



Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club
Santa Cruz County,
California

August 2026

Writer/Editor: Lise Bixler
lisetula@gmail.com

SIMPLY SUCCULENTS: AN EVENING CREATING ARRANGEMENTS

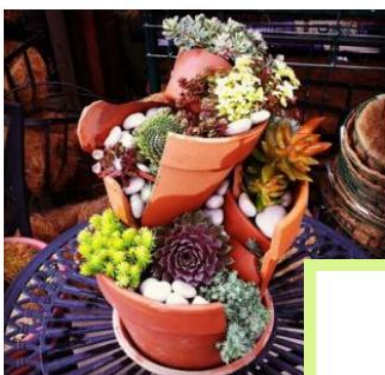
Most of us in our club share an enthusiasm for succulents, and welcome the opportunity to acquire new ones and ideas for using them. We've decided to spend a meeting sharing and trading some that we've got, planting them and sharing arranging inspirations.

Bring a dish or bowl or planter or small pot, or an item you'd like to upcycle as a planter, to hold your succulent arrangement. You might want to bring a favorite trowel or snip. Bring whatever succulent cuttings or plants you'd like to share or use. We will provide succulent soil, and Board members will bring some of the succulents we'll be using – you all bring others! Some of us will



collections of decorative items we can use to glamorize or funky-ize our arrangements (buttons, toys, marbles, colored gravel, rocks, driftwood, coins, old drawer knobs, mosaic tiles, broken pottery pieces, or???) Bring it!

Looking forward to an evening of fun. Plant table will happen as usual.



Re-purposing broken pots

keep our arrangements simple, but some of us like to making junk-ulents or funky-ulent arrangements! Do you have a vintage treasures you'd like to pot up, give away or trade (old file boxes, colanders, frying pans, rusty tool, glasses, tin cans, cake pans, tea cups, cheese grater, or???) Bring it on! Have

Join us! Thursday
August 13, 7 p.m.
Apflos Grange Hall



Funky, junky succulent arrangement

"Bee-ing" Differently



I took a break from gardening to go to an event at the Capitola Library, a screening and discussion of the film "My Garden of a Thousand Bees". I am so glad I did...it has profoundly changed the way I see what is in my garden, what is all around me. It has motivated me to try out new ways of noticing, of paying attention. When I saw bees in my garden before experiencing this film, I usually just congratulated myself on having an environment that was good for pollinators. Now I stop, slow down, ponder, ask questions, wonder. Probably the best thing about my new way of "bee-ing" is the slowing down...letting go of my garden task list long enough to allow me to really see and hear the subtleties of the wonderful nature all around me.

I urge all of you to watch the film when you can. It is not only a great story with remarkable close-up photography, but you can also hear all of the sounds the bees and their wings are making – an incredible soundtrack. Free streaming is available on PBS Nature and the mobile/smart TV PBS App, and, for some subscribers, on Amazon Prime. You can also see the film with lots of educational extras at <https://www.mygardenofathousandbees.com/>. Also, a great guide to start "bee-ing", including photographs of common bees and bee mimics you might see, is Lily Williams' article <https://lilywilliamsart.com/2021/03/03/bee-ing-a-guide-to-spotting-native-bees/>.

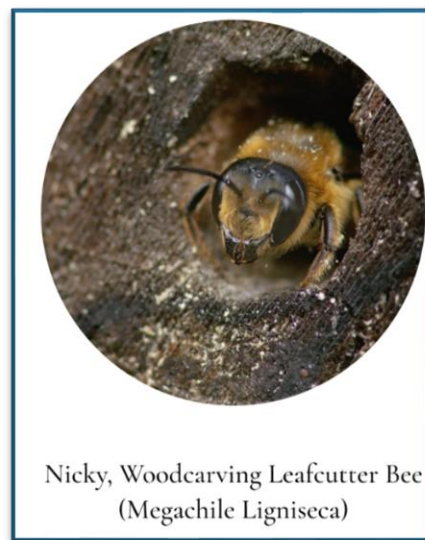
My Garden of a Thousand Bees



Locked down during the coronavirus pandemic, My Garden of a Thousand Bees follows acclaimed wildlife filmmaker Martin Dohrn as he sets out to record all the bee species in his tiny urban garden in Bristol, England. Filming with one-of-a-kind lenses he forged at his kitchen table, he catalogues more than 60 different species, from Britain's largest bumblebees to scissor bees the size of a mosquito. Over long months,

Dohrn observes how differences in behavior set different species apart. He eventually gets so close to the bees he can identify individuals by sight, documenting life at their level as we have never seen it before.

