



The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California

DECEMBER 2022

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A large, detailed pencil sketch of two elephants, one in the foreground and one slightly behind it, facing left. The sketch is done in a realistic style with fine lines and shading.

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK
and
WHITE ELEPHANT SILENT AUCTION
THURSDAY, DEC. 8TH, 7:00 P.M.
APTOS GRANGE HALL, 2555 MAR VISTA DR.**

Every December we gather to celebrate gardening, good food, good friends and the fine art of re-gifting. Bring a dish to share, labeled for the benefit of members with dietary restrictions. Please bring a serving utensil, and if you share a hot dish, please bring it already warmed. We'll provide plates, utensils and drinks.

No business meeting this month, and no plant table, either. After we feast and catch up on conversation, the liveliest part of our meeting will start. We'll browse the silent auction tables and discover items we didn't know we needed, and find perfect gifts for family and friends.

Bring unwanted oddities, jewelry, dishes, pottery, special plants, clothing, gardening items, gourmet goodies, birdfeeders, tools, chotzkes, bricabrac, vases, books, objets d'art and objets d'junk. You'll be thrilled whether you want to get rid of things or want to find bargains and treasures. You are welcome to bring friends, guests, spouses, significant others and people who are interested in our club. See you there!

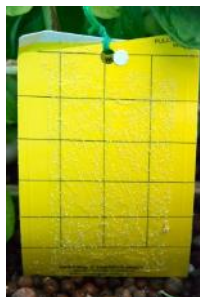
WE LOVE WHITE ELEPHANTS, BUT WHITEFLIES, NOT SO MUCH.



This was a terrible year for whitefly infestations. Tomato plants in particular were very susceptible, getting viruses and suffering from irregular ripening. Here in Bonny Doon, I still have lots of green tomatoes, but also blizzards of whiteflies and damaged foliage.

Whiteflies are not true flies (in the insect order Diptera) but are in the order Hemiptera, related to aphids, scales and mealybugs. Whiteflies use their piercing, needlelike mouthparts to suck sap from phloem, the food-conducting tissues in plant stems and leaves. Large populations can cause leaves to turn yellow, appear dry, or fall off plants. The honeydew they secrete attracts ants, which interfere with the activities of natural enemies that may control whiteflies and other pests. They can cause plant distortion, discoloration, or silverying of leaves, and may cause serious losses in some vegetable crops. Some whiteflies transmit viruses to certain vegetable crops.

If you catch whiteflies in your garden early enough, you can hose them off your plants and apply an insecticide like neem oil to the underside of leaves. Sticky yellow traps can be installed to catch



them. Spraying with a mixture of dish soap and water under the leaves, preferably in the evening, or with an insecticidal soap like Safer Soap can be used to knock down heavy infestations. Insecticidal soaps coat the eggs and

larvae with a coating that makes it difficult for them to breathe. It'll also kill off adult whiteflies. Aphids and white

flies can also be fought with an organic pesticide that contains pyrethrin.

You can try to (carefully) use a handheld vacuum every few days to remove them from your plants. This gets rid of both nymphs and adults.

UV-reflective mulch has been found to be highly repellent to whiteflies. Using this reflective mulch is said to significantly reduce the numbers of whiteflies in crops.

You can also try to control whiteflies with companion planting. Whiteflies find basil, nasturtiums and marigolds unpleasant.

Planting nasturtiums among vegetable plants and ornamental flowers helps keep whiteflies away, according to the Cornell University Cooperative Extension. Sow nasturtium seeds in the spring around cabbage starts, cucumber plants, cabbage and tomato seedlings and around radishes. Since they are perennials in my garden, I am planting seeds now.

Marigolds make a suitable all-around companion plant in the garden. The strong-smelling flowers deter whiteflies



and other garden pests, including slug, according to Brigham Young University.

Researchers have found that limonene is the chemical released from marigolds that repels whiteflies, and hope in the future to develop a limonene repellent. Plant marigolds in the spring throughout the garden. Baker Creek recommends Colossus Red Gold Bicolor.

Basil's fragrance and flavor comes from essential oils in the leaves. Plant three to six basil plants around the base of tomatoes. Basil improves the flavor of tomatoes when grown together, according to the Cornell University Extension.

Whiteflies used to be mostly a warm weather problem, but now they are pretending to be December snow!

MAKE A TWIGGY CAGE FOR PROTECTION FROM BIRDS

A twiggy cage is an attractive way to protect crops, such as lettuces or young brassicas, from marauding sparrows while still allowing free movement of air. It's made by pushing supple, twiggy branches directly into the ground, then gently pulling the tops inwards and threading them under and over each other to form a natural-looking canopy. If you are doing selective pruning of shrubs, trees, etc., or collecting fallen branches while tidying your garden, this is perfect for using up those materials.



