



GARDENING ON THE EDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTEREY BAY MASTER GARDENERS
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'Forest Pansy'

—Stuart Walzer, MG '96

Many years ago while visiting England one early spring, I saw a tree covered with purple flowers growing in my brother-in-law's garden. I knew at once that I must have that tree or one very much like it. I was told it was the "Judas Tree," maybe because it dates back to biblical times, and I assumed that it was a rare specimen to be found only in England. Years later, back in California, I learned that the Judas tree was a member of the *Cercis* (redbud) family, and that, of all the redbuds, the Eastern Redbud 'Forest Pansy' is the showiest variety.

The Eastern Redbud's Linnean designation is *Cercis Canadensis*. 'Forest Pansy' is a purple-leaved cultivar of the Missouri native redbud tree. It is a deciduous tree and in early spring displays an abundance of purple blossoms before it leafs out.

'Forest Pansy' has a great deal of pigmentation. Beautiful shimmering heart-shaped leaves open bright reddish-purple in the spring. The purple color of the leaves and flowers may account for the name 'Forest Pansy.' The leaves become deep reddish-green during the summer and the deep maroon veins on the backs of the leaves make a striking contrast with the light grey/green leaf. The leaves turn yellow-orange in autumn, perhaps the most beautiful color in the cycle.



'Forest Pansy' is easy to grow, adapts well to most conditions and is well-suited to the coastal zone of central California. The tree has a tolerance for partial shade. My 'Forest Pansy' is overshadowed by a large, fast-growing sequoia. It leafs out well but, perhaps due to its shady location, doesn't flower noticeably. A few small red buds appeared last spring. Some trees take years to reach full flowering and my specimen may be of that ilk.

This tree does not transplant well so it should be planted when young and left undisturbed. My specimen was about 5 feet tall when I purchased it and was well staked. I left the stake in when I planted the tree in the ground and I intend to leave it in until the trunk becomes sturdy.

Light, rich, moist soil is best but Eastern redbud adapts well to a variety of soils including sandy, clay or alkaline.

It fixes its own nitrogen so only light (if any) nitrogen fertilizer is recommended.

'Forest Pansy' is also an excellent small tree for a container. It will do well located in lawns, woodland gardens or naturalized areas. It is effective planted in groups or as a specimen. ☞

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We're going totally digital!

Look for the February/March issue

ONLINE

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Gourds

—Jan Olafsson, MG '01



When we were living in Arizona for a few years, I took some art classes, one of which was a gourd decorating class. I came away from that with a love of gourds and their practical and artistic value. For Master Gardeners growing gourds is a fitting compliment to our gardening prowess. Now, it does take at least a year for gourds you grow in the summer to be ready to use. For instance, the Speckled Swans I grew two years ago are just now ready to decorate. But, fortunately, there are places you can go to get gourds that are ready right now. (More on that later.)

One reason that gourd art is so much fun is that each gourd is unique and each has a personality. For the swag I made, I chose bottle style gourds. The other materials you would need are: wire, a drill, paint or shoe dye, a painting sponge, and ribbon. (Optional materials could be seed pods, pine cones, plastic berries, dried chiles, or any other interesting little pieces you might want to incorporate.)


Three larger or five smaller gourds would make a nice grouping. Drill two holes near the top of the gourds and insert wire long enough to hang them. Next paint or color your gourds. I used a gold paint and just dabbed it lightly on the gourds and then hung them to dry. When dry, cluster them together attractively and make a big bow out of the ribbon. Tie the bow to the top, add your optional pieces, and you're done.

In researching where to find gourds for sale around here, I Googled American Gourd Society and got some interesting site links from the California Gourd Society. Dry gourds are not heavy, nor are they expensive. You can get "cleaned" or "un-cleaned" gourds. Obviously, the cleaned ones are ready to use. If you go for the un-cleaned (and thus less expensive)

ones, you'll need to clean them yourself. It's not hard...think of it as scrubbing stubborn potatoes—that float. Fill a large container or sink with warm water. Put the gourds in and put a wet towel over them to help weigh them down. Turn them every once in a while to let the whole surface soak. It may take as little as 10 minutes or as long as several hours. Test with a scrubber that won't scratch the surface. You can use a butter knife to get at any concave areas. You want to get all the dirt and moldy bits off. You don't want it perfect, some staining adds character and makes it look natural. Then let them dry thoroughly before painting.

Welburn Gourd Farm sells from their web site (www.welburngourds.com), as does Leisers (see gourdfarmer.com). Leisers have more interesting and unusual types than others. Zittel Farm (www.zittelgourds.com) is in Folsom and does not seem to sell on-line, but looks like a fun place to visit. Some of you might want to share a box of gourds.

Local members of the Gourd Society may have some gourds to sell to the public. The president of the California Gourd Society, Jill Walker (phone: 831-728-4427), lives in Watsonville and may have some other sources as well. If you're interested, she gives classes and is happy to talk about gourds any time.

This is an easy way to make beautiful hand-crafted decorations for the holidays and even the un-crafty person can have something they are proud to display. And who knows, you may fall in love with gourds in the process. 

