



Gardener's Notebook

Volume 28, No. 2

News, Advice & Special Offers for Bay Area Gardeners

May/June 2014



Beautiful
 Abutilon
 is a nectar-filled
 hummingbird delight

1.

Four favorite varieties!

1. **'Watermelon Candy'** is a vigorous upright grower of small texture and compact habit, with oval dark-green leaves and dark stems. The slightly flared flowers are dark watermelon pink with dark sepals. Grows to 4-6'.

2. **'Nabob'** has large, dark-maroon red flowers. It's a vigorous, robust shrub, growing 8-10' tall with large, dark green leaves.

3. **Pictum 'Thompsonii'** has yellow speckled foliage and light orange flowers. Good vigor, grows 3-4' tall by 2-3' wide.

4. **'Victor Reiter'** is a very large tangerine orange flower with a lighter center and light yellow green calyces. Compact and heavy blooming. Flowers reach over 2" across. Grows to about 4-6' tall and 3-4' wide.



2.



3.



4.

Loved for their continuous bloom, fantastic ability to attract hummingbirds, and gorgeous colors, Abutilon (also known as flowering maple) is a favorite in Bay Area gardens. This hibiscus relative can be grown in containers or in the landscape. The down-

ward facing, pendant-shaped flowers can be white, melon, rose, orange, yellow, pink or red, and look elegant planted en masse or in a mixed border. Main bloom season is spring, but some seem to flower continuously throughout the year. Between its prolific

showy flowers and heavy nectar production, Abutilon is irresistible to hummingbirds.

Care notes: Abutilon does well in full sun but requires partial shade in very hot areas. It definitely will benefit from good drainage. Pinch back buds and prune for a fuller plant.

Plant Hydrangea macrophylla Wedding Gown for low-maintenance blooms!

Looking for a fast-growing, long-blooming shrub that will put on a big show throughout the summer and fall? Go for Hydrangea macrophylla Wedding Gown!

This hydrangea has a compact habit that requires less pruning, so it's truly a low-maintenance plant. Suitable for shade gardens and stunning in containers, the blooms start out as mopheads and open as lacecaps (large, double white flowers are unique to lacecaps). Wedding Gown flowers spring through autumn and is mildew-resistant.

About Hydrangea: They love our climate, especially the coastal areas of Marin and San Francisco. Hydrangea thrive even in average soil, with the only true requirement being regular water. Hydrangeas can be massed for impact in light sun or partial shade. Their full form is ideal for pairing with other shrubs or trees.

Hydrangea blossoms are lovely cut flowers, and the leaves are a beautiful addition to arrangements. Whether you use them in borders or as single plants, hydrangea is a beautiful and stunning garden shrub.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 8am-4pm

www.sloatgardens.com

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

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S l o a t



G a r d e n C e n t e r

420 Coloma Street
Sausalito, CA 94965-1428

Don't Forget **Mother's Day** (May 11th)
& **Father's Day** (June 15th). Stop by
Sloat Garden Center for great gifts!

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Standard
U.S. Postage
Paid
StrahmCom



We'll help you grow the plants you love!



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Instagram, Facebook and
Twitter. Sign up for our
monthly e-newsletters

8 SLOAT NOTEBOOK May/June 2014

Bay Area Gardening Guide: May & June

May

Plant

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



Fertilize

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



Prune/Maintain

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



June

Plant

- Warm season annuals are here! Plant zinnia, salvias, cosmos, lisianthus 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 **GreenAll Microbark** for its beauty and utility.
- Make sure vegetables are supported with cages, stakes, or trellises.
- Check early-bearing fruit trees for heavily laden branches. Thin fruits now to 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

Salvias are prolific bloomers, beloved by beneficials and pollinators



Salvia greggii with butterfly



Salvia clevelandii with bumble bee



Salvia leucantha

"My favorite plant is anything in the salvia (sage) family. They are low maintenance, drought-tolerant (once established) and prolific bloomers. Sages are beloved by birds, pollinators, and beneficial insects, but not liked by gophers and deer. They are beautiful ornamental plants, but many also have medicinal and culinary uses."

