



Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California

FEBRUARY 2023

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the tomato offers its gift
of fiery color
and cool completeness
—pablo neruda



MASTERING THE ART OF THE TOMATO

Learn about the art and science of growing the world's most popular fruit with teacher extraordinaire Cynthia Sandberg, owner of Love Apple Farms and creator of its multiple educational offerings and resources. One lucky attendee will win a Love Apple gift certificate! Read much more about Cynthia and Love Apple Farms in the pages following.

Thursday, February 9th, 7:00 p.m.



founder of the World Tomato Society (see WorldTomatoSociety.com), which is dedicated to preserving "tomato diversity and cultural heritage." Love Apple Farms holds the largest tomato plant sale in California, with well over 100 varieties of heirloom tomato seed-



If you taste an Orange Russian 117, you'll be a tomato-lover for life.

Cynthia Sandberg, organic and biodynamic farmer, grows some of the best tasting tomatoes many of us have ever tried. I still remember the first bite of the first fruit of the first plant I ever bought from her many years ago! Mmmm, sigh...what a taste and aroma memory!

Beginning her work life as a trial attorney, Cynthia transitioned to farming after falling in love with gardening in her backyard on a bit more than one acre in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Founding Love Apple in 2000, Cynthia started as a tomato plant grower and had a small tomato fruit stand on her Ben Lomond property.

In 2010, she purchased 22 acres on the former site of the Smothers Brothers Winery on Vine Hill Road in Santa Cruz and re-established her farm on the terraced hillside. Love Apple Farms partnered with Manresa, a three Michelin starred restaurant, for 10 years, providing them with all of their fruits, vegetables and edible flowers. This relationship was one of the forerunners in the ubiquitous farm to table movement, and influenced many other such farm/restaurant relationships.

Achieving Demeter certification as a biodynamic farm in 2012 was a proud milestone for Love Apple. Cynthia has spoken at numerous gardening and farming conferences and garden clubs, including the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show. In addition to tomatoes, she grows many different cultivars of fruit, vegetables, herbs and edible flowers.

She not only owns, manages and grows over 20 acres, she also organizes workshops on tomato growing and other terrific topics such as beer brewing, bee keeping and cheese making. She is a co-

lings (also called "starts") each spring, from March to June. Their retail greenhouse is at Ivy's Porch, 5311 Scotts Valley Drive, Scotts Valley. Their spring sale has already started—you can preorder some of their outrageous varieties of tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, other veggies, herbs, flowers and gardening supplies. <https://www.growbetterveggies.com/growbetterveggies/pre-sale.html>

But first come to our meeting. Cynthia says, "Yes, you CAN help your tomatoes taste better. Yes, you CAN achieve results to make even your most doubting relatives and neighbors envious. Seven foot plants that yield 100 pounds of fruit each—yes, you CAN!"

One of the most remarkable things about Cynthia is how generous she is with sharing information on how to succeed at gardening (and other topics) with the general public. Going to her website you can find a very long and detailed article on How to Grow Better Tomatoes. There is no room to print the whole thing here (although we'll try and have handouts at the Club meeting.) But you can read it here <https://www.growbetterveggies.com/growbetterveggies/instructions-on-how-to-grow-better-tomatoes.html> or scan this QR code to read it on your phone.



She has a second article on growing tomatoes in containers, which requires some more specific requirements Read here or scan the QR code: <https://www.growbetterveggies.com/grow->



My oh my! Haven't finished pruning the roses or trees, and it is February, the month to whack down all of the buddleias to the ground. In the meantime, I just came across a great video on Jeff Rosendale's Sierra Azul site on how to prune salvias, and I don't know many members of our club who don't have more salvias than they can count. Sharpen your shears and clippers!



<https://youtu.be/dWKIfIhhTyU>

How to Prune Salvias—Sierra Azul

UCSCA AGROECOLOGY UPCOMING EVENTS

<https://agroecology.ucsc.edu/news-events/events/index.html>



Produce Pop-Up - Winter Quarter

Every Wednesday from 11am to 3pm at Quarry Plaza

Every Friday from 1pm to 4pm at Porter Quad

Affordable organic produce from the UCSC Farm and local farmers, available to students, staff, faculty, and community members! Cash, EBT, Card, and Check accepted. See you there!



