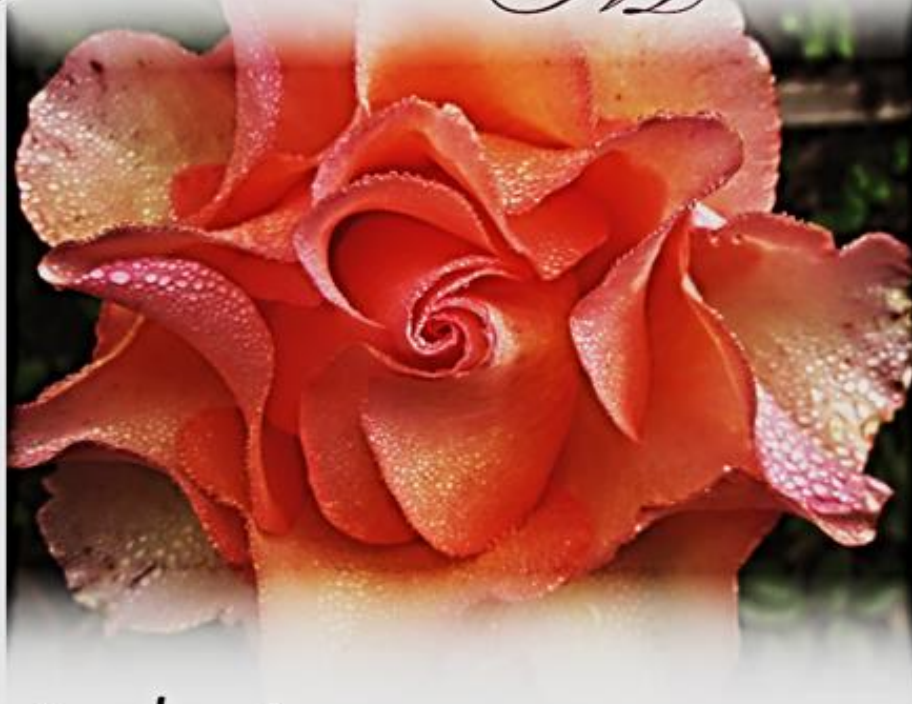
You can go at it with a hammer or a mallet or a metal pounding tool or a roller. You can put it in a pillowcase or between old sheets or rags or cardboard or burlap or whatever.



It is best done on a firm surface like a concrete driveway. Use eye protection, and maybe gloves. First break pots into several large pieces, then put them in your wrapping. Then hammer or mallet away—until the pieces are the size you want or you've taken out all of your frustrations. Match the chunks to the size of the pots. Large pots can utilize large pieces. Very large pieces, like 4 inches or larger, can be used to keep squirrels from digging up bulbs. Small pots look best with tiny gravel sized bits. It disguises perlite and helps retain moisture, and looks great as a finishing touch to a succulent planter.



# A Garden of POETRY & MUSIC



**Correction:** Last month we listed the names of people who donated plants to the Ramsay Park plant restoration project. We left out Joanna Hall. Thanks, Joanna!

Saturday, June 4, 12 noon – 2 pm  
ALAN CHADWICK GARDEN

Featuring Readings by–

Shirley Ancheta  
Emily Boarding  
Nancy Dahl  
Michael Hannon  
Stephen Meadows

Lisa Ortiz  
Lee Perron  
with music by  
Richard  
Somers

## June Board Meeting

The next Board Meeting will be on Monday, June 27th, at 6:00 p.m. We'll be meeting at the stunning home and garden of Joanna Hall. Her address is 2200 Cox Rd., Aptos. You don't have to be a member of the Board to attend. Join us for a garden tour, good eats, conversation and brainstorming about The Gardeners' Club.