- Kat Catton
Manager Sloat Blvd SF location

When considering salvia's ability to flower from late-spring through early fall and attract butterflies, bees and hummingbirds, it's clear that salvia is a superstar that deserves attention. There are over 900 diverse species of salvia. Many varieties are native to Mexico and South America, but you can find these eager plants growing on nearly every continent. Salvias are known for their medicinal and culinary benefits, but they're also one of the most beautiful and carefree plants you can add to the garden.

The taller varieties (which incidentally make super cut flowers) can be placed in front of evergreen shrubs, combined for a sweep of color, or left to grow alone as a specimen plant. The lower-growing varieties make nice bedding plants.

Salvias enjoy full sun, but most will thrive in partial shade. They benefit from well-draining soil, but for the most part are not too particular, and can be grown successfully in poor soil conditions. Once established, many salvias are drought-resistant, and deer-resistant, too.

A common salvia characteristic is its floral structure. It features whorls of distinctive two-petal flowers appearing either spaced along the square stem, or tightly compacted so as to appear like a dense wand of color.

The key is to mass colors by planting at least a half dozen plants of the same color together -- the more, the better! We have a wide selection of these super summer performers at all Sloat Garden Center locations.

Some of our favorite Salvias

Salvia clevelandii features fragrant, inch-long, pale lavender to violet-blue flowers in widely spaced whorls. Blooms in early summer. Fragrant foliage!

Salvia greggii, also known as Autumn Sage, blooms throughout summer and fall, bearing flowers in colors from deep purple-red through true red to rose and pink shades to white.

Salvia leucantha. This upright, vigorous, velvety plant grows 3 to 4 ft tall and sprawls. Known for producing an attractive bloom of showy bi-color flowers consisting of white corollas and longer-lasting funnel-formed purple calyces. Blooms best in fall.



Sloat Organic Potting Soil supports healthy container plants



Our signature potting soil has been formulated for Bay Area growing conditions and specifically intended for indoor and outdoor pots, planters and other containers. It provides excellent drainage and is compaction-resistant, which means it stays loose and offers roots better air circulation. Our potting soil is all-organic, comprised of premium ingredients to help flowers (including salvia), vegetables, houseplants, shrubs, and other ornamental plants, succeed in containers.

What's in the bag? Fir bark, Canadian sphagnum peat moss, compost (wheatstraw, cottonseed hulls, Canadian peat moss, cottonseed meal, chicken manure and gypsum), volcanic pumice stone, earthworm castings, sand, feather meal, bat guano, green sand and kelp meal.

NEW LEAF PAPER® ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS STATEMENT of using post-consumer waste fiber vs. virgin fiber	
46	Trees
20936	Gallons of Water
14	Million BTUs of Energy
1271	Pounds of Solid Waste
4347	Pounds of Greenhouse Gases

Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and other members of the Paper Task Force.

www.newleafpaper.com

NEW LEAF PAPER®
PAPER MADE FROM RECYCLED FIBER

Gopher Scram stops gophers from feeding on plants



In the on-going battle against gophers, we'd like to recommend Gopher Scram granular repellent to keep gophers from feeding on ornamental plants, vines, shrubs, trees and grass. This organic formula provides strong, natural repelling power without harming people, pets or the environment. Fully biodegradable, Gopher Scram is unique in its two-pronged approach to quickly drive away gophers using *bad taste* and *strong smell*.



Gopher Scram is a blend of castor and other natural oils in granular form. Sprinkle it on the ground and then water; or allow rainfall to activate the repellent. The water draws the oil into the soil where it coats grass and plant roots. When a gopher nibbles on the treated plant, it tastes bad and becomes uncomfortable to digest. Gophers will quickly seek other areas for their burrowing activity where the vegetation is more palatable and agreeable. Gopher Scram works fast, is effective, and affordable.