Zittel Farm



Leisers



Welburn



Points!

Kari Olson, MG '06

Cabrillo College Poinsettia Sale and Open House

Wednesday December 6th, 3:00 to 8:00 PM at the Cabrillo College Horticulture Center Greenhouses located at the "Top of the Campus."

Think Poinsettias only come in just your common everyday red? Think again! Join Cabrillo Horticulture students and faculty for this festive open house and plant sale featuring 38 Poinsettia varieties displaying an amazing assortment of colors: variegated green and red, peach, hot pink, burgundy, soft creamy green, blush pink, and multi-colored combinations! Propagated by Cabrillo horticulture students and lovingly cared for by the nursery staff, these Poinsettias add seasonal color to your home and make unique gifts. The open house will also include wreath making demonstrations and, of course, food.

The Poinsettia sale begins at 3:00 on December 6th so come early for the best selection. ☞

Cheers!



The Do's and Don'ts of Poinsettia Care

DO place your plant in indirect sunlight for at least six hours per day. If direct sun cannot be avoided, diffuse the light with a shade or sheer curtain.

DO provide room temperatures between 68 - 70° F. Generally speaking, if you are comfortable, so is your poinsettia.

DO water your plant when the soil feels dry to the touch.

DO use a large, roomy shopping bag to protect your plant when transporting it.

DO fertilize your plant AFTER THE BLOOMING SEASON with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer.

DO NOT place plants near cold drafts or excessive heat. Avoid placing plants near appliances, fireplaces or ventilating ducts.

DO NOT expose plants to temperatures below 50° F. Poinsettias are sensitive to cold, so avoid placing them outside during the winter months.

DO NOT overwater your plant, or allow it to sit in standing water. Always remove a plant from any decorative container before watering, and allow the water to drain completely.

DO NOT expose your plant to chilling winds when transporting.

DO NOT fertilize your plant when it is in bloom. ☞

Windmill Nursery, Buellton, CA, by the owner's permission

Confessions of a Reluctant Gardener: Inside Outside

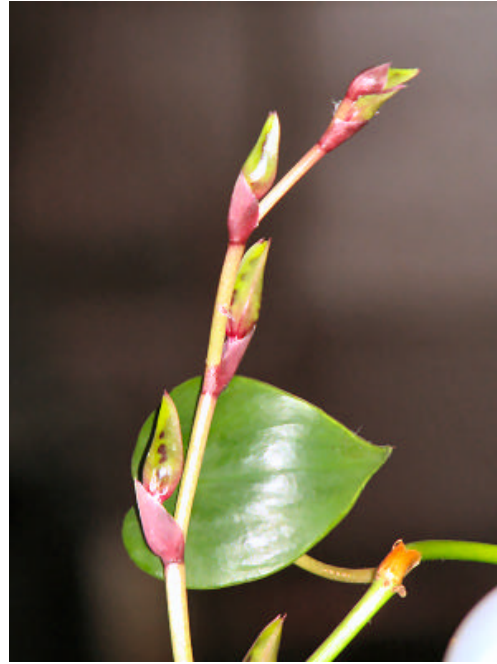
Christina Kriedt, MG '06

This past summer I shuttled my houseplants, nearly every one, out to my wind-sheltered east-facing back patio, which is (if we're seriously lucky that day) bathed in warm morning sun. A few remained inside, including an elderly heartleaf philodendron (*Philodendron scandens oxycardium*, Araceae family) which I acquired as a cutting from a friend when my first son was three years old in 1969. So I've had it in a container for 37 years.

It is without doubt the most neglected plant in California. I have repotted it only twice. I have hacked its long vines to stubs maybe a dozen times. I water it only once a month and fertilize it so infrequently that it should surely be dead now, or, at the very least, unable to squeeze out a single leaf. But there it lives, up high in my dry heat-sucking loft, trailing over the railing nearly eight feet down to the kitchen counter, not merely tolerant of my negligence and abuse, but growing along quite cheerfully. Surely if it were transplanted into a jungle in its native Puerto Rico or Jamaica this brave little vine would become what was intended: a massive twenty-foot super-climber with leaves up to 12 inches long, and 6-inch whitish-green spathes. The largest leaf on my pitiful plant is scarcely 4 inches long and it has never bloomed. (In my defense, they almost never bloom in captivity.) It never crossed my mind to summer it outside as it is precious and old, but now I believe it would have flourished had I done so.

My loving children and well-intentioned friends keep me knee-deep in orchids of all descriptions, mostly *Phalaenopsis*, and I shamefully admit adding to the congestion myself by rescuing the occasional unidentified plant from exasperated owners. But my small house cannot accommodate many plants. Windows and walls are situated such that it is difficult to provide adequate light, so placing them where they'll receive anything resembling dimly 'optimum' conditions is impossible. I shoot instead for conditions that will keep certain death at bay for a few more months. Watering becomes problematic as each plant has to be carried to the sink or tub or outside for a decent dip. Some of them are heavy – and I'm getting old. Spider webs, dead flies and yuck accumulate around the pots on the window sills where the plants struggle for survival. I'm always worrying over leaves pressed against cold north-facing window glass, too few lumens, dry house air, scorching rays in the sunny window....

