

S l o a t



THE SLOAT FOUNDATION

# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 17, No. 4

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

July/August 2003

## Sensational Summer Gardens



Grafted Gardenias New Angelonias Summer Vines Carnivorous Plants Birdfeeders

# Summer rose care overlooked, but worth the effort

By the time summer rolls around your roses are apt to be in full glory, but what do you do now?

Summer rose care focuses on several things including keeping your roses blooming and looking great.

Mid- and late-summer blooms can be less colorful and foliage less vibrant when

compared to spring growth and flower output. Turning this around and keeping your roses looking their best is definitely worth a little effort. Here's how:

## 1. DEADHEAD

Deadhead your roses to remove energy-zapping spent flowers. Taking cuttings for flower arrangements accomplishes the

same thing as the plant's energy can be focused on new growth and the remaining flowers.

## 2. FEED

Feed your roses in mid to late July with **Magnum Grow Rose Food**. This innovative product was developed by Dr. Tommy Cairns, a noted forensic chemist and president of the American Rose Society. It greatly simplifies rose feeding. Magnum Grow contains both nitrogen, phosphorus and potash (NPK) and secondary elements such as magnesium, which is important for soil fertility and plant growth.

## 3. WATER

Depending on your soil conditions, water deeply at least every two weeks to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. Water at the base of the shrub if possible to help prevent disease. If you must overhead water, do it in the morning so your roses have a better chance to dry out.

## 4. MULCH

Along with watering, mulch your roses to maintain soil moisture and keep roots protected. Last month's Gardener's Notebook featured several mulches you may want to consider. Check them online at [sloatgardens.com](http://sloatgardens.com). Just go to the Gardener's Notebook page and follow the Archives link at the bottom of the page.

### Seminar Alert:

Join members of the Marin Rose Society for a seminar on Summer Rose Care.

See seminar dates and locations on page 7.

## Gardening Guide

# July & August

### Plant:

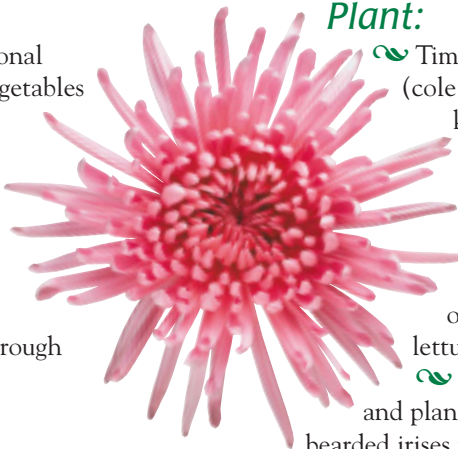
Plant additional heat-tolerant vegetables such as beans, chard, and cucumbers. Summer flowers abound. Fill your garden with color that can carry you through until fall.

### Fertilize:

Feed vegetables, perennials and annuals with a water-soluble fertilizer such as Neptune's Harvest (See page 6) or Maxsea. Avoid feeding during the heat of the day.

### Prune & Maintain:

- Support or thin early-bearing fruit trees to keep branches from breaking.
- Mulch all garden beds to protect from summer heat and keep garden maintenance down.
- Water lawns deeply and mow grass 1/2" higher than normal to protect against heat and stress. Leave lawn clippings in place to add nitrogen to the soil.
- Cut back perennials that have gone to seed.
- Check your sprinkler system to insure coverage during summer's heat.
- Shade lettuce and spinach with shade cloth to discourage bolting.
- Deadhead flowers to promote additional blooming.



### Plant:

Time to plant fall vegetables (cole crops) including broccoli, kale, chard, cabbage, brussels sprouts, green onions, carrots, cilantro, spinach, and all sorts of lettuce.

Select and plant bearded irises for spring. Dig up and divide existing iris. Plant fall-blooming chrysanthemums.

### Fertilize:

Fertilize camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons with E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Food. Feed vegetables and flowers with a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote.

