



Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California
APRIL 2026
Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler
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ALL THINGS PROPAGATION: LINDA BEATHAM



"I belong in a greenhouse!"

The above quote is from a few years ago when Linda last visited our Club. But she is a woman of many talents -an avid gardener, educator, landscape designer, horticulturist, sculptor, succulent



expert and painter. So you are just as likely to find her not in a greenhouse but outdoors digging in the soil or in an art or clay studio. She's been a Santa Cruz resident for decades, active in the gardening and arts communities, and many of you have visited her gardens over the years. She had a succulent business that inspired us for while! Because she is so experienced, and such an enthusiastic multiplier of plants, we've asked her to give us a refresher session on all things propagation.



Wanna get all the dirt on propagating more plants? Come to our April meeting!



This art is from article Napa Valley Features article by Penny Pawl titled

"Multiply Your Plants With Propagation", You can read it at <https://open.substack.com/pub/napavalleyfocus/p/multiply-your-plants-with-propagation?>

THURSDAY,
APRIL 9TH 7:00 PM.
APTOS GRANGE
2555 MAR VISTA DR.

THE ART OF NATURE

MARCH 28 - MAY 31, 2026



The Art of Nature Exhibit Returns! Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History, 1305 E Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, 95062

Scientific illustration brings to life the beauty of nature while deepening our knowledge and enriching connections. Explore the diversity of forms and the fine details of the world around us in this annual spring exhibit featuring works from 52 local artists in a variety of mediums. Every year, The Art of Nature continues to reveal new wonders—just like nature itself—offering fresh inspiration through artwork and engaging programs.

FLORA FIRST FRIDAY!!!



(above artwork by Maria Cecelia Freeman, Erin Hunter, Rebecca Botelho)

FLORA FIRST FRIDAY!!! APRIL THIRD— FIVE TO EIGHT PM

Go to the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History for a special First Friday celebrating the Art of Nature exhibition and the beauty of plants.

This month's event is Flora-themed, highlighting the incredible diversity of local plant life and the artists inspired by it.

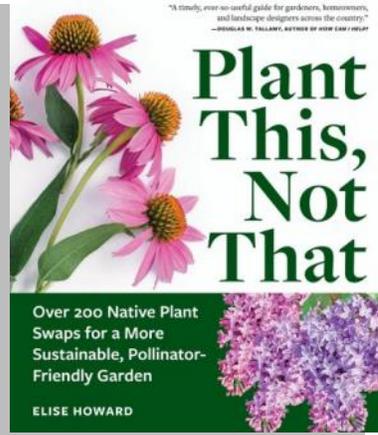
Meet Art of Nature artists, learn about their creative process, and explore the exhibition while connecting with community organizations dedicated to native plants and local ecology. Enjoy an art-filled evening at the Museum with FREE admission, an open bar, food truck, and plenty of time to experience the exhibit after hours.

Event will feature: Art of Nature artists (live demos, artwork, and conversations), California Native Plant Society Norris Center for Natural History...and more!

Come celebrate art, science, and the plants that shape our landscapes.

(

Plant This, Not That: over 200 Native Plant Swaps for a More Sustainable, Pollinator-friendly Garden (Author: Elise Howard)



These days, home gardeners know that many traditional, non-native garden plants—like English ivy, barberry, and burning bush—don't support our bees, butterflies, birds, and other creatures. And that native plants are more likely to thrive, because they

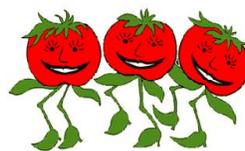
evolved as part of the local ecology, so they often require less fussy maintenance and don't depend on pesticides and fertilizers. But gardeners ready to make the switch may ask: Where do I begin? And how do I find the best native plants for my landscape?

Plant This, Not That considers some of the most common non-native (and often, invasive) plants in North American gardens and suggests substitutions for more beneficial and equally beautiful natives. Each native plant listing includes a full-color photo, along with sun, water, and soil requirements; ornamental features (including bloom time and color and whether the plant has berries, fruit, and/or fall color); and the pollinators known to depend on and support that plant. Accompanying maps show every plant's locally native range, down to the county level. The book also features an overview of how native plants contribute to our local ecosystems, where to shop for them, advice on maintaining a mostly native garden, and resources to learn more about native planting.

