

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

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

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

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

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
(415) 454-0262

Danville
828 Diablo Road
(925) 743-0288

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

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

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

Visit Sloat on the Web: www.sloatgardens.com

Visit our new San Francisco store on Pierce Street!



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Great plants and great advice to help them grow!

8 Sloat Notebook April 2007

April Gardening Guide



PLANT

☞ Plant your favorite annuals for spring.

Impatiens, petunias, marigolds, cosmos and lobelia are all budding and blooming now!

☞ Plant bulbs and perennials now to fill your garden with summer color. Lilies & dahlias will be beautiful additions.

☞ It may be time for a new watering can. We have them in stock now.

☞ Organic vegetable starts and seeds are here. Start your edible garden early this year. (See page 4.)



PRUNE/MAINTAIN

☞ Improving the quality of your soil should be at the top of your spring garden activity list. An optimal loamy soil balance promotes drainage, air and water penetration. Use **Sloat Loam Builder**, **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** or **Sloat Planting Mix**. All are custom-blended for Bay Area gardens.

☞ Control pests before they take over your garden by adding plants that attract beneficial insects. (See page 2).

☞ Continue to control destructive snails that ravage gardens by night and hide by day. **Sluggo Snail Bait** works great and is the perfect non-toxic alternative to products with metaldehyde.

☞ Apply **Greenlight Rose Defense** to roses and other ornamental plants at the first sign of fungal and pest problems to control black spot, powdery mildew, rust, mites, aphids and more.

☞ Prune azaleas and camellias after they bloom.

FERTILIZE

☞ Use **E. B. Stone Organics Sure Start** (with mycorrhizae) with all new plantings to help them get established quickly.

☞ Use **Agricultural Lime** to balance your soil's pH and add calcium and magnesium to vegetable and other garden beds.

☞ Fertilize with **E. B. Stone Organics All-Purpose Plant Food** and **Citrus and Fruit Tree Food**. See our staff for other plant-specific fertilizer recommendations.

☞ Lawns are ready for some attention. Feed them with **GreenAll Pro Formula Lawn Food**.



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.