The following plants are usually left alone by gophers. It should also be noted that many plants that are deer resistant are also gopher resistant.

Shrubs: Buddleja, callistemon, ceanothus, euonymus, grevillea, heteromeles, hydrangea, rosemary

Perennials: Begonia (fibrous), lantana, lavender, nepeta, penstemon, salvia, euphorbia, Shasta daisy, clivia, heuchera, juncus, festuca, digitalis

Bulbs: Scilla, narcissus/daffodil, amaryllis belladonna, allium, muscari, tulbaghia, onion, garlic

Trees: Fraxinus, eucalyptus, apricot, avocado, pomegranate

Unfortunately...the following plants have been identified as sure-bet gopher foods: most bulbs, most vegetables (especially carrots, peas, potatoes and parsley), aster, campanula, California poppy, lavatera, miscanthus, phormium, rose, and salvia uliginosa.

These plants are a joy in the garden **AND** they're gopher resistant!



Shasta daisy



Ceanothus



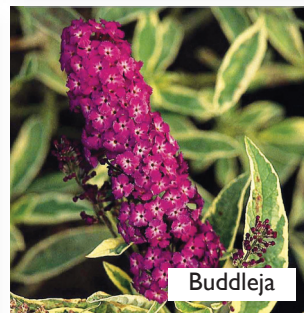
Rosemary



Lantana



Digitalis



Buddleja



Euphorbia



Lithodora

Taking a summer vacation? Have the Plant Nanny water your plants!

Plants are healthier when they have consistent moisture available, so the Plant Nanny is on the job to keep them watered!

The Plant Nanny is a specially engineered ceramic stake that is inserted into moist soil near a plant's root system. It stays in the soil and the reservoir provides the water supply. You create the water reservoir by filling an empty bottle (wine, soda or water bottle) with water and attaching the included drip-free, threaded adaptor that makes refilling easy. As the soil begins to dry, the terracotta stake slowly releases water (through gravity/diffusion) directly into the soil, instead of on the surface.

Each ceramic Plant Nanny stake is designed to release just the right amount of moisture; the plant's roots will grow around the stake, using water more efficiently. The plant Nanny will tell you when to add water, even at a distance. Knowing when to add water is simple. If the reservoir is empty, it's time!



Alstroemeria: new varieties are ready to Rock & Roll this spring!

We love the bright, new Alstroemeria Inticancha series. They were bred for compact, tidy growth and long, profuse flowering. The stunning blooms are ideal in cutting gardens, borders, or containers, and sturdy stems support clusters of large flowers that have an exceptional vase life. Alstroemeria thrives in well-drained soil that's enriched with organic matter. Pluck old flower stems from the base to promote new growth and flowering, and divide clumps every 2 or 3 years in early spring.

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HORTICULTURAL CRAFTSMEN SINCE 1926



Inticancha Machu



Inticancha Navayo



Alstroemeria Rock & Roll

Rock & Roll is an award-winning perennial with sensational flowers and two-toned foliage. Huge clusters of vivid scarlet-orange blooms are adored by hummingbirds and stunning in cut-flower arrangements.

Compact and clump forming, it thrives in the landscape or patio containers. Big, bold and beautiful in the landscape or containers.



Inticancha White pink blush



Inticancha Dark Purple

3 nifty new HOSTAS

The real glory of hostas is their beautiful foliage. Variegated leaves and spikes of blue or purple flowers make this plant a show stopper. Generally, hostas are shade lovers, though some will tolerate sun in cool zones. Hostas grow most luxuriantly in good, organically enriched soil, with regular feeding during the growing season. Clumps expand in size over the years and shade out weeds, also, clumps become more beautiful as they grow larger. New hosta varieties are always being developed, and these three are perfect for the landscape or containers.



