



Newsletter of The
Gardeners' Club,
Santa Cruz County,
California

January 2017

Into the Garden

January Meeting

sister succulents



Sister Succulents (<http://www.sistersucculents.com/>) grows, designs and markets fine succulents. It is a partnership between Linda Beatham (Earthly Delights) and Carol Schmidt (Quail Mountain Herbs). Linda and Carol created a small plant nursery in Watsonville, California with the goal of growing, propagating and distributing unusual and

drought resistant succulents from around the world. Their desire is to craft an artistic integration of antiques and rare plants in the form of sculptural arrangements.

At our next meeting, Linda will come and talk on landscape designing with succulents, and tips on how to grow them. She will also bring succulents for sale.



January 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Aptos Grange

2555 Mar Vista Drive

Refreshments will be served. Bring plants for the Plant Table; share what's growing in your garden at the Blossom Table.

Cacti and Succulents for Cold Climates: 274 Outstanding Species for Challenging Conditions

By Leo J. Chance

At the last meeting and auction of the Monterey Bay Area Cactus and Succulent Society (<http://mbsucculent.org>), I wished I had remembered to bring my recently-purchased copy of this book, because knowing which cacti and succulents can survive the hard frosts like we have had recently makes all of the difference in your growing success.



We grow cacti and other succulents because they are drought-tolerant, low-maintenance and they look great. But what about hardiness? Hundreds are fully cold-hardy and can be grown outdoors from New England to British Columbia, Wisconsin to Texas—but without some help at a nursery or plant sale you might not be able to figure out which ones will survive your microclimate.

Cacti and Succulents for Cold Climates is filled with inspirational portraits of 274 plants that can be used to create drought-tolerant gardens, as well as tips from regional experts who have mastered the art of growing cacti in parts of the country not usually associated with high temperatures or a scarcity of water. Expert Leo Chance describes how to prepare planting beds, how to get plants well established, how to handle cacti during planting, how to protect plants from cold winters, and when and how much to water.

Answers to December Question of the Month: What Mistakes Made You a Better Gardener?

A Garden Lesson

My large garden has grown over the past ten years with lots of diligent care, from a meager beginning of immature plants and a few fruit trees into an organic ecosystem, with rainwater catchment, complete composting for soil augmentation, chickens, doves, earthworms and fruit trees, using only local hardscape materials.

Now I view those years of industry, as having been overly ardent, micro-managing rather than in collaboration with nature, keeping my plants dependent children rather than training them to become mutually integrated and self-reliant adults. Now that the garden and I have matured, I plan on returning the garden to it's rightful independence.

Initiating this passing of control, I limited watering this fall to a few fruit trees trusting the plants to go semi-dormant as they might if growing in a Mediterranean climate. They looked forlorn, having grown up as water dependent so I pruned all the bushes and plants to four inches above the ground, mowing them down with a hedge trimmer, including topping and shaping most small trees, enabling the root structures to survive without attempting to support their above ground structures.

Now, with the rains all have rebounded with enthusiasm over their renewed balance of roots to plant.

My plan is to enjoy all new growth, accepting the garden in its many seasons without the former prodding, pruning and weeding. This new natural garden will be an ever changing living organism. I am excited to be one of its admirers.

—*Bill Patterson*

Let Me Count the Ways

How many mistakes? Let me count the ways. I would say one of the worst mistakes is to think that weed block fabric will eliminate your weeds. Ha! What ever you cover the fabric with, it just postpones the inevitable. Sooner than later, the weed seeds will find a foothold and be back. True, it is easier to pull them out for

a while, but that was not the purpose of putting down all that weed block, was it? Oh well, we live to learn.

In the middle 90's I installed the greatest drip system you can buy. Filters, emitters, tubing, timers for the vegetables and the perennials, and on and on. It worked great until (because we're on well), the emitters began to clog up. Then, my husband being helpful and trying to save me some work, took the weedeater and chopped down the weeds--and some of the drip tubing. Over time any of the tubing exposed to the sun began to crack. Now, I'm trying to re-do the whole thing. My plan is to take PVC pipe out to the raised beds and have a faucet at each bed, so I can turn off any that are not planted. That's the plan, but since I have more than 13 raised beds, it will be a while 'til it's accomplished. As for the perennials, if they don't like the drought, they've got to go. (Real tough guy!) Last summer I took the hose once a month and watered by hand.