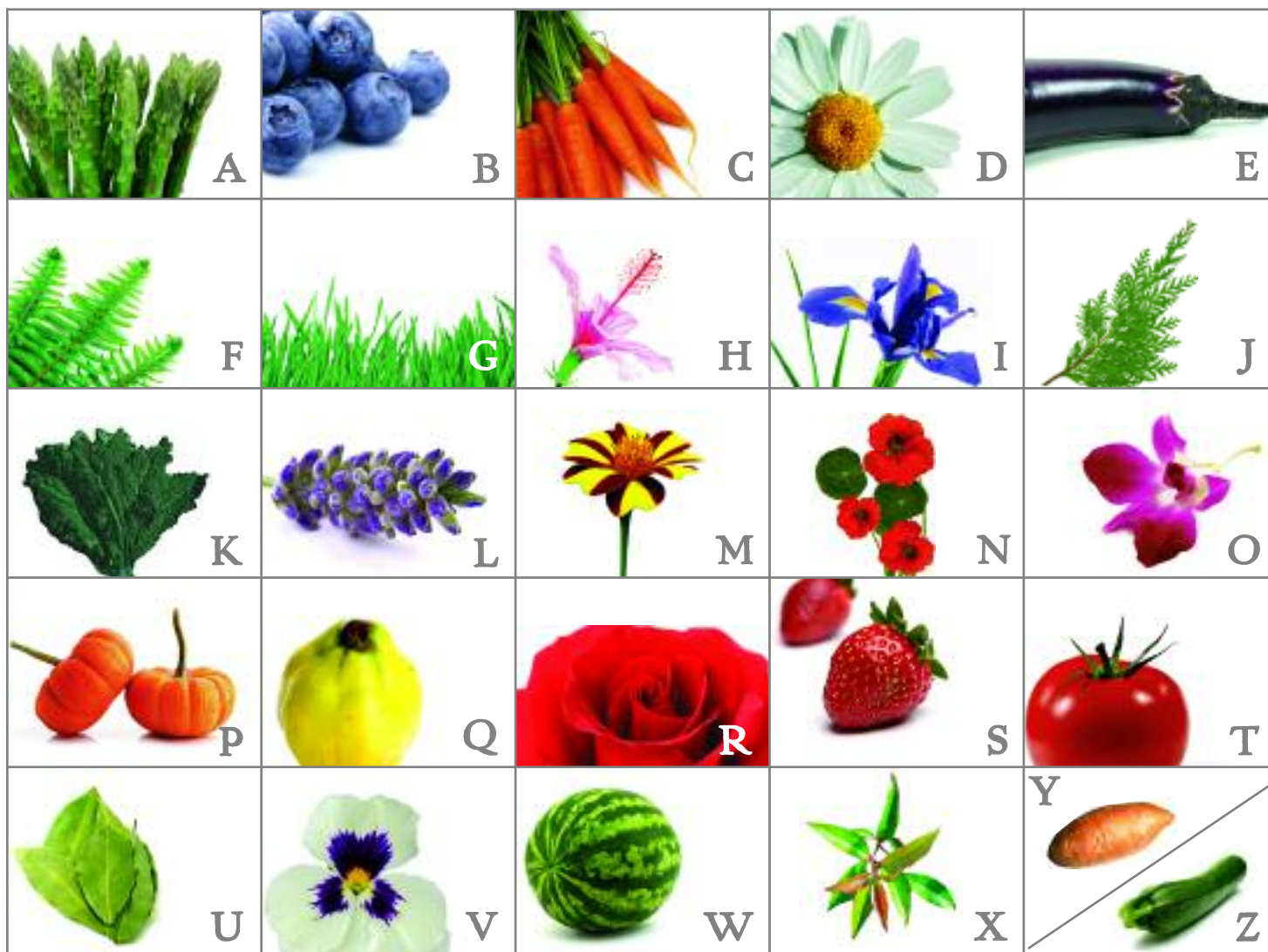
Gardener's Notebook

Volume 21, No. 2

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

April 2007

The Spring Gardening Issue



edible gardening

sustainability

peonies

tomatoes

Spring gardening the sustainable way

In February the International Panel on Climate Change issued the latest in a string of serious warnings worldwide about human-induced global warming. This report has given many Bay Area gardeners reason to pause; as gardeners we have an intrinsic connection to the cycles of the earth...but when the land and weather we know so well begins to change, we look for ways to help lighten our footprint.

With decreasing carbon dioxide in mind, this year we present our annual Spring Issue with a theme: Sustainability.

At Sloat we deeply believe that gardening is good for the planet. We urge every gardener to plant something this spring...because as we learned in 6th grade science class, through photosynthesis plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen - and that's a good thing these days.

Sustainable Gardening could be defined as a balance between resources used and results gained. Specifically this includes:

- Using non-toxic methods to help plants both resist and recover from attack by pests and diseases.
- Reusing garden waste in compost and mulch.
- Choosing plants that are an appropriate fit for your soil, sun and shade conditions.
- Using Bay Area native plants (or Mediterranean plants) in your garden: these all need less water.
- Providing wildlife habitat in your garden.
- Incorporating rain gardens into the landscape (stay tuned for details in the May/June Gardener's Notebook).



Our staff receives ongoing training in plant care. Look for a Sloat team member wearing this button.

Treating garden pests & plant diseases organically

Sloat Recommends:



Serenade Garden: An organic disease control spray for home gardeners that effectively treats diseases without the effects of harsh fungicides. Serenade provides protection against a broad spectrum of the most common fungal & bacterial garden diseases, yet is completely non-toxic to bees and beneficial insects, pets and people. Serenade Garden was one of the first fungicides to receive registration from the new National Organic Program.



Bonide All Seasons Spray Oil: Superior paraffinic oil. Kills insects by smothering them. Use Bonide in early spring to kill overwintering insect eggs and all season long to control insects (including scale) on trees, shrubs, ornamentals, fruits and vegetables in your backyard or greenhouse. This is the perfect insect control product for organic gardeners. Protect your favorite plants and trees with Bonide All Seasons Spray Oil.

Did you know?

Whenever possible, Sloat Garden Center sources locally...which means your plants have fewer miles to travel to get to you.