(Taken from an article in [Gardens Illustrated](https://www.gardensillustrated.com/garden-design/make-your-own-plant-supports-and-protection/). For more ideas, go to <https://www.gardensillustrated.com/garden-design/make-your-own-plant-supports-and-protection/>.)



35 CREATIVE GARDEN PROJECTS USING STICKS & TWIGS

Check out the website for Lovely Greens for garden projects using sticks and twigs that you can DIY with just a few tools and garden waste. Make everything from garden artwork to trellises and garden arches using a material that you can find in the woods or in your garden.

<https://lovelygreens.com/30-garden-projects-using-sticks-twigs/>

A FEW GARDENING GIFT IDEAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Some of us avoid gifting for the holidays, but some of us use the season as an excuse for treating those we love or admire.



If I could ask for just one gift, it would be the favorite “book” I take to bed each night to peruse. I agree with people who say the Baker Creek Whole Seed Catalog is the best seed catalog on the planet. Over 500 pages, it features their full collection of heirloom varieties from around the world, as well as gorgeous new photographs, recipes, seed histories, stories and a behind-the-scenes look at the people who make Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company so special. The many new varieties from Japan make me



Sakura No Uta Stock—edible flowers!

drool—who knew you can grow Japanese stock or citrus? Or basil from seed grown in Africa? The photographs in the catalog are more gorgeous than you’d find in a coffee table book. It is a world view on

gardening—the stories of the seeds, and the people who saved them or grew them, are like having an unlimited travel ticket.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company offers over 1,000 heirloom and rare seed varieties. They have one of the largest selections of 19th-century heirloom seeds from Europe and Asia. All of their seeds are non-treated, open-pollinated, non-patented, and non-GMO. Some of the seeds they offer are grown organically and some are grown conventionally.

You can flip through the catalog on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/p/CIEMaytJ_85/

Buy the catalog, or order a free smaller catalog, or a gift certificate or seeds, at <https://www.rareseeds.com/>.



Solomon Amuzu, of Call to Nature Permaculture in Ghana—Evivi Ntor Basil

SOIL THERMOMETERS

Many of us have never used soil thermometers, or know much about the significance of soil temperature. To maximize success germinating seed, or planting starts, consider getting one and learning how to use it.

Soil temperature triggers not only seed germination but is an important factor in soil chemistry. Soil chemistry includes the release (dissolution) of mineral nutrients

in soil moisture. Mineral nutrients are essential for vegetable plant growth and maturation to harvest. Joe Lamp’l says “Warmer temperatures speed up chemical reactions and, conversely, cooler temperatures slow them down. Those chemical reactions help break down the protective seed coat and tell the seed that it’s time to wake up and start growing. For a cool-season leafy crop like spinach, the ideal temperature for germination can be as low as 50 degrees Fahrenheit. For heat-loving tomatillos, the minimum desired soil temperature is 80 degrees.”

A soil thermometer takes the guesswork out of when to plant. With our changing climate, we need all of the help we can get. To help choose a model, go to I Dig Organics (<https://www.idigorganics.com/garden/soil-thermometers.html>).



<https://gardenbite.com/tomato-pepper-planting/>

LOVE APPLE FARMS — TAKE A CLASS, OR GIVE A CLASS!

If you've never taken one of the Grow Better Veggies classes taught by farmer Cynthia Sandberg, co-founder of the World Tomato Society, maybe you should make 2023 the year you treat yourself to one. In my many years gardening, Cynthia's classes have been the most chockful of information, organized and enjoyable I have taken. I was surprised to go on her web site and see that her classes for next year are already selling out!

Early Spring Vegetable Gardening - January 14, 2023 (\$99) **SOLD OUT**

Tomato Masters - January 15, 2023 (\$69) **SOLD OUT**

Early Spring Vegetable Gardening - January 21, 2023 (\$99)

Tomato Masters - January 22, 2023 (\$69)

Designing the Perfect Vegetable Garden - January 28, 2023 (\$69)

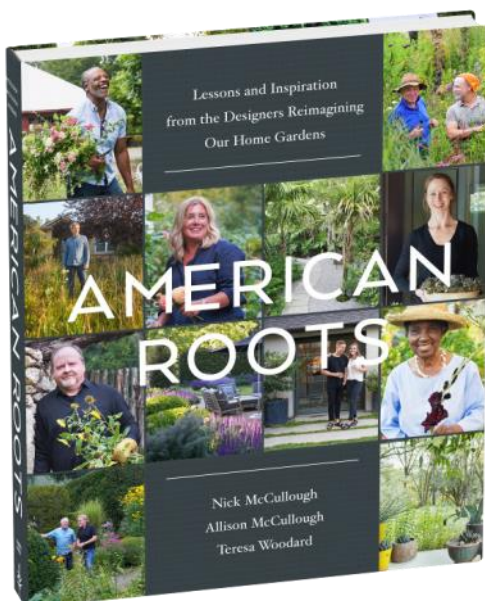
Early Spring Vegetable Gardening - January 29, 2023 (\$99)

Tomato Masters: Follow the growing techniques learned in this workshop to grow 7 foot tall plants that yield 100 pounds of fruit per plant! This is a hands-on seminar on backyard tomato growing. Get the latest techniques for fertilizing, pruning, and soil amending for maximum production, health and taste. We'll also talk staking, proper garden siting, mulching, watering, disease and pest control, harvesting, the heirloom vs. hybrid debate, and seed saving.

