



# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 21, No. 1

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

February/March 2007

金桔  
kumquat



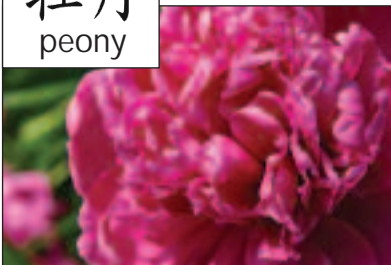
桃花  
plum tree



山茶花  
camellia



牡丹  
peony



## Gardening for the Chinese New Year

Each January and February, Chinese communities in the Bay Area begin preparing for Chinese New Year (also known as Lunar New Year). There are many traditions that are thought to bring good fortune if put into practice during this time, including planting and caring for plants.

Throughout the year, certain plants are favored in traditional Chinese gardens for their associations with luck, fortune and perseverance. Here at Sloat this Chinese New Year, we present six beautiful plants chosen for their symbolism in helping gardeners yield good health, wealth and luck.

A Kumquat or Mandarin promises a fruitful and prosperous new year inviting endless wealth. "Kum" symbolizes gold, while "quat" symbolizes auspiciousness and peace; many Chinese believe in keeping at least one or two in their home. Kumquat and Mandarin are also said to protect the home and ward off evil.

Flowering Plum Tree – It is believed that plum trees not only invite and create love, but also prosperity and wealth. Plum trees are revered for their beautiful blooms, perseverance and ability to grow in a wide variety of climates and terrain.

Camellia – Native to eastern and southern Asia, this shrub symbolizes wealth and is associated with auspiciousness, peacefulness, and royalty. Its beautiful flowers are a lovely floral treat.

Peony – A symbol for wealth, value and power, the peony is also a sign of royalty. With its dignified beauty, peony has been used to describe queens and royal concubines in ancient China. In full bloom, it is a sign of peace. For centuries,

the peony has been esteemed in traditional Chinese gardens as one of the most exquisite flowers.

Nandina – Also known as Heavenly Bamboo, Nandina is an evergreen or semi-evergreen woody shrub. Since bamboo has "sections" on each stalk, it symbolizes personal and professional development section by section. It makes a light, airy looking hedge, screen or tub plant and is dramatic with night lighting. Nandina is excellent for bonsai and terrific in urban environments in narrow, restricted spaces. Nandina is also known for its beautiful winter color.

Michelia champaca – This plant is widely appreciated during Chinese New Year for its positive symbolism. A magnolia relative, it has attractive lush foliage and profuse, fragrant blossoms. In Chinese, the name means "subtle, timid smile."

Other plants used in traditional Chinese gardens: Banana, lucky Bamboo, Quince, evergreen Hydrangea, Chrysanthemum, Ginkgo, Magnolia, Jasmine and Willow.

### Traditional Chinese gardening:

- Chinese gardens embrace the Taoist philosophy of yin (calmness) and yang (activity). These gardens illustrate the traditional aesthetic of placing plants and objects together that are opposite so that they work as a balanced whole.
- Chinese gardens are often constructed to take viewers on a journey of discovery and may be planned to encompass balance, harmony, proportion and variety through a combination of natural elements.
- Water is a central element in a Chinese garden; it balances other elements of the garden.

## Ten Locations in San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Contra Costa

Richmond District  
3rd Avenue between  
Geary & Clement  
(415) 752-1614

Marina District  
3237 Pierce Street  
Chestnut & Lombard  
(415) 440-1000

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

Kentfield  
700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.  
at Wolfe Grade  
(415) 454-0262

San Bruno  
675 El Camino Real  
(650) 869-6000  
3 blocks south of I-380

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

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

Mill Valley  
657 E. Blithedale at Lomita  
415-388-0102  
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma  
(415) 388-0365

Danville  
828 Diablo Road  
(925) 743-0288

Garden Design Department  
401 Miller, Mill Valley  
(415) 388-3754

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

**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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## February & March Gardening Guide

### Plant:

- ☞ Plant an ornamental or fruit tree now before spring. This is the time for maples, magnolias, dogwoods, flowering cherries, willow, plums and crabapples.
- ☞ Say yes to summer bulbs! Plant gladiolus, dahlias & lillies now for summer color.
- ☞ Start spring vegetable seeds indoors or in a greenhouse. Heirloom varieties, seed trays, soil and everything else you need are available at Sloat.



- ☞ Plant fragrant vines and shrubs: lilac, wisteria, daphne & pink jasmine for flowers & foliage.
- ☞ Rhododendrons and azaleas are budding and blooming. Feed them with E.B. Stone's organic Ultra Bloom.
- ☞ Start thinking about planting spring & summer annuals: violas, pansies & iceland poppies.

### Fertilize:

- ☞ Fertilize your garden and houseplants with a time-release fertilizer to provide ongoing nutrition for up to four months. Use Sure Start fertilizer for new plantings to establish them quickly.