Plants for your favorite insects

You can attract beneficial insects that will eat nuisance insects, by establishing the beneficials' favorite plants in your garden: alyssum, aster, bachelor buttons, California poppy, cosmos, yarrow, mustard, parsley, and cilantro are some favorites. Mint and garlic may repel pests that are attracted to plants by smell. Planning a balanced garden with plenty of beneficial insects is the key to gardening success and protecting the environment. We have excellent handouts on beneficial plants & insects. Stop by!

Let the ladies loose!

Ladybugs love to nibble on destructive bugs and so why not invite these helpful critters into your garden?



Adding beneficial insects to your gardening routine is a completely natural method of controlling aphids, whitefly, caterpillars and other destructive pests by releasing their natural enemies. In fact, this practice has been around for centuries. How about unleashing 1,000 ladybugs, a box of nematodes & hanging up 4 praying mantis egg cases for fun? We have all these terrific critters in stock.

Our Kentfield location is a store with a lot to love



Managers Ashley McQuade and Marco Marchesini show off the large patio area at our Kentfield location.

Looking for a roomy garden center that's right off 101 with ample parking? Sloat Garden Center in Kentfield is your perfect match.

Centrally located on Sir Francis Drake, less than 2 miles from 101, our Kentfield store serves West Marin and hosts one of our largest nursery yards. Besides a great plant selection, this store has an extensive pottery collection and a covered patio,

which is great for rainy days.

"A special feature of our Kentfield store is the extra large yard which allows us to offer a great selection of 15 gallon plants, 24" box trees and shrubs, and specimen plants," explains store manager Ashley McQuade. "Plus, there's the newly expanded succulent area."

If you haven't been to our Kentfield location in a while, stop by and see the new layout. Both the outdoor and indoor areas have been redesigned and there is plenty of room to wander around while creating your perfect garden.

Kentfield Sloat Garden Center at a glance

- ∞ 150 foot pottery wall with over 1,000 domestic and imported containers.
- ∞ Wide selection of trees, shrubs, vines, shade plants, bedding plants, indoor plants and edible plants.
- ∞ Delivery available throughout Marin.

We're an eclectic group of plant geeks!

Sloat Garden Center employees have a wide range of plant specialties, from orchids, trees and roses, to bonsai and tropicals...but one thing we all have in common is a love for plants.

Over the years, some of our employees have chosen to take their passion further and become a California Certified Nursery Pro through work experience and a multi-level exam.

The California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers created this certification program in 1969 to train staff to help with bug/disease/design problems and make appropriate plant recommendations. In order to stay certified, staff must attend seminars, symposiums, and keep up with plant & product introductions, new theories, concepts and trends...or lose certification and have to retest again!

Lora Kellner is a staff CCN Pro who helps Sloat staff prepare for this difficult test. She enjoys leading the class and learning more along the way.

"I have a passion for learning, and love the research and study involved in solving customers' problems and the continuing education aspect, both for myself and the staff training I am responsible for," she says. "I also care more deeply for plants and gardens than I care to admit."



www.sloatgardens.com

Sloat Garden Center has officially entered the world of blogging. Sloat's blog is updated 2-3x per week with the latest arrivals of plants, furniture and pottery...plus design ideas, garden events and our terrific wit and humor. Check in often.

www.sloatgardens.com

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.)

Deer Resistant Planting

Local expert Dawn Smith discusses which plants are most successful in deer country and techniques for giving them a good start.
Apr. 4 – Novato, Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Grow Roses Naturally

Learn techniques to reduce disease & bugs naturally from Annie Joseph, CCN Pro
Apr. 7 – Danville, Sat., 10 a.m.

Cymbidiums 101

Glenn Smith, from the Marin Orchid Society, shows how to divide and repot these cool-season bloomers.
Apr. 11 – Kentfield, Wed., 11 a.m.
Apr. 15 – San Rafael, Sun., 10 a.m.
Apr. 28 – Danville, Sat., 11 a.m.
Apr. 29 – Novato, Sun., 10 a.m.

Salad Bowl Workshop

Make your own gourmet salad bowl and take it home that day! Materials Fee: \$45
Reward Members \$35
Apr. 11 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), 6:30 p.m.

After Easter Egg Hunt and Salad Potluck

Bring the kids and a salad and enjoy a delightful afternoon with us in a beautiful setting. Call 925-743-0288 for more details.
Apr. 14 – Danville, Sat., 11a.m.

