

# The Gardeners' Club

January 2012

## Pfister's Perennials

People have been raving about Tim and Julia Pfister's plant sales in Ben Lomond for years and years, and many of our members have unique plants in their gardens purchased from them. They have been holding plant sales at their home, flea markets and other venues, and now, Pfister's Perennials is coming to us!



*Pfisters' Perennials at Treasure Island*

Tim Pfister really knows his plants, giving lots of information about each one, and has varieties not often seen in the Bay area. His plants are healthy and happy and his prices very reasonable. He sells maple trees in many varieties and all sorts of perennials, bamboos and succulents. He is famous for the beautiful plant arrangements in pots and boxes he'll do for you with plants you choose, and he's going to demonstrate this talent at our January meeting. He'll also be bringing a variety of plants at affordable prices for us to purchase. (This is in addition to our Plant Table, not instead of it!) Should be a really enjoyable meeting—please join us!



Thursday, Jan. 12th, 7:00 p.m.

Aptos Grange Hall

2555 Mar Vista Drive

Thanks to Sim Gilbert for snack,  
Barbara Vorlop for juice and  
Denise Kennedy for dessert.

*Live each day AS IF IT WERE YOUR LAST,  
AND garden AS THOUGH YOU'LL live forever.*

*Author Unknown*

## Note from the Editor

Several years ago, when I was being recruited for The Gardeners' Club Board, someone tried to entice me by saying, "It's kind of a club within a club". "Sounds pretty elitist", I thought to myself, but I didn't say anything – I just signed on. Now, being a well-seasoned Board member, I see now what the "club within the club" notion is really about. It means more volunteerism, creative thinking, caring and idea-exchanging than one could believe. It is giving the Club guidance, leadership, energy, even pruning and fertilization, metaphorically. But there ARE perks. One treat is getting to sit around in a smaller group than our monthly meetings and discuss at length gardening, gardens, resources, experiences. We laugh and learn. Because we rotate our meeting places, we get to visit each other's gardens and the gardens of other members who volunteer theirs. We nourish each other with great food, great stories and great appreciation.

This month, for the second year, we have a special treat. Club President Cherry Thompson's culinarily-gifted husband, Joe, is preparing us dinner. Last year, between the feasting and the admiring of Cherry's garden, we didn't get much Board business done. If you have a spark of interest in the Board, or just want to find out more about it, you are invited to join us. Just RSVP to Cherry at 475-0991 or [cherrylea@comcast.net](mailto:cherrylea@comcast.net).



*Joe in his element*

## New Year's Message from Club President Cherry Thompson

I want to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to our hard-working Board members, especially those who are willing to continue on the Board for 2012. Sharing out the work of keeping our club vibrant and interesting hopefully is a reward in and of itself, but it makes my job easier to have experienced Board members. That said, this year is also the time to involve new members on the Board so there will be an easy transition for any who feels the need to take time off from the Board the following year. Board members meet ten months of the year (taking December and February off). If you have time to come to a Board meeting on a 4th Monday of the month, you would be welcome to observe and share in the fun, with no obligation. We have an opportunity to see gardens, to socialize and take care of business in a relatively brief 60 to 90 minute time frame. Please speak to me or to any Board member if you have an interest.

By the way, In January and February we need extra help collecting money at the Plant Table, as Patty will be in away in Mexico. If you can help, even on a temporary basis, it would be welcome.

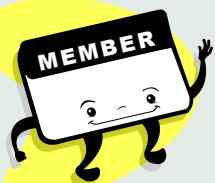
**Board Meeting & Dinner, Mon., Jan. 23rd,  
6:30 p.m. - 3315 Putter Drive, Soquel**



*One of the great things about Board meetings is getting to meet at different homes and getting the chance to see other gardens!*



## Have you renewed your membership?



Last call for membership renewals— if you haven't renewed, this will be your last newsletter. Don't miss an issue! Annual dues, which include all benefits, are only \$12, and entitle members to all club educational programs, our special events, plant trades and our monthly newsletter. The "green" option is to choose to receive an electronic PDF full color version of the newsletter. If you choose snail mail, you'll get a paper black-and-white newsletter. The membership year is Jan. 1—Dec. 31, 2012. Send your name, address, phone number and e-mail address, as well as your newsletter form preference, with a check for \$12 made out to "The Gardeners' Club", to our Membership Chair Suzanne Mercado, 1633 Quail Hollow Road, Ben Lomond, CA 95005.



