



# Into the Garden

The Gardeners' Club  
Santa Cruz County,  
California

FEBRUARY 2026

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## SUCCESS WITH SWEET PEAS WITH RENEE SHEP-



*"I adore annual sweet peas and I think that their exquisite perfume, ruffled, winged blossoms and treasury of glowing colors make them the most irresistible and memorable garden flowers."*

But aren't sweet peas hard to grow? No, says seedswoman Renee Shepherd, who will be our special guest at our February meeting. Renee's presentation will be on cultivating sweet peas, sharing tips on growing, selecting varieties and getting the most fragrant, colorful blooms from your garden. She says the biggest challenge will be not growing them, but choosing from the many colors and varieties available! Renee's Garden seeds alone has 26 varieties. The sky's the limit when it comes to color and styles. The elegant flowers of garden sweet peas come in a wide, wonderful color range, from the softest pastels to rich, regal, deep hues. Most selections are tall vines that can reach a height of up to 8 feet in a single season. There are also a few short, nonclimbing, border-type plants that grow to just 2 to 3 feet high. For containers, there are diminutive dwarf window-box sweet peas, which cascade and reach 8 to 10 inches long.

Renee will gift every attendee to the meeting a free packet of sweet pea seeds.



**THURSDAY,  
FEB. 12TH 7:00 PM.  
APTOS GRANGE  
2555 MAR VISTA DR.**



YouTube tutorial by artist Lindsay Weirich at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJQoEAPqWBc>



# Honoring Our Relatives

*A series of events inspiring love between plants and people*

## Amah Mutsun Botanical Illustrations

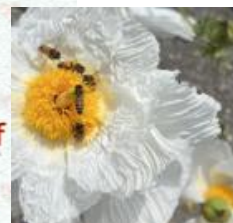


Artwork by: Sabella Cordova  
Amah Mutsun Tribal Steward

An exhibition featuring illustrations of culturally important plants by Amah Mutsun tribal members and UC Santa Cruz student artists

**Opening Reception**  
**Friday, February 13th**  
**Santa Cruz Museum**  
**of Art & History**  
**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

More event  
details here:



February 21—  
9:30 to 11:30am  
Cabrillo College  
Horticulture  
Center, 6500  
Soquel Drive,  
Aptos. Free.

UC Master Gardeners of Monterey & Santa Cruz Counties Home Gardener Series Class.

Master Gardener Claire Witherspoon will share specific plants and planting strategies to help create a more pollinator-friendly garden for native bees and other local pollinators. The class includes a 45-minute lecture followed by hands-on learning activities in the Cabrillo Horticulture gardens.

## The Teachings of Plants



Sage LaPena, a mixed-blood Nomtipom and Nomsus Wintu from the high country of the Trinity River, is an herbalist trained in both traditional and western protocols. She manages the Healing Ways Department at the Sacramento Native American Health Center.

A public symposium with keynote speaker Sage LaPena and an all-indigenous speaker panel focused on living in kinship with plants

**Saturday, February 14th**  
**UC Santa Cruz Hay Barn**

**10:30-12:30 Career mentoring**  
**(students only)**  
**1:00-4:30 Speakers, tea, and**  
**participatory art**  
**(free admission,**  
**open to all)**

More event  
details here:



**SOIL 101- FREE CLASS, FEB, 28TH**  
**10:00 AM - 11:00 AM-**  
Mountain Feed & Farm Supply, 9550 CA-9, Ben Lomond. Join Kerri Gardener from Gardener & Bloome Soils. Come learn about the amazing world of soil and how to boost your gardens health and productivity this season! Clay soil vs. sandy soil, feeding and amending, mulching and compost application.. RSVP at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScLPmPqZiu37UNMUGtBBbG\\_Nctk0HQHoMo7MYG2i-2wriAZw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScLPmPqZiu37UNMUGtBBbG_Nctk0HQHoMo7MYG2i-2wriAZw/viewform)