Orchids 101

Glenn Smith, from the Marin Orchid Society, explains watering, fertilizing, lighting and repotting these exotics.
Apr. 17 – S.F. (Pierce St.), Tues., 6:30 p.m.

Butterfly Gardens

Mary TeSelle, of Quite Contrary Gardens, discusses how to use the plants that feed this very important pollinator. She has beautiful combinations for every garden.
Apr. 21 – San Rafael, Sat., 10 a.m.
Apr. 28 – Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10 a.m.

Veggies 101

Dinah Sims, CCN Pro and award-winning vegetable grower, shares her tips and techniques for great home-grown veggies.
Apr. 18 – Kentfield, Wed., 10 a.m.
Apr. 22 – Novato, Sun., 10 a.m.
Apr. 25 – S.F. (Sloat Blvd.), Wed., 6:30 p.m.

Appetizer Adventures!

Join Debbie Epstein, local caterer, as she demonstrates how to make gorgeous little bites for a party in your mouth, for the beginning of our food series.
Apr. 22 – San Bruno, Sun., 11 a.m.
Apr. 29 – San Rafael, Sun., 10 a.m.

Company Spotlight: Droll Yankees has a squirrel-free approach to bird feeding



The Yankee Tipper

Droll Yankees was the first company to develop the tubular bird feeder. Over the years they have expanded to produce a full line of unique bird feeding products. We asked them a few questions about the company.

How was Droll Yankee founded? In 1969, Peter Kilham developed the A-6 tubular bird feeder which led to a new and exciting approach in bird feeding. As an artist, engineer and inventor, he cared about using quality materials and innovative design to create a feeder that birds loved and people found easy to use. Still a best seller, the functional simplicity of the A-6 preserves its place as the standard in the industry.

We continue to strive to maintain the high standards of design and functionality set by Peter Kilham. We're proud of our

feeders and the legacy of being recognized as makers of the world's best bird feeders. We continually make great efforts to educate our independent retailers on species specific feeders.

How do you stay current with trends? We listen to customer feedback for ideas on product improvements and areas in the market where products are lacking.

What is your best selling product? The Yankee Family - which consists of the Flipper, Tipper, Whipper and Dipper. All are squirrel proof, large capacity and built to last a lifetime! The Yankee Tipper offers a large tray that allows multiple birds to feed at once and will attract the widest variety of beautiful backyard birds, all the while keeping squirrels away from the food.

Does Droll Yankees have a mission? We pride ourselves on making high quality wild bird feeders and accessories that are enjoyable to birds and humans. Droll Yankees products carry a Lifetime Warranty and are only sold at independent retailers.



Wild Delight makes tasty food for your neighborhood birds!

Cottage Mix Peonies: an old-fashioned, romantic flower

The smell of peonies is timeless; a gorgeous memory of summertime for many gardeners. But in the Bay Area these chill loving plants haven't always responded well to our temperate winters. With cooler January & February temperatures in recent years, we think it's worth giving these romantic and fragrant flowers a try in your garden.

This spring, Sloat is pleased to offer a very special peony cottage mix. These 2 gallon plants bloom in a range of colors and flower shapes. Since each container produces only one distinct type, be sure to combine several plants to obtain a lovely mixed effect. They will bloom this year since they were grown with a chill time...and we think they will do very well next year with just a bit of care.

Cut-flower tip: At planting time, covering the eyes with more than 2" of soil will greatly reduce the number of flowers produced. To extend the vase life of peonies, stay away from high nitrogen fertilizers. Cut the flower when the first petal starts to unfurl, remove the foliage from the cut stem and quickly place in water.



Our Garden Guru discusses Peonies

Question: The peony is my favorite flower, but I always understood that it couldn't be grown in California because it needs frozen ground in the Winter. If you know otherwise, please let me know - I would love to have a whole garden full! Thanks! Dot

Answer: Dear Dot, Yes, Peonies do need a chilling to bloom reliably but there are still many areas in Northern California that do frost, freeze or get cold enough for the plants to flower. They certainly will this year! Local areas that we include are the East Bay, West Marin, San Rafael and north, Kentfield/Ross, Fairfax and San Anselmo. Although the plants can bloom, they usually don't reach the height that they do in the northeast portion of the country. The plants that we receive in early spring will also flower as they are cultivated in the Northwest. Some people in Southern Marin and in SF have had success with icing their plants in the winter. *I hope this helps.* **The Garden Guru**

To read more from our Garden Guru, go to www.sloatgardens.com

HEALTHY Gardening starts with healthy soil

Each spring, we encourage gardeners to learn how to improve their soil because this knowledge has such an enormous impact on gardening success. The easiest way to create a superior growing medium for your plants is to add organic material to existing soil. The goal is to create a balance of sand, silt and clay that will provide easy penetration by roots, air and water.