I have pondered summering the plants outdoors for years, and this past season, I'm proud to report, I finally worked up the nerve to move all thirty-five housebound orchids outside with the *Cymbidiums* -- as soon as I was convinced that the nights had become warm enough. This was their very first summer camping out in the yard. My babies!



Orchid buds and
Philodendron leaf

And they LOVED it. They luxuriated under a split bamboo shade, showered with gentle, tropical hose-rain, tenderly protected from too much wind or sun. *Dendrobiums*, *Oncidiums*, *Degarmoaras*, *Cattleyas*, and all the others perked up, they grew, their color improved, and, much to my surprise, they didn't pick up any pests. I was so impressed that I treated them to a little fertilizer! Some of them thanked me for my benevolence by producing new spikes. I am so happy.

Or, that is to say, I *was* so happy until the dreaded drop in night temperature signaled the time to lug them back into the house for the winter. Ugh. Where to put them? They sat waiting so very patiently for three days on a plastic blue and white checkered tablecloth on my dining table while I contemplated the slim options. I was definitely reluctant to cover every windowsill with heavy clay pots once again, so I opted to surrender one-third of my unusually large kitchen counter to the cause. It is now lovely with orchids that have clearly not yet realized that they're back in the dry, dark house with the mature – trying to be delicate here – *Philodendron* whose longest stem just tickles a *Brsda*. (*Brassia x Ada*) Orange Delight 'Starbek Orange' that is about to birth a stem full of stunning, not surprisingly, bright orange flowers. Next summer I'll put the *Philodendron* outside too.*

*Upon being coerced into reading this essay, my daughter's only remark was an alarmed, "You're going to put the *Philodendron* outside next summer?" ☞

An Exciting New Shop In Town ————— Cynthia Jordan, MG '94



“Chairish the Thought” is an antiques/collectibles shop and nursery located at 2131½ Portola Dr. in Santa Cruz. The patchwork-quilt of a building has been many things over the last 50 years: originally a nursery, then the first home of Pottery Planet, and most recently an eclectic collection of house and garden items.

Enter Master Gardeners and the next incarnation of *Chairish the Thought!* Ann Weeks, MG'04, and her daughter Cindy Ellis recently purchased the inventory and leased the site. They have been joined by Bonnie Pond, MG'00, Marilyn Slingerland, MG'98, and Cynthia Jordan, MG'94, in a master plan to bring items for “Home – Garden – Life Inspiration” to Monterey Bay.

Plants propagated in Ann and Cindy’s 2500 sq. ft. greenhouse on Freedom Blvd. will be sold here. The nursery will also carry unique bulbs and succulents. Mature furniture – not yet antiques – will be acquired at auctions in Southern California and sold at reasonable prices. Inventory will include art and furniture for the garden. There will be year-round classes held on weekends and evenings. Wreath-making, faux finishes, pique assiette, and the tradition of serving high tea are just a few of the planned classes.

Wedding & event flower-arranging services will also be offered.

The most unique feature is the “co-op” art available for sale. There are some very artistic MGs amongst us. *Chairish the Thought* will provide a venue for their talents. For example, Natalie Chambliss, MG'00, will sell her beautiful cards and nature art work. Bonnie Pond’s gorgeous pique assiette will be available on a year-round basis.

Chairish the Thought would like to invite any MG with an artistic flare to contact Cynthia Jordan to discuss joining the co-op. This includes MGs who are propagating plants or producing non-perishable artisan foods that have been processed in a licensed kitchen. Looking for a place to “consignment sell” the extras in your garage? Contact Cynthia.

Life on Monterey Bay inspires in many ways. We invite you to find something to “chairish” at our shop. Look for our grand opening at the end of November. ☞

Email: cynjord@pacbell.net

Fall-through-early-winter drama: tree dahlia, Dahlia imperialis



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New Statewide Vision for MGs — Tom Karwin, MG '99

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) has conducted the Master Gardener Program (MGP) since 1980. During that 26-year history, the MGP grew to serve 36 of the state's 58 counties. The MGP functioned in a highly decentralized manner, with each county-based unit pursuing the educational mission in a unique manner. UCCE's *Master Gardener Program Administrative Handbook for Program Staff*, issued in October of 2002, contains a limited measure of statewide perspective for the MGP. The Handbook is available at <http://oakland.ucanr.org/mgpah>.


UCCE recently took a major step toward a more centralized operation with the appointment of Pam Geisel as the statewide coordinator of the Master Gardener Program. On October 28, 2006, Pam attended a meeting of the Monterey Bay Master Gardeners to outline her vision for the future of the MGP.