## JUMP START SPRING AT THE FELTON LIBRARY!

### Starting from Seed - The Basics



Seeds are potent little packages of potential, holding the entire future of your garden. Whether you are a first-time grower or a longtime steward of the land, join us for an inspiring session dedicated to the art of getting things growing! Led by **UC Master Gardener Delise Weir**, this workshop covers everything you need to know to launch a thriving warm-season garden in our region. We will dive into: **Best Practices:** Master the essentials of sowing, cultivating healthy seedlings, and successful transplanting, including some helpful tips and tricks. **Hands-on Skills:** Sow your own seeds to take home along with a year round growing guide for the Santa Cruz Bay area. Participants will pot-up seedlings and sow seeds to take home and grow for the coming season. Additional seeds will be available courtesy of the **Felton Library Friends**. 6121 Gushee Street, Felton.





Time to whack back your buddleia. Prune them hard, low down, even to the base; believe it or not, they will come back.

February is the best month to prune rose bushes, and you can go to Alladin Nursery to learn about pruning on February 21 10:00 am - 11:00 am Taught by ARS Certified Consulting Rosarians, come learn about rose pruning practices and procedures, pruners and tools, safety, IPM (Integrated Pest Management), fertilizers, and more! Attendees are welcome to bring in their own rose plants for pruning and additional tips on proper care. Class is free. 2905 Freedom Boulevard, Watsonville.



Got a deciduous shrub that is in the wrong place? Now, while it is dormant, you can finally transplant it to where it belongs!



After your snowdrops have flowered, divide any large clumps and pop them in another part of the garden.

You'll create new colonies of them.



Feeling winter gloom? Think of summer fruit! Strawberries thrive in our climate—is this a year you'll try growing them? Bare root strawberry plants are in the nurseries this month. Later in the year, potted plants will be available but the selection and the price will be much



Time for your last dormant spray for fruit trees to control insects and diseases (watch out, peach curl!). Optimal timing: Valentine's Day (before buds open). Apply oil or fungicide (copper, sulfur, or dormant oil) on dry, calm days when temperatures are above 35 degrees and no rain is expected for 24 hours.



University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

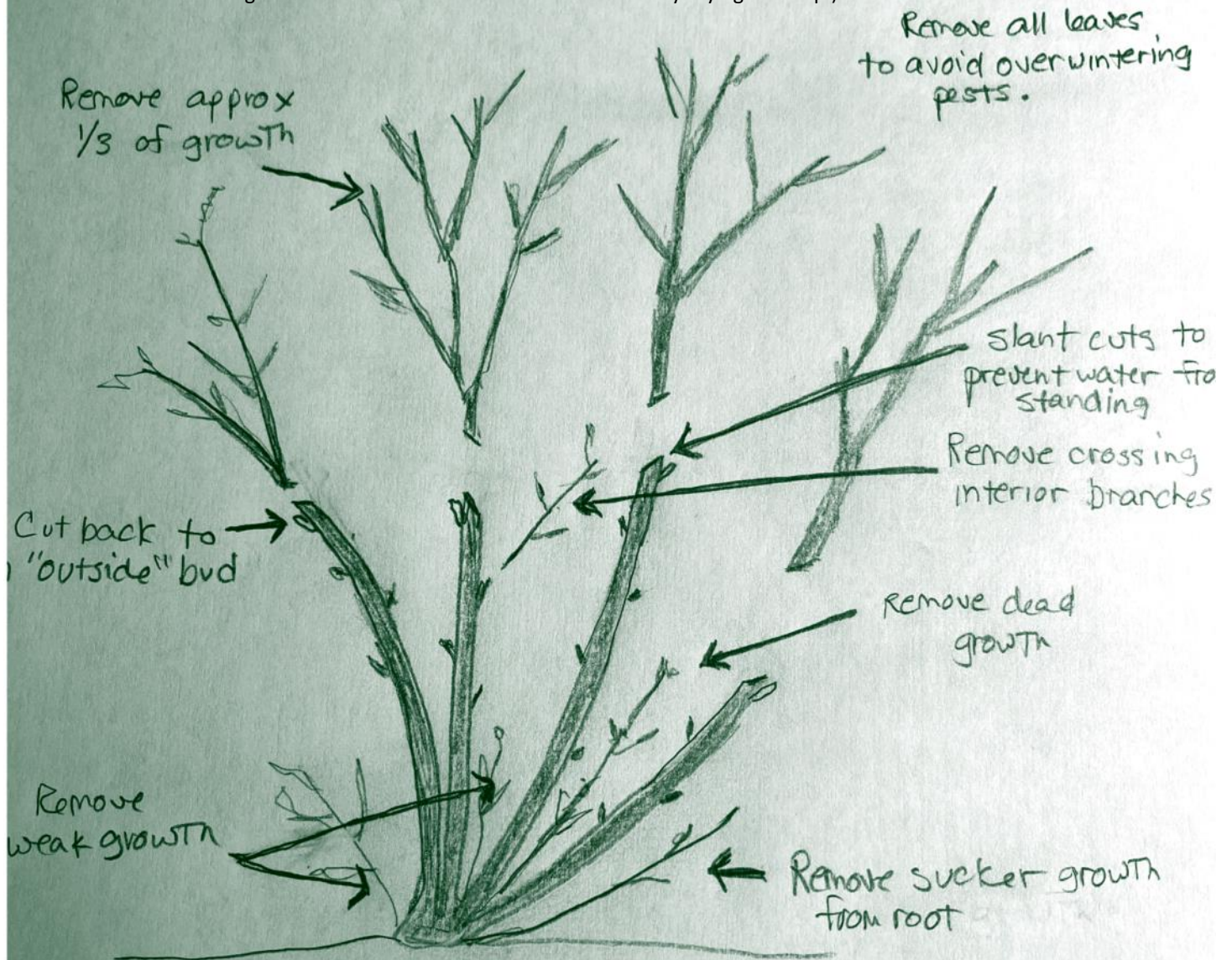
UCCE Master Gardener Program  
Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties



