



Locally owned since 1958!



# Gardener's Notebook

Volume 30, No. 1

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

March/April 2016



Salvia Red Swing



Hot Lips Salvia



Eriogonum



Erigeron



Ceanothus



Provence French Lavender

## Plant these to attract butterflies & bees



The birds, bees, butterflies, moths, and bats that pollinate Earth's flowering plants eat nectar. You can help feed them by choosing the plants that will support their nectar diet. Join us in celebrating pollinators during Pollinator Week April 22 – April 28.



### Salvia Red Swing

Produces massed displays of dark crimson blooms for mixed borders in WaterWise gardens, or containers.

### Hot Lips Salvia

Unique and striking with unusual two-toned flowers. Hummingbirds and butterflies are attracted to the blooms that appear continuously through frost. An outstanding compact shrub for WaterWise gardens.

### Eriogonum grande rubescens (San Miguel Island Buckwheat)

An evergreen, small shrub. This great looking and durable buckwheat is beautiful and attracts butterflies.

### Erigeron karvinskianus (Santa Barbara Daisy)

This trailing ground cover is lovely cascading over walls or pots. Its delicate pink flowers are a fragrant treat for bees, and tiny beneficial flies and wasps.

### Ceanothus (California Lilac)

These attractive, dense-branching, evergreen shrubs boast heavy clusters of honey-scented purplish flowers that pollinators and native bees love!

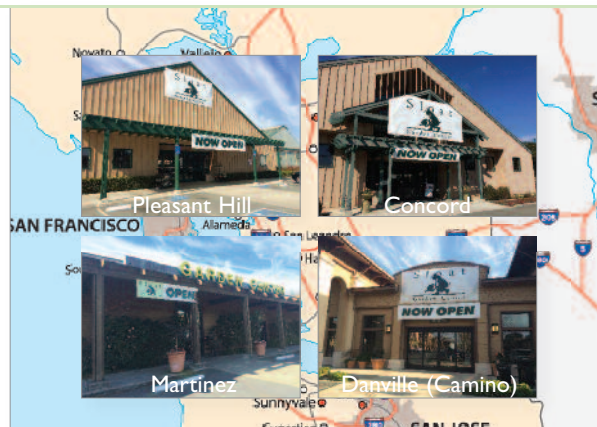
### Provence French Lavender

An evergreen, perennial shrub with graygreen foliage and abundant, fragrant, purple flower spikes that attract butterflies and bees. Useful as hedge or edging in herb gardens.

## We're growing with four new stores

Welcome Concord, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, and Danville gardeners to the Sloat Garden Center gardening community!

This spring, Sloat Garden Center took over operations of Navlet's Garden Center's four East Bay locations. We are proud to continue their tradition of expert gardening know-how. Both Sloat and Navlet's were built through a passion for gardening, a commitment to community, a responsibility for sustainable gardening, and a desire to offer the highest quality plants, pottery, and products. Welcome East Bay gardeners!



## Visit our stores: Thirteen Locations in San Francisco, Marin and Contra Costa

### San Francisco

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

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

3237 Pierce Street  
Chestnut & Lombard  
(415) 440-1000  
Hours: 9 to 6:30pm

### Novato

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

### San Rafael

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

### Kentfield

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

### Mill Valley

657 E. Blithedale at Lomita  
(415) 388-0102 (near 101)  
401 Miller Ave. at La Goma  
(415) 388-0365 (near dnwntrn)

### Pleasant Hill

2895 Contra Costa Blvd.  
(925) 939-9000

### Martinez

6740 Alhambra Ave  
(925) 935-9125

### Danville

800 Camino Ramon (in the Rose Garden Center)  
(925) 837-9144

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

### Concord

1555 Kirker Pass Rd  
(925) 681-0550

### Garden Design Department

401 Miller Ave., Mill Valley  
(415) 388-3754

### Bulk Soils

828 Diablo Road at El Cerro  
(925) 820-1273  
(East Bay delivery only)  
M-Sat hours: 8am to 4pm

Available in Marin & SF only

Visit us on the web: [www.sloatgardens.com](http://www.sloatgardens.com)

# S l o a t



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We'll help you grow the plants you love!

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK March/April 2016

## Bay Area Gardening Guide:

## March & April

### Plant

🌱 Prepare planting beds for spring. Test soil for pH, nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, and add appropriate supplements. We recommend amending with **Sloat Loam Builder** or **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**.