Early Spring Vegetable Gardening: Take advantage of our mild California Bay Area climate to get your vegetable garden up and productive for the season! Why wait for summer to start harvesting your own healthy, organic produce? This class will teach you what's possible to grow and pick in early spring. You will be able to plant and sow in February and March, then start to harvest your bounty in April. Learn sustainable organic techniques that will let you seamlessly integrate your early spring vegetable garden into your summer plantings of warm-weather lovers. We will discuss lettuces, spinaches, chards, bok choy, tatsoi, snow and shelling peas, mustard, mizuna, cress, kale, arugula, chrysanthemum greens, broccoli raab, turnips, radishes, and other quick-growing veg that will tide you over til the warm weather hits. This class differs from our Winter Vegetable Gardening Class, as it only concentrates on quick, cool-weather plants that you will be able to put in now and harvest in the spring. Every student gets to sow a flat of seeds to take home to tend along with instruction on how to grow them out. In addition to the culture requirements of each of the vegetables, the topics covered in class will include: bed preparation, heat and light requirements, frost control, germination tricks, organic pest control, fertilizing, and harvesting techniques.

Classes are held at 5311 Scotts Valley Dr, Scotts Valley. Sign up, or buy a gift certificate for a friend. Or, do both!
<https://www.growbetterveggies.com/>

CATCH UP ON WINTER READING—A BOOK TO GIVE, OR A BOOK FOR YOU



"I love this book. Here are home gardens of designers from every part of our great country that are inspiring proof of a passionate vitality and freshness in American gardening today." — Page Dickey, author of Uprooted

In recent years, bold designers have begun championing an American design aesthetic that embraces regional cultures, plants, and growing conditions. In American Roots, Nick McCullough, Allison McCullough, and Teresa Woodard highlight designers and creatives with exceptional home gardens, focused on those who push the boundaries, trial extraordinary plants, embrace a regional ethos, and express their talents in highly personal ways. Covering all the regions of the country, the profiles dive into design influences, share the back stories of the gardens and their creators, and include design tips and plant suggestions.

American Roots is a beautiful invitation to reconsider how we define the American garden, filled with guidance and encouragement for anyone looking to dig more deeply into their own home garden.

The Gardeners' Club Membership

Annual membership dues, which include all benefits, are still only \$15.00. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2023. 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, friend-



ship, community, learning, nature and growth. Renew your membership now so you won't miss a thing...you'll be glad you did.

And...with gift-giving season here, 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!

YOUR 2023 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 \$15 per member made out to
The Gardeners' Club. Mail to:

The Gardeners' Club % Suzanne Caron
P.O. Box 3025
Ben Lomond CA 95005

Membership Dues: \$ _____

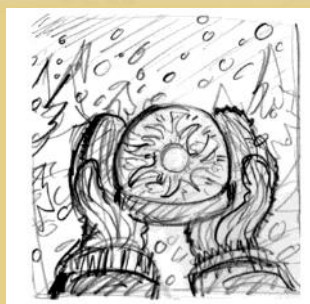
Gift Membership(s): \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

CLOSE THE YEAR BUT NOT THE GARDEN

As I think of all the things to do in a California garden in December—plant cover crops of favas and grass, scatter poppy seeds, turn off the irrigation, take some cuttings from the rhodies and salvias and camelias and azaleas to propagate for next year, tend to the roses, plant winter veggies and wildflowers and dianthus and native shrubs—I delight in reading advice from Claire Splan in Month-by-Month Gardening: California. She says, “Ready the garden for winter, but as the garden downshifts into neutral, keep the gate open and path clear so the garden can beckon us every moment... Even on days that are too cold to linger outside, the garden can comfort and delight from a window. Think of your successes and challenges in 2022, and then close your book on the year and take up your daydreams for next year’s garden.”

"I heard a bird sing
IN the dark of December
A MAGICAL thing
AND SWEET to remember.
We are Nearer to Spring
THAN We were IN September."
I heard a bird sing
IN the dark of December."
- Oliver Herford.
I heard a bird sing



Sketch by Yuko Shimizu

Happy Winter
Solstice

Happy New Year

It's easy-peasy to join our club!
Dues are \$15 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



www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern.

Our front page logo is graciously shared with us by artist Lisa Zador. Order a print or see more of her work at her Etsy shop

The Gardeners' Club

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