

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 26, No. 2

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

May/June 2012



Red Drift
 (At left): These petite roses are perfect for the front of border plantings or draped naturally over a rock wall or ledge. Mature height is less than 1 1/2' with a 3' spread.



Pink Drift

This gorgeous, low-growing mounded rose has deep pink flowers with a soft faded center that blooms in abundance throughout the season.



Ivy Drift

Small, white double blooms from late spring through frost. Medium-green glossy foliage highlights the clean, white, large clusters of blossoms.



Apricot Drift

Apricot Drift's double apricot flowers bloom all season long. This rose is perfect for small gardens or along paths and walkways as a groundcover.

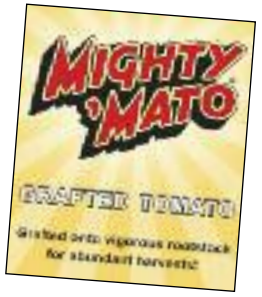


Coral Drift

Wow! Bright, vibrant coral-orange blooms cover this small mounding shrub from mid-spring to mid-fall.

Drift® Roses are a cross between full-size groundcover roses and miniature roses. They are tough, disease-resistant and virtually maintenance-free. They bloom continuously from spring to frost (about every 5-6 weeks) and are naturally dwarf. Their low, manageable habit makes them perfect for small gardens, hillsides, perennial beds and awkward areas. Also, their attractive foliage brightens up borders and fills in empty spaces around favorite established plants.

INSIDE:
 hydroponic gardening,
 low-light succulents, herbs,
 geraniums, new fiberlight
 pottery and the Mighty 'Mato



10 ways to love herbs this spring



1. **Build** a small raised bed herb garden.
2. **Plant** and cook with tarragon.
3. **Plant** up a good bug tub (*instructions on our website*). Herbs like thyme attract bees and repel harmful insects.
4. **Plant** up scented geraniums. They can be used to flavor jellies.
5. **Herbs** are tactile; plant herbs simply to touch them and release the aroma.
6. **Plant** herbs without worrying about deer; most herbs are deer-resistant.
7. **Grow** herbs hydroponically.
8. **Grow** herbs for tea: mint, lemon balm, lemon verbena and chamomile. (*See our website for a wonderful mint lemon balm tea recipe*).
9. **Use** herbs in edible landscaping. *Ground covers:* thyme, chamomile. *Shrubs:* rosemary, lemon verbena, lavender. *Perennial borders:* oregano, sage, fennel.
10. **Stock** your garden with the 12 herbs at left.



Mighty 'Mato grafted tomatoes are stronger and faster growing than regular tomato plants, and their harvests are much, much bigger.

Grafted tomatoes were first developed to allow gardeners in areas with cooler, short season climates (ie: Seattle, Portland and San Francisco) to grow and successfully harvest larger heirloom and heat loving tomatoes. As a result, increased yield and vigor has created demand for these tomatoes everywhere.

Mighty 'Mato has been bred to be resistant to pests, diseases, temperature extremes and poor soils, while producing long, abundant harvests of tasty fruit. Grafting joins the top part of one plant (the scion) to the root system of a separate plant (the rootstock). As their tissues heal, they fuse into one super plant that combines the rootstock's vigor and disease resistance with the scion's exceptional fruit quality (*but this does NOT mean the plants are genetically modified*). When planting, the graft must stay above soil level. Prune lateral suckers for best fruiting. **Please note:** *Our 5 grafted tomato quantities are limited. Pre-orders accepted at all Sloat Garden Center locations. Sign up to reserve these grafted tomatoes today!*



Green Zebra

Green Zebra is a streaked green/gold heirloom with 2" fruit. Has a bright citrusy flavor balanced with sweetness.



Brandywine

A scarlet heirloom considered one of the world's best-tasting tomatoes. Produces one pound fruits with high acid/sugar content.



Beefsteak

This bright-red, slightly ribbed heirloom has a delicious, sweet flavor. Ideal for cooking, slicing, salads or canning.



Black Krim

Black Krim is a Russian heirloom that's violet-red, slightly flattened with near-black shoulders. Smoky flavor.