🌱 It's vegetable planting time! Grow your own food with organic vegetable starts & seeds: lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, zucchini and berries.

🌱 Plant your favorite spring annuals. Petunias, begonias, alyssum, marigolds, cosmos, & lobelia.

🌱 We carry shade plants that will provide flowers & foliage in shaded spaces:



Begonias, Heucheras, and New Guinea Impatiens.

🌱 Plant gladiolus and dahlias for summer color.

🌱 Choose a large tomato cage — because your plants will surely grow larger!

🌱 Plant a tree, shrub, flower or edible for **Earth Day** or **Arbor Day**.

🌱 Rhododendrons and azaleas are budding and blooming. Feed them with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea Camellia & Gardenia Food** after flowering.

### Fertilize

🌱 Stock up on top quality, plant-specific fertilizers: we recommend **E.B. Stone Organics Rose &**



**Flower, Tomato & Vegetable and Citrus & Fruit** foods. Use **E.B. Stone Organics Sure Start** fertilizer for new plantings to establish them quickly.

### Prune/Maintain

🌱 WaterWise tip: For new plantings, use water-holding polymers such as **Soil Moist**. The non-toxic granules hold water longer than soil alone; minimizing moisture loss to evaporation.

🌱 Water early in the morning to prevent wet foliage. Wet foliage attracts snails and fungal diseases. Non-toxic **Sluggo** can help keep slugs and snails out.

🌱 Stop aphids early with **Bonide Neem Oil**, **Bonide**

**Rose Rx 3-in-1** or **Monterey Take Down Spray**. Spray at day's end after the bees have stopped foraging.

🌱 Release **ladybugs**, praying mantis, and other beneficial insects to help control aphids, mites, whiteflies, and other garden pests.

🌱 Use **Sloat MiniBark** or **Forest Mulch Plus** on established and new plantings to reduce moisture loss and keep roots cool while inhibiting weed seed germination.

🌱 Spring is the best time to repot houseplants and give them their first feeding.

🌱 Prune freeze damaged plants now (if you haven't already). But, wait to prune spring blooming shrubs until after flowering.

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# 4 sun & shade plants that snails and slugs despise

Snails and slugs are among the most frustrating pests in the garden. If your seedlings are eaten overnight and you find large, ragged holes in plants, (along with the tell-tale slime trails on the ground), your garden is probably harboring snails and slugs.

Snails and slugs are active mostly at night and on dark, cloudy days. On sunny days they can be found in moist, shady spots. Look for their eggs in the soil (about an inch down) or under rocks, boards, or plant debris. The eggs are laid in masses of up to 100 and resemble small pearls.

When you find eggs, crush them or scoop them into a plastic bag, seal it, and put the bag in the garbage.

Tired of the slug battle? Consider plants they don't like to eat. Slugs and snails don't like plants with stiff leaves and highly scented foliage, such as lavender, rosemary, and sage. They also tend to avoid woody plants and ornamental grasses. If you design your landscape using snail and slug resistant plants, you're likely to limit the damage. See our below list for plant suggestions.



**Campanula** offers blue or white, star-shaped, upward-facing flowers with a spreading growth habit.



**Daphne 'Maejima'** has beautiful gold and green foliage. Highly fragrant pink blossoms in spring.



**Heuchera** is loved for its colorful foliage and compact habit. Heuchera is lovely for shade.



**Hydrangea** has large, rounded clusters of flowers all summer. Good in containers or beds.



**Rhododendron** is a shrub with masses of flowers that bloom in early to late spring.



**Fern** These exquisite, easy, shade lovers offer elegant, upright growth.



**Sarcococca** Slow growing, handsome evergreen. Good wherever deep shade is a challenge.



**Sluggo** provides excellent slug and snail control for gardens. The iron phosphate and bait combination immediately stops slugs and snails from feeding after the bait is eaten. The pests will die within a few days. Free-flowing pellets make it easy to spread throughout the garden, along vegetable rows, and around ornamentals. Sluggo can be used throughout the growing season, whenever slugs and snails attack. Sluggo is safe to use around pets and approved for use in organic vegetable gardens.