## Color of The Year: Tangerine Tango



adding a couple of vigorously blooming 'Hot Papaya' Echinacea. Planter's remorse hit soon after! The coneflowers are jarring there, in color, shape and structure.

Time to move them elsewhere.



Better choices might be Annie's Annuals Geum mangellanicum,

How do you feel about Pantone Color Institute's choice for the 2012 Color of the Year, "Tangerine Tango"? This glowing red-orange was chosen partly in response to our current economic climate and frustrations; Pantone says it is "hopeful and optimistic". The color has its place; rose hips of this color are bright and vibrant enough to make you want to dance.



the hummingbird favorite Agastache 'Orange Nectar'

and the butterfly's friend Asclepias Curassivica (Blood-flower or milkweed).



"Tango Tangerine" seems well-suited for the vegetable garden. After all, ripe tomatoes will be fit right in. Add red 'Dragon' carrots and 'Sea of Red' lettuce, and the garden will be ready for the ballroom!



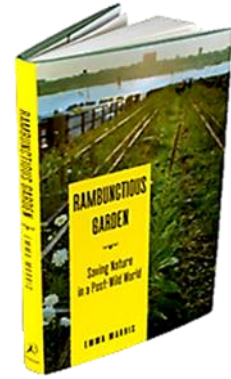
flowers play well with the complimentary color of blue, and the dark contrast of the purple-black leaves makes everything "pop".

The orange-and-purple African Daisy looked great in the area of my garden devoted to purple flowers, so I thought I'd build on that success by



*"My suggestion, which has the earmarks of a paradox, is that to see the future with confidence it will be necessary to look to the past with understanding. It will be difficult to decide where it will go if we do not know where it has been."*  
—James Ackerman

## The Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World



Who will read this book and give us a short review? Seems like food for a lot of discussion. Here's the description by the publisher:

A paradigm shift is roiling the environmental world. For decades people have unquestioningly accepted the idea that our goal is to preserve nature in its pristine, pre-human state. But many scientists have come to see this as an outdated dream that thwarts bold new plans to save the environment and prevents us from having a fuller relationship with nature. Humans have changed the landscapes they inhabit since prehistory, and climate change means even the remotest places now bear the fingerprints of humanity. Emma Marris argues convincingly that it is time to look forward and create the "rambunctious garden," a hybrid of wild nature and human management. In this optimistic book, readers meet leading scientists and environmentalists and visit imaginary Edens, designer ecosystems, and Pleistocene parks. Marris describes innovative conservation approaches, including rewilding, assisted migration, and the embrace of so-called novel ecosystems.

Rambunctious Garden is short on gloom and long on interesting theories and fascinating narratives, all of which bring home the idea that we must give up our romantic notions of pristine wilderness and replace them with the concept of a global, half-wild rambunctious garden planet, tended by us.

# Time to Prune



No, not that kind of prune, silly. January is the prime time to prune deciduous flowering vines, fruit and shade trees, grapes, and roses. Need help? There are many workshops available this month.