## Rose Pruning Basics

- \* Start at The bottom and work your way up.
- \* Remove oldest canes first - they will be gray and woody.

(In our mild climate, rose bushes rarely go dormant. In order to give them some rest, it is sometimes advised to strip all of their leaves in winter. One way to achieve this, and to deal with pest prevention, is to spray with dormant spray. excellent for removing stubborn leaves from rose bushes in winter by drying them up.)



Clean up, Clean up, Clean up !!!

Remove all leaves, clippings and weeds  
and dispose of them in the trash.  
Do Not Compost!





**FEB 06 FREE DAY**

## Fungus February First Friday

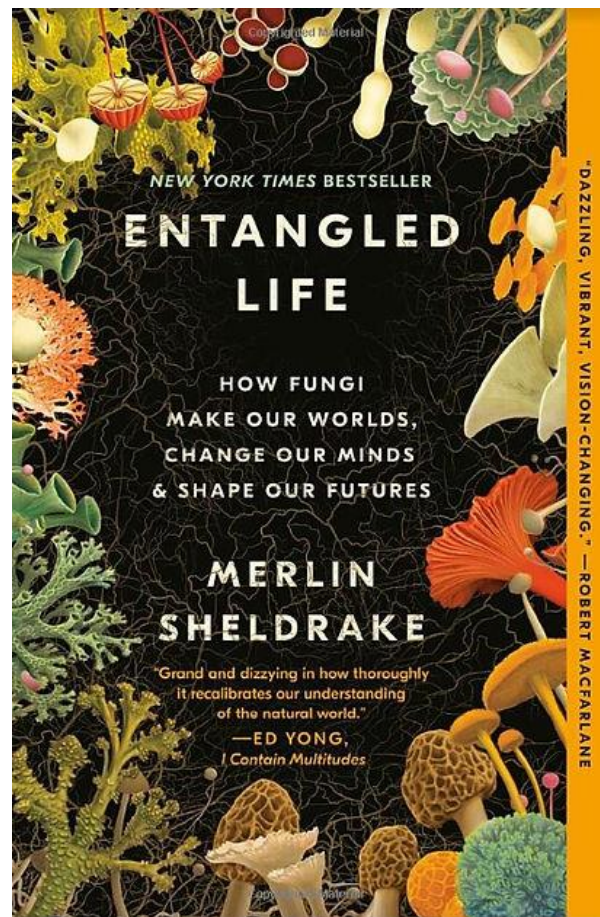
Connect with artists, mycologists, and community partners who study, steward, and share the magic of fungi. Enjoy hands-on activities, refreshments, and free museum admission all day!

