

S l o a t



G A R D E N C E N T E R

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 20, No. 5

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

September/October 2006

FALL FEATURES & SPRING PREVIEW



Spring Bulbs Birding Books Fall Clean-up Pumpkins and More!

Rejuvenate your Lawn this Fall

Care of your lawn in the fall months is just as important as watering in the summer. Fall is the perfect time to rejuvenate your existing lawn or establish a new one.

For those of you looking to improve your current lawn, there are many products geared towards restoration and weed control. E.B. Stone

Organics Nature's Green Lawn Food will ensure a lush and healthy lawn. Greenall Fall and Winter Feed has nitrates that aid in establishing a year-round green lawn. The potassium and phosphorus also help your lawn resist disease. One solution for pesky weeds is Greenall Weed and Feed. This easy-to-apply

granular fertilizer contains ammonia, urea nitrogen, and weed control that kills over 35 broadleaf weeds. However, this fertilizer should only be used on grass lawns and should be applied when the lawn is wet so that the weed control has a chance to attack the weeds.

Another fall task that will guarantee a splendid lawn is aeration. You may think this is only necessary for golf courses but it is actually an easy way to promote

the growth and health of your lawn. It allows oxygen into the soil, promotes healthy grass roots and better drainage, allows carbon dioxide to escape from the soil, and prevents loss of fertilizers from run-off.

Our lawn experts at Sloat recommend the **Yard Butler Duo Core Aerator** (pictured above).

Finally for those of you who are looking to establish a lawn, there is no better time than fall. The cooler climate and added moisture allow the seeds to germinate faster. There are many

types of grass seed but for the Bay Area, we recommend **Pacific Coast Seed**. With three distinct options, Pacific Coast offers a lawn seed for all areas from Shade to Park (for heavy traffic areas) and even Bonsai. When planting lawn seed it is important to remember

to fertilize and water regularly to ensure a healthy lawn for years to come. For an "instant lawn" ask about our many sod varieties!



Gardening Guide

September

PLANT

- 🍀 Watch for the arrival of all our spring bulbs. Shop early for the best selection.
- 🍀 Plan landscaping projects and designs to suit your tastes and needs. Think about walkways and fountains. It's a good time to call Sloat's **Garden Design Department** for expert advice.
- 🍀 Freshen container gardens with fall and winter color such as violas and pansies.
- 🍀 Choose fall blooming chrysanthemums and other autumn color.



FERTILIZE

- 🍀 Apply lawn fertilizer monthly. It's a good time to patch and reseed bald spots. Aerate compacted soil (see article this page).
- 🍀 Roses, summer annuals, and cool season annuals will enjoy monthly feeding at this time of year with **Maxsea** foods.

PRUNE/MAINTAIN

- 🍀 Keep the garden clean. Snip and trim spent rose blooms and annuals. Pick up fallen fruit to avoid pests and disease next year. Clean plant debris.

October

PLANT

- 🍀 Stop by Sloat for all your fall holiday needs such as pumpkins, gourds, and mums.
- 🍀 Select and plant maples and other trees for fall color.
- 🍀 Plant winter color such as cyclamen, violas, pansies, and kale.



- 🍀 your lawn and flower beds.
- 🍀 Top-dress azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** and feed with 0-10-10 fertilizer monthly until bloom.

PRUNE/MAINTAIN

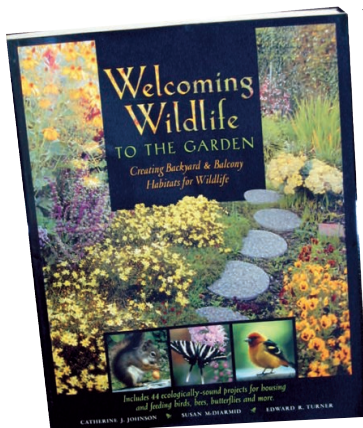
- 🍀 Prepare planting beds for winter. Clear weeds and rocks. Till soil and add soil amendments.
- 🍀 Divide the roots and rhizomes of certain perennials such as agapanthus, yarrow and dianthus. You may dig up summer blooming bulbs, including gladiolus and dahlias. Lift and store begonias after they bloom.