Sun Sugar

Abundant candy-sweet orange cherry tomatoes with high levels of sugar and vitamin A. Flavorfull!



Fiberlight Pottery

This spring we're carrying an exciting new lightweight pottery line made from fiberglass and resin. **Fiberlight Pottery** is extremely high quality and well made; its seams and seals will not crack, so the internal core stays dry. This adds years of life to the pot. And did we mention light? The same pots made from clay would weigh four times as much!

Fiberlight pots range in size from 15 inches to 39 inches, in various square, circle and rectangle shapes.



Gardeners, decorators and designers looking for large, distinctive, statement pieces will love Fiberlight pottery. Available in black and gray.

Your healthy green lawn

If you have a lawn, E. B. Stone Nature's Green Lawn Food is perfect for promoting a thick, green lawn year-round. This 10-1-4 fertilizer is all organic, natural, and includes humic acids to help stimulate beneficial soil microbes.

One of the great things about organic lawn fertilizers is that they are naturally slow release, which means they feed your lawn in a slow, healthy way while reducing the amount of fertilizer that runs off into waterways. This slow release also means you only need to use Nature's Green Lawn Food four times per year.



Nature's Green Lawn Food is granulated to make it easy to apply. Just spread it out and water in. Easy! (Reminder: never apply fertilizer to dry soil).

We carry Nature's Green Lawn Food in two sizes: the 10 lb. bag covers 1,000 sq.ft. and the 20 lb. bag covers 2,000 sq.ft.



E.B. Stone
ORGANICS

Last year E.B. Stone Organics installed two electricity-producing windmills at their facility. In just one year, the windmills created almost twice the electricity used in running their plant and offices. The windmills have produced over 179,000 kWh since they came on line in 2011. That's enough electricity to power over 20 homes for one year!

We love E.B. Stone Organics fertilizers and soils because they help us grow beautiful and healthy gardens, and because they leave a lighter footprint. E.B. Stone recently started packaging in new boxes that can be recycled anywhere that recycles milk cartons. Their printer is also committed to using the least toxic inks. Look for their new boxes with the zero VOC logo on the bottom.

Plant it in the bag with Bagtainer!

Dr. Earth Home Grown potting soil has developed a cult following in recent years, especially with the ease of their Bagtainer.

The Bagtainer remains upright as the highly reflective bag design keeps roots cool and plants stress-free. Their decadent hand-crafted soil blend

contains bat guano, earth worm castings, kelp meal and organic growth hormones. You can plant seedlings directly in the bag and grow them to maturity without the addition of more guano.

Dr. Earth Home Grown potting soil, along with the weekly feeding schedule (printed on the

back of the bag), is specifically tailored for plant health, abundant growth and high yield flowering. Simply follow the instructions to grow an impressive organic garden.

When the season is over, spread the Bagtainer in your garden to enrich the soil.





Add whimsy and fun to a trellis, arbor, column, pole, hanging basket or fence this summer with fast growing annual vines. These vines start well from seed, climb quickly, and then produce striking flowers while attracting butterflies and hummingbird. We recommend using Botanical Interest seeds for great results.

THUNBERGIA
Cheery, easy to grow sun-loving vine. Very fast growing with large, lush foliage, and masses of blooms all summer long in vibrant orange, yellow and white with a black "eye".



CARDINAL CLIMBER
This is a nice partner with scarlet runner bean or morning glory. Deep red flowers with a white/yellow throat, and fernlike foliage. It's an eye-catcher!



Back by popular demand



Welcome a robust snack tomato to your garden this year

The Tomaccio is making an encore appearance for 2012. This vining cherry tomato, grown for its high sugar content, is an extremely robust tomato with an unprecedented yield. Tomaccio tastes sweet and delicious eaten fresh or dried. It's easy to grow in a container or in the ground. This tomato is in limited supply. Call to pre-order your Tomaccio today!

Recommended Botanical Interest vine seeds: Scarlet Runner Bean and Hyacinth Bean (both edible), Cardinal Climber, Cup and Saucer, Cypress Vine, Black Eyed Susan Vine, Morning Glory, Climbing Nasturtium.