### Prune & Maintain:

- Watch for caterpillars and bud worms. Hand pick as you discover them.
- Make sure all appropriate vegetables are supported by cages, stakes or trellises to avoid crop loss.
- Water early to avoid evaporation. Check soil moisture with great care during hot spells to avoid drying out plants (especially those growing in containers).



# New Angelonia varieties deliver problem free color

If you have access to the internet and search under "angelonia" and "University Trials" you'll discover the news on our new introductions is very exciting!

Here is a new species of plant that is being developed by **Ball Seed** and **Proven Winners** that looks to be absolutely ideal for Bay Area gardens.



Photo: PROVEN WINNERS

*Angelonia 'Angelface White'*

*Angelonia agustifolia* (aka Summer Snapdragon) is native to Mexico and the West Indies. With a gorgeous variety of colors, angelonias offer masses of orchid-like flowers on very sturdy stems.

University trials show these plants are very easy to grow and have a wonderfully long bloom period that can run from spring well into fall.

Angelonias also make exceptional cut flowers and can last 15 to 20 days in a vase if placed in a bright location.

True standouts in borders, garden beds and containers, angelonias can add height to your garden design as they grow 18 to 24 inches (and taller in the right conditions). They love the heat, so plant them in full sun to part sun. They will also tolerate both wet and dry conditions, but in the initial introduction to your garden they should be kept moist.

Angelonias benefit from regular feeding, which ought to be at least monthly. If you choose to fertilize more often, consider our new Neptune's Harvest Fertilizers, which are great for all types of plants, yet

very gentle and can not be overused. (See article on page 6.)

**Blooms Nursery**, one of Northern



Photo: PROVEN WINNERS

*Angelonia 'Angelface Blue'*

California's premier specialty nurseries, will be Sloat's local grower for these new angelonia introductions from Proven Winners and Ball Seed. Here are three varieties of angelonia to look for on your next visit:

**Angelface Series.** This great new series from Proven Winners, developer of the



Photo: PROVEN WINNERS

*Angelonia 'Angelface Blue Bicolor'*

wildly popular bacopas and Million Bells, has been bred for superior flower performance as well as an upright branching growth habit. You'll find 'Angelface Blue Bicolor' (white blooms with intriguing blue markings), 'Angelface Blue,' 'Angelface White' and 'Angelface Violet.'

**Angelhmist Series.** Propagated by world famous Ball Seed Company, these varieties were among the first angelonias introduced in the U.S. Colors include deep plum, purple, lavender, lavender pink, purple stripe and white.

**Carita Series.** This F1 hybrid was bred for basal branching and uniform color. This sturdy performer will be available in dark pink and should be sensational.

Plants should begin arriving the

second week of July!

**Sloat tip:**

Gardeners will not need to prune or deadhead their angelonias, but we have learned that it is possible and may be desirable for some gardeners wishing to manage the growth of their plant to shear them back 50% in mid-season and enjoy a second bloom in 2-3 weeks.

## Soil Products to Supercharge Your Garden

If you'd like to enjoy the most successful (and easiest) year of gardening ever, make a commitment to getting and keeping your soil in tip-top shape with Sloat Planting Mix, Sloat Loam Builder and Sloat Forest Mulch Plus.

Each of these soil products has been custom blended to amend and improve the dominant soil types found in the San Francisco Bay Area. By using these products, you'll increase plant performance and improve soil structure, moisture retention, aeration and water penetration. These soil products are especially effective in taming heavy clay soils and holding nutrients in your soil.



**Only at  
Sloat  
Garden  
Centers**

# New grafted gardenias offer more flowers, less fuss!

Who doesn't want a gardenia growing in their garden?

Gardenias deliver such an intoxicating fragrance that you don't just smell them, you inhale deeply, close your eyes and experience horticultural nirvana!

green. The root stock also provides for more and larger flowers and can help protect the plant against nematodes, which can attack its roots.

white flowers. It's great as a low hedge or accent to an entryway.