Renew Your Gardener's Notebook Subscription Today!

Books Guaranteed to Inspire!

Welcoming Wildlife to the Garden

by Catherine J. Johnson, Susan McDiarmid, Edward R. Turner



Welcoming Wildlife to the Garden introduces landscaping techniques that will turn your balcony or yard into a wildlife sanctuary for birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. The authors have created 44 ecologically sound projects for attracting and nurturing local wildlife, such as birdbaths, bat nurseries, bee houses, birdhouses, worm bins, and even a basking raft for turtles. The illustrated instructions also include

basic ecology tidbits about our local wildlife and their behaviors. Did you know that ladybugs signify good luck throughout the world? In England they mean a good harvest and in France, vintners search for ladybugs throughout their vineyards as a sign of good weather. An honest guide to natural gardens, the book also discusses ways to discourage unwanted guests such as the infamous slug! This book is sure to inspire beginners, experts, and even the youngest gardeners with unique and creative ideas that will welcome all our native creatures into your garden. It makes a great gift too!

Cass Turnbull's Guide to Pruning

by Cass Turnbull



The Oregonian Queen of Pruning's second edition takes the reader through all the wonders of pruning with illustrations and instructions for more than 160 species of trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines and other unruly plants. Founder of Plant Amnesty, an organization committed to providing accurate information about pruning and garden maintenance, Turnbull is by far the Northwest expert on taming our gardens. With so much confusion over what to prune and how to prune

it, Turnbull succeeds by creating a comedic and fun educational guide that covers everything from "My Rhody is too Leggy" to "The Miracle of Deadwooding." Especially amusing yet imperative are Turnbull's Ten Commandments for gardeners (our favorite is number three: "Thou shalt not plant thy sun lover in the shade, nor thy shade lover in the sun."). A gardener at heart, Turnbull aims to make her instructions easy to understand and entertaining to read; she even includes her own mishaps and lessons learned. So before you take out the pruning shears, stop by and pick up this book!

SLOAT SEMINARS

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

WINTER VEGGIES

Grow your own organic salad greens and veggies with Dinah Sims, CCN Pro. It's easy, healthy, penny-wise, and can even be done in containers.

Sept. 6 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 9 - Novato, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Sept. 16 - San Rafael, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Sept. 30 - Kentfield, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

WILDLY SUCCESSFUL FLOWERS

Local author and teacher Pam Peirce shares how to achieve great color with less effort.

Sept. 20 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed, 6:30 p.m.

FRONT ENTRANCE DESIGN

Learn simple and easy techniques to beautify your entryway in time for the holidays. This is the first in our series from our Design Dept. consultants.

Oct. 11 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 14 - Kentfield, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

MAKE YOUR GOOD BETTER

Mary Te Selle will help analyze what works in the garden, why it sometimes doesn't 'feel right' and how to get the effect you want.

Sept. 9 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Sept. 23 - Kentfield, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

ENTERTAINING WITH HERBS

Local chef Miranda Tarbox prepares versatile dishes to make the holidays a breeze.

Oct. 4 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 21 - Mill Valley, (Miller Ave.) Sat., 10:00 a.m.

FALL PREP FOR SPRING BLOOM

Divide perennials and learn what can be planted now for winter/spring color with Mary Te Selle.

Oct. 7- Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Oct. 21- Kentfield, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

PUMPKIN PAINTING FOR KIDS

\$5 Material fee-please call to reserve a pumpkin.

Oct. 8 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10:00 a.m.

Oct. 15 - San Rafael, Sun, 10:00 a.m.

Oct. 15 - Kentfield, Sun., 12:30 p.m.

Oct. 18 - S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 21 - Danville, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

PARTY IN A POT

Design a gorgeous planted container to celebrate the season with Mary Te Selle or Linda Alexander.

Oct. 7- Danville, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 4 - Novato, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 11 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 18 - Kentfield, Sat., 10:00 a.m.

