

# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 19, No. 1

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

February/March 2005

## Celebrated British garden writer to visit Sloat Reward Members February 21st!

Don't miss this special opportunity to meet international author and founder of the International Black Plant Society when she visits Sloat's Sunset District location on February 21st at 10:30 a.m.



shows why these plants have an enduring place in the garden, while keeping dark plant aficionados up-to-date with 2,750 plants and 425 photographs. Original garden themes are painted in watercolor and plants

to sign books and greet Sloat customers, however, it will be necessary for all attendees to secure a reservation.

The event is free for all Sloat Gardener's Reward Members and \$5 for other attendees. To reserve a seat, please contact Lora Kellner, Special Events Coordinator, at (415) 332-0657 ext. 114. Reservations will close on 2/14/05.

Karen Platt, who was recently named the leading innovator in garden books,

are described in Platt's inimitable style.

Platt's book talk event is expected to last about an hour. She will be available

will be introducing her latest work, *Black Magic and Purple Passion*.

Platt appeared on Home and Garden Television (HGTV) in November to show viewers

## Heucheras are hot!

Plant these stunning year-round performers now

Though the name heuchera (pronounced 'who-ker-a') might offer you a

brief challenge, planting and enjoying these wonderful perennials will not.

Planted in borders, as ground covers or



Palace Purple

in containers, heucheras are illuminating plants whose attractive maple-shaped leaves offer rich colors including purple, silver, amber, green and more.

Also known as alumroot and coral bells, heucheras have a clumping growth

why "black" is the latest buzzword in garden design. She has also appeared on local television and radio in California, Washington and Oregon, designed award-winning gardens at U.S. flower shows and been a consultant to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Her garden was filmed by the BBC at the 2004 Chelsea Flower Show and where she won a Royal Horticultural Society Award for her display for The International Black Plant Society.

*Black Magic and Purple Passion* is the essential book of dark plants. This fully revised, rewritten and expanded edition

The latest hybrids of this North American native, first discovered in the 1600's, are showing up and dressing up gardens everywhere.

What's created excitement about these easy-to-grow plants is not their flowers, but rather

habit that generally extends about 18-20 inches. Depending on the variety, they

(continued on back page)



Over 2750 dark plants and 425 colour photographs

# Plan an encore of spring beauty with these new summer bulbs

If you love the spring show put on by daffodils, tulips and other spring bulbs why not add an encore of color by planting their summer-flowering counterparts?

Many summer bulbs offer big, bold flowers that tend to last longer in the garden than spring bulbs. They also make superior cut flowers!

This year we've added some new "black" flowers to our collection of your favorite



gladiolas, lilies, begonias and dahlias. These additions will give

you a chance to experiment with an exciting new gardening trend. (See seminar on page 1.)

Black plants have flowers and/or foliage that is dark in color, typically deep shades of purple, red, black and green.

**Simple Pleasures**, one of our top summer bulb sources, is introducing some great new bulbs featuring these trend-



setting colors and here are a few that we think you'll want to try:

**Black Forest**, a jumbo hybrid calla lily, is nothing short of spectacular. It was awarded a gold medal by Holland's famed Keukenhof Garden. Each bulb produces 3-5 extraordinary purple-black flowers on 12- to 18-inch stems.

Simple Pleasures' **Asiatic Lily Landini** is the darkest lily on the market. Its extremely deep red flower is truly remarkable. Ideal when placed in perennial borders as well as on your table in a favorite vase.

To jump on the "black" bandwagon the

easy way, try a **Black Garden Theme Collection**. It includes 10 Gladiolus 'Black Jack,' 18 *Acidantha ararielae* and 2 Cactus Dahlia 'Chat Noir.'

All our stores make their bulb buying decisions based on local preferences. If you are looking for something in particular, call your local store and/or consider visiting our S.F. location on Sloat Boulevard, which has the broadest selection of bulbs.

Enjoy the summer show!



## Gardening Guide

### February & March

#### Plant:

Plant an ornamental or fruit tree now before spring. Consider beautiful maples, magnolias, flowering cherries, birches, and more. (Fruit trees are available at our Novato and Danville stores.)

Summer bulbs are a must. Plant gladiolus, dahlias, lilies and begonias.

Start spring vegetable seeds indoors or in a greenhouse. Tasty heirloom varieties, seed trays and everything else you need are available at Sloat.

Dormant roses are ready to wake up and fill your garden with fragrance and beauty. Ask about roses specially selected for your climate.

Rhododendrons are budding and blooming. Find a place with filtered shade in your garden for these plants.