## FUNGUS FEBRUARY AT THE SANTA CRUZ NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Fungus February 2026 in Santa Cruz is a month-long celebration of fungi, featuring educational programs, workshops, and forays hosted by the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History in partnership with The Humanities Institute of UC Santa Cruz. It kicks off with a dedicated First Friday event on February 6, **Fungus February First Friday**, inviting you to dive into the fascinating world of fungi and the vital role they play in our local ecosystems. From underground networks to above-ground marvels, this evening celebrates the weird, wonderful, and essential world of mushrooms. From 5-8 p.m., explore local mycology through art, science and community. This event will offer hands-on activities, refreshments, and special seasonal items in the Museum Store. Admission is free, all are welcome, and an open bar will be available for guests 21. And come learn more about The Institutes Deep Read this year, Merlin Sheldrake's Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds, and Shape Our Futures. Fungi provide the key to understanding the planet on which we live and the ways we think, feel and behave, yet they are largely hidden from view and undocumented.

Learn more about other February Fungi events and classes at <https://santacruzmuseum.org/series/fungus-february/>. For more about The Deep Read, go to <https://thi.ucsc.edu/event/the-deep-read-a-conversation-with-merlin-sheldrake/>.

## Why Gardeners Might Want to Read Entangled Life



Don't know if it is essential reading for gardeners, but it helps reveal the hidden, powerful, and indispensable world of fungi that actively shapes soil health, plant communication, and nutrient transfer. Understanding these networks allows gardeners to foster healthier ecosystems, enhance sustainability, and improve plant growth through better soil management. Some topics covered:

**The Mycorrhizal Revolution:** explains how fungi form symbiotic relationships with up to 90% of land plants, transporting nutrients, and, connecting plant roots in a "Wood Wide Web".

**Soil Health Optimization:** shows how Fungi are crucial for soil structure; their network of hyphae holds soil together and prevents erosion.

**Enhanced Nutrient Uptake:** mycorrhizal fungi help plants take in vital nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, making them more resilient.

**Understanding Symbiosis:** fungal partnerships influence plant flavor, growth, and defenses. **Compost & Ecology:** Highlights the crucial role of fungi in breaking down organic matter.

Ultimately, Entangled Life changes the perspective from gardening as just managing plants to managing a complex, interconnected, living, profound system. I hoping to read it to be fascinated, educated, and perhaps changed.

## BLUEBERRIES FOR THE HOME GARDEN AND SMALL FARM



**January 17, 2026**  
**10 am to 12:30pm**  
**1156 High St, Santa Cruz**  
**95064**

Learn about varietal selection, site selection, planting, pruning and general care of blueberries in the home garden

Join UC Santa Cruz Farm Garden Manager Christof Bernau as he covers the fundamental information you need to know to successfully grow and harvest blueberries in the home garden. Beginning in the Hay Barn at UCSC, Christof will discuss a brief history and origin of these crops, their primary cultural requirements, site selection and soil preparation, pruning systems, protection from bird predation, varietal selection and sourcing. The group will then walk up to the farm and look at each of these crops in three dimensions, using the living plants to illustrate key terminology and plant physiology and discuss seasonal care requirements and the specifics of winter pruning. Pre-registration is required for this workshop.