Organic Citrus Growing Short Course

Thursday, February 9, 5:00pm—7:00pm: Online introductory lecture

Saturday, February 11, 9:00am—4:00pm at the UCSC Farm and Chadwick Garden

Sunday, February 12, 9:00am—12:00pm at Abounding Harvest Mountain Farm

Seasoned citrus growers will provide detailed information appropriate for a range of growers, focused on a diverse range of citrus production.



Fruit Tree Grafting for the Home Gardener and Small Scale Grower

Saturday, February 18, 9:00am—1:00pm at the Hay Barn

Learn the basics of rootstocks and scion selection, the importance of a sharp, quality grafting knife, and timing for the best luck with your graft at this Friends of the UCSC Farm & Garden workshop.



Dry Farming Symposium

Thursday, February 23, 9:00am—3:00pm

How can we adapt to water scarcity without jeopardizing farmer livelihoods? Join farmers, researchers, technical assistance providers, and policy advocates as we discuss dry farming in this community of practice.



Planning and Planting the Small Orchard Block Short Course

Thursday, February 23, 5:30—7:00pm: Online introductory webinar

Saturday, February 25, 9:00am—4:00pm at the UCSC Farm and Alan Chadwick Garden

Sunday, February 26, 9:00am—12:00pm at Fifth Crow Farm

The course will walk participants through the planning and planting of a new apple orchard block at the UCSC Farm, from site selection and soil preparation to sourcing and planting quality trees.

New VP!

At last, we have a new Vice President, in charge of attracting and arranging speakers for our monthly meetings. Morgan Louis, who has been speaker at two of our meetings this year, has volunteered to be our new Gardeners' Club Vice President Yay! Morgan grew up and lives in Watsonville and graduated from Aptos High and Cabrillo College. He is an Eagle Scout, and credits that experience with nurturing and expanding his avid interest in nature. He has years of experience I with gardens and horticulture. He has his landscaping contractor's permit and his own business, and recently got his Certified Permaculture Designer license. He is especially interested in efforts to rewild beavers locally (see article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Morgan is eager to start lining up speakers for our upcoming meetings—give him a call or an email and give him ideas and suggestions. What would YOU like to learn in the upcoming months of garden club meetings? His phone number is (831)245-5522 and his email address is mlouisbsa@gmail.com. Morgan also encourages everyone to post announcements about our upcoming meetings on your local Neighborhood Facebook page so we can expand our membership.



Board Meeting News

Gardeners' Club Scholarship Program Resumes

At its January meeting our Board approved resuming our scholarship program for Cabrillo College Horticulture students. For this year, we will award three \$500 scholarships to deserving students.

Our efforts in supporting Cabrillo's outstanding students began in 2012, thanks to the vision and leadership of member Bill Patterson, and continued for eight successive years, concluding in 2020. Then the Covid Pandemic put things on hold. But this year our giving program is back!

Bill Patterson has volunteered, and has been appointed by the Board, to lead the scholarship program. A Scholarship Committee is currently being formed to develop an application form that will ask horticulture students to respond to a few questions regarding their background, current involvement and future plans in Horticulture-Agriculture. The committee will finalize the process by evaluating the applicants and informing the board of the awardees.

The finalists will be recognized in person at the General Meeting of April 13th when they share their adventures in their career fields.

The Scholarship Committee is seeking two volunteers who hold in high esteem the Cabrillo College Horticulture Department and its student.



Resilient Soil Basics: How to weather most kinds of weather (Virtual Class) UC Master Gardeners of Monterey & Santa Cruz

February 23, 2023 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Contact: Delise Weir
ddweir2000@gmail.com

"We owe our existence to a 6-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains." Because, as we know, sometimes it rains in California and sometimes it doesn't.

Healthy soil is the foundation of any productive, thriving garden. UC Master Gardeners Delise Weir & Deborah Moser will discuss how and why to improve soil health in your yard and food garden.

This class will offer a basic understanding of soil science and the importance of the microbiotic life under our feet. Learn a few easy-to-apply, practical gardening techniques that provide optimal conditions for enhancing and sustaining biotic life in the soil to improve soil structure, make essential nutrients more biologically available to plants and facilitate a foundation that maintains moisture in the soil during drought while improving drainage during rain events.

We'll take some time to discuss how to remediate soil affected by flooding.