The UCSC Farm will be offering Fruit Trees 101: Basic Fruit Tree Care on January 7th, 10 a.m.—1 p.m. Learn the basics of fruit tree planting, irrigation, fertility, pest management, and winter pruning. Wear warm clothes, bring a snack; heavy rain cancels. \$20 for Friends of the Farm & Garden members, \$30 for general public, payable the day of the workshop. No pre-registration necessary. The same workshop will be offered at Sierra Azul Nursery on January 21st. Sierra Azul Nursery is located at 2660 E. Lake Ave (Hwy 152), across from the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds in Watsonville. For directions, see [www.sierrazul.com](http://www.sierrazul.com). A workshop that focuses on winter pruning of pome fruit trees (apples and pears) will be offered on January 28. For more information, go to <http://casfs.ucsc.edu> or call 459-3240. CASFS will also be offering a free Fruit Tree Q&A Session at the ProBuild Garden Center on River Street in Santa Cruz, with Orin Martin and Matthew Sutton. Learn about varieties that perform well on the Central Coast, along with fruit tree care tips. Friends of the Farm and Garden members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases.

The Garden Company (2218 Mission Street, Santa Cruz) will be holding a rose pruning and organic care clinic conducted by their in-house rosarian, Lance Reiners, on Saturday, January 21st at 10:00 a.m. Learn how to prune bush, climbing and tree type roses, and how to deal with common insect and disease issues using earth-friendly products. Seating is very limited, so be sure to call to reserve a space (429-8424).

The Monterey Bay Rose Society consulting rosarians will be conducting a series of rose pruning clinics at various locations. Saturday and Sunday, January 7th and 8th, 10:00 a.m.—noon, they'll be at the MBRS Display Garden, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, 2601 E. Lake Avenue, Watsonville; on January 21st, same hours, they'll be at ProBuild Garden Center, 235 River Street; on January 28th, same hours, they'll be at Alladin Nursery, 2905 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville (724-7517).

## Scion Exchange and Fruit Tree Sale Jan. 15th, Cabrillo College, 6500 Soquel Dr.

Event hosted by the Monterey Bay Chapter of the California Rare Fruit Growers. Scion wood available to all who attend. Free to members of CRFG, \$5 admission to general public. Tierra Madre Farm will be selling their fruit trees in the parking lot. Lots of fruit tree specialists will be on hand to help answer any questions, and you'll be supporting a great organization and a small farm. More info: 252-0487.

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Here are some suggestions for some things you might need before you start pruning. Of course, a good pair of pruners is essential. →

After listening to the lyrics to a Tom Waits song ("Picked the rose one early morn, I pricked my finger on a thorn. It had grown so high, It's winding wove the briar around the rose"),



I was reminded of the need to keep first aid supplies on hand. Stock up ← on these floral bandages, available at [www.perpetualkid.com/ouch-flower-power-bandages.aspx](http://www.perpetualkid.com/ouch-flower-power-bandages.aspx).

The Duluth Trading company (<http://women.duluthtrading.com/store/womens/womens-accessories/womens-work-gloves/35044.aspx>) offers



puncture-proof pigskin pruning sleeves for only \$14.99.



I want to buy highly protective gardening gloves locally, but I'm afraid they'll have to be Bionic Women's Rose Gloves. The idea of being bionic is greatly appealing.

If I absolutely can't get over my prune-phobia, I'm going on Craigslist to see about low-cost armor options, ala Joan of Arc.





# Kids' Page

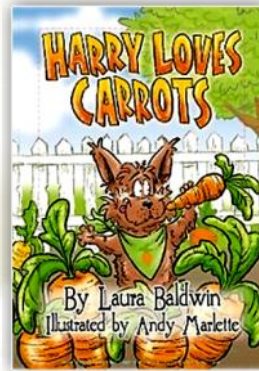
Bill Patterson is one of the Board's Members-at-Large, and he takes his role seriously by frequently presenting us with Large Ideas. Here's his latest suggestion: devote a bit of each newsletter to kids in our gardens. Members are asked to submit a favorite photo and description, 100 words or so, of a child's experience in your garden. Let's broaden this to have photos and descriptions of kids you are in contact with in any garden—your relatives may live far away, but perhaps you volunteer with school children or watch a neighbor's toddler picking strawberries in the morning sun. Bill was inspired by the "KinderGarden" feature in Birds and Bloom magazine, which shares candid photos and stories about children discovering the natural world in their backyards.