—*Jan Olafsson*

Who Needs Labels?

I use to throw away the plant labels without reading the information. That lead to placing plants in areas that were not appropriate and wondered why plants did not thrive. From that, I learned to read the information that came with the plant for best results.

—*Lupe Allen*

Invited Invaders

Many years ago I took an Herbal Medicine class with Jeanine Pollack and learned about the healing properties of many common plants. My mistake was in planting (on purpose) chickweed, plantain, and yarrow... all of which are quite invasive. It later took diligent effort to eradicate these later. I allow a small patch of yarrow to live, but keep an eye on it!

—*Cherry Thompson*

Pessimism or Optimism for Success?

I have a dual personality: The Pessimistic Gardener and The Optimistic Gardener. The Pessimistic Gardener is a sucker for any Annie's Annual plant—"What do I have to lose? It is so small and

inexpensive". Che sera, sera. The Pessimistic Gardener bought a seedling which promised "tropical four-inch tubular orangey-red flowers that will woo the hummers". She ignored the plant label that said it might grow as large as a tree; she'd be lucky if it survived gophers and drought and freeze and survived as a small lovely plant with red flowers. She tucked it in close and cozy with other reddish-orangey plants, in a Darwinian area, maybe 10 ft. square, behind a stand of red-twigged dogwood and next to a cluster of quaking aspen, where she had also planted a correa, many bulbs, a forsythia, a twinberry and a rose. "One of them might make it," she thought, and what a surprise, 6 or 7 years later, to see that ALL of them have survived and are seeking the sun, competing vertically and when that fails growing horizontally, or weaving themselves sneakily through the branches of their neighbors. Clearly The Pessimistic Gardener cannot believe and trust in a plant, is unable to let go and let nature take its course and be okay if the plant doesn't make it. She now has a different problem – she now has a major remodeling and removal project. A thicket.

But maybe it was The Optimistic Gardener who caused this problem? She believed in the power of community – all of those reddish-flowered plants would thrive in companionship and cooperative growth. They would shelter and encourage each other; they would complement and support each other. Size doesn't matter; small close plantings would give such a cottage garden feel. And today, as she hacks back huge branches and ties others to trellises, she sees that perhaps she was right. The red-flowered plant that grew into a tree, now arching freely skyward, no longer has the protection of the twinberry and the correa, has suffered badly from the recent hard frosts in Bonny Doon. Clearly, it doesn't appreciate the independence from its neighbors that it was recently granted; it relied on its crowded relationship for shade and protection and encouragement. The Optimistic Gardener thought of this plant grouping as a family, which it was, although living in crowded quarters. Pessimism, optimism – will this gardener ever learn? Time will tell.

—*Lise Bixler*

Winter is the time to plant your bare root fruit tree, when it is dormant. Dig a large saucer-shaped hole and plant it at the same depth it was planted in the nursery. If you have gophers, don't forget a tree basket or hardware cloth. If you can't plant your trees right away after purchasing them, "heel them in". To do so, dig a trough—at a 45° angle—that's deep enough at its lower end to completely contain the tree's roots. Put the tree in the trench, and cover its roots with soil. (This step isn't necessary if your tree has a wrapped soil ball around its roots when purchased.) The important thing is not to let the roots dry out. You can also heel your trees in a wheelbarrow or other container and keep it in the garage until you are ready to plant.



CORRECT CUT - CORRECT TOOL

Select pruning tools based on the size of the branch to be removed. Purchase ergonomically-designed (body-friendly) pruning tools that are lightweight & well balanced. Look for natural blade-to-handle attachment angles and larger handles with grip contouring and soft, slip-resistant surfaces. Do not "force" cuts with pruners that are too small or incorrect for the job. The correct tool makes pruning easy for you and your plants.