The lovely and vibrant geranium: our best selling plant!



Fancy leaf geranium



classic red zonal geranium



Fancy leaf geranium



Fancy leaf geranium



Scented geranium



Martha Washington type geranium

There's good reason why the geranium is our number one seller year after year. This herbaceous, clumping perennial is low maintenance, not bothered by insects, and produces beautiful flowers three seasons of the year. Just think of all those big red geraniums decorating the villages in Europe...stunning!

Geraniums thrive in any climate and will even tolerate drought. They prefer full sun but will accept partial shade in hotter,

inland areas. The soil should be well-drained, watered on a regular basis and allowed to dry out slightly between waterings. In warm weather plants should be watered deeply once a week. Remove faded flowers regularly to encourage new bloom.

Fancy varieties have a colorful leaf that is like a flower in itself, and when blooms appear, you really have a party. Martha Washington types have a blotched, two

tone flower on compact plants, making them ideal for containers. Smaller leaved scented geraniums, with their small delicate blooms, are happy in pots, planted with vegetables and herbs, and in rock gardens.

All geraniums do well in pots. Actually, they bloom best when somewhat pot-bound. We carry geraniums that bloom in a rainbow of flower colors; white and shades of pink, rose, red, orange and violet.

PERFECT SUCCULENTS INDOORS & OUT

We adore fleshy succulents like purple Aeonium and orangey red Sedum, but we also love a wide range of greener leafed types which won't sulk when planted indoors. Some favorites are Sansevieria, Jade plant, Haworthia, Gasteria, Aloe Vera and Pony Tail Palm.

We call them low-light succulents because they retain their color and do not fade, nor do they become stretched (etioliated), even in the darkest rooms. They will tolerate infrequent watering and are almost immune to pests. Truly versatile succulents!



Sansevieria
Can handle dry air and fluctuating temperatures.



Pony Tail Palm
Very slow growing and drought tolerant.



Haworthia
There are many types of Haworthia but all are adaptable plants.



Gasteria
Related to aloe, these stemless plants have great colors and spots.



Aloe
Showy and easy to grow. Needs only a little water, but can take more. Many varieties.



Jade
The lovely and ubiquitous jade plant is easy to grow and fun to love.

What is fungicide and why is it useful for my garden?

A fungicide is a biological organism or chemical compound used to control fungal diseases. Common fungal diseases are early and late blight, leaf spots, powdery mildew and anthracnose. These diseases will severely limit plants from thriving, but they can be kept in check by applying a fungicide as a preventative (fungicides are better used as preventatives than as a cure).

We often recommend Bonide Copper Fungicide because it's great for controlling fungal diseases on various vegetables, flowers, ornamentals and fruits, plus a host of fruit trees. The formula does not burn plants and is perfect for organic gardening. For optimal effectiveness, spray plants when rain is not expected within 48 hours of treatment. Bonide Copper Fungicide is also good at controlling black spot, downey mildew, gray mold (botrytis), leaf spot and other problems on ornamental plants and edibles.

Tip: you can help prevent fungal problems with the slow steady feeding of organic fertilizers, top dressing plants with bark or rock, watering only in the morning and watering the soil around plants instead of their leaves and flowers.

Proper identification of plant problems is always advised. Our staff is ready to help! Bring in samples in a sealed bag so we can identify the type of plant disease you're dealing with.

You can also visit with the Plant Doctor; dates & times are listed on page 7 of this Gardeners Notebook.



leaf spots

powdery mildew

late tomato blight

anthracnose

Hydroponics & the art of gardening indoors

We like to say that hydroponic gardening is more than just growing plants in water...it's the science and art of controlling gardening inputs (water, nutrients, temperature, light, even atmospheric gases) to grow plants at their ultimate potential — for speed of growth, volume of harvest, nutrient content and flavor.

In an outside garden, the function of soil is to give plants nutrients and to anchor roots. In a hydroponic garden, gardeners do the work of soil by providing it with nutrients and a growing medium to anchor roots. Having control of nutrients gives gardeners the ability to control quality and yield.