BOUNTIFUL & BEAUTIFUL BULBS

Planting bulbs is an almost effortless and foolproof way to guarantee a magnificent spring garden. Bulbs are perfect for any part of your garden, even in the shade or in a container on the porch. Thankfully, you don't need to be a master gardener to successfully grow these beauties - just plant in the fall and wait for the colors to appear in spring!

There are generally five types of bulbs: true bulbs (tulips, lilies, hyacinths and daffodils), tubers (ranunculus and begonias), corms (gladiolus, freesia, and crocus), tuberous roots (dahlia and anemone) and rhizomes (iris). Regardless of the bulb type, they all feature a unique underground storage system that allows them to store nutrients in order to begin growing after a dormant winter. One hint when selecting bulbs is that bigger bulbs mean bigger and more flowers. At Sloat, the size and quality of bulbs is our guarantee.

Each season our buyers at Sloat select the best varieties of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocus, and all your other spring favorites. But don't think that we stop there. This year we have strived to once again bring you a selection of new and unusual bulbs to add to your designs.

For 2007 we have found a number of unique **Tulip** varieties that are sure to add an element of drama to your

garden. **Virichic** is "very chic" indeed with uniquely shaped petals accented by vivid green streaks. These naturally elegant tulips also have a long flowering time and are perfect for borders and bouquets. Add a little fire to your garden this season with **Flaming Spring Green**. This feathery tulip variety proudly displays the colors of the Italian flag and brings a dynamic presence to any garden.

Another delightful tulip for spring is **Orange Greenland**. This tulip combines the hot colors for spring - orange and chartreuse - in an elegant bloom. Rounding out our featured tulips is **Rems Sensation**. The brush-stroked petals combine magenta and white into an explosion of color. A variety of Triumph tulip, the Rems Sensation resulted from a cross between long-stemmed Darwin Tulips and short-stemmed Early Tulips.

A lesser known bulb is the **Allium**, which is actually an ornamental onion! Showcasing a graceful ball of blooms atop a statuesque stem, these bulbs make an amazing backdrop or border. This year we are featuring a number of allium varieties such as **Mount Everest**, **Giganteum**, **Globemaster**, and **Schubertii**, many of which are pic-



variety of Alliums

tured above.

Another fantastic spring bulb is the the **Muscari**. These hardy and elegant bulbs are ideal for borders and rock gardens and will tolerate some shade and almost any type of soil. **Dark Eyes** is a unique wild hybrid with bright blue flowers in tight spikes that open to reveal white-rimmed rounded blooms. The unique silvery blue flowers of **Valerie Finnis** make it the perfect option to set off your heucheras at the edge of the garden. For those of you looking for the traditional royal blue blooms, check out our selection of *M. latifolium*, **Blue Spike**, and *M. armeniacum*.



Muscari Dark Eyes

So stop by today and start planning and creating an amazing Spring 2007!



Virichic



Flaming Spring Green



Tulip Orange Greenland



Rems Sensation

A Spectacular Spring starts with these easy-to-plant designs

Design 1: Sunny Border

Select a variety of alliums as the backdrop of your border. Add daffodils in white and yellow. Choose mixed crocus or a single color, perhaps blue, for the foreground and mix in a bulb cover such as white alyssum or blue lobelia. (4 x 6 area)

Shopping List

- 30 alliums bulbs
- 50 daffodil bulbs
- 25 crocus bulbs (yellow or blue)
- 1 - 4" flat of white alyssum or blue lobelia



Design 2: Partial Shade

Create a flagstone path going to a focal point, plant, or tree. Plant bearded iris in the background on one side and perennial daylilies on the other. In the middle add beautiful fritillaria. On either side of the path plant blue muscari and fill in with bulb cover such as violas or primrose. (15 x 10 area)

Shopping List

- 40 bearded iris bulbs
- 20 - 1 gallon daylily plants
- 60 blue muscari bulbs
- 50 fritillaria bulbs
- 2 - 4" flats of violas or primrose plants



Bulb Gardening Essentials

Once you have chosen your springtime bulbs there are a few important planting tips that should guarantee both beginner and expert gardeners an exceptional spring.

