



Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California
July 2025
Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler
lisetula@gmail.com

Whoopee! It is National Ice Cream month, which means it is time for our annual super-creative over-the-top Ice Cream Social! Over the years our Social has grown from a simple time to socialize over a scoop of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry to an extravaganza. It's time to bring your favorite toppings—homemade or store bought, fresh from the garden, farmer's market, your oven, your favorite gourmet haunt or the nearest grocery store.

We love toppings from the garden—fresh fruit or herbs or flowers, cooked syrups, compotes, fruit salads, etc. We love decadence—how many ways are there to serve chocolate? We love the unusual—wasabi peas, potato chips, Fruitos? We love to make “dirt sundaes” in honor of our gardens—crushed oreo cookies, crumbled brownies, toasted coconut “mulch”, gummy worms, etc. Wafers, cookies, minicones, etc. enable us to build architectural sundae wonders.

Bring a friend or a family member to the Social. We'll provide basic ice cream flavors, including a dairy-free option, whipped cream, and maraschino cherries. You are in- bring your favorite toppings—chopped nuts, edible flowers, berries, fruit, herbs, preserves, syrups, crumbles—we encourage



your creativity. Ice cream is very forgiving—try something new! Whether traditional or wild, our creative gardeners always bring the yummiest ice cream toppings.



Join
us!
Thursday
July 10
7:00 pm
Aptos Grange
2555 Mar Vista Dr.



Fruit and Herb Pairings

Fresh fruit and fresh, aromatic herb combinations can elevate ice cream with interesting and complementary flavors. Basil pairs well with strawberries, peaches, and figs. Thyme enhances the flavor of peaches, cherries, and honeydew. Rosemary complements apricots, apples, and citrus fruits like oranges. Mint is a refreshing addition to melons, citrus, pears, kiwi, and berries. Consider the options below—they don't necessarily need ice cream—use in salads, as side dishes, etc.

Strawberries and Basil: This classic pairing offers a sweet and slightly savory combination.

Peaches and Rosemary: The earthy notes of rosemary enhance the sweetness of peaches.

Blueberries and Lavender: The floral lavender adds a delicate touch to the sweetness of blueberries.

Figs and Rosemary: Rosemary's aromatic quality pairs well with the rich, sweet flavor of figs.

Lemon Thyme: Lemon and thyme create a bright, citrusy, and slightly savory flavor. It pairs well with stone fruits like peaches and nectarines

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Lemon Thyme: Lemon and thyme create a bright, citrusy, and slightly savory flavor.

Mint and Pineapple : A refreshing and cooling combination, ideal for hot days.

Pear and Rosemary: Rosemary enhances the delicate sweetness of pears.

Mango and Cilantro: Cilantro adds a bright, herbal note to the tropical sweetness of mango.

blueberry basil syrup

BLUEBERRY | LEMON | BASIL

2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)
3 cups water
2 cups sugar
1/2 tablespoon dried lemon peel, or 3-4 strips of lemon peel from 1 lemon (peel only, ideally no pith)
1 cup, lightly packed basil leaves

Combine berries, water, sugar, and lemon in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain at a simmer for 15 minutes. If any foam gathers on the top of the mixture while simmering, use a spoon to skim it off. Remove the saucepan from heat and stir in the basil leaves. Allow the mixture to steep for another 15 minutes, stirring every few minutes. Strain the mixture through the fine mesh strainer or through cheesecloth positioned in a colander. Transfer strained mixture to air-tight container for storage in the fridge (up to 1 month) or freezer (up to at least 6 mos.) - <https://www.diningwithmcz.com>

Easy Baked Peaches or Nectarines



Light, fresh topping for ice cream—or for pancakes, yogurt, oatmeal, cheesecake, pound cake, or????

14 medium-large fresh peaches ripe but slightly firm (or equivalent amount of nectarines)

1 tablespoon salted butter
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Slice your peaches (not too thin) and place them in a

baking dish. Combine melted butter, syrup, cinnamon, and vanilla. Pour over the fruit and stir gently to combine.

Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the juices are bubbling and the peaches have softened but are still holding their shape. Cool at room temperature for about 15 minutes, this allows the juices to thicken a bit.

Help! It's time for the Ice Cream Social and I didn't make anything! What to bring???

Crumbled anything (donuts, grahams, cookies, ice cream cones); pretzels; cereal (granola, fruit loops, cocoa puffs); a jar of supermarket or gourmet hot fudge, or any other decadent topping; marshmallow fluff; chocolate chips; caramel; gummies; sprinkles; candy (M&M's, peanut butter cups); black sesame seeds; candied or roasted nuts; caramel corn or olive-oil popcorn; wafers; dates; cookies; candied citrus peel; lemon curd; fresh fruit; toasted pepitas; crushed wasabi peas; balsamic vinegar; cocoa nibs; coffee syrup, maple syrup. Surprise us!

Ears are peanut butter cups halved.



Sculpture IS: In the Garden 2025

July 26, 2025, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm,

Location: Sierra Azul Nursery & Gardens

Sculpture IS: In the Garden 2025
Exhibit Dates: June 1 – October 31, 2025

Sierra Azul Nursery & Garden

2660 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville — right across the street from the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds.