I'll get the ball rolling with one of my photos and text as an example of what Bill has in mind for this page. But next month the page will be empty unless one of you e-mails me a photo of a child in a garden, or gives me a photo at the January meeting! And if you have a photo op but no camera, Bill is willing to come to your place to take pictures.



"This is Robbie Bixler, my grandnephew, pausing on his enthusiastic run up and down the iris path at his great-grandparents' home in Los Gatos. Another great-aunt, my sister-in-law Camilla Bixler, got many of us Bixlers started on growing irises in astounding colors and forms by taking us to visit the High Garden Iris Farm in Camino, California. We all have varieties we bought there and planted years ago. This year, after all the rains, the blooms were amazing. This is a good reminder for me to go to Los Gatos and divide these!" - Lise Bixler

## The Giggling Garden



*"He looks for them in the garden. He looks for them in the store. He looks for them everywhere...He even looks in the refri-ger-a-tor...Please don't laugh because you see, it's always been true, Harry is a carrot lover through and through!"*

In Laura Baldwin's children's book, Harry Loves Carrots, children go on a playful journey in and around the garden as they follow Harry, a very silly dog with one obsession: carrots. While fun and engaging, Harry Loves Carrots has a much deeper purpose: to combat child obesity and teach children from an early age that making healthy choices can be fun. The author has dedicated her life to this purpose, also running In The Koop, a seed company specializing in colorful, heirloom vegetable seeds. The pride and joy of In The Koop is its child-friendly project, The Giggling Garden, which features heirloom vegetables with names like Cosmic Purple Carrots, Green Zebra Tomatoes and Dinosaur Kale.

Go to the In the Koop web site (<http://inthekoop.com>) to find ways to cultivate laughing and learning with garden kits, organic seed packets and more. How can we resist planting "Painted Serpent Cucumber"?



By the way, the "I love vegetables" book series is based on a real dog, Harry. The next one in the series is Harry Loves Greens. What an enjoyable way to learn to grow and appreciate veggies, one bite at a time.





Each year representatives of the professional horticulture industry select one perennial to be showcased, chosen because it is popular, easy-to-grow, widely adaptable, genetically diverse, and versatile. 2012 is The Year of the Heuchera. Heucheras are all-American. Literally. Different species hail from the islands off the California coast to the highest mountains in the Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico. With this diverse range of habitat, these plants are able to find a niche in everyone's garden. Breeders in America and Europe have taken a well-aimed swipe of a paintbrush between these species, and have assembled a plethora of plants with amazing flower and foliage forms that didn't exist a scant ten years ago. Not only are these plants aesthetically pleasing, but they have become stronger, fuller, and more disease resistant. With few pests, great adaptability to containers and a seemingly unending number of forms, heuchera should be in everyone's garden!

Heucheras require well-drained soil. If you've had problems with coral bells in the past, most likely you've tried to plant them in soil that's too wet or full of clay. To solve that, plant your heucheras in raised beds, on a berm, or in containers. Even mounding the soil slightly where you plant them will help. A premium organic planting compost will provide excellent drainage with enough moisture.

Other than keeping the soil well-drained and mulched, coral bells have very few other maintenance needs. Let them dry between watering, refrain from using excess fertilizer, and give them neutral or slightly acidic soil (the perfect pH is 5.8 to 6.3, but most aren't too fussy).

Many coral bells do well in part sun, but stay away from hot afternoon rays—foliage will often fade, wilt, or scorch under intense sunlight. Instead, provide shade during the hottest times of the day, or plant where your heuchera will get consistent full or filtered shade.

## YEAR OF THE HEUCHERA



Heuchera are remarkable for needing little care. When flowers fade, they can be spun off with a flick of the wrist. If stems get too long they can be cut off with the resulting stub resprouting and the piece in your hand replanted to form a new plant. This helps keep your heuchera compact. Most varieties are drought-tolerant.