Pam made it clear that her vision was still a work in progress as she studies the UCCE priorities. Still, she quickly listed ten likely initiatives:

1. Enhanced statewide coordination
2. Statewide identity of the MGP
3. Improved outreach
4. Training and mentoring programs
5. Improved sub-regional collaboration
6. Greater statewide recognition and support
7. Serving more diverse populations
8. Increased use of the WWWeb to provide services
9. Development of endowment and support funds
10. Regional facilities for training and education

At the same time, Pam emphasized her intention to respect local management and direction of the MGP. As Pam spoke of increased communication with local MGP coordinators, she acknowledged that UCCE has funded half-time coordinators in only eight county-level programs. The programs that do not have a UCCE coordinator, e.g., Santa Cruz UCCE, might appreciate having a MG volunteer support those communications. Once Farm Advisor Steve Tjosvold has spelled out the role of such a volunteer, a local MG will be recruited to serve.

Pam acknowledged the existence of the non-profit corporation, Monterey Bay Master Gardeners, in addition to the local UCCE MPG. All local "chapters" of the MGP operate as activities of the UCCE, but four counties also have formed non-profit corporations as complements to the UCCE activity. Those counties are Fresno, San Diego, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz/Monterey. Pam is encouraging all counties to form a Master Gardener Association (MGA). To date, two counties have done so.

The "bottom line" is that the appointment of a statewide coordinator for the MGP is very likely to generate new lines of communication, which in turn will stimulate ideas for new ways for us to pursue our educational mission. The future of the MGP could become very interesting! 



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Board Meeting Report

Martye Lumpkin, MG '99

Welcome the 2006-7 Board

Claudia Boulton	School grants
Phyllis Hilton	
Tom Karwin	Smart G. Faire
Darby Kremers	Vice President
Martye Lumpkin	President and Hotline
Paul McCollum	Monthly Calendar
Sheryl McEwan	Smart G. Faire

Candice McLaren	Youth Garden
Patricia Nicely	Secretary
Bonnie Pond	
Barbara Schilling	Project Coordinator
Betsy Shea	Publicity
Gisele Tacheny	Treasurer
Gloria Thomas-Jones	Demo Garden

Coordinators

Joan McLeod-Mertz	Newsletter Editor
Alan Schlenger	Email List
Mary Edmond	New Class App & Orientation
Alicia Molina	Quarterly Meetings

Tammy Tahara	Quarterly Meetings
Robin Sanders	Roster & Board Election
Christina Kriedt	Webmaster - MG
Mark Brekenridge	Webmaster - UC



Thank you for your vote of confidence. We look forward to having your input and help. Currently, we need a Garden Tour Coordinator or Team. Our next meeting should be in early Jan 2007; however, no specific date has been set. If you'd like to attend board meetings, please give me a call for more details.

☞

Mark your calendar:

Quarterly Meeting	December 2, 2006
Garden Faire	June 23, 2007
Garden Tour	September 8, 2007

Newsletter and Website Status

Christina Kriedt, MG '06

It's true -- we're going virtually high-tech. "Gardening on the Edge" will henceforth be published on our website six times a year; and starting with the February-March issue we will be printing and mailing copies only to those who request them. We will not ask you each time -- just this once.

If you wish to receive a printed copy of future issues, please contact Robin Sanders at 831-726-1942 or robinsanders@redshift.com. Just to make it perfectly clear: **if you do not contact her, you will not receive a printed newsletter in the mail.** Remember that if you are a MBMG, the newsletter is FREE. Publishing digitally on our website saves our organization considerable money both in printing and postage costs. And if you download and print your own issue each time, you can keep a lovely *color* newsletter! You can also save the files to your hard drive and read the outstanding, informative articles whenever you like -- in *living color!*

If you are a paid subscriber or advertiser, please contact Robin about your options.

At this writing, our url is www.smartgardening.org. By the time the next newsletter issue is available, the URL will have been changed, probably to montereybaymastergardeners.org. We'll keep you informed about that and any other changes and updates by email and in the newsletters.

The website is official now as it has board approval. The only data that will be password protected is anything of a personal nature (addresses, phone numbers -- which are NOT online at all now, and may never be), and forms and documents that are just for MGs (i.e. our quarterly hours form).

We want to develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the site. Whenever you are working the Hotline, and you find yourself with time on your hands, please help us with the FAQ project. We need to develop a searchable database of information based on the specific questions we get from our neighbors on the central coast. It has not been set up yet, but soon there will be a system in place for members to enter questions and the UC approved answers. (Is there anyone out there interested in helping with this project?) Listed below are three randomly picked FAQ sections from gardening sites, just to give you an idea how it works:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/cooper/mg/faq.htm>

<http://www.pcmg-texas.org/faq.htm>

<http://www.ontariohorticulture.com/lmmg/FAQs.asp>

Your input is valued, so please let us know what you think on Yahoo (mbmg@yahoogroups.com). ☞