You can start planting spring and summer annuals soon. Check with your local Sloat to see what's available.

#### Fertilize:

Wake up your garden by using fertilizers such as **Sure Start** for new plantings, **E.B. Stone's Alfalfa Meal** and **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food** for acid loving plants.

Fertilize houseplants with a time-

release fertilizer such as **Osmocote**.

Apply a lawn fertilizer with a pre-emergent to control annual weeds.

Stock up on a season's worth of top quality plant-specific fertilizers from **E.B. Stone**. The new "Naturals" line is environmentally friendly!

#### Prune/Maintain:

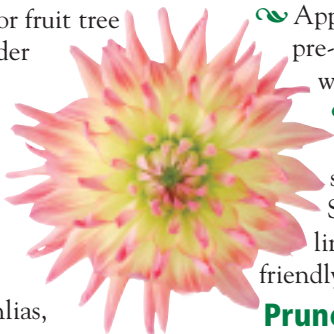
Bait for snails and slugs which are hatching in your garden now.

Clean up and prune plants and trees to enhance their appearance and prepare them for spring growth.

Prepare planting beds for spring by amending soil with **Sloat Loam Builder**, **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**, and **Sloat Planting Mix**. Also, add **E.B. Stone's Agricultural Lime** to your soil, to provide needed calcium to vegetables and fruit.

Protect fruit trees and other deciduous trees from pests and diseases by applying dormant sprays such as **Cooke's Sulf-R-Spray** and **Kop-R-Spray**, **Polysul**, or **Ultrafine Oil** depending on plant variety.

Aphids are beginning to appear. Stop them early with **Greenlight Rose Defense**. Use it on roses and all your plants!



## Sure Start builds strong roots 12 ways

One of the precepts for success in planting is getting healthy roots established quickly.

Nursery plants are grown under optimal conditions in top quality soil. Once you remove a plant from its nursery container, spread its roots and introduce it to your garden, there is typically a shock as the plant's roots acclimate to your garden's soil and growing environment.

To help new plants make the transition from heaven to earth, use **Sure Start**.

This fertilizer contains 12 powerful ingredients to build strong roots including beneficial bacteria, alfalfa meal, bat guano, chicken manure and Mycorrhizae, which have proven to dramatically increase nutrient uptake. When added to planting mix, your plants are sure to thrive.

# Don't let destructive snails prevail in your garden!

Like the swallows to Capistrano, snails and slugs are now returning to Bay Area gardens by the thousands!

Actually these pests with voracious appetites for all types of



plants, fruits and vegetables are now hatching in your garden - thank God they can't fly.

Although snails and slugs come out at night and hide during the day, there is no mistaking their damage. They take chunks out of leaves leaving ragged edges and holes, and are capable of swallowing an entire seedling. (Vegetable growers beware!)

Snail baiting is the most popular solution to this pest problem and Sluggo

brand snail bait is the best choice for environmentally astute gardeners.

Sluggo's active ingredient is iron phosphate, which stops snails and slugs from eating anything once the granules are ingested.

Iron phosphate occurs naturally in the environment and when it breaks down (after breaking off an attack on your garden), it will provide nutrients for your plants. It won't hurt your pets or wildlife.

If you've ever had snails in your garden, don't wait for evidence of their arrival.

Bait now and stay ahead of these destructive pests.



## 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.)*

### ROSE PRUNING

Learning to prune your roses is essential to maintaining their health and beauty. Join members of the S.F. and Marin Rose Societies or a Sloat professional to learn this important skill.

Feb. 6 - S.F. (Third Ave.) Sun. 10 a.m. SFRS  
Feb. 16 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Wed. 5:30 p.m. SFRS

### ORCHID CARE

Join Glenn Smith, of the Marin Orchid Society, or Sloat's Richard Avery when they discuss successful orchid growing and care as well as techniques for encouraging these plants to rebloom.

Feb. 6 - Mill Valley (Miller) Sun. 10 a.m. (Smith)  
Feb. 9 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Wed. 5:30 p.m. (Smith)

Feb. 12 - Danville, Sat. 10 a.m. (Avery)  
Feb. 26 - Kentfield, Sat. 10 a.m. (Smith)

### PRUNING JAPANESE MAPLES

Arborist Julie Gates or Sloat's Richard Avery will demonstrate pruning techniques for Japanese maples to accentuate their naturally graceful form.

Feb. 13 - Kentfield, Sun. 10 a.m. (Gates)  
Feb. 20 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sun. 10 a.m. (Gates)  
Mar. 5 - Danville, Sat. 10 a.m. (Avery)

### HOUSEPLANT CARE

Sloat's Dinah Sims, C.C.N.P., will reveal the secrets to healthy, robust houseplants.