- ☞ 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 "Naturals" and "Organics" lines are environmentally friendly.

### Prune/Maintain:

- ☞ Snails and slugs are hatching in your garden right now. Non-toxic Sluggo can help.
- ☞ 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 & Sloat



Planting Mix. Also, add E.B. Stone's Agricultural Lime to soil to provide needed calcium for vegetables & fruit.

- ☞ Protect fruit and other deciduous trees from pests and diseases by applying dormant sprays such as Cooke's Sulf-R-Spray and Kop-R-Spray or Bonide All Seasons Oil (ask at Sloat to see which variety you'll need).
- ☞ Aphids are beginning to appear. Stop them early with Greenlight Rose Defense. Use it on roses and all your plants!

*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.

# tropicals

## easy to grow and a whole lot of fun



*Pink Sunburst*



*Milk Festival*



*Alocasia odora*



*Colocasia esculenta*



*Alocasia californica*

### For lush, green foliage, plant Elephant Ears

Visit the tropics in your own garden by planting this handsome, bold and lush tropical native.

- **Alocasia odora:** Striking foliage with large, deep green upright leaves. Produces a dramatic effect in containers or beds. 48–72" tall.
- **Colocasia esculenta:** Produces large tropical leaves that are a subdued emerald green accented by purple blotches between the veins. 36–60" tall.
- **Alocasia californica:** This dwarf variety is ideal for containers. Has large upright leaves that stand straight on strong stems, growing no taller than 2½'. Sparkling foliage in a shiny yellow green will be a focal point in any garden. 24–30" tall.

Question: What's tall, has large, lush, banana-like leaves, showy tropical color and spectacular, vibrant blooms, and is as easy to grow as your average marigold? Answer: Cannas, of course. Cannas are the perfect plant for gardeners who tend to question their green thumb.

Though they look fussy, cannas are affordable, simple to grow and prized in gardens throughout the world. They can help create height, texture and focal point in borders and large pots and are dazzling when planted in groupings of a single color. Cannas will grow in any soil but of course prefer loamy ground. (Bay Area gardeners take note: cannas will grow in wet, clay soils!)

Sloat carries a wide variety of colors. Stop by this month and scoop up these exotic treasures for your garden.

### New Cannas this Spring

- **Pink Sunburst:** Wow! Incredible variegated foliage (in green, red and yellow) complimented by lovely salmon pink blooms. 2½ – 3' tall.
- **Milk Festival:** This canna blooms in a rare color, producing blooms with creamy white outer petals and buttery yellow centers. 2 – 2½' tall.

### Sloat's 2007 Gladiolus selections

We have selected two outstanding new *flevo* varieties based on their bright color and robust performance. Growing only 22–28" tall, the *flevo* series is more compact than traditional gladiolus, which makes them ideal for containers.

- **Bambino:** A lovely pastel variety in pale yellow and soft rose pink. 10–12 inches. *(top right)*
- **Amico:** Striking violet pink highlighted by an ivory white center. *(bottom right)*

In a standard size gladiolus, *Fringed Coral Lace* is also a winner. It's fringed and ruffled in a lovely salmon-peach with creamy white centers.



### ● garden design: ready for spring! ●

1. Clear out winter debris so you can clearly see "the bones" of your garden. Make a list of what needs to come out (dead branches, trees blocking sun, dead or overgrown shrubs, etc).
2. Make a list of what you would like to change or add: perhaps a water feature, statuary, more color or fragrance? Then, implement an action plan.
3. Check your garden tools for sharpness and then your hoses and irrigation systems for soundness. Do you need a new pair of gloves? Sloat has them in a variety of sizes and styles to fit every gardener's hands.
4. Add color in pots for an instant spruce up at doorways. Annuals like Primrose, Pansies, Violas and Calendula are beautiful and inexpensive container plants.
5. Call Sloat's Garden Design Department for a one-hour garden evaluation or consultation and let us help you form specific, personalized garden plans! 415-388-3754

### GOT PATIO FURNITURE?

Sloat's 2007 line of patio furniture is arriving! Beautiful benches, bistro sets, love seats and tables made from certified plantation grown Eucalyptus wood (similar to teak in longevity and quality) with all stainless steel nuts and bolts. *Stay tuned!*



*If your school is looking to raise money, Sloat's Growing up Green program can help. Visit our website for more info or email us for details: [growingupgreen@sloatgardens.com](mailto:growingupgreen@sloatgardens.com)*



# Sloat arrives in the Marina!



Manager Michael Gravel and Assistant Manager Erik Borman

Sloat Garden Center has officially opened the doors to a new store – our tenth location in the Bay Area and third San Francisco location.

Situated in the heart of the Marina on Pierce Street between Lombard and Chestnut, the store opened just after Thanksgiving and features products for container gardening, as well as indoor and outdoor color. Store manager Michael Gravel is thrilled about the opportunity to cater to the plant and garden needs of urban dwellers.

