

Gardener's Notebook

Volume 30, No. 2

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

May/June 2016

For the love of fragrant basil! 5 varieties for a delicious summer



Basil Care: Basils are warm weather plants that love full sun. The more sun they get, the better they grow. The important key to basil success is to water them deeply, as opposed to giving them regular light waterings. Deep watering will result in big leaves and plants.

Like other herbs, a loamy, well draining soil is the optimal growing environment and can reduce overwatering and other potential problems.

Harvest basil for pesto dishes, salads, drinks, and to season tomatoes, fish and poultry.

See the *Garden Guru's Pesto recipe*
www.sloatgardens.com

Growing tip!

Plant 20 plants (or more!) to insure a bounty of basil to keep you, your family, and friends in basil heaven.



Balsamic Blooms™ is a basil game changer. Not only is it completely edible, it grows leaves and blooms at the same time.

The deep purple blooms last for weeks and are pollinator magnets. With flavors ranging from mint (blooms) to soft sweeter basil (leaves), Balsamic

Blooms offers a range of flavors to cook with, and tastes as good as it looks. No need to pinch flower heads, as they add beauty and are edible. Easy to grow, great for landscapes and containers.



Genovese – classic Italian flavor, 3" dark-green leaves, slow to bolt, 24-30" tall.



Mrs. Burns' Lemon Basil Sweet tangy lemon flavor, 2½" tall with very bright green leaves.



Red Rubin – dark purple Italian large leaf, 3" purple copper red leaves, 18-24" tall. Flavor!



Sweet Thai – Spicy anise-clove flavor, 2" green leaves, purple stems and flowers, 16-20" tall.

Gorgeous grafted gardenias for your garden



Our grafted gardenias for Spring 2016: August Beauty, First Love, Mystery, and Veitchii

MONROVIA
 Grow Beautifully

Get ready for a sweet, intoxicating scent when you add a gardenia to your garden. Grafted gardenias take the root stock of *Gardenia thunbergia*, known for its ability to grow well in Bay Area clay soil, and graft to it some of the most wonderful above-ground gardenia performers. Since the rootstock is adapted to cold temperatures and our clay soil, leaves will stay green and won't yellow out as easily in winter.

For spring we have these grafted types: August Beauty, First Love, Mystery, and Veitchii. Other wonderful varieties are not grafted but sturdier types on their own roots: the new Summer Snow has great resistance to cold climates.

Radicans is a low growing, dwarf type which is suitable for containers and along a pathway.

Gardenia Care:

Gardenias are full sun plants that grow best in warmer areas. They require well-draining soil with plenty of rich organic matter. During the first year, regular watering will help establish deep roots. Mulch to keep roots cool. Gardenias benefit from spring, summer and fall feeding – we recommend a complete fertilizer like **Maxsea Acid** or **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**. Supplement in Summer and Fall with **Green All F.S.T.** to provide needed sulfur.

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

Currently available in Marin & SF only

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 (M-F: 8-6:30)

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

Mill Valley (M-F: 8 to 6:30)

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

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

Visit us on the web: www.sloatgardens.com

Open 7 days per week 8:30am to 6:30pm
(or as noted above)

Don't forget *Mother's Day (May 8th)* and *Father's Day (June 19th)*. Stop by for great gifts!

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Sloat



Garden Center

420 Coloma Street
Sausalito, CA 94965-1428

Locally owned since 1958!



We'll help you grow the plants you love!

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



Find us on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter. Sign up for our monthly e-newsletters

Bay Area Gardening Guide:

May & June

May

Plant

- Plant petunias, marigolds, begonias, lobelia, salvia, zinnia and coleus. Re-seed radishes, carrots and beets.
- Plant late summer edibles: pumpkins, sunflowers, peppers, basil and melons.
- Select garden-ready dahlias, perennials, hydrangeas and hanging baskets.



Fertilize

- Fertilize rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias with **E.B. Stone Organics Azalea, Camellia & Gardenia Food**.
- Boost vegetables 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 their 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 and portulaca.
- Plant herbs for use in the kitchen. Re-seed or transplant salad greens, green beans and kales.