**Penstemon** features large, tubular flowers summer to autumn. A hummingbird & butterfly magnet.



**Yucca** Big spikes make a bold statement in the year-round landscape. Sun lover!



**Euphorbia** Stunning year round foliage and low maintenance. Looks great in containers!



**California Poppy** We're so lucky that this CA native is ignored by snails and slugs!



**Impatiens** are back! This colorful garden standby spruces up any border or container.



**Lantana** Blended color flowers are WaterWise for dry areas. Season-long color and great vigor.



**Vinca Minor (Periwinkle)** Large, deep green or green/white foliage with lilac-blue, pinwheel flowers.

# To the rescue: 5 easy-to-grow Superfoods!

Interested in Superfoods? Gardeners are learning to grow nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables that are considered beneficial for health and well-being. This spring, plant your favorite Superfoods and enjoy the growing ease and deliciousness of figs, strawberries, artichokes, blueberries and leafy greens.



## Corky's Honey Delight

**Fig** has a vigorous habit and bountiful fruit, yielding two crops each year. Sweet, amber-colored flesh with a honey note. Good for cooler, coastal gardens.



**Strawberries** are sweet, nutritious and fun to grow (especially for kids). Strawberries are high in Vitamin C. We love growing them to eat fresh or enjoy in smoothies.



**Artichokes** grow well from spring through autumn, with most produced in early summer. Delicious served steamed with lemon!



**Blueberries** are very easy to grow in Bay Area gardens and containers. Loves acidic soil. Grow two for best results. This perfect brain food is packed with vitamins.



**Leafy Greens** like chard, kale, spinach and collards are nutrition powerhouses for our bodies. Easy to grow, leafy greens like chard often "volunteer" in the garden.

## Beautiful Pieris and Azaleas for your spring garden



### Pieris 'Impish Elf®'

A compact, late-blooming evergreen with dark purple-pink buds that provide winter color; then burst into bloom with bright, bell-shaped flowers. Glossy, new, brick-red foliage and deep red stems. A stunning foundation plant ideal for mass plantings.



### Pieris 'Tiki'

This Pieris is an exceptional, rarely seen variety with graceful, arching stems. Showy buds stand out against shiny foliage through winter; opening to exquisite wedding cake-like layers of white flowers. Compact, rounded form makes an excellent accent.



### Azalea 'Encore Autumn Fire'

This dwarf azalea packs a powerful punch of rich, true red color with semi-double velvety blooms. Its glossy, dark green foliage deepens to a saturated purple bronze in winter. Compact growth means little pruning to maintain this easy-care beauty.



### Choisya 'Goldfinger'

This new variety of Choisya is a yellow, shrubby, evergreen with narrow, golden leaves and white flowers in spring that have an orange blossom fragrance. Grows to 3-4' tall and wide. Best color comes from growing in sun, though it can take part-shade.

## Taking care of acid loving plants

Azaleas, pieris, camellias and rhododendrons could be considered the royal family of the shade garden. Each group has nearly 3,000 named varieties of different color, flower form, and growth habit. Their basic growing requirements are very similar. Here are tips for growing your favorite acid loving plants.

Fast-draining acid soil that also retains moisture is best. Soil high in organic matter has these properties. If your soil needs improving, work in liberal amounts of **Sloat Planting Mix** or **E.B. Stone's Azalea, Camellia, Gardenia** mix. Adding **Sul-Po-Mag** will help acidify your soil as well as provide additional minerals to keep your plant's leaves green. (We do not recommend peat moss as it is difficult to re-wet once it dries out.)

Sun tolerance varies between species and varieties. Too much sun can cause burning in the center of the leaf, though most can take full sun in cooler, coastal areas. Too much shade can inhibit flowering and cause plants to be "leggy". The best location is in filtered shade under tall trees, or on the north or east side of the house. Southern Indica azaleas, Exbury azaleas, small leafed Rhododendrons and sasanqua camellias can handle the most sun.

# What is a Bioswale?

This spring we hope you'll consider adding a rain garden or bioswale to your yard, patio, or sidewalk area. Bioswales are depressions in the soil that are planted with deep-rooted plants and grasses to help divert storm runoff from treated lawns and roofs. An added benefit is that they give gardeners the opportunity to feature native plants that encourage butterflies, birds, and beneficial insects.



