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Winter 2008

The City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department's

The Green Thumb

An occasional publication to update Community Gardens Program participants about the current happenings in the San Luis Obispo gardening community.

Make the Most of Small Spaces

The French gardening practice known as "protager" consists of a well planned garden as formed in old Europe that would blend vegetable and floral bouquets in inspiring arrangements. This combination of plantings is believed to form a well presented garden; such as a properly set table creates a feast for the eyes.

As the spring planting season draws near, do not allow the color of flowers to take center stage, instead plan to intermingle plantings using flowers and all things edible. Greenery from vegetables and fruits can provide full backgrounds to set off much admired bright colored flowers in the spring and summer gardens. Select vegetables can also provide colored foliage including shades of green, purple and blue.



Photo from Angelo Bernacchi Greenhouses.

Working flowers and vegetables together in one plot attracts birds, bees and other insects which make the organic ecosystem thrive and add another advantage to these French style gardens. Designing small garden spaces is the topic of the Community Gardens first seminar topic of 2008. Robert L. Gordon will speak on techniques to enhance garden design.

from Sunset magazine, www.sunset.com

Quick Tips

Time to Start Cool Season Herbs Indoors

In San Luis Obispo's warmer climate it is okay to begin planting dill, parsley, and cilantro indoors for preparation for spring planting.

Consider Planting Leeks

Having a softer flavor than their onion relatives, leeks add a nice subtle touch to dishes. Leeks are delicious braised, sautéed, or pureed in soups.

Color Garden Plots with Spring Bulbs!

Bulbs are perennials that provide foolproof display which can brighten any spring garden. When buying, choose bulbs that are fresh and firm, not brittle, moldy or rotten. Bulbs can be planted in tight arrangement to bloom in a dense and dramatic show.

Popular perennials include: narcissus, tulips, crocus, dahlia, iris, gladiolus, hyacinth, calla lily and oriental lily.

Guest Speaker

Tuesday, March 11
5pm at the Ludwick
Community Center

Garden Design Seminar with Bob Gordon

Robert L. Gordon of Gordon's Floral Design Studio is scheduled to speak at the 2008 Community Gardens Program spring seminar Tuesday, March 11 at 5 p.m.

The Ludwick Community Center will be buzzing with excited gardeners as Mr. Gordon catapults them into spring planting season. The community garden members

from each corner of San Luis Obispo cannot afford to miss the awe-inspiring gardening strategies that come from Mr. Gordon's design talents.



For more information on activities through the City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department, call (805) 781-7300 or stop by 1341 Nipomo Street in SLO.

Local Garden Events & Attractions

Cal Poly Organic Farm Volunteer Opportunity

Every Monday: 8am to 12pm; every Thursday: 10am to 2pm; a full 4 hours are necessary for orientation & work time.
For more information on the Organic Farm at Cal Poly, call 756-6139 or visit www.calpolyorgfarm.com.

Five Cities Orchid Society

March 8: 9am to 5pm; March 9: 10am to 5pm; Orchids Carnival: 13th Annual Orchid Show and Sale, \$5
For more information on Five Cities Orchid Society, call 929-6710 or visit http://fcos.org/show_info.html.

San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens

Every Tuesday: 9am to 11am; Plant Sale & Preview Garden Maintenance
February 9: 1pm to 2pm; Seminar "Touring South Africa for Succulents" with Brian Kemble, \$5.
February 9: 2pm to 4pm; Workshop "Creating Potted Succulent Gardens" with Maggie Wagner & Nick Wilkinson, \$10
For more information on SLO Botanical Garden events, call 546-3501 or visit www.slobg.org.

ECOSLO

February 3: 9:30 to 11am; Sustainable Living Tour of local home. Meet at 1040 Cielo Lane, Nipomo.
For more information please email Elder Bill at bdenneen@kcbx.net.

City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department

March 11: 5pm to 6pm; Community Gardens spring seminar with guest speaker Bob Gordon at Ludwick Community Center.
For more information please contact Amy Voorhies, 781-7069.

SLO County Garden Club Contacts

Cabrillo Orchid Society 528-5974

Cayucos Garden Club 995-2392

Central Coast Cactus and Succulent Society 773-6644

Central Coast Geranium Society 937-9983

Floral Design Study Club 462-2277 or contact Ruth Pimentel at rjpimentel@sbcglobal.net

Los Osos Valley Garden Club 528-6800 or 528-5979 or contact Diana Blizzard at bunkynavo@gmail.com

Master Gardener Helpline, San Luis Obispo; volunteers available Mondays and Thursdays, 1pm-5 pm; 781-5939

Mediterranean Garden Society 801-6625

Morro Bay Garden Club 772-3738 or contact Liz Weeth at lweeth@charter.net

Multiflora Garden Club 237-0608 or contact Betty Wood at bettywood@charter.net

SLO Gardeners 784-0552 or contact Linda Groover at slolag@sbcglobal.net



Winter Gardeners' Monthly Checklist

January

- Plant bare root vegetables: artichokes, asparagus, horseradish & rhubarb
- Hand pick out slugs & snails. Remove hiding spaces by cleaning leaf litter
- Prune dormant shrubs by trimming back dead, diseased & crossing branches

February

- Plant summer flowering bulbs
- Plant spring flowering perennials
- Hand pull or hoe out emerging weeds
- Prepare soil by mixing in amendments and fertilizers, allowing the soil to mellow out before planting directly into the fertilizer or manure

March

- Divide crowded bulbs and replant
- Fertilize plants that are actively growing with a balanced 15•15•15 fertilizer
- Plant spring flowering annuals

from *Weekend Gardener*
www.weekendgardener.net