The scent of gardenias is quite powerful, so placing one



Mystery

*Gardenia jasminoides* 'Mystery' is one of three gardenias our grower, Monrovia, has selected to graft onto *Gardenia thunbergia*. Its sweetly fragrant, pure white flowers against glossy green foliage make this compact shrub a true garden celebrity.

*Gardenia jasminoides* 'Veitchii,' a second grafted variety, is praised for its profusion of fragrant blooms. This beautiful plant with its compact upright growth habit and lovely green foliage can be grown well in a container.

Our third grafted variety is *Gardenia jasminoides* 'Aimee.'

The wonderful, fragrant, double-white blooms

of this plant are larger than any other gardenia. It is first to bloom and continues well into the season.

## MORE GARDENIAS

In addition to the new grafted varieties, Sloat and Monrovia will offer *Gardenia jasminoides* 'August Beauty' and 'Radicans,' two very popular non-grafted varieties. 'Radicans' (miniature gardenias) has the same great fragrance as larger varieties, but bears petite white flowers on a lower-growing plant. It's an excellent container plant, border plant or ground cover.

'August Beauty' is a prolific bloomer with large, sweetly fragrant and velvety

next to a bedroom window, for example, might be too much for some people. They are best when planted along walkways, on patios and decks and/or sited in other places where their fragrance can circulate.

Gardenias are members of the *Rubiaceae* family, which includes fragrant cousins such as coffee (the flowers of the plant smell good— not just the ground beans), *Gallium odoratum*, commonly known as Sweet Woodruff, and *Bouvardia*, which smells like jasmine. With ultra white flowers, gardenias show well at night, too, especially when the moon is out.

## GARDENIA CARE

Gardenias are full sun plants, but they can be grown in partial sun as well. They

require well-draining soil with plenty of rich organic matter. During the first year, regular watering will help establish deep roots. Mulch gardenias to keep roots cool. Gardenias benefit from regular feeding as well. A spring,



Veitchii

Photo: MONROVIA

summer and fall feeding is advised and we recommend a complete fertilizer like E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia and Gardenia Food.

Pinch back younger plants in their first year of growth to promote branching and prune your established gardenias shortly after they bloom to keep their shape.

Our new grafted gardenias make it easier than ever to enjoy these beautiful and fragrant plants. Not only will you appreciate more and bigger flowers, but these gardenias solve a common problem, which causes the leaves of the plant to turn yellow.

Grafting is a technique where two plant species are combined by joining the root stock of one plant with the above-ground stock of another. The result is a superior plant that blends together the best characteristics of two plants. In the case of our new gardenias, varieties of *Gardenia jasminoides*, a native of China, have been grafted to *Gardenia thunbergia*, a South African native.

*Gardenia jasminoides* includes most of the well-known gardenia varieties (with most of these cultivars having been created by growers). *Gardenia thunbergia* provides below-ground support with its ability to grow in the colder, wetter, clay soils found in the Bay Area and still take up important nutrients such as iron, magnesium and sulphur. This ability heads off the very common yellowing of leaves and keeps the plant healthy and

# Decorative birdfeeders bring health and beauty to your garden

Our new birdfeeders are not just for the birds.

If you haven't discovered the fun and benefits of attracting beautiful birds to your garden, you're truly missing something good.

Wild birding (bird watching, feeding and housing) is the fastest growing backyard activity in the country. In fact, bird-watching is America's number two pastime following our favorite avocation: gardening.

While you may already admire the birds that visit your garden, chances are you don't realize how much more enjoyment they can offer when you bring them up close with an attractive birdfeeder.

Not only does a well-placed birdfeeder allow you to see and hear birds better, but it allows you to see more birds! As birds discover your feeder, they will visit often, especially when their normal food sources are limited during winter months. In addition, migratory birds will visit, giving you, your family and friends the opportunity to mark the seasons as certain birds appear in your garden.