Recipe for tomato planting shared years ago by Cynthia of Love Apple Farms.

Ten Foot Tomato Treat
(Recipe by Love Apple Farms)

- ½ cup of fish meal
- 2 aspirin tablets
- ¼ cup (3 or 4) crushed egg shells
- ¼ cup of bone meal
- ½ cup of an all-purpose organic granular fertilizer 4-6-3
- ¼ cup of pure worm castings



Growing Tomatoes in Santa Cruz County: A Complete Guide

By Adrienne Gaughan.

Plant tomatoes in Santa Cruz County from mid-April through early June, depending on your microclimate. According to UC Cooperative Extension, tomatoes require daytime temperatures of 70 to 85 degrees and nighttime temperatures above 55 degrees for fruit set. In coastal areas, choose fog-tolerant varieties like Sungold and Early Girl. In warmer inland valleys, most varieties thrive, including large beefsteaks and heirlooms.

Our Mediterranean climate delivers the warm days tomatoes crave, but our coastal fog, cool nights, and wildly variable microclimates mean that generic California tomato advice often falls flat here. What works in Sacramento or Los Angeles won't necessarily work in Aptos or Boulder Creek. The gardener in sunny Scotts Valley faces different challenges than someone growing in foggy westside Santa Cruz.

The good news: once you understand our local quirks, tomatoes become one of the most rewarding crops you can grow. This guide covers everything Santa Cruz County gardeners need to know, from variety selection to harvest, with specific advice for our unique growing conditions.

Check out Ambitious Harvest, a coaching and educational resource by Adrienne Gaughan. The rest of this article and many more can be found at <https://www.ambitiousharvest.com/learn/growing-tomatoes-santa-cruz>. More about Ambitious Harvest: "Local gardening knowledge matters! Generic gardening advice wasn't written for our fog, our dry summers, or our mild winters that let us grow nearly year-round. What works in the Midwest or the Pacific Northwest often fails here. Ambitious Harvest is your guide to what actually works in Santa Cruz County and the greater Bay Area: the right varieties, timing, and water-wise techniques that make sense for California."

What you'll find: grow guides written for Santa Cruz County microclimates; periodic newsletter and growing tips;

Timing help: what to plant now, what to prep, what to avoid

Practical tools: printable calendars, checklists, and selectors

Water-wise and fire-wise strategies that match local realities

Local resources for plants, soil, and trusted community programs

A live dashboard with real-time conditions and planning support



<https://www.ambitiousharvest.com/>



Joint Sale! Cabrillo College Spring Plant Sale with the Santa Cruz County CA Native Plants Sale



Held jointly with the Santa Cruz California Native Plant Society Sale

- Water-wise Perennials & Shrubs
- Organic Veggie Starts
- Annuals and Color
- Native Plants
- Houseplants, Succulents, Cacti & more!

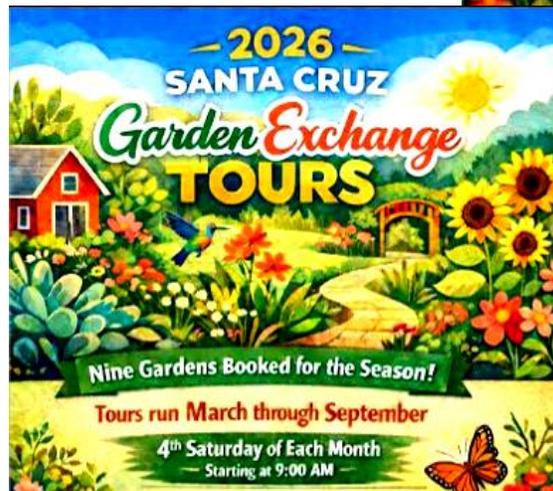
Pottery
Botanical Art
Books
Jewelry



CNPS Santa Cruz to host Spring Native Plant Sale

The sale will feature a wide selection of California native plants suitable for local gardens. A list of available plants will be posted online before the event. Organizers encourage attendees to arrive early, as plants often sell out. The event is held jointly with Cabrillo Horticulture. A shuttle will be available for transportation to the sale location.