Cost: \$30 - \$50, sliding scale

Contact: Kate  
 Heppell, [kheppell@ucsc.edu](mailto:kheppell@ucsc.edu)

Register at:

<https://center-for-agroecology.company.site/products/Backyard-Series-Blueberries-for-the-Home-Garden-and-Small-Farm-p806480339>

## CLASS:DESIGNING THE PERFECT VEGETABLE GARDEN!



eSat Feb 21 2026Sun Mar 29 2026

This is a vegetable garden-landscape design-construction workshop. Learn how to site your vegetable beds for maximum efficacy by taking into consideration factors such as climate, season, and sun exposure. You will learn numerous approaches to bed design, including methods that use straw wattles, recycled concrete, lumber, and cinderblocks.

You will also receive valuable information on what to fill your newly constructed beds with and how to do it properly. Not all soil is alike. We've got supplier recommendations for you that will save you money and give you maximum results due to superior soil fertility

Topics also covered in class:

Starting out: Learn how to create a lovely vegetable garden on any surface, from an existing lawn to concrete.

Bed sizes: Proper sizing is important, from their height to their width. You want maximum workability and comfort to you, the gardener.

Paths: Considerations of path materials, cost, and efficiency.

Holding in your soil: From various types of lumber, to many other hardscape materials, learn what you can do and how to save money doing it. We will build a simple garden bed during class, showing you how to select lumber, cut the boards, and screw them together. We will also be installing the bed on a slight slope, showing you how this is done

properly.

Filling your new beds: Top soil varies in vitality and usability. Learn how to get a deal from our most-preferred providers and the best start for your new plants.

Other important elements: Where are you going to put your hobby greenhouse? Compost pile? Worm bin? Do you have space for a small chicken coop or beehive? Where is the best place to put these important structures?

All these questions and more are explored in detail at this exciting workshop. Even if you've got an existing garden, it's not too late to tweak it to perfection.

This class runs from 10 am to 2 pm, with a 30 minute lunch break. There are a few restaurants nearby, but many students find that bringing a packed lunch is a more convenient option.

ALL CLASSES ARE HELD RAIN OR SHINE AND REQUIRE ADVANCE REGISTRATION. Register at <https://love-apple-farms-nursery.myshopify.com/products/class-design>

And check out their many other classes and seedling offered!



It is membership renewal time! Annual dues, which include all benefits, are only \$20.00, due by January 1st. The member-ship 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	\$ _____



## The work of waiting

February reminds us that rest, planning, and trust are essential parts of every successful garden; Though winter still holds the landscape in its grip, this month carries a quiet promise. The light lingers just a bit longer at day's end. The garden, like the gardener, is gathering strength. And in this waiting—this steady, hopeful pause—we are reminded that growth does not rush. It arrives exactly when it's ready, and it will be worth it when it does. - **Food Gardening Network**

## Summer Garden Starts Earlier Than You Think

Advice from Love Apple Farms

Here are a few simple things you can do right now to set yourself up for a good summer season:

Take a good look at your space. Before choosing plants, it helps to really

notice your garden: How much sun different areas get. Which spots warm up first in spring? Where shade or wind might be an issue. This makes it much easier to choose varieties that will actually thrive where you put them.

Start thinking about soil. Even if you're weeks away from planting, now is a good time to add compost or other organic matter, top-dress beds and let winter moisture do the work.

Decide what you actually want to grow. Think about what you like to eat; what's done well for you in the past; what fits your space.



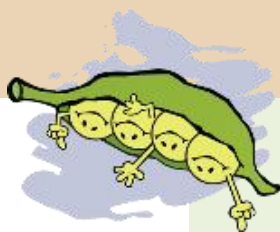
#biancabosso

Plan for fewer, stronger plants. More plants don't always mean more harvest. In many cases fewer, well-spaced plants perform better. Strong starts establish faster and handle stress more easily. Planning ahead helps you focus on growing better plants, not just more of them.

\*\*\*

Note from Editor: After reading the summer gardening advice from Love Apple Farms, I started lusting for tomatoes. If you put them in the ground too early, the plants will sulk. But it is not too early to preorder your favorites at Love Apple Farms, for pick-up the week of March 21-27. <https://love-apple-farms-nursery.myshopify.com/>

**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



## The Gardeners' Club

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