Al's Corner: The Soil Food Web


Al Derrick, MG '95

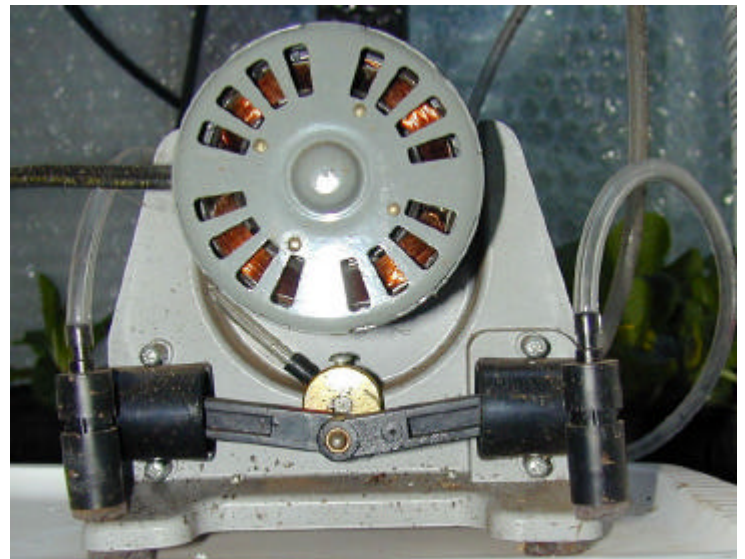
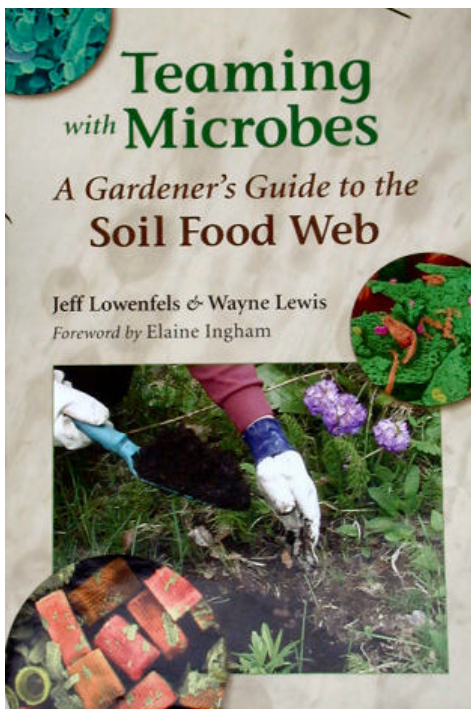
The spring edition of "Pacific Horticulture" published an excerpt from a new book due to be released in August. After reading the article, I immediately ordered a copy to be shipped as soon as available. I have enjoyed reading and re-reading the book Teaming with Microbes. For those of us without a biology education, a lot of information is offered that requires reinforcing. It took me a week to remember the word "exudates" although its meaning was very clearly explained. Many pictures taken with an electron microscope allow the gardener to see the microbes as they interact in the "soil food web." Millions of microbes add their contributions to the health of the soil as they consume dead plant material and each other to achieve balance and assist in the plant roots' ability to take up nutrients and moisture.

It is not my intention to quote passages from this book, but I would suggest reading the excerpts in the last two issues of "Pacific Horticulture" magazine. The knowledge I have gained from reading this book is helping me multiply the benefits of using compost tea. Four cups compost, five gallon chlorine free water and two tablespoon molasses, oxygenated for twenty four to thirty six hours is the whole recipe. My original "Tea Machine" used a water pump to oxygenate the tea. In this book excess agitation is explained as a cause of damage to certain fungi. For this reason I now use an aquarium air pump connected to air stones in the bottom of the five gallon plastic bucket. The compost is now contained in a mesh bag with holes at least four microns in size to allow the larger fungi to pass through.



Ideally, the tea would be applied to the plants or the soil within four hours of its completion. If not, aeration should be continued for up to three days; and if not used by then it should be discarded. If the tea is used as a foliar spray it should always be applied when the plant is not in the sun, as the sunshine will kill the microbes before the plant benefits from them. When working with compost tea we need to always remember it is composed of live organisms, best kept alive.

As gardeners we are just now learning about a whole world of soil life and how this knowledge can improve our gardens -- or maybe it is just me, and everyone else already knows! Teaming with Microbes, A Gardener's Guide to the Soil Food Web is written by Jeff Lowenfels & Wayne Lewis and published by Timber Press. 



Air pump for oxygenating tea

Book Review: Grasses

Kathleen Sonntag, MG '06

Grasses -- Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design
by Nancy J. Ondra

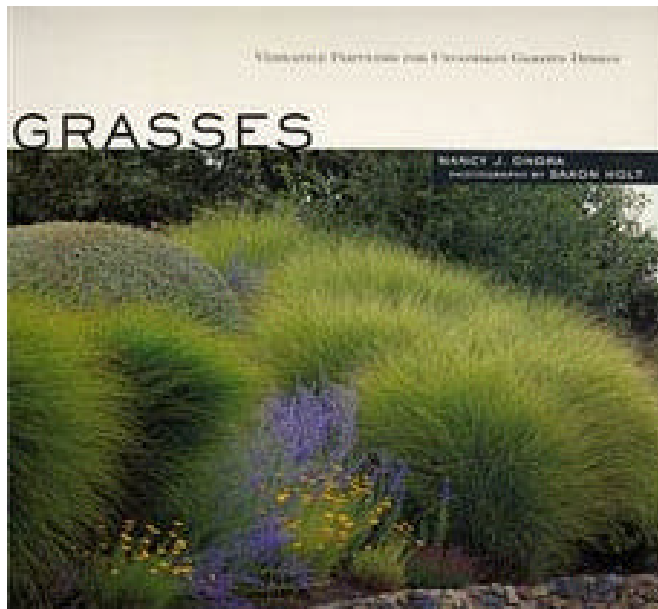
There are so many grasses – different shapes, different sizes, some that clump and some that creep. And there are “problem grasses” that will take over the garden. Once through the descriptions on the introductory pages of this profusely illustrated book, the reader can view page after page of examples of grasses in the garden.