The other wonderful thing about hydroponic gardening is that soil-borne diseases and pests are not an issue, and there's no weeding. Whether you want to grow exotic plants that don't flourish locally, or harvest luscious tomatoes in winter, a hydroponic system can be the way to go.

Soil Grown
small plant - big roots



Hydroponically Grown
big plant - small roots



Hydroponic garden at our Danville location. Visit our stores this month to see these hydroponic systems in action.

Tools for a hydroponic garden... in stores now!



Sunburst 250W Growlight

Depending on where you live, the time of year and where you want to garden, the sun may not always be available. But with hydroponic gardening you can grow any plant, anywhere, anytime.

Regular fluorescent grow lights will help get seedlings started but can't deliver the strong light needed to grow plants taller than 6 - 8". The Sunburst growlight can do the job!

The Sunburst delivers more usable light energy for maximum plant performance and operates at cooler, quieter levels than any other compact system on the market. This light can be hung from a simple ceiling hook and plugged into any standard electric outlet. There is a 5-year warranty on ballast and electrical components. Includes instructions, hangers and lighting recommendations.



Hydrofarm's Smart Float is perfect for starting seeds or cuttings. It comes complete with a 55-cell floating insert, heavy duty tray, and 55 earth-friendly Quick Start plugs to get your plants off to a great start. Smart Float provides an ideal air to water ratio.

Fiskars MicroTip Snip

These pruning snips are perfect for indoor gardening. They make deadheading, trimming and shaping plants easy and ergonomic. High-grade, stainless-steel blades feature a precision-ground edge that stays sharp longer and snips all the way to the tip for clean, healthy cuts. Has a soft touch handle for a more comfortable grip.



Dyna-Gro Root-Gel is a unique vitamin-hormone gel formulated for the propagation of cuttings. It contains the rooting hormones IBA and NAA, as well as Vitamin B-1 in a water-soluble form, plus just the right amount of essential minerals.

Thirsty Light

This digital plant moisture sensor blinks when it's time to water a potted plant. It is designed to continuously monitor conditions, testing the moisture level once per second. Comes with a comprehensive and informative user and watering guide. Perfect for hydroponic gardens and houseplants.



SPRING gardening seminars



Each season we select local gardening experts and designers, as well as our knowledgeable senior staff, to speak in our seminar series. The class fee is \$5 (Gardener's Reward Program members attend for free) and all participants receive a 10% off coupon for redemption at any of our locations. *Please call ahead to the seminar location to reserve a seat. Attendance is limited.*

Pruning the Acid Lovers: Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias, and Hydrangeas

Pruning Specialist Elizabeth Ruiz returns one last time this season to explain and show us how to shape and prune these popular plants.

May 2 - Sloat Blvd., Wed., 6:30pm

May 6 - Novato, Sun., 10am

May 12 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10am

Shade Gardening How To

Mary TeSelle holds a well-rounded discussion on gardening in the shade.

May 5 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sat., 10am

May 16 - Sloat Blvd., Wed., 6:30pm

Herbs!

Norma Novy returns to share her secrets on growing flavorful herbs.

May 20 - Mill Valley (Miller Ave.), Sun., 10am

May 20 - Novato, Sun., 1pm

May 23 - Sloat Blvd., Wed., 6:30pm

Miniature Gardens for kids, big and small

Join Jen Strobel for a hands-on, make-and-take workshop in creating your own garden in miniature. This is a perfect project for students to enjoy over summer break. Ages 7-100!

Fee \$30.00 Limit 15

June 1 - Sloat Blvd, Fri., 11am

June 2 - Miller Ave., Sat., 10am

June 2 - Novato, Sat., 1am

June 11 - Danville, Mon., noon

Successful Plants for San Francisco Gardens

Come share the knowledge of our world traveling horticulturist and plant buyer Gerry O'Donoghue. Gerry will show us / talk about his most favorite plants that thrive in the San Francisco climate.