Register at <https://soil2023.bpt.me/>



2019 Awards

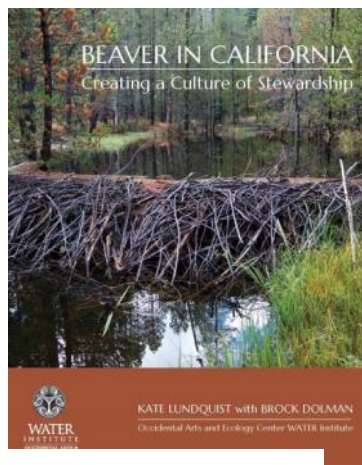
Please contact Bill Patterson @ wilderwill@comcast.net.



FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH BEAVERS

Did you know that California has started a project to rewild beavers in our state? A Sierra Club article states, "beavers increase water and soil retention, but they also reduce wildfire risk by creating fire breaks. They increase carbon sequestration. They build rich meadows by backing up water in ponds that eventually fill with vegetation. They create an array of 'moisture gradients' for more diverse plant and animal and insect species." Read the article at <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/grand-vision-rewilding-west-beavers-and-wolves> ..

A more comprehensive resource is Beaver in California — <https://oaec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Beaver-in-California-2.0.pdf>



And if you want to take an ever deeper dive into

the subject, here is the official government handbook. You can read or print the PDF at

<https://www.beavercoalition.org/guidebook>

or scan the QR for your phone.



The Beaver Restoration Guidebook

Planning with Beaver to Restore Streams, Wetlands, and Floodplains
Revised 2022, July 18, 2023



Edited by:
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US Forest Service

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Edited by:
North Pacific Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Save the Date!

Saturday, April 8, 2023

2023 Spring Plant Sale

10:00 to 2:00 UCSC Arboretum and Botanic Garden

The ever-popular Santa Cruz Chapter Spring Plant Sale will be held in person at the UCSC Arboretum and Botanic Garden on **Saturday, April 8!** We have a fabulous selection of California natives lined up for this sale featuring plants from our local area and the central coast region, ready to brighten local gardens.

This spring's plant sale will feature well over one-hundred species of native plants, many of which are new offerings for our chapter. Of particular interest will be a *significantly* expanded line-up of spring flowering annual wildflowers which provide instant garden color and diversity for pollinators. Many of these annuals are from locally sourced seed which means they were grown from seed collected from local lands around Santa Cruz County (with landowner permission, of course.) This is an exciting development for the propagation team, one we hope to pursue further as we work to acquire additional locally sourced propagules (seeds!).

The sale will also offer a wider selection of spring flowering bulbs and native grasses which bring beauty and texture into any garden space. As always, we will have lots of plants in our most popular genera: *Iris*, *Erigeron*, *Diplacus*, *Artemisia*, *Achillea*, and *Grindelia*!

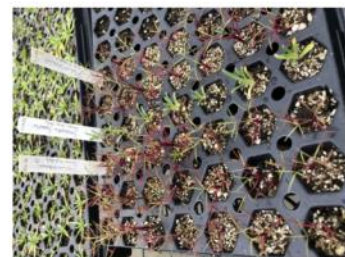
Please check the chapter's website and Facebook group page for specifics including the sale plant list which will be posted roughly two weeks prior to the sale date.

Kari Olsen



Seedlings of locally sourced *Trifolium wildenovii* (tomcat clover) and *Amsinckia lunaris* (bentflower fiddleneck). Photo credit: Kari Olsen

Seedlings of locally sourced *Lasthenia minor* (goldfields), *Plagiobothrys chorisianus* var. *chorisianus* (Choris's popcorn flower), and *Leptosiphon grandiflorus* var. *dylanae* (large-flowered Linanthus). Photo credit: Kari Olsen



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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CHAPTER



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MILK JUG WINTER SOWING: HOW TO START SEEDS IN A MILK JUG

BY AMY GRANT. GARDENING KNOW HOW

For gardeners, spring can't come soon enough and many of us have been guilty of jumping the gun and starting our seeds way too early inside. A terrific method for starting seeds that can be done earlier is milk jug winter sowing, which is basically sowing seeds in a milk jug that becomes a mini greenhouse. Keep reading to learn about milk jug seed pots.

Sure, you can recycle plastic milk jugs, but a better use for them is to repurpose them for a low-maintenance way to start seeds earlier than you thought possible. The sealed jug acts as a greenhouse that allows the seeds to germinate several weeks ahead of direct sowing.