Open daily, 10am–5pm. Come wander, relax, and let inspiration bloom! 🌻



The garden is calling! Sculpture IS: In the Garden 2025 returns to Sierra Azul Nursery with over 90 imaginative sculptures by 45 artists and collaborators, thoughtfully curated by Susana Arias, Hedwig Heerschop, William Huffman, and Jeff Rosendale. Explore the beauty of art and nature intertwined throughout the stunning two-acre demonstration gardens.

July Board Meeting — July 28th

The July 28th Board meeting will be at seedwoman Renee Shepherd's Felton home garden. We will meet there, at 5:45 to allow time to walk around for a garden tour. Her address is 7389 West Zayante, Felton. As usual, we will have a potluck dinner to enjoy as we discuss Gardeners' Club business. You don't have to be a Board Member to attend — come and hear our discussions, and to give us you ideas, opinions and questions.





A Delightful and Engaging Farm Dinner in celebration of HGP's Transitional Employment Program at their Santa Cruz Westside organic farm!

Come join us for the most delicious way to support the work of the Homeless Garden Project at a farm-to-table dining experience at their Natural Bridges Farm! Indulge in a 4 course meal and a celebration of sustainability and community. Our fantastic chef for the evening is Chef Katie Reicher from Greens of San Francisco, who will source ingredients from the farm itself as well as from her new cookbook, Seasons of Greens. Katie aims to nourish guests physically, spiritually, and emotionally through her cooking. Our engaging keynote speaker Manjula Martin is author of The Last Fire Season: A Personal and Pyronatural History, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. She is coauthor, with her father, Orin Martin, of Fruit Trees for Every Garden, winner of the American Horticultural Society Book Award. Connect with community, support our unhoused neighbors and savor the flavors of locally grown produce. We'll have live music, local unique beverages and wine options, a farm tour and more! Stay tuned for further updates, including the menu, coming soon.

Buy tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sustain-supper-july-19th-2025-registration-1349095373579?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>



Working in the garden in the heat of summer, it is important to stay hydrated! Try drinking your lunch in the shade.

Recipe and art by Lea Lralj Jager, Chick Peas Vegan Quarterly, Summer 2013



Whether you're new to gardening or looking to deepen your knowledge, the Native Plant Bootcamp offers something for everyone. Visit mbmg.ucanr.edu to register for this free event.



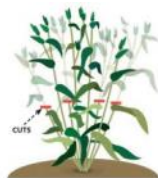
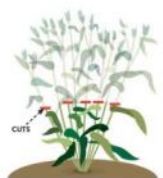
What is the Hampton Hack Back?

(The spread above and this description from Jo Thompson, *The Gardener's Mind*)

It's time for the Hampton Hack Back, when you can cut down early summer perennials like geraniums in order to get more foliage and perhaps even some more flowers. Some of these early summer perennials that respond really well to this hack-back are: Geraniums, nepeta, lupins, acanthus, centranthus, lythrum, salvia nemerosa, campanula, monarda, nepeta, achillea, alchemilla, centaurea, coreopsis, knautia, leucanthemum, oenothera and delphiniums.

It's really hard to bring yourself to do this, but have a go: you need to shear the plants off, nearly to the ground - including most of the leaves. The key thing is to stop the flowers from setting seed, as when they start to do this, they think that their job is done for the year. Afterwards, a good watering and a feed should encourage them to start to consider flowering all over again.

Will you be brave enough?



What's the Deal With the Chelsea Chop?

"Pretty much any gardening book that's worth its salt mentions the Chelsea Chop—but most do only that. The introduction of the concept is usually followed by some variation of this sentence: 'Cut the plants back by a third or half to delay bloom and limit size.' But the how, why, and what are rarely discussed. The Chelsea Chop can be used to great effect if you're trying to create peak season combinations. It often allows you to ensure that plants which don't normally bloom in tandem with each other reach their peak at a similar time. There are several other benefits too, as well as some drawbacks."

The paragraph above is from *Fine Gardening*, which has an article with more detailed description and instructions. Read it at https://www.finegardening.com/article/whats-deal-chelsea-chop?srltid=AfmBOooOu_sqYEwLIC7ufy_8a3MdGvVq0tpbHggvJOJIR_5r1iWHyAOFL3

CAN YOU TOP THIS?
JULY IS NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH.
RISE TO THE CHALLENGE! CREATE AN AMAZING TOPPING AND
BRING IT TO OUR ICE CREAM SOCIAL ON JULY 10



The Gardeners' Club

P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005

President Cherry Thompson, 475-0991

Vice President & Publicity cherrylea@comcast.net

Secretary Vacant

Treasurer ABarclay@aol.com

Membership Suzanne Caron 609-6230

Hospitality Suzanne.bottomline@gmail.com

Refreshments Marge Gregory

Webmaster pmcveigh@baymoon.com

Members-at-Large Joe Thompson

Members-at-Large www.thegardenersclub.org

Members-at-Large lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large lisebixler, 457-2089

Members-at-Large Newsleter Writer/Editor

Members-at-Large lhaveclock@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large Joanna Hall

Members-at-Large 628821

Members-at-Large 566-4553

Members-at-Large Pat McVeigh

Members-at-Large 684-1529

Members-at-Large margareggo-

Members-at-Large r41@gmail.com

Members-at-Large 684-1529

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It's easy-peasy to join our club!

Dues are \$20 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

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

www.etsy.com/shop/curiousprintpattern.