Parking reminder: Visitors are asked to park in lower campus lots and take the shuttle or walk to the site so vendors can use the limited parking available near the horticulture area. Information is available at chapters: cnps.org/santacruz.



Growing Strong: Vegetable Garden Planting & Care

Apr 18, 2026 10:00am to 12:00pm

Pinto Lake County Park Demonstration Garden, 757 Green Valley Rd
Watsonville, CA 95076

Dig into the basics of growing your own vegetables with Monterey Bay Master Gardeners. In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to prepare garden beds, select seeds and transplants suited to our coastal climate, and get them into the ground successfully. We'll cover essential early-care practices — including watering, thinning, weeding, and fertilizing — so your vegetables get off to a strong, healthy start. Whether you're planting your first seed or refining an existing plot, you'll leave with clear, practical steps to grow thriving food at home.

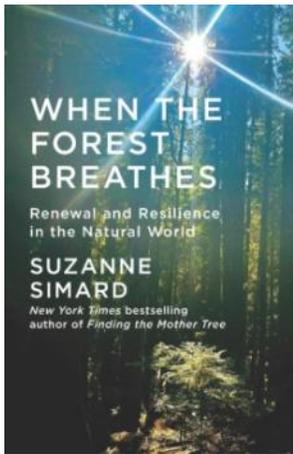
Free. Register at <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/growing-strong-vegetable-garden-planting-and-care>.

Explore Beautiful Local Gardens
Share Ideas & Connect with Fellow Gardeners
Learn Tips for Santa Cruz Growing!

Garden Host	Tour Date & Time
Cherry	3/28 @ 9:00 AM
Susan	4/25 @ 9:00 AM
Linda	5/23 @ 9:00 AM
Cabrillo Cottage Farms	5/23 @ 10:30 AM
Kim	6/26 @ 9:00 AM
Alex	7/25 @ 9:00 AM
Birdsong Orchards	7/25 @ 10:30 AM
Tom	8/22 @ 9:00 AM
Jesselyn	9/26 @ 9:00 AM

Tour Location Information

Please attend the Santa Cruz Garden Exchange at 8:00 AM on the morning of the tour to receive the garden location for that day.
For questions or additional information, please email SantaCruzGardenExchange@gmail.com



SUZANNE SIMARD

Bestselling author of *Finding the Mother Tree*

APRIL 4TH AT 2:00

At the Cowell Ranch Hay Barn

BOOKSHOP
SANTA CRUZ



THE
HUMANITIES
INSTITUTE
UC SANTA CRUZ



Suzanne Simard | WHEN THE FOREST BREATHES

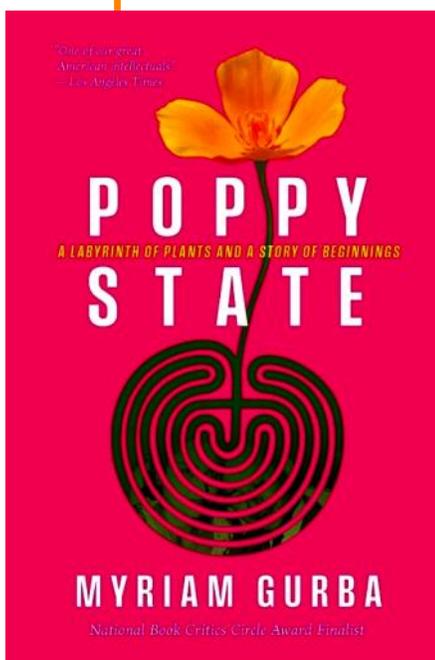
Bookshop Santa Cruz offsite event, cosponsored by the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum & Botanic Garden and The Humanities Institute UC Santa Cruz. It will take place at the Cowell Ranch Hay Barn.