The thing about grasses is that I am never sure how to combine them with other plants that I have in my garden. This book contains a font of ideas about how to use grasses to complement other plantings. Nancy Ondra’s book has photographs of combinations that inspire – roses growing next to blue oat grass or a species of *Miscanthus*. Picture *Acer Palmatum* (Japanese maple) with dark purple leaves behind *Junctus patens* (California Rush) shown on page 57.

The author discusses use of grasses in containers, in water gardens, on slopes and along borders. Do you associate grasses with fall color? Oh yes, there are some eye-catching examples in that chapter. Seeing grasses at their best in all types of situations – slopes, dry areas, wet areas, cool areas, as privacy screens – is a pleasure and an inspiration. The perspective is entirely different than seeing a grass in isolation; seen with other familiar plants the size and shape of the grass is clear.

The reader is first mesmerized by the photos. The book contains over 160 photos on 140 pages. When you go back to read the text, the author will not disappoint. She includes tips for garden design, planting, and maintaining the grasses. There is ample information about how to keep your garden looking good year-round – not too difficult where we live – but also ideas for creating eye-catching vignettes in unexpected places.

As I watch my *Gaura lindheimeri* move in the wind next to California native *Calamagrostis nutkaensis* (Pacific reedgrass) I am glad to have found this book to whet my appetite and inspire me to try new plant combinations. ☞



Lava flow with fountain grass *Pennisetum setaceum* photographed above Kailua-Kona Airport, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i, by Eric Guinther, 2005.
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Over The Garden Fence Sharon Ettinger, MG '00

Help is on the way!

If you're looking for help with a garden project, check out the Cabrillo College online job board at ecampusrecruiter.com/cabrillo. I placed an ad for a garden helper on Saturday and by Monday noon had several respondents to choose from. With the Horticulture Department at Cabrillo, there are lots of students eager to earn some extra cash while working in their chosen fields of study.

Craigslist for landscape plants

My neighbor was in the process of landscaping her yard and as I drove by one day, I noticed a huge hole being dug. It was obviously going to be for a specimen tree. As I rounded her corner the next day, I was stunned to see the most gorgeous 35-foot tall palm planted on the corner, looking as if it had been there forever. Where did she find such a perfect specimen?...www.craigslist.com. She searched in the 'miscellaneous' and 'household items' sections and found a "you dig 'um" palm in Seaside. Even with the cost of hiring someone to dig it up and plant it, she estimates she saved 75-80%.

Container plant revival

Natalie Chambliss, MG '00, reminds us not to forget about plants in large containers (like a half barrel). In June she noticed her camellia was looking a bit dull but she was too busy with other stuff to really look at it. Then it went into a massive leaf drop, which really made her stop and pay attention. The dripper was no longer functioning so she gave it a massive watering followed a few days later with a sprinkling of sulfur on top of the soil. She sprayed the leaves with an iron solution and then added iron to the water for the soil. She topped all that off with a light sprinkling of peat moss all around the plant and a good feeding. She also gave her bonsai coast oak a sulfur/iron treatment. Within a month both plants looked remarkably green and healthy - the camellia leaves looked like they had been polished. The camellia is now beautiful and covered with buds, which are just beginning to show color. She almost lost her *Fuchsia thymifolia* to a dripper that fell off the pot - the foliage drapes over the pot and down to the ground so she couldn't see what was wrong. It pays to poke around every once in a while! ☞

Hummers in the Winter Garden Christina Kriedt, MG '06

My living room window frames a few hummingbird feeders that are frequented by flitting jewels all day. To learn how to keep my birds healthy during winter, I decided to drop into The Bird Feeder on Soquel Avenue in Santa Cruz and ask the experts. This is what I learned:

Anna's are the only hummers that stay in our area all winter long, presumably because we have abundant winter-flowering plants and we don't get terribly cold. At night when the temperature drops, they enter a state of torpor during which they appear to be dead, but it's actually a trancelike state with temporarily lowered body temp and slower metabolic rate. It takes about 30 minutes for the birds to return to normal in the morning. The sugar water we feed them is good 'breakfast' food; flowers don't have their juices flowing until later in the day. They fill up in the evenings in preparation for the long night. They don't store a lot of body fat because they don't migrate. And -- they eat tiny flying

bugs! All news to me! But I think the most amazing fact I learned is that the female Anna's build their sturdy nests of plant down, eesy feathers, and *spider webs*, and camouflage the exterior with lichens.