Fertilize

- Your spring plantings are getting hungry. Feed them with all-purpose fertilizers such as **E.B. Stone Organics and Maxsea**.
- Feed your lawn with **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 **Sloat Mini Bark** 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 increase their size and prevent branches from breaking. Harvest vegetables as they ripen so plants continue producing.

About this Newsletter: The Gardener's Notebook is published three times a year 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 via email to sloat@sloatgardens.com

5 plants to feed the caterpillar to butterfly life cycle

Some plants provide nectar for adult butterflies (lavender and salvia), while others are food for their larvae – caterpillars (parsley, anise and fennel for swallowtails). Asclepias do double duty; the leaves are an important food source for Monarch caterpillars, and its flowers are nectar-rich for butterflies.



Join us for a
Butterfly Wing Ding
May 13 – 19

Celebrate butterfly friendly plants during this week devoted to butterflies!



Seminar! All About Butterflies

Learn about Butterfly life cycles, preferred plants and how to attract them to your garden with Suzanne Bontempo, expert gardener and IPM advocate. Her popular, informative seminars are recommended.

Friday, May 13, Kentfield, noon
Saturday, May 14, Novato, 10:30AM
Sunday, May 15, Danville-Diablo, 10:30AM
Tuesday, May 17, Miller., Mill Valley, noon
Wednesday, May 18, Sloat Blvd., SF, noon



Lavender 'Meerlo'

Lavender Meerlo is one of the most heat, humidity, and WaterWise lavenders. These vigorous plants hold their beautifully variegated and highly fragrant foliage, and sport pale blue flowers in summer. Deer-resistant, easy care, heat tolerant. Flowers in summer. Low-water once established.



Salvia 'Black and Bloom'

An improved earlier blooming version of Salvia Black and Blue. This is another great Salvia option for the mid-to-back of borders. Deer resistant and heavy blooming until frost. Dark-blue flowers mid-spring to mid-fall. Attracts pollinators, easy care, longer blooming, and WaterWise.



Asclepias tuberosa

A tough, hardy perennial, clumping from a narrow base. The erect 2 to 3 ft. stems are lined with brushes of narrow, dark green leaves. For several weeks in summer it carries broad heads of waxy bright orange blossoms, followed by interesting horned pods.



Asclepias 'Wildfire'

Brownish green leaves provide a dark background for red flowers with yellow centers. In the language of flowers, this one means 'Let me go'. Which is what it does when the seed pods ripen and the seeds float off in the wind. Grows about 3-4' tall and is a great attractor for Monarch butterflies. Blooms all summer.



Asclepias 'Silky Gold'

An exotic yellow-flowered variety of tropical milkweed from South America. Large clusters of golden-yellow flowers in summer are displayed against yellow-green foliage. This easy care plant mixes beautifully with other tall perennials. Attracts Monarch butterflies.



WaterWise Forest Mulch Plus keeps roots cool

To control weeds this spring, mulch vegetable and flower beds with organic **Sloat Forest Mulch Plus**.

Forest Mulch Plus contains aged fir bark and aged chicken manure. It will aid in the supply of air and water to the plant roots for improved growth and robust plants. Forest Mulch Plus also helps soil retain moisture and keeps roots cool; an important aspect of WaterWise gardening.

Recommended for planting trees, shrubs and ornamentals mixed 50/50 with existing soil.



Forecast calls for a sweet summer with a sprinkle of strawberries

This year we're carrying the following June bearing strawberry plants

- Sequoia
- Chandler



Tip! A good rule of thumb is to plant 5 strawberry plants per person in your household

Strawberries are lovely additions to both large and small space gardens. They'll grow well in garden beds, but plentiful berries can also be produced in boxes, barrels, pots and strawberry jars.

There are two types of strawberries. **Everbearing strawberries** bloom and set fruit all season long. They are delicious and excellent for containers. **June bearing strawberries** produce a single crop for three weeks in late spring or early summer, and can produce up to a quart of fruit per plant. June-bearing strawberries send out lots of runners, so rows can quickly become a tangle of plants. In general they are the highest quality strawberries gardeners can grow. June bearing strawberries are great for freezing and making jams.