For many Bay Area gardens, amending high clay content will help achieve a "loamy" soil balance. To break up heavy clay soils, **Sloat Loam Builder** can help. It contains a unique blend of chicken manure and composted mushroom soil (wheat straw, cottonseed hulls, Canadian peat moss, cottonseed meal and gypsum). This high-powered combination enhances bacterial action in the clay and loosens the soil to allow air, water and root penetration.



For soils that need moderate conditioning, use **Sloat Organic Planting Mix**. This mix contains fir bark, mushroom compost, perlite and

gypsum and is ideal for improving the soil in flower and vegetable beds.

Loam: the ideal soil which contains moderate amounts of silt, sand & clay.



Mulching your soil with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** will also improve soil in several important ways. As a mulch it will help conserve moisture and its fir bark content will add long-lasting organic matter to the soil and help keep clay particles separated.

How much do you need? As a rule, use 1/3 soil amendment to 2/3 native soils. To provide a boost to existing beds, apply a 2-inch layer.

For mulching, blanket the soil with a 1/2 to 1 inch layer. Two cubic feet of mulch will cover 48 square feet of surface at 1/2 inch.

When crops are deprived of basic nutrients they suffer. Improve the quality of your soil this spring and watch your plants thrive.

For information go to www.compostguide.com



Sloat Loam Builder and **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** have been custom blended to amend the dominant soil types found in the San Francisco Bay Area. They are especially effective in helping to tame heavy clay soils.

Ever make compost lasagna?

We hope so, because it's your soil's favorite meal! Compost can greatly reduce the amount of fertilizer your plants need. You can make your very own compost using the lasagna technique. For information go to www.compostguide.com

Sloat's Certified Organic Growers



"That is what Sloat Garden Center is all about: planting for success and having fun doing it!"

Sarah Machado

Sloat Garden Center sources from many organic and local growers. **Flatland Flower Farm**, a family nursery owned by Dan Lehrer and Joanne Krueger just west of Sebastopol, grows flowers and native plants in three unheated greenhouses.

In Santa Cruz, **Upstarts Organic Seedlings** is a small certified organic bedding plant/nursery that provides Sloat Garden Centers with gourmet and heirloom vegetable and herb starts. We asked Upstarts co-owner Sarah Machado about the business.

Why do you choose to grow organically?
Because we can, so why do it any other way?

Initially, for us in 1991, it was for environmental purposes, out of concern for animals and the earth. It didn't make sense to use pesticides and fertilizers that can harm the waterways and habitats of the planet.

What are some of the newest trends in vegetable gardening?

I think the trend is for choices. Folks want a variety of flavors and colors in their kitchen garden. I think they find it is an adventure to create fantastic meals because they can choose from their own fresh harvest of what is at its peak, which is what the best chefs do. This also goes for herbs. Folks want to experiment with

herbs used in Thai and Indian and Asian cuisine. The other trend is for bounty and productivity in their variety choices. Gardeners would rather have 10 lbs of Early Girl tomatoes over a longer season, than just a few Brandywine.

Why do you like to work with Sloat Garden Centers?

Sloat customers are knowledgeable, but they are also curious and adventuresome. The Sloat staff are so enthusiastic and helpful and they really strive to carry the best selections for their store, which is a benefit to all. I encourage my customers to grow what works but try something new. Plant things in a checkerboard, try the weird broccoli or the Stupice tomato or the Holy Basil. Plant a French intensive bed but don't go overboard. Vegetables in containers? Go for it! That is what Sloat Garden Center is all about: planting for success and having fun doing it.





The Edible Gardener: Recipes for delicious ideas this summer!