Viewers will marvel at moments timely captured in My Garden of a Thousand Bees, such as bees laying tiny eggs preparing for the next generation, green-fanged spiders feasting on male flower bees and a female yellow-faced bee attacking a Gasteruption wasp to protect her nest. Other fascinating behavior featured in the program includes two male bees fighting each other over a female, different species of bees competing over territory and one busy bee building a nest with a shell and hundreds of sticks. Intrigued by the intelligence of one particular wood-carving leafcutter bee, Dohrn dubs her "Nicky" and sees life at her level as she leaves a lasting legacy in the garden.



Nicky, Woodcarving Leafcutter Bee
(Megachile Ligniseca)

Recipes are Stories

"I read recipes like others turn to poetry or study sacred texts. Recipes are stories of past, present, and possible future gatherings. At their best, they are seasonal markers that ground me in time and place
-Lorene Edwards Forkner, Newsletter
"Cultivating Color: tending a good & delicious life."

https://lorene2022.substack.com/p/recipes-are-stories?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

The 2026 Zucchini Story

Most of us who grow vegetables have zucchini overload stories. The giant zucchini season is upon us. At the Ice Cream Social, Joanna Hall astounded us with a delicious ice cream topping, zingy and incredibly tasty. The mystery ingredient? Zucchini! Here's the recipe.



ZUCCHINI GINGER LEMON MARMALADE

(Only makes 16 oz. marmalade so can double or triple)

2 cups grated zucchini
2 lemons
2 cups sugar
2 inches fresh grated ginger
1tsp cinnamon optional
1/4tsp nutmeg optional

Rinse lemons zucchini and ginger and dry
Peel the thin yellow skin from lemons and finely chop in slivers.
Juice lemons and set aside pips
Slice, pith and place with pips in muslin cloth or bag. Tie.

Grate zucchini and unpeeled ginger.
Place lemon skin, juice, zucchini, ginger and sugar in a heavy bottomed pan.
(Remember the jam will boil and rise so use a larger pan.)
Bring to boil as you stir. Cook on medium heat 15-20 mins.
Wrinkle test or use a thermometer. Set is 220F.
Add cinnamon and nutmeg. Enjoy – yum!

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August Meeting - Monterey Bay Area Cactus and Succulent Society

August 16, 2026

PLANT PHOTOGRAPHY

Presented by Jann Lepson

Corralitos Grange Hall #487

165 Little Corral Way

Watsonville, CA 95076



Jann won two prizes last year at the annual Cactus and Succulent Society of America photo contest. Left: 2nd Place, Stapelia surrecta. Right: Honorable Mention, Monathes wilpretti.

Join us every 3rd Sunday of the month for informative and fun meetings There is plenty of parking near the hall and the building is ADA accessible.
Doors open at 11:30am. Bring your own lunch starts at 12:00pm.

Meeting starts at 12:30pm. There is always an amazing plant raffle and other goodies!

Biodiversity in Urban Gardens Initiative

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) announced the launch of the Biodiversity in Urban Gardens (BUG) Initiative, a two-year effort that links community science, public policy, and civic action to foster biodiversity in urban landscapes.

“By learning about the relationship between native plants and wildlife, we hope to unlock new insights on the crucial role native plants have in our ecosystems,” said Lila Higgins, director of Education and Horticulture at CNPS. “Urban ecosystems are often overlooked when it comes to biodiversity, yet they are rich in wildlife, as anyone who’s ever observed birds or butterflies in cities can attest. With 94% of Californians living in urban areas, we need to choose the plants that best support life there.”

With the launch of BUG, CNPS is inviting members of the public to join BUG community science projects to document native plants and wildlife in the urban environment.