Birds play an important role in your garden's health as many eat harmful insects. Some birds can consume more than 500 insect eggs, beetles, and grubs in an afternoon. A swallow, for example, will swallow hundreds of flying insects during its daily routine.

A top quality birdfeeder is also a garden decoration and focal point. Sloat has recently introduced a selection of birdfeeders from a company called **Duncraft**.

Named for the Dun family of Peacock, New Hampshire, this company began producing birdfeeders 50 years ago.

What the Dun Family has learned over the years about building durable, bird-safe, and squirrel-proof feeders has earned them an "official feeder" designation by the **National Audubon Society**. It has also resulted in their ability to offer you a lifetime guarantee.

Duncraft's lovely designs feature innovations such as open wire bottoms. This idea prevents seed buildup and keeps squirrels from hanging on the feeder. (Birds won't visit when squirrels are around - a common problem). In addition, the design of the feeders keeps squirrels from reaching the bird-food.

Attracting and watching birds is great fun and nothing could be easier. You may want to invest in an inexpensive bird guide (Sloat has some nice ones) and consider a birdbath and birdhouse, too. Once you see the beauty of wild birding, you'll be easily hooked.

## Sloat tips:

You can hang your new birdfeeder from a tree or overhang, but for the ultimate in flexibility you might want to try one of our Shepard's hooks.

Place your feeder where you can easily see the activity that will take place such as directly outside a window, near a garden bench, or on your patio.

Birds are most active in the early morning and late afternoon.

If you or your neighbors have cats, be careful not to place your feeder in an area where unsuspecting birds are easy prey.



*This Duncraft birdfeed lets birds in while keeping squirrels out.*

# Try our creative container recipe

By Katy Thompson  
*California Certified Nursery Professional*

It's easy and fun to put together gorgeous container displays when the pottery and plants are equally beautiful.

It does, however, get a bit more challenging to figure out how to put together a variety of plants that not only work well together, but share similar water and sun needs.

We've made this easy for you by creating a number of container recipes that will be featured in this and future issues of the *Gardener's Notebook*.

Each Sloat location will have the current container planting (shown below) on display as well as the pottery and plants you'll need to create it.

A great way to insure your success is to make sure that the growing medium in your container is tops! Try a mixture of Sloat Potting Soil, E.B. Stone Sure Start, Soil Moist (to help retain water), and a slow-release fertilizer such as Osmocote.



## COOL SUN POT RECIPE

- 1 Fancy Leaf Geranium - (1) Gallon or 4-inch
- 2 Blue Petunias - (1) Jumbo Pack
- 3 Lilac Lobelia - (1) Jumbo Pack
- 4 Dusty Miller - (2) 4-inch
- 5 Helicrisum - (1) 4-inch
- 6 Lavender Million Bells (1) 4-inch

# Powerful new organic fertilizers that are gentle on plants

Chances are you'll be a bit confused, but very impressed, when you discover how effective our two new organic fertilizers are in light of their very low "NPK" numbers.



Over the years, gardeners have been trained to focus on the percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash (NPK) in fertilizers. It's only in recent times, perhaps in part because we all wish to limit the use of chemical fertilizers, that the benefits of organic micro-nutrients have been brought into the limelight.

## Neptune's Harvest

**Seaweed Fertilizer** has NPK numbers of only 0 - 0 - 1. What makes this fertilizer so highly effective for flowers, trees, vegetables and houseplants is the over 60 naturally occurring nutrients and amino acids it offers. **Neptune's Harvest Fish Fertilizer** percentages are only 2-4-1, but university studies have shown it to outperform 20-20-20 chemical fertilizers.

An important reason Neptune's fertilizers can match and exceed the performance of chemical and other fertilizers is a unique "cold process" manufacturing technique. By not heating the fertilizer during the production process, Neptune's Harvest is able to retain more vitamins, minerals, macro and micro nutrients, trace elements and growth hormones that might otherwise be lost.

With no harsh chemicals, these fertilizers are gentle on plants and can be used without fear of burning plants or over-fertilizing them.