The pleasure of eating fruits, herbs and vegetables harvested yourself is so sublime that sometimes mere words cannot do this experience justice. These are the fruits of your gardening labors and you should plan for them. Go ahead and dream of backyard strawberries, tomatoes in containers or herbs sprinkled onto the evening salad because April is the perfect month to get into gear for edible gardening – whether in containers, garden beds or on windowsills.

This spring we present two edible garden recipes to motivate you for sweet rewards come harvest time. Not enough room? Sloat's larger glazed pottery in delicious colors can handle each of these gardening recipes with style. Enjoy...

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt"
writer Margaret Atwood on gardening

Edible Garden #1: Pizza Garden!



Pizza Garden Recipe

Ingredients:

Growing container
Sloat Potting Soil
Tomato cages
E.B. Stone Tomato & Vegetable food
Cherry Tomatoes – we like Sun Gold starts the best!
Arugula – we have seeds & starts in all stores

Herbs – purchase starts or from seed

Basil: We like a number of basil varieties for this dish. Genovese, Lemon Basil or African Blue (grows well in San Francisco weather)
Oregano

Arugula & Cherry Tomato Pizza with Feta Cheese

Pre-baked pizza crust/shell (you can also use english muffins, Italian bread or tortillas)

Olive oil

Parmesan cheese

3 cups Arugula from your garden -- coarsely chopped

15–20 Cherry Tomatoes from your garden -- halved

2 tsp Lemon juice, fresh

2 tsp Olive oil

Pinch Kosher salt

Fresh ground Black Pepper, to taste

Optional toppings: Pine nuts, Olives, Feta Cheese, chopped fresh Basil from your garden

- Take the pizza crust and brush with olive oil. Warm pizza crust per package instructions. Remove from oven.
- Cover with parmesan cheese. Bake for 2 minutes until cheese is lightly brown.
- While the cheese is melting, toss the arugula, tomatoes, lemon juice, olive oil and optional toppings together. Season with salt & pepper.
- Gently cover the pizza with the topping while crust is still warm. Serves 4 as a light lunch.

"Even in very small spaces, you can grow your own herbs and food."

- Charlie Nardozi, Senior Horticulturist
National Gardening Association



Edible Garden #2: Early Summer Salad

Lettuce Garden Recipe

Ingredients:

Growing container
 Sloat Potting Soil
 E.B. Stone Sure Start
 4 types of lettuce (we like Mesclun mix and Butterhead)
 Radishes – start these from seed
 Dill – purchase starts or from seed
 Chives – purchase starts or from seed

Fresh Yogurt & Herb Dressing

8 oz plain yogurt (1 cup)
 1 tsp finely chopped Chives
 1 tsp Lemon juice
 1 tsp fresh Dill from your garden
 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
 2 – 3 Tbs. skim milk
 Pinch Salt, ground Black Pepper
 Lettuce from your garden, cleaned
 Radishes from your garden, sliced

- Mix all ingredients thoroughly and chill until served.
- Evenly divide lettuce and radishes on plates. Serve dressing over salad. Enjoy!



Sloat Tomato Tips

Tomatoes are a prolific vegetable. Once they get started you will have an ongoing supply of delicious produce.

Some tips:

1. Don't start tomatoes until the weather warms consistently. Sloat stores will have starts, but you can also start seeds indoors.
2. Amend your soil with organic matter such as Sloat Loam builder and fertilize with E.B. Stone Sure Start for new transplants. Use E.B. Stone Tomato & Vegetable Food to feed them.
3. If planting starts, remove lower leaves from stems, then plant rootball and stem to encourage the formation of additional roots.
4. Stake or cage tomatoes early and guide new growth to maximize production and prevent fruit damage.



The Food Series at Sloat!

This summer we're launching a series of tasty gardening & food workshops. Enjoy!

Salad Bowl Workshop

Make your own gourmet salad bowl and take it home that day.

Veggies 101

Tips and techniques for great home-grown veggies.

Appetizer Adventures!

Make gorgeous little bites for a party in your mouth.

Try this Fresh Garden Herb seasoning!

Plant thyme, parsley, marjoram and sage this spring. As you harvest the herbs, coarsely chop them together and mix with salt and pepper. Use this garden fresh seasoning on roast chicken, steak or grilled fish.