Note that as coral bells grow, their crowns rise up and out of the soil slightly. Either mulch to protect the crown, or lift, divide and replant. It's best to divide them every two to three years, with the spring being the best time to do this work. If necessary, cut back winter-damaged foliage in early spring to make way for new growth. Oak leaves make ideal mulch.

Heucheras can be divided by a sharp shovel in early spring. A two-year-old plant can easily be divided into 6 plants. Place the divisions buried to the crown in enriched soil and water in.

The biggest problem with heucheras? Making up your mind which ones to plant. The foliage color choices are boggling—you can get amber/peach, black, brown, gold, green, lime-yellow, orange, red, purple, silver, silver with green veins and variegated. To see

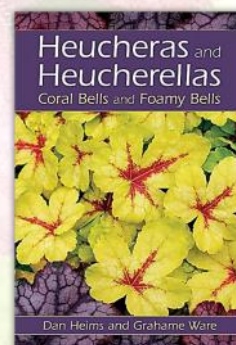
glorious pictures of the choices, go to the National Garden Bureau website ([www.ngb.org](http://www.ngb.org)).

Heuchera leaves offer extremely long-lasting foliage for fresh-cut arrangements. Add them to your floral bouquets by cutting the leaves so each one has a fairly long stem and then stick them immediately in water with the flowers of your choosing. Change the water weekly and heuchera leaves can live up to two years in a vase. (They'll even start rooting eventually!)

Try pairing the deep purple leaves of 'Dark Secret', 'Plum Royale' or 'Berry Smoothie' with a spray of yellow coreopsis or a few choice lilies. Marry the chartreuse of 'Lime Marmalade' with blue bachelor's buttons and orange California poppies. Or, arrange the bold orange leaves of 'Peach Flambé' or 'Tara' with green hydrangeas, zinnias or purple salvia. To play up the color silver, combine a silver-toned coral bell like 'Rave On' or 'Silver Scrolls' with white daisies, roses or lilies. Tulip flowers in dusky purples and black work quite nicely with dark leaved "heuchs". European florists are rolling the leaves around roses for a cool effect.



The text in this article is from a fact sheet written by Dan Heims and provided as a service from the National Garden Bureau. Dan is the co-author, with Grahame Ware, of Heucheras and Heucherellas (Timber Press).

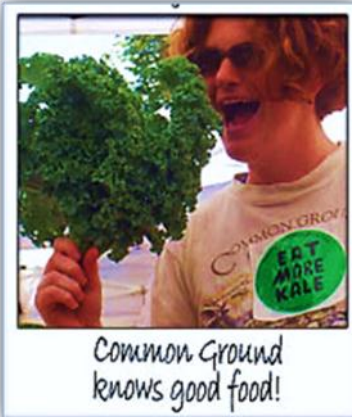


More heuchera information is available on the NGB website ([www.ngb.org](http://www.ngb.org)).





Eat more kale, grow more kale—it is nutritious and tasty and easy to grow. Go to [www.eatmorekale.com](http://www.eatmorekale.com) to order your own T-shirt—it is even available in a kale-ishy color green. Then try this wonderful recipe from the newsletter of Common Ground Organic Garden Supply and Education Center ([www.commongroundinpaloalto.org/newsletters.htm](http://www.commongroundinpaloalto.org/newsletters.htm)).



### **Kale, Red Peppers, Walnuts & Garlic**

1 bunch kale leaves, coarsely chopped (about 4 cups)  
2 to 4 cloves garlic  
2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil  
2 Tbs walnuts, chopped

1 red bell pepper, cut into strips  
Sea salt and black pepper to taste

Wash kale & mix with the garlic & 1 Tbs of oil & allow to sit. Toast nuts in a heavy skillet over medium heat for about a minute and remove from pan. Heat 1 Tbs oil or a little more in the skillet. Add bell pepper, salt & pepper. Sauté for about two minutes and add kale. Stir briefly, cover pan and turn heat to low. Cook for about three minutes, then stir. Cover again, turn off heat and allow veggies to steam for about two minutes before serving.