Free admission. Free parking available at Merrill College.  
Call 831.459-3240, email [casfs@ucsc.edu](mailto:casfs@ucsc.edu), or go online at [casfs.ucsc.edu](http://casfs.ucsc.edu) for more information and directions

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THE CENTER FOR AGROECOLOGY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

## Rooting Softwood Cuttings

June is the ideal month to take cuttings from deciduous shrubs. Propagating from cuttings is a relatively simple way to make new plants at virtually no cost, and to replicate sentimental favorites. Plant pieces are clipped from the parent plant and rooted to form new plants; these are called rooted cuttings. If all goes well, you should be able to produce tiny, new plants in 6 to 8 weeks. Softwood cuttings are taken from new growth of the current season. They are called softwood because the new growth is still flexible and non-woody.

Softwood cuttings are generally the easiest to root and don't require special handling. They are used for propagating deciduous shrubs such as forsythia and lilac. Other shrubs that can be propagated this way include butterfly bush, cotoneaster, euonymus, honeysuckle, hydrangea, mock orange, privet, rose, spirea, viburnum and weigela.

The key to softwood cutting is taking the cuttings while stems are succulent and not yet woody. The snap test is a quick way to determine if the new growth is mature enough for successful rooting. Bend a selected stem between your thumb and forefinger. If it snaps, the tissue is in prime condition for rooting. However, the break must be clean. If the stem merely bends, it's not quite ready.

Select stem cuttings from vigorous, healthy branches in the upper portion of the plant. Avoid extremely vigorous shoots as well as weak, spindly growth. Take cuttings in early morning while it's still cool. Cuttings should be 4 to 6 inches long with 4 to 6 sets of leaves. Use a sharp, clean knife and make a slanting cut slightly below a node (the point where leaves are attached to the stem). Then remove the leaves from the lower half of the cutting, dip the base in a rooting hormone for faster and better rooting and insert the cutting 2 to 3 inches deep into the rooting medium. Rooting compounds are available in powder form at most garden centers.

A number of environmental factors are important for the successful rooting of cuttings. The rooting media must support the cutting and also supply moisture and oxygen to the developing roots and shoots. High humidity must be maintained around the leaves to prevent wilting and death of the cutting. Stem cuttings must also be kept in the light so that carbohydrates can be manufactured to help produce roots. And lastly, it's important to select healthy cutting material and to work in sterile, clean conditions so decay and rotting don't occur before your cuttings root.



**Softwood Cutting**

When leaves are very large trim them to 1/2 size to help cutting from losing too much water through transpiration.

The medium used for rooting cuttings must be clean and sterile. Diseases are a frequent cause of poor rooting and can come from containers, tools, potting benches or rooting media that have not been sterilized. A good all-purpose rooting medium is a mixture of equal parts of perlite and peat moss. Perlite is a sterile artificial ingredient that provides good aeration and peat moss is a natural organic. Both are available at garden centers. Do not use soil as a rooting medium; it's too heavy and may contain disease organisms.

Place cuttings in individual pots or flats up to the remaining leaves. Then water thoroughly to settle the medium around the base of the cutting.

During rooting the propagation medium should never dry out. Nor should it remain excessively wet; this will result in poor aeration and the death of new roots. To maintain high humidity, enclose entire pots in clear plastic bags. Monitor the plastic bags for condensation and water when the condensate disappears (about once a week). Don't place plastic-enclosed pots in direct sunlight because excessive heat will build up, baking your plants. A northern exposure with good, indirect light is best. If you plan to root large numbers of cuttings use a cold frame or greenhouse.

Most shrubs will root within 3 to 6 weeks. Tug gently on stems to see if they have rooted. If stems resist tugging, chances are they have developed roots. Carefully remove a few from the medium to check. When cuttings have produced some roots at least an inch long, they are ready to be transplanted into a growing medium. If rooted plants can't be potted up soon after rooting, apply a water soluble fertilizer at half the recommended rate. Water with this fertilizer solution every other week until cuttings are potted.

Put your new cuttings into a houseplant or nursery soil mix and fertilize monthly with a water soluble fertilizer. The move from high humidity and a moist rooting medium to low humidity and a drier soil is critical. Keep a close eye on your new plants the first few weeks as they make this transition.