Strawberry Care: Strawberries thrive in full sun and want good air circulation and water drainage. The more sun, the better, for this is what makes the fruit sweet. They prefer soil rich in organic matter. Strawberries require ample water since they have shallow roots. Irrigate immediately upon planting and always keep moist during flowering and fruiting by providing frequent soakings. Fertilize with E.B. Stone Fruit Berry and Vine Food or E.B. Stone All Purpose fertilizer as growth begins and again at the end of the first flush of fruit.

Make it extra sweet! Bush Doctor® Bembé® is a delicious treat for your plants that helps enhance sweetness, flavors and fragrances, while providing a food source for microbial populations at the root zone. This sweet elixir is packed with cane sugar, beet sugar and molasses, and incorporates earthworm castings, bat guano, and other organic ingredients. Contains rock phosphate to help transfer energy into bigger buds and flowers.



BloemBagz strawberry planters for happier, healthy plants

Bring color, fashion and functionality to your garden by growing flowers, vegetables, fruit (strawberries!), succulents, and herbs in BloemBagz.

Made of 100% recycled materials (mostly water bottles), BloemBagz features double walled construction that readily supports the weight of soil and plants. Rugged construction means these bags are machine washable (or can just be hosed off). They can be left outside year-round or emptied and folded flat for next season. When you

garden in bags there are no worries about breaking, chipping or cracking that can happen with traditional pots.

More fibrous roots means healthy plants

Plants will do a natural root pruning when their root tips hit the fabric of the bag. The tips of the roots will self prune, allowing the root to branch out. More roots mean plants can absorb more water and nutrients. All this means no more pot bound plants, or circular roots growing around the root ball.



bloem BAGZ

Available in red, green, gray & brown

On location at our 3rd Ave. SF store: An inviting place for plant geeks to converge



The 3rd Avenue store



3rd Ave staff: Jason, Vince, Nick, Walt, Gavan

Q: Paint us a picture of the 3rd Ave SF store. **Jason (Assistant Store Manager):** This has to be one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the Bay Area. We have so many interesting people coming in. In the last few months we've been working on opening up the store so that it's visible and inviting from Clement. Plant lovers are surprised to discover the store because some don't know we're

here.
Q: How do you identify pest and disease issues for customers?

Nick (Store Manager): What I used to think of as plant problems, I now look at as symptoms of plant care issues. And as a result I don't recommend immediately spraying or treating, but finding the root cause of the problem. It's all about the care of plants.

Q: What is your favorite plant?

Jason: I don't have just one favorite. I used to. It was Japanese Maples. And now it's everything. I disliked succulents when I started working at Sloat Garden Center, but I love succulents now. And I love anything fragrant.

Nick: My favorite plant varies with the seasons. I enjoy watching the wisterias bloom now, but in my backyard is a 40 year old Meyer lemon that I love. I do have to feed it, but there's hardly any maintenance required.

Q: What are your hopes for the store?

Nick: For it to be an inviting place for plant geeks to converge. Just a happy, homey, gardening spot with personal service, knowledge of plant material and a warm environment to hang out and talk plants.

Design ideas: Thriller, Spiller and Filler containers: the art (and fun) of flower and foliage design

There are many ways to approach designing a container for your deck, doorway or garden. Sometimes a more minimal planting is best, while other times an overflowing abundant look is desired. We like to approach container design with the equation of Thriller, Filler, Spiller. See our mix & match recipe ideas at right and below for inspiration!



Sun & Shade Thrillers

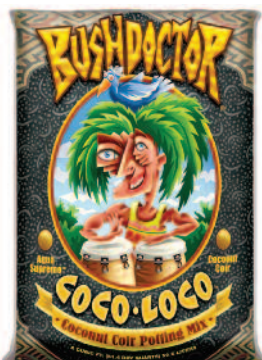
A grounding plant that's the main container focus.

Sun

Shade



Bush Doctor Coco-LoCo Potting Mix for Containers



We like **Coco Loco Potting Mix** because it can hold more than its weight in water while still draining well. The coir in Coco Loco behaves like little sponges, making water available as needed. Lower humidity reduces the chance of attracting mold and root rot, which then means insects are less likely to bother potted plants.

Plants growing in Coco Loco will not need as much water as those grown in a traditional potting mix. Whether you're growing in hanging baskets, vertical gardens, containers, or seedling trays, extend your watering schedule with Coco Loco. In most climates, watering every 3 days will be enough with Coco-LoCo. Always adjust your watering schedule as needed.