Not to be confused with fish emulsion, there is no offensive odor.

## The proof is in the pumpkin.

While Neptune's Harvest is new to Sloat gardeners, the popularity of the fertilizers is nationwide. There are plenty of testimonials that speak of healthy and vibrant plants, vigorous growth, and amazing vegetables, but our staff was amused and impressed to learn that the world's largest pumpkin weighing in at just over 1,337 pounds was fed a steady diet of 16 ounces of Neptune's Harvest

# These unusual plants will catch your eye and plenty of bugs, too.

By Dustin Strobel,  
*California Certified Nursery Professional*

A few years ago gardeners would be hard-pressed to guess the nature of Sloat's expanding collection of unusual and often very beautiful plants... unless they spotted the well-known Venus Flytrap.

Today, thanks to attention from mainstream media like *Martha Stewart Living* and even the *Wall Street Journal*, many gardeners are discovering the wonder and beauty of carnivorous plants.

Carnivorous plants are divided into 500 species with 15 recognized genera. They can range in size from a very low growing plant that preys on microbes in the

...large ... found in ... that eats ... . ... le from their ... sting dietary needs ... vorous plants are col- ... and have interesting shapes ... can be combined in containers for ... ing

fertilizers and 100 gallons of water every two days during the growing period.

Fertilizing is a fact of life if you expect both peak performance and long term health for your plants. A challenge for today's gardeners is finding effective fertilizers that are easy to use and won't harm the environment. Our new Neptune's Harvest fertilizers are an excellent solution and we encourage you to give them a try.

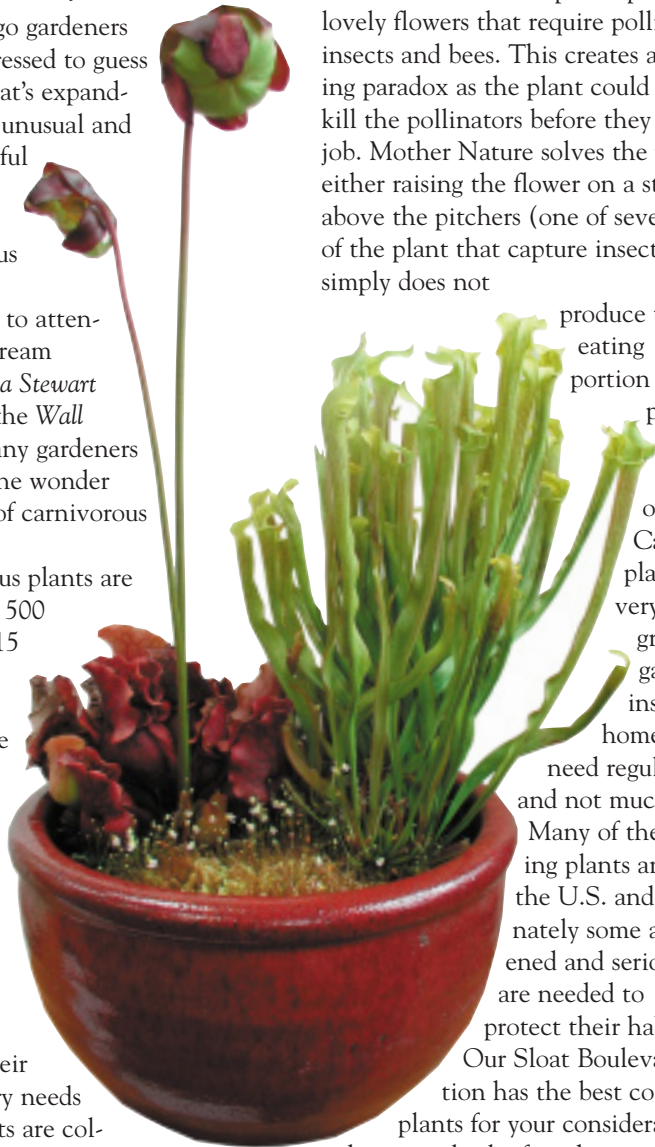
displays.