Do not plan to transplant recently rooted cuttings to a permanent location in the landscape this season. Instead, in late summer transplant them into gallon-sized pots or a nursery bed. Grow your transplants to a larger size for a year to increase their chances of survival. Since they will be sensitive to cold, bury pots to the lip for the winter months and mulch heavily for added protections. At the end of next year's growing season, your fabulous new shrubs should be ready to move to their permanent location.

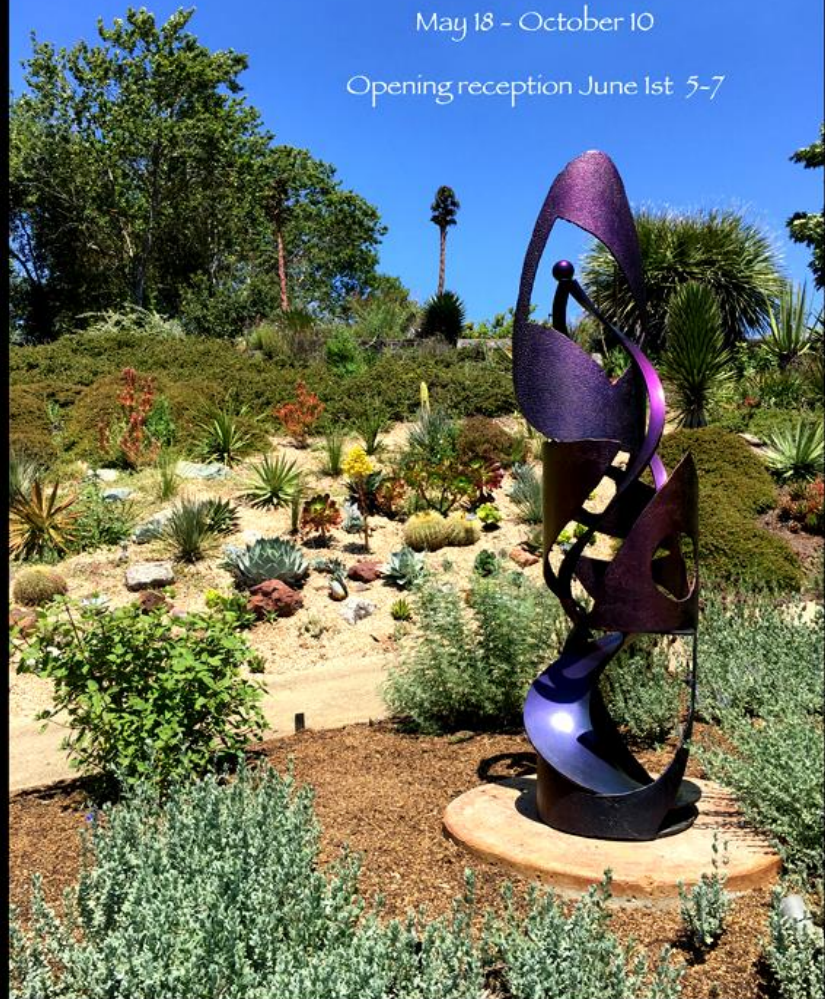
*Written by Margaret Hagen, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension*