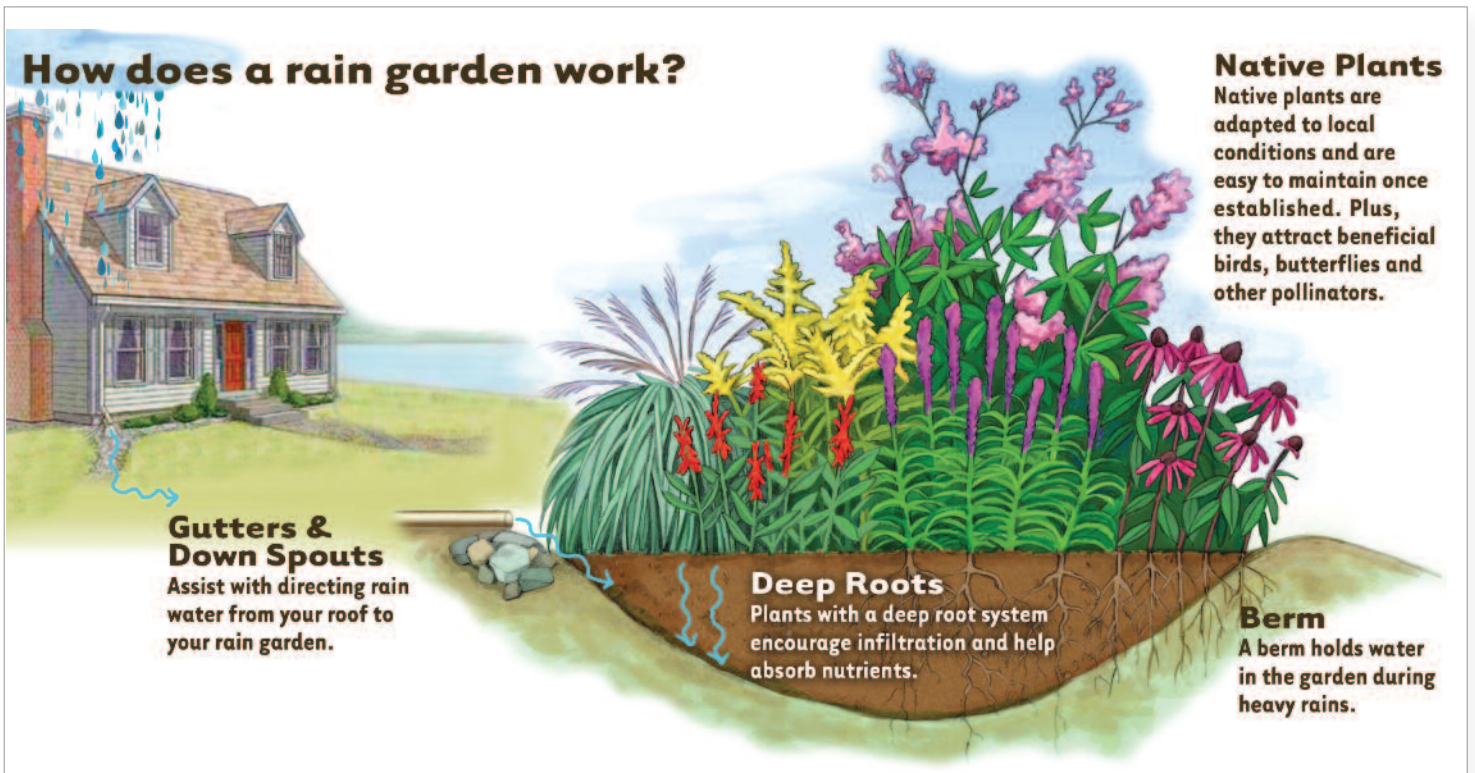
The Bioswale/rain garden concept started in the midwest and on the east coast during the 1990's, and is now a growing landscaping trend. Creating a rain garden does not require technical experience, planting plans or heavy equipment.

"The main purpose of a rain garden is to divert storm water to soil before it hits the sidewalk, runs down storm drains and enters waterways," explains Sloat Vice President and horticulturist Katy Thompson. "Soils filter the storm runoff of pollutants, and organisms in the soil work to break them down. This is an efficient way to help mitigate polluted runoff entering bays and streams, help with erosion, and allow gardeners to utilize a precious resource."

Here's how it works: A mounded or bermed garden with a depression space is filled with blooming annuals and perennials. Many of

your favorite blooming perennials will be able to live there, though plants selected for a rain garden should be able to tolerate both saturated and dry soil. It should be located near a house to catch roof stormwater runoff, or in an area that will collect runoff from the lawn or driveway. Rain gardens are perfect for both suburban and urban gardens.

"Building a rain garden in your yard is probably the easiest and most cost efficient thing you can do to reduce your contribution to storm water pollution," explains the Rain Garden Network. "By capturing rainwater and diverting it into a rain garden where it can slowly soak into the ground, filtering contaminants and keeping quantities of clean water from going down the sewer system, you'll have a great looking garden that puts water in its place."