1. Before planting, establish the top and bottom of the bulb. For most, the pointy side is considered the top. If you are concerned check with a Sloat Garden Professional.
2. Depth and spacing are very important for bulb planting. A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs twice as deep as they are high, which usually ranges from 4" to 8" deep. In terms of spacing make sure that the bulbs are not touching each other. Smaller bulbs should be spaced 1" to 2" apart, and larger ones 3" to 6" apart. (Note: Space closer in containers)
3. Bulbs are like mini storage tanks and really don't require heavy fertilizing, but it is always advised to boost your growth with **E.B. Stone Organics Bulb Food**. The fertilizer contains long-lasting ingredients for feeding bulb's foliage throughout the following year.
4. Top quality garden tools will make planting all your bulbs a breeze. This season we are recommending the **Wilcox Trowel** and **Wilcox Weeder** (pictured to the left). The trowel features a measuring scale on the blade, a great way to guarantee your bulbs are planted at the correct depth. Both products are made of stainless steel and have a comfortable grip handle and should last a lifetime.



FEEDING AND CARING FOR OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

Bird watching has become a popular pastime as well as one of the fastest growing outdoor activities in America, especially in the Bay Area. Our climate, variety of landscapes, saltwater, freshwater, and brackish water all combine for a welcoming environment for many types of birds. We recently spent an afternoon at our Sonoma store with John Coulston, store manager and Sloat bird expert. John gave us all the tips and tricks for creating a bird-friendly environment in any garden.



The first step is identifying your neighborhood birds.

The **Local Bird Guide** (pictured left) is the perfect assistant. Once you have established

who lives in your neighborhood, you are ready to begin welcoming these exquisite feathered friends to your garden.

Birdbaths

Birds need water for both drinking and bathing, so when creating a bird-friendly environment, it is imperative to include a birdbath. It is also important to place the birdbath in a spot that will be safe from cats and other predators, and to watch the water level. The birdbath should be filled with fresh water to a depth of about an inch. The water level of the birdbath is also a great indicator of whether or



not your garden needs water - so check the level daily. One way to invite birds to your garden and



introduce them to the birdbath is to fill it with birdseed for a few weeks and then replace the seed with water. Sloat has a variety of birdbaths available this season!

Bird Feeders

There is an enormous variety of bird feeders on the market from decorative to "squirrel-proof". One of the most popular feeders is the **Duncraft Bird Sanctuary** (pictured



right). This ingenious feeder will attract dozens of birds that can perch on the wire caging, waiting their turn to eat at the feeding ports. Duncraft's precise spacing between the cage and the tube prevents gray squirrels from getting at the seed. The result is your seed is undisturbed, the birds feed in peace, and the squirrels are left to eat

seeds that drop to the ground.

Another great feeder option is the **Wild Delight Finch Sock** (pictured right). This inexpensive purchase is a great investment to see who is in your area. All you need to do is hang the mesh sock feeder from a tree limb, hook or other hanging mechanism. The finches will cling to the mesh sock and eat, bringing hours of enjoyment (to you and the birds!).



For those of you looking to attract hummingbirds to your garden Sloat has a wide range of feeders and nectar for these unique birds.

Birdseed

With all the different types of native birds in the Bay Area you can only imagine the number of different birdseeds. Sloat Garden Centers feature **Wild Delight** bird seed in many flavors. Certain bird families like finches have a specific preference for one type of seed such as **nyger thistle**, while others prefer a variety of seeds. **Wild Delight** offers the full range of birdseed options from specialty **song bird food**, to **nut n' berry**, and even **gourmet wild bird food**. Your best option is to stop by and ask one of our Sloat Professionals for the best birdseed for your local birds.

For more information on local Bird Watching Groups, Wildlife Associations, or Birding in general, please visit our website links page: sloatgardens.com/gardenguru/links



Spice up your Fall Cleanu**R** with **COLO**R

With winter around the corner it is time to clean up the garden. This season you can complete your seasonal chores in style with our new lines of colorful gardening tools!

A good pair of gardening gloves can make all the difference in the world.