Hosta 'First Frost'

'First Frost' is named for its robust foliage, which remains beautiful through to the first frost. Rich blue-green leaves have a creamy-yellow border that gradually fades to white. Excellent adaptability to varied climates and conditions. First Frost was the American Hosta Grower's 2012 Hosta of the Year.



Hosta 'Enterprise'

Hosta 'Enterprise' will be a beautiful contrasting addition to the shade garden, featuring heart-shaped leaves with dark green and creamy white variegation with tinges of olive green throughout the season. Dainty tubular lavender flowers appear above the low mounds of foliage in summer.



Hosta 'Fantasy Island'

Hosta 'Fantasy Island' is an attractive dwarf variety, perfect for the front of the shade border. Deep-green, slightly wavy leaves have a unique, creamy-yellow variegation. Dainty, tubular, lavender flowers emerge above dense foliage in mid-summer. Excellent vigor and sun tolerance.

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Nine stores 9 favorite plants

We asked our staff about their favorite plants for spring 2014. It's so hard for a plant geek to choose! You can learn more about the growing requirements of each plant on our blog.



Aeonium has an amazing shape and form. They love our seacoast conditions.
Sloat Blvd SF location



Trachelospermum - We love star jasmine's fragrance and easy care.
3rd Avenue SF location



Dahlia is the official flower of San Francisco. A stunning favorite!
Pierce Street SF location



Fuchsias are an easy, fun plant in containers.
Novato location



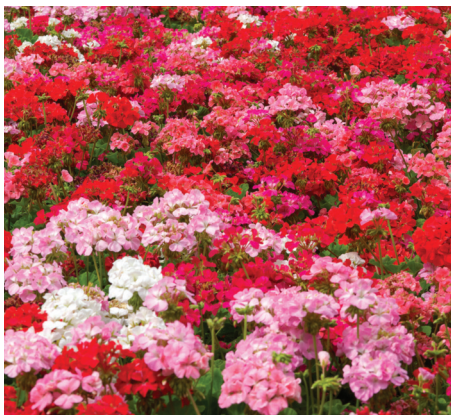
Orchids are a favorite. So many new colorful hybrids!
Kentfield location



Vibrant Phormium looks fabulous in any planting.
E. Blithedale (Mill Valley) location



Lavender is a go-to plant for any landscape or pot, especially in our hot summer area.
Danville location



Zonal geraniums=instant color in the garden. Long-lasting and hardy.
San Rafael location



Calibrachoa is a bright spot in our gardens. So many colors to choose from!
Miller Ave (Mill Valley) location



Attention and prevention: the keys to controlling garden pests



Naturally we'd love to devote this entire newsletter to discussing beautiful spring plants, but we know a few words now about pests will help later. With that in mind, we wholeheartedly recommend BioSafe Insect Control (formerly AzaGuard Botanical Insecticide/Nematicide) as a non-toxic insecticide that repels insects.

BioSafe Insect Control inhibits growth, feeding, molting, and reproduction of insects, and minimizes insect damage to plants. The unique packaging offers three individual 32oz. refill applications. All you need to do is add water.

Use BioSafe Insect Control on outdoor and indoor flowers, fruit, and vegetable gardens, trees, shrubs, and lawns to control over 300 species of insects (aphids, armyworms, beetles, borers, caterpillars, chafers, cutworms, grasshoppers, grubs, lacewings, leafminers, loopers, mealy bugs, mites, mole crickets, nematodes, scale, thrips, weevils, and whiteflies).

Administration is easy-peasy-lemon-squeezie! The bottle contains three easy-to-use ampoules which contain the botanical insecticide. Remove one ampoule from the pouch on the front of the product container, open the side cap and pour the botanical concentrate into the empty bottle, fill with clean water, and return the cap....then, you're ready to go!