## 5 ideal plants for Bioswales



Phlox subulata 'Red Wings'

**MONROVIA**  
Horticultural Craftsmen Since 1926

This wonderfully showy spring flowering perennial has deep crimson flowers with dark centers, producing a carpet of color. Tolerates dry conditions once established. Perfect as an accent in a rock garden, or mixed with annuals. Evergreen perennial.



Cotinus

This deciduous shrub has foliage that emerges a rich maroon red in the spring and darkens to purplish red by late summer. Airy puffs of purplish hairs surround the flowers which begin appearing in late spring and early summer. The 'smoke puffs' are created by large, loose clusters of fading flowers - as the tiny greenish blossoms fade, stalks of sterile flowers elongate and become clothed with fuzzy purple hairs. *Note: Golden leafed Cotinus varieties are also available.*



Lomandra Seascapes

Lomandra Seascapes is an easy-to-grow, drought-tolerant plant that has a graceful, weeping appearance. Its dark-green foliage is grass-like, low-growing and low-maintenance. Looks great in the landscape, and the compact habit makes it suitable for containers. It is also heat and sun tolerant. Deer resistant.



Lomandra Platinum Beauty

*New variety to Sloat Garden Center!* Add year-long beauty with this tough yet graceful plant. Flowing masses of white-edged foliage brighten containers and garden beds. This drought-tolerant, low maintenance plant thrives in challenging environments. Full-sun to part shade. Deer resistant.



Western Sword Fern

One of the most robust and reliable ferns, this hardy, North American native offers superb texture with glossy, leathery, toothed foliage. Vigorous clumps are formed of many long fronds; in cool, shady locations up to four feet long. In warmer, arid areas plants are more compact. Thrives with little care when established, keeping up appearances even in hot, dry weather.

### • HOW TO: *care for your plants*



#### Tappin' Roots to the Rescue

Tappin' Roots will care for cuttings, new plantings, and even established plants with a variety of naturally occurring plant growth hormones and micro-nutrients. It offers multiple benefits to plants at any stage of development, but truly works wonders on new transplants. It is safe to use, won't burn tender roots, increases propagation success rates and eliminates transplant shock. For gardeners looking to avoid the perils of synthetic products, Tappin' Roots promises 100% natural ingredients that work fast, yet pose zero risk of burning. Safe, non-toxic, biodegradable, eco-friendly. Can be used alone or in conjunction with any fertilizer and produces visible results in 1-3 days. Recommended over vitamin B1!



**Bonide "Maize" Corn Gluten**, is an all natural way to prevent annual and perennial weeds from growing in lawns, around trees, shrubs, ornamentals, flowers and even vegetable gardens. Maize is great for spring and fall applications.

TRUSTED SINCE 1926  
**BONIDE**

Maize controls hard to kill weeds like Bermuda grass clover, foxtail and more. It works by releasing organic dipeptides into the soil, causing the roots of weeds to fail to grow properly and die out. It affects the germination of most all seeds. Use corn gluten from season to season (up to 4 times per year) so it can build up in the soil inhibiting weed seeds more efficiently with multiple applications.

# Celebrate Tomatoes at Tomato Time



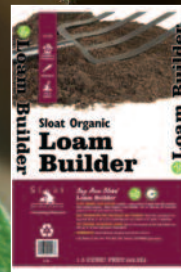
April 8 – 14th

Shop during *Tomato Time* and be dazzled by our fabulous selection of organically grown tomato varieties. Attend tomato growing seminars and get the tomato-growing information you need to succeed. April is the best time to buy and plant tomatoes!



Plant your tomatoes with Sloat organic Loam Builder. It contains a unique blend of aged redwood, compost, and chicken manure.

Sloat Organic Loam Builder acts to enhance the bacterial action in the soil and improve fertility for vegetables and flowers.



## New Tomato varieties for Spring 2016

*Introducing three new tomatoes that will sing a delectable song in your garden this spring and summer.*



**Tidy Treats**

Produces tons of fruit on a very compact plant. Good in small space gardens and containers -- continues to produce red cherry tomatoes all season (unlike other patio varieties). Has a habit like a determinate, but produces like an indeterminate.



**Little Napoli**

One of the only patio roma tomatoes, with disease resistance for better success. Produces high yields for a small plant; harvest enough at one time for a batch of salsa or sauce. Grows best in containers.