Hand Pruners and Loppers

(branches up to 3/4" diameter)



Heading Cuts (partial branch removal): Heading stimulates growth of buds closest to the cut. The direction in which the bud directly below the cut is pointing will determine the direction of new growth. Make heading cuts selectively to reduce height and retain natural form.

wrong—too long, stub will die back

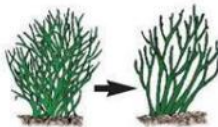
wrong—too close, bud will dry out

correct

(branches up to 1 1/2" diameter)

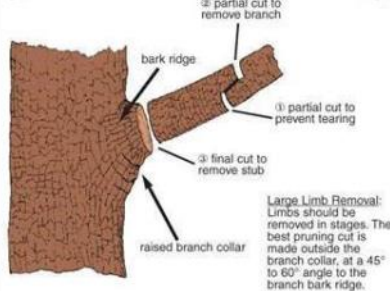


Thinning Cuts (total branch removal): Thinning removes branches at their point of origin or attachment. Used in moderation, thinning cuts reduce density without stimulating regrowth.



Pruning Saw

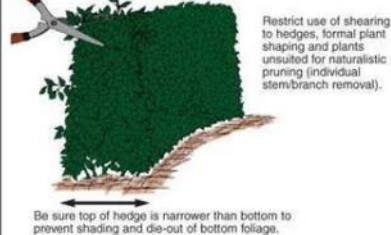
(large diameter branches)



Large Limb Removal: Limbs should be removed in stages. The best pruning cut is made outside the branch collar, at a 45° to 60° angle to the branch bark ridge.

Pruning Shears

(formal pruning)



Poster Design by: Dr. Bonnie Appelton, Virginia Tech University
Landscape Architecture, Inc.
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Funds provided by the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance
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Upcoming Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS) Workshops:

January 7, 10 am - 12 pm, San Lorenzo Garden Center, 235 River St., Santa Cruz: Free Fruit Tree Q&A Session

Join Matthew Sutton, owner of Orchard Keepers for a free talk and Q&A session on fruit trees. Learn about local varieties, planting tips, fertility, irrigation, and more. Bring your questions! Note: This event will happen rain or shine! There is indoor space available for this session.

January 14, 10 am - 12 pm, The Garden Co., 2218 Mission St., Santa Cruz: Free Fruit Tree Q&A Session. Same presentation information as above.

January 21, 10 am - 12 pm, UCSC Farm: Fruit Trees "101" -Bare Root Fruit Tree Planting and Basic Care
Learn the basics of bare root fruit tree selection, planting, irrigation, fertility, and pest management with Matthew Sutton and Kim Mayer of Orchard Keepers. This workshop takes place at the UCSC Farm. Dress for the outdoors.

hands-on pointers on how to prune your fruit trees to maximize health and production. Information on tools, timing, techniques, and more, with Matthew Sutton and Kim Mayer of Orchard Keepers. This workshop takes place at the UCSC Farm. Dress for the outdoors. Heavy rain cancels. Rainout date is February 11. Full refund if you cannot attend on the rainout date. Registration costs same as Jan. 21st event.

January 29, 9:30 am- 12 pm, Cowell Ranch Hay Barn, UC Santa Cruz: Blueberries for the Home Garden and Small Farm
Join CASFS/UCSC Farm & Garden manager Christof Bernau to learn about varietal selection, site selection, planting, pruning and general care of blueberries in the home garden and on the small farm. This is a lecture and demonstration workshop. The workshop will take place on Saturday, January 29, from 9:30 am to 12 pm, and will meet at the Hay Barn, adjacent to the UCSC Farm. This workshop takes place rain or shine. Registration costs same as above.

For online registration or other information, go to <http://casfs.ucsc.edu/index.html>.

Heavy rain cancels. Rainout date is February 4. Full refund if you cannot attend on the rainout date. Online registration costs: \$30 for general public, \$20 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members, \$15 limited income, \$5 for current UCSC students. Or pay at the door (cash or check only): \$40 for general public, \$30 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members, \$20 limited income, \$5 for current UCSC students

January 28, 10 am - 12 pm, UCSC Farm: Basic Fruit Tree Pruning. Review the goals and techniques of pruning fruit trees in this lecture and demonstration workshop. Get some

Prune ornamental grasses. Learn how with the tutorial help of Genevieve Schmidt at http://northcoastgardening.com/2016/12/pruning-ornamental-grass/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+northcoastgardening%28North+Coast+Gardening%29. She says, "When it comes to pruning ornamental grasses, even an ordinarily confident gardener can feel some confusion. Each type of grass has different requirements, which makes it hard because there's not one rule of thumb which fits all. While some varieties look shaggy and sad if not whacked to the ground each January, for other types of grass this treatment sounds the death knell. Not to worry. I've got you covered with a list of the ornamental grass varieties that are grown most commonly, and simple instructions for how to prune each."