The plants are sown in their mini greenhouse outside, eliminating the need to harden seedlings off. The seeds also go through a period of stratification which is necessary for some types of seeds to germinate.

Milk jugs are usually the preferred vehicle for this type of sowing, but you may also use any semi-transparent plastic container (apparently the semi-opaque milk containers work as well) that has room for at least 2 inches of soil and at least 4 inches for growth. Some other ideas are juice jugs, strawberry containers, and even rotisserie chicken containers.

Rinse out the milk jug and punch four drainage holes into the bottom. Cut the milk jug horizontally at the bottom of the handle working your way around the circumference; leave an inch or so to act as a hinge at the handle.

Use either a soilless seed starting mix or a potting mix that has been sifted to remove any large chunks of bark, twigs, or rocks and has been amended with perlite or vermiculite. If using a potting mix, make sure it has no fertilizer which can burn the seedlings. The most ideal seed starting medium for milk jug winter sowing is 4 parts screened aged compost to 2 parts perlite or vermiculite, and 2 parts coir.

Fill the bottom of the jug with 2 inches of slightly damp medium. Plant the seeds according to the package instructions. Replace the top of the milk jug and seal it as best you can with tape; packing tape works best. Place the containers in an area of sun outdoors.

Keep an eye on the containers. If temperatures dip, you may want to cover the jugs with a blanket at night. Water the seedlings lightly if they dry out. When temperatures hit 50-60 F., especially if it is sunny, remove the tops of the jugs so the seedlings won't fry. Cover again in the evening.

When the seedlings have produced at least two sets of true leaves, it is time to transplant them into individual containers to allow the roots to grow and then transplant them into the garden.

What to plant in winter milk jugs? Seeds that require cold stratification, hardy perennials and hardy annuals, and many native plants can be started in milk jug seed pots in early to mid-winter.

Cold crops like brassicas, native plants and wildflowers that require short periods of stratification, heirloom tomatoes, and many herbs can be started using this method in late winter through early spring. Tender annuals and summer vegetable crops that require warmer temps to germinate and don't reach maturity until late summer (tomatoes, peppers, basil) can also be started in milk jugs during this time or later.

Information on seed packets [6] will also help you to figure out which seeds should be planted when. 'Direct sow after all danger of frost has passed' becomes code for planting in late winter/early spring, and 'start indoors 3-4 weeks before average last frost' means sow in milk jugs in mid to later winter, while "sow 4-6 weeks before average last frost" indicates planting time in early to mid-winter.

Lastly, but most importantly, remember to clearly label your pots as you sow them with waterproof ink or paint.



Image by Gardening Know How, via Liz Baessler

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 news-



letter 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.

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

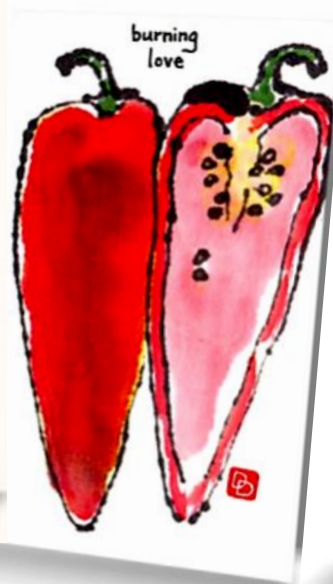
The Gardeners' Club % Suzanne Caron
P.O. Box 3025
Ben Lomond CA 95005

Membership Dues: \$ _____

Gift Membership(s): \$ _____

Extra Contribution for Scholarships, etc. \$ _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

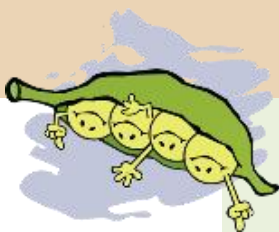


The Japanese folk art of Etagami consists of simple drawings accompanied by a few apt words. I discovered the beautiful Etagami (e= "picture"; tegami= "letter/message") cards and gifts by artist [dosankodebbie](https://www.redbubble.com/people/dosankodebbie/shop/collections=112093) online several years ago.. Debbie is a professional translator and artist who lives in Hokkaido, Japan. Her artwork is stunning and unique, and many of her collections feature fruits, veggies and flowers from the garden, as well as creations from the kitchen. See her works at Red Bubble <https://www.redbubble.com/people/dosankodebbie/shop/collections=112093>. Aren't the cards above perfect for someone you love?

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

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

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



The Gardeners' Club

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