Pottery for Creative Containers



We have a wide range of pottery for your Thriller, Spiller, Filler container creation.

See our website for pottery styles!



Sun & Shade Spillers

Trails over the edge of the container to create an accent.

Sun & Shade Fillers

Fills the space from the soil level, up to mid-height of the grounding plant.

Sun



Calibrachoa

Shade



Fuchsia

Sun



Lantana

Shade



Impatiens



Lobelia



Bacopa



Osteospermum



Heuchera



Ivy Geranium



Lysimachia



Verbena



Mimulus



WaterWise MagniMoist Soil Hydrating Basket Liners for containers

MagniMoist liners are made with kenaf fibers derived from Hibiscus cannabinus, a relative of okra and cotton. MagniMoist magnifies the water-holding capacity of potting soil by not letting water escape from the basket until the plant is completely hydrated.

After watering, MagniMoist's smart fiber deflects water back into the dry soil above it. Then when the soil is fully saturated, the fiber becomes porous and releases only the excess water. You'll also save more fertilizer because MagniMoist reduces runoff and enhances plant uptake. It's proven to dramatically improve the look and health of plants. These liners are superior to coir, which can dry out quickly. Easy to cut and shape.



Summer Vines for hummingbirds and caterpillars

Trumpet vines are vigorous climbers that bear clusters of radiant blossoms shaped like flaring trumpets from mid-summer to fall. Loved by hummingbirds, each of our unique Trumpet Vines produce a different bloom time and fragrance, so you can enjoy them throughout the summer. Train Trumpet vines and Passiflora on a trellis or wall to showcase their foliage and showy flowers.



Sunrise Gold Trumpet Vine
Campsis 'Sunrise Gold'

At half the size of other varieties, this is a super choice for an easy climbing vine to provide fantastic color and screening without overtaking space. Unique, yellow gold, trumpet-shaped flowers provide great summer color in containers. Grows 3-5' tall & wide.



Summer Jazz™ Fire Trumpet Vine
Campsis 'Summer Jazz Fire'

Features flame-red blooms with intense orange overtones nearly non-stop, summer to fall. Provides fantastic color and screening, without overtaking space (Summer Jazz is half the size of other varieties). Great in containers, easy climber. Grows 3-5' tall & wide.



Trumpet Honeysuckle
Lonicera sempervirens 'Magnifica'

Excellent vine cover for fences, trellises, and arbors. Showy trumpet-shaped, orange-scarlet flowers. Semi-evergreen to deciduous in colder areas. Evergreen in warmer climates. Attracts the hummingbird clearwing moth.



Scarlet Trumpet Vine
Distictis buccinatoria

Amazing warm season color display for fences, high walls or arbors. Vigorous grower produces blood red trumpet-shaped flowers with a yellow throat. Climbs by tendrils.



Lavender Trumpet Vine
Clytostoma callistegioides

Evergreen vine with rapid growing woody branches. Glossy dark-green leaves are a lovely contrast to the light lavender, trumpet-like flowers over a long blooming period. Easily grown in sun or part shade.



Coral Seas Passion Flower
Passiflora jamesonii 'Coral Seas'

Showy 3-inch deep coral pink flowers and small purple filaments cover this spectacular vine. Rich evergreen foliage and vigorous growth habit. Protect from extreme heat. Loved by the Gulf fritillary caterpillar.

Attract more birds this spring

Our new feeders are designed to attract more birds to your garden. Easy to clean and easy to fill. Twelve new styles with one touch openings! Here are three from the new line:



Hydration Station Waterer
 Holds 18 ounces
 Silver finish on cap and basin

Did you know...
 Water attracts just as many birds as seed does.



Metal Hopper

- 3.6 pound capacity
- Durable squirrel resistant metal hopper
- One touch opening for easy filling
- 4 large rounded ports to attract more birds



Medium Feeder

- 3.8 pound seed capacity
- One touch opening for easy filling
- 6 ports with large perches
- Removable base for easy cleaning

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.*

Spring Into Gardening

Join us for this seasonal gardening class — we'll discuss what to do in your garden this spring.
Saturday, May 7, Pleasant Hill, 10AM

All About Butterflies

Have you always wanted to learn more about these beautiful creatures? Learn about their life cycle, preferred plants and how to attract them to your garden with Suzanne Bontempo, expert gardener and IPM advocate.