## Art in the Arboretum Sculpture

May 18 - October 10

Opening reception June 1st 5-7



Jamie Abbott  
Jennifer Hennig  
Marilyn Kuksht  
Cristie Thomas  
Anna Martín

Jeff Arnett  
Coeleen Kiebert  
Kirk McNeill  
& Scott Lindberg  
Jenni Ward

## Invitation from the UCSC Arboretum

### Art in the Arboretum "Sculpture" Opening Reception

Wednesday, June 1, 2016 5:00 to 7:00pm

Exhibit Dates: May 18 - October 10, 2016

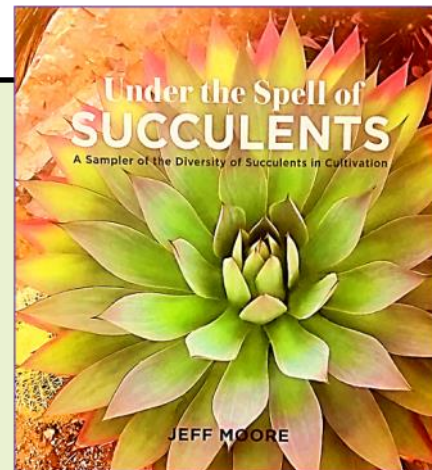
Please join us to celebrate Art in the Arboretum "Sculpture" June 1st from 5 to 7 and become part of our exhibiting history!

UC Santa Cruz Arboretum is thrilled to partner with Susana Arias, one of the curators of Sierra Azul Nursery & Garden's Sculpture IS exhibits, and welcome an exceptional group of local Santa Cruz artists for Art in the Arboretum "Sculpture."

"We are extremely honored and grateful for Susana's involvement and expertise. She has selected exquisite sculptures by some of our most beloved Santa Cruz artists to kick off the first of a series of art exhibits at the Arboretum." - Dr. Martin Quigley

The sculptures are on display in the Aroma Garden now until October 10.

Those of us who attended the last meeting of the Monterey Bay Succulent and Cactus Society were treated to a



lively presentation by Jeff Moore, the owner for over 20 years of Solana Succulents, a specialty retail nursery in Solana Beach, CA. offering both the common colorful succulents as well as collector cacti and succulents. Jeff wrote **Under the Spell of Succulents**, a 244 page, 800 color photo introduction into the world of cultivated succulents. It is a succulent nursery owner's take on the hobby, offering insight into how we interact with these plants, from casual enthusiast to collectors, growers, landscaping, container gardening and more. Interludes showcase the major genera, including aloes, euphorbias, agaves, cacti, crassulas, kalanchoes, and just about everything you can fit into a book this size. It is a quality softcover, with gorgeous photographs, some how-to's but not an overwhelming a lot of instruction, and an accessible, clear and inspiring approach. This book is a valuable addition to the library of any gardener who is "under the spell". We were so impressed by the book, which is not available on Amazon, that we asked Jeff for a box of them to bring to the June meeting. Marcia Meyer 30 copies, and they will be on sale for \$30.00 (cash or check only). Visit [solanasucculents.com](http://solanasucculents.com) for more information. Be on the lookout for his next book, **Aloes and Agaves in Cultivation**, which will be released soon. According to Moore, this next book will "differ from the other aloe/agave books in that 99% of the images are non habitat, but actual plants growing in California, so it will appeal more to the enthusiast."

# Come Grow Together at The Garden Faire

The Garden Faire will be held on **Saturday, June 18, 2016**,  
from **9am to 5pm**, in Scotts Valley's Skypark.



The Garden Faire is a free-admission, educational event focusing on benefits of organic gardening and sustainable, healthy living. Included will be a unique assembly of garden goods and materials, plants and services, plus many knowledgeable speakers, interactive presentations, food and beverage, live music and plenty of activities for everyone.

The 2016 theme, "Cultivating an Ecoculture" will explore the importance of individual actions toward building the health of ourselves, our community and our planet, implementing new ideas and techniques that will assist and enhance the growth of plants, while sustaining our earth and our environment, resulting in organic/holistic food for body and spirit. For more information, go to <http://www.thegardenfaire.org>.

The Garden Faire is a proud member of  
the California Garden Clubs, Inc.



## 2016 Home Gardening Boot Camp

### The Joy Of Gardening



Join with fellow gardening enthusiasts from the Central Coast and beyond for a day packed full of information presented seminar style by expert instructors.

This year, the 6th annual Boot Camp has 3 sessions of 90-minute classes, with 18 classes to choose from! Topics address water-conservation in the home landscape, micro-climates, permaculture, irrigation systems, lawn removal, along with classes in pest management, garden diseases, fruit trees, pruning and home food preservation.