**Sugar Rush**

This super-sweet elongated fruit has one of the highest Brix (sweetness) ratings. Fast-maturing and very productive all season. Long trusses of fruit with great crunch and texture. We recommend growing them in-ground.

*Sloat Garden Center carries tomato cages and fertilizer to grow the best tomatoes. **Tomato growing questions?** Attend our **All About Tomatoes** seminar to learn how growing tomatoes can be successful, fun and easy!*

## Fiberlight Pottery Solutions



There's good reason that our Fiberlight pottery is so popular. Fiberlight is a lightweight pottery line created from fiberglass and resin. It's 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 rectangular shapes and vibrant colors: yellow, red, blue, green, white and black. *Please note: Fiberlight is currently available in the East Bay at our Danville (Diablo Rd) store only. Soon to be available in all other East Bay locations, as well.*



Psyllobora beetle

### Helpful beetles in the garden

This spring, keep an eye out for the tiny Psyllobora beetle, one of the many "lady beetles". This newly researched beneficial insect feeds on powdery mildew and nectar. If you look closely, you can see this 1-2 mm beetle feasting on nectar in the small blossoms of white alyssum. They are cream to beige with black spots.

About 200 "lady beetle" species occur in California and most are predators predominantly as larvae. While adults will also feed on aphids, thrip, mealybug and other soft-bodied pests, their diet is more nectar and pollen based. Don't mistake the larvae forms as pests!



Ladybug larvae

If too much powdery mildew is getting you down, treat affected plants with **Bonide Rose Rx** or **Neem Oil**, sesame based **Organocide**, or **Serenade**. These sprays are safe to use in organic gardens.



### Why we ♥ Seedlingers Fertelixer

Seedlingers Plant Fertelixer is an all-natural liquid fertilizer that aids in root generation, plant establishment, and flower + fruit production. Made from kelp, yucca, and other ingredients for microbial stimulation, Fertelixer is recommended for indoor or outdoor use, and is ideal for overall plant health as well as heat stress recovery. It provides a slow, non-burning nutrient release and contains rich organic components.

The self measuring cap provides an easy and convenient way to mix the solution. Mixes 1oz. per gallon and should be used as a drench, applied about once per month or as needed.



### Your Farm to Your Table

*This spring we invite you to grow your own food and create a delicious backyard grocery store for you to enjoy.*

## 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. Free for Rewards Members. \$10 for non-members (membership is 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.*

### Just Tomatoes with Buzz Bertolero, The Dirt Gardener

Learn how to successfully grow the most popular of all the summer vegetables, the tomato! We will cover soil preparation, the merits of heirloom versus hybrid varieties, watering techniques, troubleshooting problems, and ripening tomatoes off the vine.

Saturday, April 2, Concord, 10 am

Saturday, April 2, Pleasant Hill, 2 pm

Saturday, April 9, Martinez, 10 am

Saturday, April 9, Danville - Camino Ramon, 2 pm

### All About Tomatoes!

Join us for our Tomato Time seminar series. We love tomatoes and we want you to be successful growing them. Our tomato experts will share planting tips, favorite varieties, & successful tomato planting combinations.

Sunday, April 10, 10:30 am at multiple locations:

- Sloat Blvd. (With Cindy Bonilla) • Danville - Diablo Rd. (Dustin Strobel) • Miller Ave., Mill Valley (Dan Alexander)
- Kentfield (Jen Strobel) • Novato (Leo Grassman)

### Pollinator Week: Pollinator Basics:

We welcome back Suzanne Bontempo, expert gardener and IPM Advocate. Using (I)ntegrated (P)est (M)anagement, Suzanne will teach us how to attract and protect pollinators in our gardens.

This popular seminar is a must for all gardeners!

Friday, April 22, Kentfield, noon

Saturday, April 23, Novato, 10:30 am

Tuesday, April 26, Miller Ave., Mill Valley, noon

Wed., April 27, Sloat Blvd., noon

Thurs., April 28, Danville - Diablo Rd., noon

### Organics 101

In this introductory seminar, you'll learn the basics of organic gardening to produce healthy plants. Learn about the different types of composting, which yard and kitchen wastes should go into a compost pile, the pros and cons of bins versus pits, how to compost your soil, and the use of cover crops.

Saturday, April 23, Concord, 10 am

### Organics 102

How can you eliminate pests with the least impact on your garden and environment? This class covers several organic solutions, such as encouraging beneficial insects with companion plants, employing cultural practices to minimize diseases, and using fertilizers to keep plants healthy.

Saturday, April 30, Concord, 10 am