Gloves will protect



you from thorns, bugs, blisters, and most importantly from ruining your manicure! Over the years gloves have also become quite the fashion statement culminating with the new line of vibrantly colored **Atlas Nitrile Touch**. Atlas is known for extremely durable and comfortable garden gloves that feature a breathable nylon coating that is completely washable - these gloves are a must-have!

The other fashion-forward accessory for the 2006 fall season is the **Garden Works Tubtrug**. These bendy totes



are the most versatile containers available to gardeners. Made from UV-resistant polyethylene, Tubtrugs are available in 5 fantastic colors and 2 sizes (9 and 5.5 gallon). These incredibly strong and flexible totes make hauling rocks, leaves and debris, or pouring water a breeze. Give these colorful garden assets a try this season - we promise you will be thrilled!

~ Fall Planting Guide ~

As the seasons start to change, we in the Bay Area often forget all the fabulous flowers and delicious vegetables available for our fall gardens.



FLOWERS

There are a number of flowers that you can add to your garden to maintain color and beauty through the cooler seasons.

Violas and **pansies** are perfect for creating mass color in containers or flowerbeds. Available in a variety of hues, these plants are also great as ground cover for spring bulbs. **Iceland Poppies** are a wonderfully vibrant option this fall, along with **snapdragons** and **chrysanthemums**.

For a hardy and unique alternative, consider planting **ornamental grasses** at this time of the year. Most varieties are in bloom and looking their best. Grasses require little upkeep and can create a wonderful camouflage against the house or fencing.



VEGETABLES

Late summer and early fall are the perfect times to plant a "cool season" crop of vegetables. Most below-ground growing veggies such as **carrots**, **beets**, **turnips** and **onions** will need to be planted as seeds for the spring harvest. But, if you are looking for vegetables with immediate foliage as well as future harvests, your best options are **lettuce**, **kale** and even **broccoli** and **cauliflower**.



Recently, these leafy greens have become popular borders and ground covers because of their unique color combinations and of course, their delicious cooking qualities. If you have limited space, why not consider planting a few favorites in containers.

For more fall gardening tips and unique container recipes check out our Gardener's Notebook library at: www.sloatgardens.com/notebook.

Our website now allows you to search all our Gardener's Notebooks since 2002 for helpful gardening ideas and advice. Enjoy!



New for Christmas

High-Quality, "Life-like", Artificial, Pre-lit Christmas Trees!



These exquisite and easy to care for artificial trees will be in select locations this November!

Locations in San Francisco, Marin, Sonoma, Contra Costa & San Mateo

Richmond District

327 3rd Avenue
(415) 752-1614

Sunset District

2700 Sloat Blvd.
46th & Sloat Blvd.
(415) 566-4415

San Bruno

675 Camino Real
(650) 869-6000

Novato

2000 Novato Blvd. at
Wilson
(415) 897-2169

San Rafael

1580 Lincoln Ave. just off
Hwy. 101
(415) 453-3977

Mill Valley

657 E. Blithedale at Lomita
(415) 388-0102
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma
(415) 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

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Great plants and great advice to help them grow!

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DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR GARDENER'S NOTEBOOK SUBSCRIPTION!!

Would you like to continue to receive our famous *Gardener's Notebook*? You need to let us know! There are now two options for delivery of our bi-monthly gardening publication: via mail or via email. That's right, we are now able to offer online delivery of the *Gardener's Notebook*! But, in order to continue to receive the *Gardener's Notebook* you must renew your subscription! From now until November we are offering two easy ways to renew your subscription:

Online Renewal - Please visit: www.sloatgardens.com/notebook/update or look for the Update my Subscription icon (pictured right) throughout the website. Fill out the quick form and submit!

In-Store Renewal - During your next visit to one of our stores please look for the "Update my Subscription" sign or ask one of our friendly staff for a renewal form. Fill out the form and give it to a Sloat Garden Center Professional.

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PUMPKINS & GOURDS

Stop by this fall and see
our great selection of:

Howden carving pumpkins

Cinderella Red pumpkins

Assorted gourds

Miniature pumpkins

White, Blue & Brown pumpkins

Plus lots of Fall Decor Ideas!



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. or online at www.sloatgardens.com/notebook/update