Get your day started with morning check-in and reception from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. with welcome coffee, tea and treats. A general assembly runs from 9:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. followed by classes. Later, enjoy lunch on the outdoor patio with a beautiful view of the Monterey Bay. Economical lunch options are offered via local catering Cruz N' Gourmet food truck ([www.cruzngourmet.com](http://www.cruzngourmet.com)) or bring your own.

Cabrillo College Horticulture Department will have plants available for sale during the lunch break. If you missed their famous Mothers' Day Plant Sale, this is an opportunity to add some beautiful student-propagated and raised plants to your garden. graywater, plants that require less water, pervious surfaces, and gardening and irrigation practices can be integrated into a water neutral landscape. Bring photos of your garden and a scaled plan or sketch. This will be important for our small design groups. The class will include a site visit to state-of-the-art examples of these principles.

[For information on specific class offerings and how to register, go to http://mbmg.ucanr.edu/?calitem=310162&g=75603](http://mbmg.ucanr.edu/?calitem=310162&g=75603)



## Sierra Azul Nursery and Gardens Sculpture Is" In the Garden

Celebrate the 10th year of Sculpture is at Sierra Azul. New pieces have been added and the garden looks spectacular this year! From June 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>, Sierra Azul teams up with the Pajaro Valley Arts Council (PVAC) for **Sculpture IS** – an annual five-month show of sculptures by California artists that are exhibited around the lush property. This will be the 10th anniversary of Sierra Azul's outdoor art show. Admission is free to view the sculptures, stroll the garden or lounge at the picnic tables. Starting this year, Sierra Azul will also offer visitors a handbook to accompany the Sculpture Is exhibit.

The PVAC is a non-profit organization founded to promote arts by engaging the community in cultural events and showcasing local artwork. *Sculpture IS* began as an extension of a seven-week sculpture exhibit held in the PVAC downtown Watsonville gallery in 2006. Sierra Azul's owner, Jeff Rosendale, offered the use of the gardens as an expansive location to display the size and scale of selected sculptures.



Installation of Flames by Scott Graham and Cristy Aloysi

## The Traveling Gardener

Your intrepid editor is finishing the June newsletter while vacationing in Brooklyn, N.Y. Haven't been to the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens yet, so a report on that will have to wait until next month. But I have two pictures to share with you from our tourist activities so far. Today we climbed the stairs inside the Statue of Liberty to the crown of her head. The name of the French sculptor man who designed the statue was **Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi**. Thought you would enjoy this postcard of one of his famous quotes.



Yesterday we visited the 9/11 memorial site. Probably many of you know the story of the Survivor Tree, but I didn't. A Callery pear tree became known as the "Survivor Tree" after enduring the September 11, 2001 terror attacks at the World Trade Center. In October 2001, the tree was discovered at Ground Zero severely damaged, with snapped roots and burned and broken branches.



Survivor tree November 2001

The tree was removed from the rubble and placed in the care of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. After 9 years of loving care, recovery and rehabilitation, the tree was returned to the Memorial in 2010. New, smooth limbs extend from the gnarled stumps, creating a visible demarcation between the tree's past and present. Today, the tree stands as a living reminder of resilience, survival and rebirth.



# Happy Midsummer!



Midsummer may simply refer to the period of time centered upon the summer solstice, but more often refers to specific European celebrations that accompany the actual solstice, or that take place on a day between June 21 and June 24, and the preceding evening. The exact dates vary between different cultures. Here, Midsummer's Eve this year will be Sunday, June 19.

According to an ancient rite, sunrise or sundown on Midsummer's day was an auspicious time to gather together a magical bouquet consisting of seven to nine different flowers. By "sleeping on the bouquet" (inside or

underneath the pillow), boys and girls would each receive dreams about their future mate.

Best flowers would be Wormwood, Greater Plantain, Hoary Cress, Black Nightshade, Chamomile, Nettle, Wild Apple, Chervil and Fennel.

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

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The Gardeners' Club

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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