Some carnivorous plants produce lovely flowers that require pollination by insects and bees. This creates an interesting paradox as the plant could actually kill the pollinators before they do their job. Mother Nature solves the problem by either raising the flower on a stem high above the pitchers (one of several parts of the plant that capture insects) or she simply does not

produce the insect-eating portion of the plant until after pollination occurs. Carnivorous plants are very easy to grow in your garden or inside your home. They

need regular moisture and not much more! Many of these fascinating plants are native to the U.S. and unfortunately some are threatened and serious efforts are needed to protect their habitats.

Our Sloat Boulevard location has the best collection of plants for your consideration, but they can also be found in our Marin and Danville stores. Please visit us to learn more about adding these interesting plants to your garden and home.



**Sarraceniaceae have hollow leaves used to trap insects.**

## Time to plant these divine vines

The addition of summer-flowering vines to your garden can have an exciting and dramatic effect.

Not only do climbing vines produce some of summer's most beautiful flowers, but there are few plants that can be used in so many interesting ways to enhance a landscape design.

During the summer months so many flowering vines are



*Passion Vine*

vine needs little water once established and this striking summer annual's flowers will last into fall.

***Pandorea jasminoides* (Bower Vine)** A fast growing evergreen vine with attractive white flowers with rose-pink throats. Plant this vine in full sun near the coast and partial shade inland. It will flower from June to October.

***Passiflora* (Passion Vine)** Exotic purple flow-

ers are the hallmark of this evergreen vine. It climbs with tendrils and quite vigorously, too. Plant it in full sun and prune annually, once established.



*Bower Vine*

available that it's a perfect time to look for a wall, fence, trellis, arbor, arch, or pergola that would benefit from the addition of quick and beautiful color.

While many gardeners are familiar with bougainvillea, clematis and trumpet vines, here are three other vines that you should consider as well:

### ***Ipomoea* (Morning Glory)**

This vine offers a gorgeous combination of blue-purple flowers and lovely green foliage. Plant it in full sun. The



*Morning Glory*

**Sloat tips:** Most vines either have tendrils, cling or twine in order to climb and attach themselves to structures. Some vines will need your assistance to secure them, so please see Sloat for the proper ties.

Vines can be very care-free and a little wild. Periodically monitor their growth as some are capable of overwhelming a garden rather quickly.

## Seven ways to water your plants

Summer is here and so is the need to keep your plants well watered. Check out our Gilmour Comfort Grip nozzle with seven different spray patterns to deliver water properly and effortlessly. With features like a leak-proof seal, diecast zinc nozzle body, brass valve system and rust-proof stainless steel spring you can depend on years of trouble-free operation!



## SLOAT SEMINARS

*Attendance is limited. Please call ahead to the seminar location to reserve a seat. Seminar fee is \$5. (Gardener's Reward Program members are free.)*

### Fountain Maintenance

Keep your fountain running (and looking) great with advice from Sloat's Joel Wolski. The Danville store has a great collection of fountains, too!  
July 5 - Danville, Sat. 9 a.m.

### Ornamental Grasses

The use of grasses in the garden is really taking off. Get up to speed with horticulturist and grass aficionado Bob Hornback.

July 6 - San Rafael, Sun. 11 a.m.

July 13 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun. 11 a.m.

August 23 - Kentfield Sat. 11 a.m.

August 28 - SF (Sloat Blvd.) Thur. 6:30 p.m.

### Culinary Herb Garden

Join Sloat's Miranda Tarbox for tips and techniques for using flavorful culinary herbs. A must for those who love to cook!

July 17 - SF (Sloat Blvd.) Thur. 6:30 p.m.

### Indoor Plants to Clean the Air

Learn how plants can purify the air in your home. Sloat's Dinah Sims will guide you on selecting, positioning and caring of these plants.