Feb. 19 - Sonoma, Sat. 10 a.m.  
Feb. 26 - San Rafael, Sat. 10 a.m.

### BLACK MAGIC & PURPLE PASSION

See information on author Karen Platt on Page 1.

Feb. 21 S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Mon. 10:30 a.m.

### TWIN PEAKS SLIDE SHOW

City dwellers will enjoy this special slide show featuring native plants of the Twin Peaks neighborhood. Learn to appreciate and use these plants in your garden with SF Chronicle writer and landscape professional Geoff Coffey.

Mar. 2 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Wed. 5:30 p.m.

### GROWING ORGANIC TOMATOES

Here's a great opportunity to learn organic techniques for growing a fantastic crop of tomatoes from our grower. Join Pilar Reber owner of Sunnyside Organic Seedlings.

Mar. 16 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Wed. 5:30 p.m.

Mar. 20 - Sonoma, Sun. 10 a.m.

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

### GROWING GREAT VEGGIES

Join Sloat's award-winning vegetable grower Dinah Sims when she discusses tips and techniques to maximize your spring vegetable harvest. Sims has won awards for her vegetables at the Marin County Fair.

Mar. 19 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.) Sat. 10 a.m.

Mar. 26 - San Rafael, Sat. 10 a.m.

### CUTTING GARDENS

Learn to grow a productive cutting garden including selecting a site, choosing flowers, and caring for your garden with expert advice from Sloat's Dustin Strobel.

Mar. 30 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) Sat. 5:30 p.m.

## Meet a red hot green thumb

Ready to answer any of your gardening questions.



Name  
Dustin Strobel

Store  
Miller Avenue (Formerly in SF)

Special Interests:  
Low maintenance/drought tolerant garden design

Carniverous plants

Water gardens

#### Experience

Sloat Professional: 8 1/2 years

California Certified Nursery Professional  
Seminar Speaker

Attended an Ian Baldwin Tour in United Kingdom in 2002

Visited over 20 European nurseries and gardens

Met world famous rose grower David Austin

#### Dustin's Tips for Gardeners

1. Gardeners should always seek out local knowledge. With micro-climates all over the Bay Area, some of the best advice you will receive will be from other gardeners in your community - including Sloat team members.

2. Concentrate on getting your soil in optimal growing condition before planting and learn to use fertilizers properly. It has been said that those who put 90% of their effort into their soil and 10% on plants are the most successful. I wholeheartedly agree!

## Ten Locations in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma & 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

**Mill Valley**  
657 E. Blithedale at Lomita  
388-0102  
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma  
388-0365

**Kentfield**  
700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.  
at Wolfe Grade  
454-0262

**Sonoma**  
23566 Arnold Drive  
(707) 939-9400

**Danville**  
828 Diablo Road  
(925) 743-0288

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

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

Open 7 days a week 8:30 am to 5:30 pm



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

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### Heucheras (continued from page 1)

will thrive in full sun as well as in light shade. They look magnificent when planted in sunny mixed borders and in the shade alongside hostas, astillbes, ferns and pulmonaria.

The number of new heuchera hybrids exploded in the mid-1990's and continues to expand. Our grower, **Hines Horticultural Nursery**, has focused on several superior varieties this year which you must consider.

**Heuchera 'Palace Purple'** may be familiar to some gardeners as it was one of the first

heucheras to be grown for its wonderful purple foliage. It has endured for over a

decade as a perennial favorite in spite of competition from new introductions and was the 1991 Perennial of the Year!

**Heuchera 'Amber Waves'** is one of the

the world's top heuchera hybridizers, it is his most attention-getting plant and a winner of several European awards.

**Heuchera 'Amethyst Myst,'** is another new-generation hybrid with silver-veined leaves with bright magenta undersides. Six hundred National Home Garden Club members awarded 'Amethyst Myst' the Tested Seal of Approval after a year-long trial. Judged on ease of use, performance, appearance, plant health and durability, the 87% approval rating underscores the potential for this and other heucheras in your garden.

Heucheras prefer well-draining soil and regular watering. They are relatively disease-free and resist slugs.

You'll need to divide your heucheras every 3 - 5 years to keep them looking their best.



**Amber Waves**

Photo: Hines Horticulture



**Amethyst Myst**

Photo: Hines Horticulture

brightest new hybrids with its amber-gold leaves and hints of red. It's like fall color all year long. Developed by Dan Heims, one of

*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.