Raised in a family of loggers committed to sensible forest stewardship, trailblazing ecologist Suzanne Simard has watched as timber companies leave forests at higher risk for wildfires, water crises, and plant and animal extinction. But her research has the potential to chart a new course. The

forest, she reveals, is a symphony of finely honed cycles of regeneration—from mushrooms breaking down logs to dying elder trees passing their genetic knowledge to younger ones—that hold the key to protecting our forests. Working closely with local Indigenous communities, whose models of responsible forestry have been largely dismissed, Simard examines how human interventions—particularly destruction of the overstory's mother trees—endanger new growth and longevity. If we can honor the tools that trees have honed for sharing intergenerational wisdom, she argues, we can protect these sacred places for many years to come.

As she considers how older living things facilitate the conditions for new growth to flourish, Simard faces parallel rhythms of loss and regeneration in her own life, watching her two daughters grow into adults and savoring her final days with her ailing mother. Animated by wonder for our forests and the intricate practices of caretaking that have long sustained them, *When the Forest Breathes* is a vital reminder of all the natural world has to teach us about adaptability, resilience, and community.

For more information, and to purchase tickets and/or books, go to <https://bookshopsantacruz.com/suzanne-simard>



Poppy State: A Labyrinth of Plants and a Story of Beginnings (2025) by Myriam Gurba is a genre-bending nonfiction collection combining memoir, botany, California history, and social commentary. Structured as a "labyrinth" or garden, Gurba explores personal memory, indigenous knowledge, and resilience through her relationship with plants.

From the publisher: "In addition to serving as structural anchors, 20 featured plants will function as portals into Gurba's life, summoning memory, magic, nightmare, myth, indigenous knowledge, cultural critique, social commentary, pedagogical philosophy, and history. Each vignette will focus on one of California's native plants, including: California live oak, thistle, golden poppy, grape, California flannelbush, Monterrey cypress, and Monterrey pine. A few non-natives, such as boysenberry, orange, and water hyacinth, might also appear. The book will explore the relationship with Gurba's father—who she calls a former "Chippie" (Chicano hippie) turned anxious workaholic, and who introduced Gurba to native plants as a child via their California xeriscape garden—and how her deeply ingrained knowledge of plants has grounded her in every aspect of her life"



MULCH MADNESS

You happen to be one of the many ground-nesting bees that looks for garden sites for digging small tunnels where you will lay your eggs in individually-made brood cells that you will provision with pollen and some nectar. But something has happened in recent years to those favored bare dirt sites that makes your task much harder and oftentimes impossible. MULCH MADNESS has arrived and has become a highly promoted “eco-friendly” method for suppressing weeds, conserving water, and unknowingly discouraging ground-nesting bees! Equally bad for ground nesters is BPI, or better known in the trade as Black Plastic Insanity, that is, the laying down of plastic products over bare soil to accomplish the same goals as MM. So what is the big deal about bare dirt and bees? Between 60-70% of the



native CA bee species dig tunnels in soil and provision a series of nest cells, each of which will contain one new bee offspring. To do this the female must find a patch of bare dirt, excavate a tunnel and then make repeated visits between the tunnel entrance and flowers for their pollen and nectar. If a nest-searching female encounters 1-2 inches of mulch or plastic where there should be bare dirt, she will not excavate through this material and will leave in search of an appropriate site. When a high number of gardeners in an area mulch or plasticate their soil, this can have a negative impact on bee populations. In a recent casual survey of 200 gardeners in the SFBA from 40-60% said they were mulchers!

To put MM and BPI into context, consider all the other challenges that urban bees face. There are numerous natural enemies of bees that include hungry birds, spiders, and a variety of predatory insects. One could then add the high number of exotic plant types (about 95%) that urbanites use in CA gardens that are of little or no food value to bees native bees prefer native plants over exotics by a very high margin). Then come all the chemicals that urbanites use to control or enhance this or that problem, many of which are toxic to bees. Finally, MM and BPI get added to the list of all the other areas in urban environments that are covered: pavement, concrete, building footprints, lawns, etc. It is amazing that bees co lonize urban areas. If they only had the knowledge that we have!