A statewide community science study: BUG participants across California will document the native plants and native wildlife they see in native-plant dominant gardens through simple observations uploaded to iNaturalist. This project is open to anyone who is interested and has a smartphone or digital camera and can download the iNaturalist app. Instructions are provided, so prior knowledge of iNaturalist is not necessary.



How to get involved:

1. Find California native plants. Find native plants growing around your home or neighborhood.
2. Look for native insects, birds, lizards, and mammals or other animals you see with California native plants. We want to see any native wildlife you see with California native plants.
3. Take photos of the native animals you see on, in, under, or around native plants, and upload them to the iNaturalist app.

Download the free iNaturalist app in the Apple or Google store and create your account at [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).

Join the two BUG projects on iNaturalist:

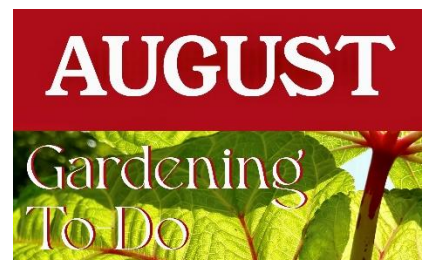
Biodiversity in Urban Gardens:
California Home & Neighborhood
Gardens · iNaturalist

Biodiversity in Urban Gardens:
California Public Gardens ·
iNaturalist

Observations made in California public gardens that are already part of the BUG project will automatically get uploaded to the Biodiversity in Urban Gardens: California Public Gardens · iNaturalist project..

For observations you make at home, in neighborhoods, or anywhere else in urban habitats, you will need to join the Biodiversity in Urban Gardens: California Home & Neighborhood Gardens · iNaturalist project and then manually add your observations.

Sign up or learn more about getting involved in the Biodiversity in Urban Gardens Initiative at cnps.org/bug.



Plant bearded irises, or divide the ones you’ve got. Irises need to be divided every 3 to 5 years to prevent overcrowding and encourage blooming.

Sow seeds of fall- and winter-flowering plants (calendula, Iceland poppy, pansy, primrose, stock, etc.)

Keep fertilizing those tomatoes (low-nitrogen fertilizer).

Summer pruning for deciduous fruit trees like apples and pears is best done now. It opens the canopy to let in sunlight, controls vigorous growth, helps develop fruit buds for the next season and improves air circulation to prevent fungal issues. It is also time to prune cherry and apricot trees.

You can plant cool-season crops to harvest in fall and winter. Good choices include seeds or transplants for broccoli, kale, spinach, carrots, beets, lettuce, Swiss chard, and snap peas.

Don’t overwater! Excessive watering can be a problem even during prolonged dry spells. A condition known as root rot develops, and marigolds, verbenas, hollies, boxwoods, azaleas and rhododendrons are some of the most sensitive. It can be confusing...people see plants that are wilted and yellowing, with stunted growth, and they naturally think the problem is lack of water — so they water more! Unfortunately, the causes of root rot, a few species of fungi, are very aggressive pathogens that thrive in wet soil.



The Time to Order Garlic is NOW

Popular hardneck and softneck strains sell out weeks before autumn.

Preorder to get the cultivars you want, especially heirloom and specialty ones, which are in limited supply. Preordering garlic times delivery right: vendors mail the seed garlic when local weather is good for outdoor planting. Some garlic growers say that orders are filled in the order received, and earlier orders generally get the larger bulbs. In our climate, planting in mid to late October is ideal, which will give you time to prechill your cloves before planting.

Prechilling Garlic - Vernalization

Garlic is a popular fall crop for home gardeners and market growers alike, valued for its strong flavor, health benefits, and long storage life. But what if you live in a warmer climate, where winter temperatures are not consistently cold enough for garlic to grow properly? The good news is that you can still produce high-quality garlic by using a process called vernalization.