July 17 - Novato, Thurs. 6:30 p.m.

### Feng Shui in the Garden

Discover how Feng Shui can create harmony, beauty and balance in your garden with one of our favorite presenters, Terumi Leinow.

July 19 - Kentfield, Sat. 10 a.m.

July 31 - SF (Sloat Blvd.), Thur. 6:30 p.m.

### Garden Rejuvenation

Bring your garden back to life and up to its full potential with techniques and ideas from horticulturist Elizabeth Finely.

July 26 - Larkspur, Sat. 10 a.m.

August 10 - San Rafael, Sun. 10 a.m.

### Summer Pruning for Maples

Learn the basics of pruning your Japanese maples for health and beauty with local horticulturist Julie Gates.

July 27 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun. 10 a.m.

### Successful Container Garden

Learn techniques for creating and maintaining container gardens with Sloat's Gary Lavey.

August 2 - Danville, Sat. 9 a.m.

### Summer Rose Care

Join the Marin Rose Society and learn how to care for your priceless roses during the summer!

August 3 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun. 10 a.m.

August 14 - Novato, Thurs. 6:30 p.m.

### Great Garden Color

There are many techniques for achieving spectacular garden color. Join horticulturist Keeyla Meadows when she discusses them.

August 14 - SF (Sloat Blvd), Thur. 6:30 p.m.

### Winter Vegetables with Dinah

Join Sloat's Dinah Sims who has won medals at the Marin County Fair with her outstanding vegetables. Dinah will share her tips on growing winter vegetables.

August 16 - Larkspur, Sat. 10 a.m.

### Ladybug Release Party

Join the fun and learn to use beneficial insects in your garden with Jennie and Dustin Strobel.

August 17 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun. 10 a.m.

## Nine Locations in San Francisco, Marin & Contra Costa

**Richmond District**  
3rd Avenue between  
Geary & Clement  
752-1614  
**Sunset District**  
2700 Sloat Blvd.  
46th & Sloat Blvd.  
566-4415

**Novato**  
2000 Novato Blvd. at  
Wilson  
897-2169  
**San Rafael**  
1580 Lincoln Ave.  
just off Hwy. 101  
453-3977

**Larkspur**  
279 Doherty Drive between  
Redwood High &  
Downtown  
924-7390  
**Kentfield**  
700 Sir Francis Drake at  
Wolfe Grade  
454-0262

**Mill Valley**  
657 E. Blithedale at Lomita  
388-0102  
401 Miller at La Goma  
388-0365  
**Danville**  
828 Diablo Road  
(925) 743-0288

Open 7 days a week  
8:30 am to 6:30 pm

**Garden Design  
Department**  
401 Miller, Mill Valley  
388-3754

Visit Sloat on the Web: [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)



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*Great plants and great advice to help them grow!*

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## Redwood boxes offer plenty of design possibilities!

A superior selection of redwood planter boxes awaits you on your next visit to Sloat including some new sizes that are the result of our special requests!

These planter boxes go with just about any garden design and are ideal for everything from small trees and shrubs to vegetables and other seasonal annuals.

While they are especially well-suited for decks and patios, there are so many more possibilities you must consider.

Redwood planters can be used to

line walkways and soften the look of concrete driveways or entryways. Match them with a trellis and you can create

lovely screens of green by planting vines, for example, or add color by planting a flowering vine.

By using several planters, you can create a great look that not only ties together your plant displays, but allows you to define spaces in your landscape.

Our redwood planters are beautiful and durable, too! You need only fill

them with Sloat Potting Soil and add plants.

For help choosing the correct size planter as well as plants that help you achieve a particular goal, please consult with our team of nursery professionals.



*About this Newsletter:* The Gardener's Notebook is published bimonthly by Sloat Garden Center for the education and enjoyment of Bay Area gardeners. Information is collected from Sloat's expert staff, current horticultural publications and Sunset's Western Garden Book. Send address corrections to: 420 Coloma Street, Sausalito, CA 94965.