So, what to do about MM or BPI? In our small experimental bee-plant garden at the UC Berkeley Oxford Tract our main goal is to develop practices that encourage native bees. We don't use synthetic chemicals; we plant lots of attractive natives and a few attractive exotics; and we don't use mulch or plastic. We also hand-weed and water.

Many home gardeners many not be able to adopt all of our bee-friendly practices. So, our recommendation is to set goals and keep synthetic disruptions at a minimum if you want to encourage interesting wildlife in



your garden. In the case of mulch and plastic, if you must use it, do so sparingly, leaving about 50% of your garden in bare dirt – for the bees and other useful organisms.

Learn more about The Urban Bee Lab at <http://www.helpabee.org/>

**Earth Day Santa Cruz,
Saturday, April 18 from
11:30 AM – 4:00 PM E**



Earth Day 2026 will be held at beautiful Downtown Santa Cruz on Cooper St, Pacific and

Abbott Square. Local businesses and organizations will gather for a day of fun and environmentally focused activities and education.

Enjoy live music from SambaDá, FREE face painting and photo booth fun, flower crown making, hands-on Earth Day activities, and eco-friendly vendors. Kids can join the Passport Program, collecting stamps at 8 booths and trading a completed passport for a FREE scoop of ice cream or a cookie.

Spring Plant Sale— Center for Agroecology

April 25 @ 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Hay Barn, UCSC

Stock your garden with premium organic seedlings while supporting student education! Browse a huge variety of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and strawberries—all grown by UCSC Farm staff, students, and volunteers in our greenhouses. Proceeds support the Center for Agroecology's hands-on learning programs.

UC Master Gardeners Annual Online Spring Plant Sale

...Featuring seasonal herbs and vegetables ready for the garden as well as water-wise plants, including California native plants and shrubs, carefully selected bulbs, pollinator-friendly plants, a variety of salvias, succulents, grasses and trees! Plant list coming soon! Our online nursery will open Monday, April 27th and will be open until midnight Sunday, May 3rd. Plant pick up location: Pinto Lake COUNTY Park in Watsonville. <https://ucanr.edu/site/uc-master-gardeners-monterey-santa-cruz-counties/2026-spring-plant-sale>

It is membership renewal time! Annual dues, which include all benefits, are only \$20.00, due by January 1st. The membership year lasts through the end of December, 2026. 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. And...with gift-giving season almost 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!

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 Cabrillo College students who are working towards careers in horticulture. Because our dues are so low and we’d like to be able to continue to give scholarships as needed, we are giving you the option of making an additional gift with your membership. Thank you!

Your Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

How would you like your newsletter? E-mail (FULL COLOR!!!) **THE GREEN OPTION...SAVE TREES!**

OR

Paper (Black & white; postal service)



Gift Membership

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ Email: _____

Gift Membership Newsletter — Check ONE:

E-mail (FULL COLOR!!!) (the green option...save trees)

OR

Paper (Black & white; via Snail Mail)



Enclose check for \$20 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	\$ _____



APRIL FOOL?

The Gardeners' Club

P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005

President Cherry Thompson, 475-0991

Members-at-Large Debbie Kindle

Plant Table poppy-54@live.com

Secretary Lupe Allen, 247-2705

Members-at-Large lypea@ucsc.edu

Refreshments aneymark@hotmail.com

Treasurer George & Evelyn Zhovrebhoff

Membership zhovrebhoff@aol.com

Hospitality Marge Gregory

Members-at-Large 684-1529

Members-at-Large margereg@rcv41@gmail.com

Members-at-Large Pat McVeigh

Members-at-Large 566-4553

Members-at-Large pmcveigh@baymoon.com

Members-at-Large lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large Lise Bixler, 457-2089

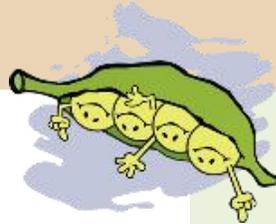
Members-at-Large jhaveclock@sbcglobal.net

Members-at-Large Newsletter Writer/Editor

Members-at-Large www.thegardenersclub.org

Webmaster

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.