“I really enjoy the energy and vibrancy of the city and the people who shop here,” says Michael. “We are a local store here to meet the needs of local gardeners. We have plants for smaller spaces and also more formal plants. There’s a formality to gardening here and that’s part of what we’re specializing in.”

Filled with natural daylight from 10 skylights, the store serves the Marina, Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow and Nob Hill neighborhoods and beyond.

## Company Spotlight: Gloves we love

**Womanswork Gloves** was founded in 1985 by a sculptor who wanted to design gloves for the way women work. We asked company owner Dorian Winslow a few questions about her product.

How do you design new products?

What we really focus on when we’re designing new products is the things that are important to women: fit, durability around the fingertips and style. We’re gardeners, designers and women designing for other women. We know that men’s and women’s hands are shaped differently. Women tend to have longer fingers in relation to the width of the hand. When they’re gardening, women use their fingertips and their fingers poke through the gloves. Most of our gloves have some kind of reinforcement on the fingertips...we pay a lot of attention to making sure they’re good, strong, durable gloves. They are designed to fit women’s hands.

What is your best selling glove?

The paisley glove is very very popular, and it’s a pretty glove.

Does Womanswork have a mission?

Our mission is to really understand the needs of women working outdoors, either gardening, working outside for a living or volunteering. We want to provide gloves and hats and things that meet all their needs. It’s a diverse group of people we’re catering to. Our logo is “Strong women building a gentle world”...it kind of fits in with that. Gardening is a gentle art.



## 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

Join the San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Rose Societies and our local experts Dawn Smith and Linda Alexander and take the fear out of pruning.

Feb. 4 – San Rafael, MRS, Sun., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 10 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.) SFRS, Sat., 10 a.m.  
 – San Bruno, SMRS, Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 11 – Novato, Smith, Sun., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 18 – S.F. (Third Ave.), SFRS, Sun., 10 a.m.  
 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Smith, Sun, 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 24 – Danville, Alexander, Sat., 11 a.m.

### Orchids 101

Glenn Smith from the Marin Orchid Society shows how easy it is to feed and water orchids.

Feb. 11 – Kentfield, Sun., 11 a.m.  
 Feb. 25 – Novato, Sun., 11 a.m.  
 Mar. 3 – Danville, Sat., 11 a.m.  
 Mar. 11 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10 a.m.  
 Mar. 18 – San Rafael, Sun., 10 a.m.

### Growing Roses Naturally

Join Annie Joseph, CCN Pro, for a natural approach to growing roses.

Feb. 18 – Kentfield, Sun., 11 a.m.  
 Feb. 25 – S.F. (Third Ave.), Sun., 11 a.m.

### Air Purifying Plants

Dinah Sims, CCN Pro, shares how to care for plants that remove impurities in the indoor air we breathe

Feb. 21 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

### Repotting Cymbidiums

Glenn Smith demonstrates how to divide/repot cymbidiums, and discusses when/which fertilizers to use.

Mar. 7 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

### Spring Bulb Planning/Planting

Mary Te Selle shows creative ways to plant bulbs.

Feb. 7 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.  
 Feb. 10 – Kentfield., Sat, 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 24 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sat., 10 a.m.

### Tool Care/Felco’s

Drew Kellner, local expert, will demonstrate how to clean and care for tools.

Feb. 17 – San Bruno, Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 24 – Pierce St., Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 28 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.  
 Mar. 25 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sun., 10 a.m.

### Spring Spruce-up

Rejuvenate your garden with ideas for color, fragrance and cleanup from our Design experts.

Feb. 10 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Feb. 25 – Kentfield, Sun., 10 a.m.

### Scented Geraniums

Lisa Ludwigsen will share how to grow these deer-resistant fragrant perennials and then demonstrate some of the culinary, bath, and medicinal uses.

Mar. 4 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sun., 10 a.m.  
 Mar. 14 – Novato, Wed., 5:30 p.m.  
 Mar. 25 – San Rafael, Sun., 10 a.m.

### Salad Bowl Workshop

Make your own gourmet salad garden in a container and take it home that day!

Mar. 11 – San Rafael, Sun, 10 a.m.  
 Mar. 18 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sun., 10 a.m.

### Botanical Garden Treasures

Fred Bove will share slides of plants from around the world that will thrive here in our own back yards.

Mar. 21 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 5:30 p.m.

### Grow Great Veggies

Learn the secrets to growing great veggies with CCN Pro Dinah Sims.

Mar. 24 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Mar. 31 – San Rafael, Sat., 10 a.m.

### Bonsai Repotting, Styling

Sloat expert Daryl Quijano demonstrates the basics of growing/shaping and fertilizing Bonsai.

Mar. 24 – San Rafael, Sat., 10 a.m.  
 Mar. 28 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd), Wed., 5:30 p.m.  
 Mar. 31 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave), Sat. 10 a.m.