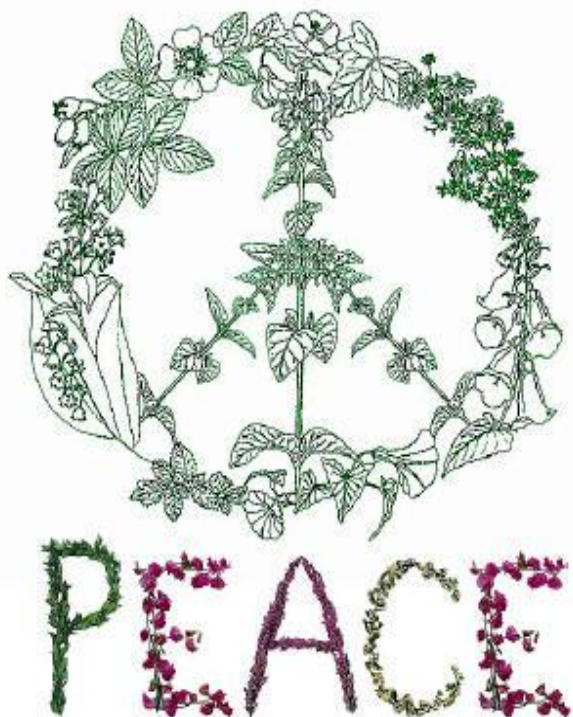
Kale is near the top of the list in veggie nutritional value, containing heart-healthy antioxidants such as beta-carotene, large amounts of vitamins A, C and E, and heavy doses of calcium, potassium and iron. Its sweetness is brought out after a series of frosts, which helps break the starches into sugars. Strip the lower leaves from the base of the plant as needed—leaf removal encourages new growth and ensures a prolonged harvest. Kale matures 50-65 days after direct sowing or 30-40 days after transplanting. If aphids visit your plants, a jet of hose water is all it takes to get rid of them.

This issue of the newsletter was almost ready to go to press when I received another kale recipe, this one from my niece Chelsea Soneira, who lives in Maryland. Chelsea may be undoing some of the health benefits of kale by adding chorizo and cream, but hey, we need a few more calories to get us through winter, and doesn't this sound incredibly delicious? Plus you get to use up leftover turkey.

### **Chelsea's Soup**

1 large onion (yellow)  
1/2 head crushed garlic  
8 oz. spicy chorizo (I used Spanish)  
1/4 C olive oil  
16 C broth - any kind will do - I use broth without salt, then add salt later  
2 cans chickpeas, rinsed  
2 cans white beans, rinsed  
2 cups cooked brown rice  
2 cups cooked basmati, or other fragrant rice  
4 cups chopped cooked turkey  
6 cups chopped kale  
1/2 cup white wine (I used Riesling)  
1/2 C light cream  
Oregano  
Salt and pepper  
Red pepper flakes

Cook the onion, garlic and chorizo together in the olive oil until fragrant. Deglaze the pan with wine and add broth. Bring to a simmer and add all other ingredients except salt and cream. Cook uncovered on simmer until everything is tender and the soup has reduced somewhat. Add cream and salt and cook, covered, for 15-20 minutes. Yum! Chelsea says, "I cooked the rice in extra water and threw the rice water in the pot, too. I'd say it serves 10 - it filled up my 15" pot."



# *The Gardeners' Club*

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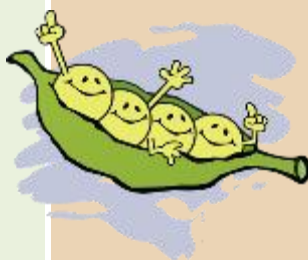
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## **It's easy-peasy to join our club!**

Dues are \$12 per calendar year. Make check to "The Gardeners' Club" and mail to 1633 Quail Hollow Rd., Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Aptos Grange Hall, 2555 Mar Vista Dr., Aptos.

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