Vernalization is the exposure of garlic cloves to cold temperatures before planting. This process copies the natural cold period that garlic would normally experience in winter, ensuring that the plants will form full bulbs correctly. If you live in USDA Zones 9 and above (or some warmer Zone 8 areas with mild winters), vernalization is a crucial first step to success. Garlic is a cool-season crop that requires a period of cold to trigger bulb formation. Without this cold exposure, garlic may only produce leaves and fail to split into multiple cloves. Research tells us that garlic typically needs 6 to 8

weeks of exposure to temperatures between 32°F and 50°F to start proper bulb development. In colder regions, winter naturally provides this chilling period. In warmer zones, gardeners must simulate it.

How to Vernalize Garlic

Step 1: Prepare the Garlic Cloves
Select healthy, disease-free garlic heads from a trusted source.

Separate the cloves just before vernalization, leaving the papery skins intact. Avoid using small or damaged cloves, as they may not perform well.

Step 2: Cold Treatment

Place the cloves in a mesh bag or paper bag for airflow. Store them in a refrigerator—never the freezer—at 34–40°F (1–4°C) for 6 to 8 weeks. This is a reliable method when natural winter temperatures for your growing zone are insufficient.

Step 3: Humidity Management:

Use breathable containers (paper or mesh bags). Avoid sealed plastic.

Consider adding slightly damp peat moss, vermiculite, or coconut coir to maintain balanced humidity.

Check weekly and air out if condensation appears. Discard any soft or moldy cloves.

Sprouting in the Fridge? This is not a failure! Pre-sprouted cloves often establish quickly in soil. Handle them gently to protect the new growth.

Mold: Remove any affected cloves and improve airflow or reduce moisture.

Drying Out: If cloves shrivel, introduce a slightly damp medium to the bag—but avoid excess moisture.

Step 4: Planting After Vernalization

After about 6 to 8 weeks, plant the cloves 2 inches deep and 4–6 inches apart, pointy end up, in late fall to early winter (depending on region). Mulch heavily with straw or leaves to insulate soil and conserve moisture.

UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology

You're invited to our Farm to Fork Benefit Dinner at the UC Santa Cruz Farm on Saturday, August 29. Enjoy a reception and benefit dinner on the farm followed by dancing in the Hay Barn! This event will feature music, appetizers, tours, and local beer and wine followed by a seasonally-focused, locally-sourced meal featuring produce from the farm and local partners. As the sun sets, head down to the Hay Barn for music, dancing, and dessert. <https://eventreg.ucsc.edu/en/8c5uR8G7/farm-to-fork-2026-5a4hKa4n6tv/overview>





Monterey Bay Iris Society Annual Rhizome Sales

The Monterey Bay Iris Society will hold its annual big iris rhizome sale on Aug. 1, but shoppers can still choose from a large selection of healthy, member-grown tall bearded iris rhizomes on two additional dates. The prices are \$5 each or 10 for \$40.

Additional sales will be held Aug. 8 at the Aptos Farmers Market at Cabrillo College and Aug. 15 at the Westside Farmers Market, 2716 Mission St. in Santa Cruz (opposite the old Wrigley’s building). Early arrival is recommended for the best selection.

For information, visit montereybayiris.org.

Don't give up. You never know what's possible between a rock and a hard place.



[Carol J Michel](http://caroljmichel.substack.com/)
<https://caroljmichel.substack.com/> Diary of a Midwest Garden

The Gardeners' Club

P.O. Box 3025, Ben Lomond CA 95005

President
Cherry Thompson, 475-0991
cherrylea@comcast.net

Vice President & Publicity
Vacant

Secretary
April Barclay, 688-7656
ABarclay@aol.com

Treasurer
VACANT

Membership
Suzanne Caron 609-6230
Suzannebottomline@gmail.com

Hospitality
Joanna Hall
628821
jhaveclock@sbcglobal.net

Newsletter Writer/Editor
Lise Bixler, 457-2089
lisebixler@sbcglobal.net

www.thegardenersclub.org

Members-at-Large
Debbie Kindle
poppy-54@live.com

Plant Table
Lupe Allen, 247-2705
lupea@ucsc.edu

Refreshments
Marge Gregory
684-1529
margereggo-ry41@gmail.com

Member-at-Large
Pat McVeigh
566-4553
pmcveigh@baymoon.com

Webmaster
www.thegardenersclub.org

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.