June 6 - Sloat Blvd., Wed., 6:30pm

The Doctor is IN

Have a problem with fungus or bacteria in your garden? Don't know what pests are bugging your plants? Well, our own Dr. Winky will be available to help you with a diagnosis and offer a solution. You are invited to bring your samples in for a one-on-one consult in an informal setting. Please bring samples in a plastic bag.

The Doctor is IN

June 26 - Sloat Blvd., Tues, noon-2pm

The Doctor is IN

June 27 - Miller Ave., Wed, noon-2pm

SAVE the DATE!

12th annual Solstice SALE

June 22 - all locations: 8am - 8pm

Gardener's Reward Members ONLY

Rewards members shop one day before the general public.

June 23 & 24 - all locations: 8:30 - 6:30

Available to all shoppers, all weekend long!

Specials on plants, pottery, soil and more!

Annual Pottery Sample SALE

July 15, 16, 17 - Kentfield location only

Save on one-of-a-kind Factory Sample Pottery.

Never seen before pots in trendsetting styles & colors.



Strawberry Jam Session

The sweetness of summer: May 25th - June 3rd

Join us in celebrating strawberries during our Strawberry Jam Session. We have strawberries in all sizes ready to flower and fruit, and everything else you need to get the summer "jamming."

Tip: we recommend planting 5 strawberry plants per person in your household for optimum backyard berry production.



Read the
Kitchen Gardener!
sign up for our grow-your-
own food e-newsletter:
sloatgardens.com

Visit our stores: Nine Locations in San Francisco, Marin 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
9 to 6:30

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 (near 101)
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma
(415) 388-0365 (near downtown)

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

Danville
828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 743-0288
M-Sat hours: 8 to 6:30pm
Sun hours: 8am to 5pm

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

Bulk Soils
828 Diablo Road at El Cerro
(925) 820-1273
(East Bay delivery only)
M-Sat 8-4

Visit us on the web: www.sloatgardens.com • Also find us on...

Sloat



420 Coloma Street
Sausalito, CA 94965-1428

Locally
owned since
1958!

Open 7 days per week 8:30am to 6:30pm
(or as noted above in Danville & SF Marina)



Don't Forget Mother's Day (May 13th)
& Father's Day (June 17th). Stop by Sloat
Garden Center for great gift ideas!

Pre-Sorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
Paid
StrahmCom



Printed on 100%
PCW recycled
paper using
vegetable
based inks!

We'll help you grow the plants you love!

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK May/June 2012

May & June Gardening Guide

May

Plant

- Plant annuals like petunias, marigolds, begonias, lobelia, and coleus. Re-seed radishes, carrots and beets.
- Plant late summer edibles such as pumpkins, squash, sunflowers and melons.
- Select garden-ready blooming perennials.

Fertilize

- Fertilize rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**.
- Give vegetables a boost with **E.B. Stone Organics Tomato and Vegetable Food**.
- Use a time-release fertilizer such as **Osmocote** for your container plants.



Prune/Maintain

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after bloom is past.
- Mulch vegetable and flower beds with **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus** to control weeds and conserve moisture.
- Freshen up containers and replace spent annuals with colorful 4-inch perennials such as verbena, calibrachoa, bacopa and ipomoea.
- Release ladybugs and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.

June

Plant

- Warm season annuals are here! Plant zinnia, salvias, cosmos, lisianthus, portulaca.
- Plant herbs for use in the kitchen. Re-seed or transplant salad greens, green beans and kales.



Fertilize

- Your spring plantings are probably getting hungry. Feed with all-purpose fertilizers such as **E.B. Stone Organics** and **Maxsea**.
- Feed your lawn with high nitrogen fertilizer: **Nature's Green Lawn Food**.

Prune/Maintain

- Continue to deadhead roses, shrubs and other flowers with **Felco pruners** to encourage new blooms; for smaller jobs, such as grooming your container creations, use **Fiskars Micro Tip Snips**.
- Mulch shrubs and beds to conserve moisture. Try **GreenAll Microbark** for its beauty and utility.
- Make sure vegetables are supported with cages, stakes, or trellises.
- Check early-bearing fruit trees for heavily laden branches. Thin fruits now to prevent branches from breaking. Harvest vegetables to keep them producing.