Her popular, informative seminars are highly recommended.

Friday, May 13, Kentfield, noon
Saturday, May 14, Novato, 10:30AM
Sunday, May 15, Danville (Diablo), 10:30AM
Tuesday, May 17, Miller Ave., Mill Valley, noon
Wednesday, May 18, Sloat Blvd., SF, noon



Gardening with Cacti and Succulents

Whether growing in the ground or containers, we'll show you how to grow cacti and succulents successfully.

Saturday, May 14, Concord, 10AM

Sloat Design Series: Creating a Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden

Create a beautiful garden space using plants that attract Hummingbirds and Butterflies. Learn from our talented design staff.

Saturday, May 14, Pleasant Hill, 10AM
Saturday, June 25, Novato, 10:30 AM (w/Gloria Sanchez)
Saturday, June 25, Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 1:30 PM (w/Gloria)
Sunday, June 26, Danville (Diablo Rd.), 10:30 AM (w/Dustin Strobel)
Sunday, June 26, Sloat Blvd, SF, 10:30 AM (w Jen)
Sunday, June 26, Kentfield, 1:30 PM (w/Jen)

Summer Rose Pruning with Buzz Bertolero, The Dirt Gardener

Learn how to prune roses after the first flush of flowers have faded. This class covers pruning, watering, fertilizing, disease and pest control.

Saturday, May 28, Martinez, 10AM
Saturday, May 28, Danville (Camino Ramon), 2PM
Saturday, June 4, Concord, 10AM
Saturday, June 4, Pleasant Hill, 2PM

WaterWise Gardens

Come see how beautiful a drought-tolerant garden can be! We'll show you drought-tolerant options from groundcovers to trees to succulents and California natives. Our resident experts will also teach you techniques and tricks to make your existing garden more WaterWise.

Sunday, June 5, Danville (Diablo Rd.), 10AM
Tuesday, June 7, Miller Ave., Mill Valley, noon
Wednesday, June 8, Sloat Blvd. SF, noon
Thursday, June 9, Novato, noon
Friday, June 10, Kentfield, noon
Saturday, August 13, Concord, 10AM
Saturday, August 13, Pleasant Hill, 10AM

Water & Watering During A Drought w/ Buzz Bertolero, The Dirt Gardener

Learn tips for saving water while keeping your landscape green.

Saturday, June 11, Concord, 10AM
Saturday, June 11, Danville (Camino Ramon), 2PM
Saturday, July 2, Pleasant Hill, 10AM

All About Growing Citrus

You don't have to live in Florida to grow sweet citrus like Meyer lemons, oranges, and grapefruit. Find out which varieties are best suited to your area, plus learn how to keep your citrus pest-free, healthy, and happy.

Saturday, June 25, 10 AM
Concord • Danville (Camino Ramon) • Martinez • Pleasant Hill

Wake up your garden with molasses and yucca extract

Molasses is a valuable, though relatively unknown, tool for gardeners. The natural sugar in molasses feeds microorganisms in soil. These microbes in turn break down organic matter and can consume pollutants, which means richer soil for plants to absorb nutrients.

Molasses is a carbohydrate with a plentiful array of vitamins and minerals: calcium, iron, and magnesium. It's also a good source of carbon.

GrowMore Garden Molasses with Yucca enhances flower blooming and

fruiting, resulting in more flavorful fruits and vegetables. Molasses can be used throughout the growing season on flowers, annuals, shrubs, fruit trees, vegetables, roses, vines, perennials, herbs, and indoor / outdoor container plants.



Our newsletter had humble beginnings...

Gardener's Notebook: 20 years of Bay Area gardening education

Sloat Garden Center first opened in San Francisco in 1958, but our Gardener's Notebook didn't get off the ground until 1996. The Gardener's Notebook began as a 1 color, 2-page newsletter covering a range of topics for Bay Area gardeners.

Since then it's grown into an 8-page, full-color newsletter produced by our horticultural team. To create it we gather the latest tips and trends from growers, producers and manufacturers. Over the years we've received plenty of feedback and accolades from customers. Thanks for all the support over the last two decades. We'll keep printing and you keep planting!