The Ultimate Guide to Pruning Grasses - From giant Phormiums to tiny Carex, and everything in between...

Start tomato and pepper seeds in January!? You bet! Farmer Fred (<http://farmerfredrant.blogspot.com>) says, "Late January and early February is the ideal time here in Northern California for starting tomato and pepper seeds indoors. And while you're at it, why not start a few others, such as more cool season leaf crops and summer annual flowers from seed. Those leaf crops (lettuce, spinach, chard) can be transplanted outdoors after about three weeks worth of growth indoors (take a few days to gradually introduce them to the outdoors, perhaps bringing them and their containers back in at night). Those tomato and pepper plants, along with the summer flowers you started from seed? Keep them protected, indoors, until mid-April. Then, gradually acclimate them to the outdoors as well." More detailed seed starting info can be found at <http://www.simplycanning.com/starting-seeds-indoors.html>.



Seed and garden catalogs are sprouting in our mail boxes! January is a great time to start planning what vegetable varieties will be grown in the garden. Some flower varieties should be started in January.

Renee's Garden has a new website, www.reneesgarden.com, and new 2017 introductions for 20% off!

Plantsman Graham Rice raves about this new Calendula 'Snow Princess', an almost pure



white calendula that will undergo a beautiful transformation right before your eyes.

Unopened blooms are a lemon-curd yellow and as the petals unfurl, a brilliant almost pure white is revealed with a stunning, contrasting dark center. The only place offering seed for it is Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds <http://www.rareseeds.com/>. While you're on their website, order their free catalog, with over 1700 varieties from over 70 countries.



WHAT TO DO NOW

This is the time of year to give your roses attention. Some roses just don't 'get it.' They want to

continue blooming – even when days are short and it gets cold. In our part of the state, it does not get cold enough to trigger true dormancy so you need to help. Strip off all of the leaves—this will help prevent diseases later in the year (also, clean up old leaf debris around the

base of the plant). Start pruning. You can visit the website of the American Rose Society, www.rose.org, for a eight articles by experts about rose pruning and numerous articles on all aspects of rose cultivation. The Monterey Bay Rose Society rosarians offers the following pruning classes:

Saturday & Sunday, January 14 & 15, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Free Pruning hands-on class at the MBRS Display Rose Garden, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, 2601 E. Lake Avenue, Watsonville (Horse show entrance). Rosarians will be on hand to demonstrate pruning techniques. Bring your pruners and gloves to get some practice under the watchful eyes of the experts.

Saturday, January 21, 2017 • Free Pruning Seminar • 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. • San Lorenzo Nursery • 235 River Street, Santa Cruz

Saturday, January 28, 2017 • Free Pruning Seminar • 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. • Alladin Nursery • 2507 Freedom Blvd. Watsonville

If desired, after pruning apply a dormant spray before new growth begins; also spray soil around plants. This is also the time of year to plant new roses (bare root season), and water well. Keep new plants protected with mulch to prevent drying out.

The Gardeners' Club Membership

Have you renewed your membership?

Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$12.00, due this month. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2017. 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. 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.



Ours is a club celebrating the joys of gardening, friendship, community, learning, nature and growth. We have a history of giving to the community, and have focused this giving in the last few years on scholarships for high school and Cabrillo College students who are working towards careers in horticulture. Because our dues are so low

and we'd like to be able to give at least one additional scholarship this year if we can, we are giving you the option of making an additional gift with your membership. Thank you!

Renew now so you don't miss anything—you'll be glad you did.

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

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, plus any additional contribution to our scholarship fund, made out to *The Gardeners' Club*.

Mail to The Gardeners' Club
c/o Suzanne Caron, P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005.

Membership amount	\$ _____
I would like to make an additional gift	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