When the sugar water becomes cloudy (up to a week), it is time to replace it; disassemble and soak the feeder in a 10-1 chlorine solution to kill bacteria with every new batch of food. Rinse thoroughly. Never use any sweetener but cane sugar (sucrose) dissolved 4-1. A ripe banana is sufficient to supply a cloud of fruit flies for that extra protein. ☞

Visit The Bird Feeder

Monday - Saturday, 9:30 - 5:30

Sunday, 11:00 - 4:00

347 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz

831-457-8240



(continued from page 12)

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society

Meets Second Friday of every month

7:00 PM Potluck Dinner

7:30 PM Meeting

Simpkins Swim Center, Community Room

979 - 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA

For Orchid Lovers

Carmel Orchid Society meets at 7:30pm on the first Monday of each month, except May, September and December at: First Presbyterian

Church of Monterey, 501 El Dorado Street, Monterey, CA

Santa Cruz Orchid Society has a monthly meeting to see each other's blooming orchids, learn about orchids from a speaker and have a chance to buy orchid plants from each other. A recognized expert in orchid growing and/or hybridizing speaks at our monthly meetings. Visitors welcome !!

We meet at Live Oak Grange at 1900 17th Avenue in Santa Cruz at 8:00 PM on the first Friday of each month.

Orchid show and sale is in early February each year. ☞

Garden Tour Follow-Up

Bonnie Pond, MG '00

After the Garden Tour, I contacted the garden owners and asked these questions:

- Did you enjoy the event, or 'survive' it?
- Would you undertake it again?
- If so, what would you do differently?

Betsy Shea

I loved it. I'd do it again in a heartbeat. Once upon a time I would have stressed out about imperfections. Not anymore. It's what it is.

I achieved my main objective, which was to get everything cleaned up. All the delayed maintenance was becoming too easy to put off. It was just overwhelming actually. This gave me the incentive.

My second objective was to get the plants identified. I have so many unusual plants and it's easy to lose the tags and forget the varietal name. I accomplished about 95% of that goal. Since then I have actually finished everything. Now I've got a system for the future so that as I add plants it will be easy to just record the name in the right section on the computer. Note for another year's tour: I needed twice the number of plant lists even though most people returned them. I started out with 35.

A minor disappointment: not that many people actually asked about the specific plants.

The best reward is that even now, more than a month later, my garden still looks wonderful. This is the first time ever that every area of my yard looked well groomed at the same time. Doing most of the work by myself is too much. That's why I appreciated the help so much. Leaves are starting to fall now so it's impossible to keep it well groomed daily but there are flowering plants everywhere and everything looks lush and healthy. All of the deadwood is gone, most of the major pruning is done. The ornamental crabapple grew so much this year that it will need to be thinned out soon.

One thing I would make sure of next time is to educate the helpers on the day of the tour about the highlights in the garden, such as specific plants to point out.

One of the best aspects of the tour was getting to know fellow Master Gardeners better. A wonderful surprise was the people who came on the tour. Great conversations with strangers - the common bond of gardening allows you to connect with one another so easily. I even rekindled a friendship with someone I haven't seen in 30 years.

Robin Hazard

I did enjoy this tour, much more so than the first one that I was on. You should have asked if our marriages survived it! Ha! And yes, again, better than the first time.

No, I wouldn't undertake it again. I've done it twice now and it's time for someone else to step up and show off their garden.

Phyllis Hilton

The 2006 Master Gardener Tour was a great success and no one benefited more from it than I did. At the end of the tour my garden was in tip top shape and 100% improved over the before picture. All the unsightly bare spots were covered with fresh mulch, the weeds were gone, the flowering plants were deadheaded and the reflection pond in the back yard was in working order, between raccoon raids that is.

The MGs who helped me were very supportive and encouraging. They did help a lot, but the best thing was that they motivated me to keep working. Everyone contributed major ideas to the garden and helped implement them. For example: Paul McCollum helped me install a drip system in the newest part of the garden. Dianne Huang helped me harvest a lot of worm casting so we could fertilize the roses and she moved all my worms from a small box to a large box in the process. She was a constant dependable hard worker on other projects as well. Judy Miller and Liz Burns designed a large planter arrangement for the front door and helped with pot selection and design of the key front yard entry area. It made a big difference in the initial impression of the garden to visitors. Gigi Tacheny and Pat Verde cleaned up and made design improvements in the large area to the left side of the house, and Nancy Martella helped me espalier the two small apple trees in the back yard and construct a deer protection net cage for them using polyethylene pipe. Joan and Carri, Dianne Yost and Martye weeded and spruced up the patio area and moved pots to enhance its appearance. Martye also spent a morning cleaning the patio area with her power washer. Jan Olafsson, a Home Depot Garden expert, fixed my fountain pump, connected the pond pump and contributed much more.

Last, I am very grateful to Malcolm Frasier who spend a whole 1/2 day plus part of a 2nd day hiding the electrical cords going to the fountain and the pond pump. It was a large undertaking and he worked very hard. Elizabeth Burns deserved a gold badge for working on the plant list and getting it in printed form. Chris Carrier was a big help installing border cement blocks around various beds where he noticed it would improve the appearance. He also helped move a lot of mulch. Peter Quintanilla was a valuable aid. He removed a smaller redwood tree and pruned almost all of my many oak trees (25 of them, plus or minus).

And, of course, I should mention Leora, who took the wonderful pictures of the garden. My family really enjoyed them and so did I. They were taken early on which was an uplifting contribution, because I thought my garden was hopeless at that time.

I'd like to think that those who helped with the garden gained some experience, ideas and knowledge in the process. I think they had fun working in the garden with other MGs. I certainly appreciated all their input, their encouragement and getting to know them better. This was one of the peak experiences of my life!! I really mean it too. Thanks very much to all those involved. However, I need to mention that I really earned all those volunteer hours I got for the tour. It was a big undertaking with very positive results. I look forward to helping others with their gardens! ☞

Advanced Training, Volunteer Opportunities and Other Events

Kathleen Sonntag, MG '06

Rose Pruning Workshop by Paul McCollum

Thursday, Dec 7, 10 a.m. to noon

Learn the basics and take home cuttings to start your own plants

726-1319 for more info

Green Wreath Workshop, Fri., Sat. & Sun., Dec. 1, 2, & 3 The Potting Shed, call for information and reservations, 685-1626.

Seaside Green Team Project: Every third Saturday 1:00-3:00

Contact Mary Wilson, 393-0193 bluespud@pacbell.net

County of Santa Cruz Master Composter Training Program. Ecology Action is now accepting applications for 2007. The training provides hands-on experience managing compost piles and worm bins and exposes participants to Santa Cruz County recycling, composting, and landfill facilities. In exchange for the free training, Master Composters volunteer to teach others about composting at community events.

When: The training includes seven Tuesday evening classes and five Saturday field trips, January 30-March 27, 2007. **Application deadline is January 29, 2007.**

Cost: There is no cost to participate. Class materials, including books, worm bins and worms are provided.

Contact: To request a class agenda and application, call the Rotline at 423-HEAP or download an application from:

<http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org>.

Monterey Bay Certified Farmer's Market (MBCFM) at Cabrillo College, Aptos,

"Can You Dig It" Gardening Workshop Series

Our new gardening series features Master Gardeners, professional landscape designers, educators, and authors who will be giving hands on demonstrations and workshops throughout the year.

When: **Third Saturday of each month.** Please check website for times, since the schedule will vary.

<http://www.montereybayfarmers.org/news.html>

Saturday, December 16, 10 – 11:30, Featuring: Speaker, Ken Foster

Topic: Seasonal Landscape Design

Ken Foster and Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping represent the ultimate in "green awareness" in the home garden.

Workshops Coming Up in 2007

Judith Taylor, UCCE Certified Master Gardener will present a hands-on workshop on gardening tool care and maintenance. Under her expert guidance, you will learn how to disassemble your hand tools (if applicable), sharpen, oil, and ensure that they are ready for a new gardening season. Every gardener knows how expensive it is to replace good hand tools. Judith will show you how to care for your gardening tools after each use and how to perform that major, once-a-year maintenance. So bring your hand-pruners, tree loppers and shovels with you for an educational experience not to be missed.

Also planned: Basics of Landscape Design, Heirloom Seed Saving, Organic Pest Control, Propagation for the Home Gardener, Garden Art

Elkhorn Slough Volunteer Stewardship / Restoration Work

Help us bring the native plants back to Elkhorn Slough. We will be gathering seeds in the field, working in the greenhouse, planting native plants, and pulling weeds at the Elkhorn Slough Reserve (ESNERR) and on Elkhorn Slough Foundation (ESF) lands.

Be sure to RSVP: for ESNERR events call 831-728-2822; for ESF events call 831-728-5939

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2007; 10:00 - 1:00

<http://www.elkhornslough.org/willow.htm>

Filoli Opening Event 2007

February 27 through March 3

Filoli's opening event will be a week-long series of special tours, talks, demonstrations and displays all celebrating the beauty and splendor of the winter and spring garden. The event will be FREE with paid admission to Filoli. There may be a minimal cost for some of the talks. Details to follow in January and February. (continued page 10)



For 6 issues, send \$15 to:

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Welburn Gourd Farm <http://www.welburngourds.com> as does
Leisers <http://gourdfarmer.com>
Zittel Farm <http://www.zittelgourds.com>

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Horticulture Department <http://www.cabrillo.edu/academics/horticulture/>
Windmill Nursery, Buellton <http://www.windmillnursery.com/>

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online job board <http://www.ecampusrecruiter3.com/cabrillo/index.php?script=local-login>
Craigslist <http://sfbay.craigslist.org/>
Monterey Bay Dahlia Soc. <http://www.mbdahlias.org/>
Carmel Orchid Soc. <http://www.carmelorchidsociety.org/>
Santa Cruz Orchid Soc. http://www.yourtownmontereybay.com/main.wsi?group_id=237

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Seaside Green Team http://groups.ucanr.org/mbmg/Projects/Seaside_Green_Team.htm
Filoli <http://www.filoli.org/>

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