On location in San Francisco with the Sloat Blvd. team



Staff back row: Catlin, Judy, Jason, Kat, Gerry. Front row: Nick, Yvonne. At right: Sloat Blvd location

Sloat Garden Center started in 1958 as part of the GET Department Store at the corner of 34th Ave. and Sloat Blvd. in San Francisco. In 1968, the store moved to a larger space at 46th Ave. and Sloat Blvd. across from the zoo and officially became known as Sloat Garden Center. Many customers and local residents tell us they grew up going to the store and have fond memories of buying plants there. The Sloat Blvd. location has a loyal and beloved crew that work tirelessly to get it right for thousands of San Francisco gardeners each year. Store Manager Kat Catton and Assistant Manager Gerry O'Donoghue answer some questions about gardening and the location.

What do you like about your job?

Gerry: I love learning about new plants, especially anything from Australia and South Africa. Plant propagation has always been a favorite. Seeing one of my designs go from pen and paper to someone's garden and have them come back years later always makes my day.

Kat: My favorite aspect of what I do is helping teach kids and grown-ups how easy it is to grow plants. A lot of books make it seem so complex, but so much of it is just common sense -- plants need the same things as humans: food and water, light and air, and of course safety, shelter and a diverse commu-

nity above and below ground. A stressed or run-down human gets sick; the same goes for plants. So we just figure out what's stressing the plant to make it better. When all else fails, our guarantee means you can start over without any worry.

What is your favorite or most useful tool?

Gerry: My Felco #2. I've been using one for over 20 years. It's always at my side.

Kat: I am never without my Tuff Tote. I use it to store tools, soak bark, carry weeds to the compost bin, transport plants from the nursery and catch the extra dirt when un-potting plants.

Can you tell us about your staff?

Gerry: We range from plant geeks, succulent lovers, to an all-round great crew. No two personalities are alike and we all get on like a well-behaved family. Everyone backs each other up, especially on a busy weekend in spring.

Kat: My crew is a great staff of different characters that reflect our city, but they all share a deep love of plants and delight in growing their plant knowledge and those of our guests. There is so much to learn in horticulture and our store is so busy, but it seems like we always have someone on the crew with a passion for each area of gardening. Whether it's orchids or edibles, natives or bonsai, you can bet at least one of our crew spends extra time at home puttering around with the same type of plant you love.





SPRING gardening seminars



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

Lose Your Lawn!

We welcome the Bay-Friendly Coalition for an insightful discussion on shrinking your lawn space. We will offer practical solutions, design ideas and learn hands-on how to use the sheet mulching method.

Tuesday, May 6th at Kentfield, 4:30pm

Saturday May 31st at Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 10:30 am

Bamboo: Friend or Foe?

Join Matt Clark of M2 Design and Construction for an enlightening discussion on all things bamboo. Learn the best (and worst) species and varieties for garden design, as well as how to control and contain them.

Saturday, May 17th at Kentfield, 10:30 am

Pruning and care of the Acid Lovers: Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Camellias

Welcome back Elizabeth Ruiz for tips and a demonstration for pruning Camellias, Rhododendrons, Azaleas and other garden favorites.

Sunday, May 18th, Danville, 12 noon

Hanging Basket Make and Take workshop:

Join Jen Strobel, our container design expert, for hanging basket planting tips and workshop fun. We will make lush, colorful, beautiful hanging baskets for summer.

Bring a friend! Admission \$55, (with friends-2 or more-\$50 each)

Thursday, May 22nd at Kentfield, 11 am

Friday, May 23rd at Miller Ave., Mill Valley, 11am

Bigger and Better Tomatoes

Do you want larger, earlier ripening and more flavorful tomatoes? Join Jed Brown of Sweetwater Nursery for a talk on pruning tomatoes.

Saturday, May 31st at Novato, 10:30 am

Know Your Garden Bugs

Join Suzanne Bontempo, IPM advocate. Her expertise draws from her 18 years in the Bay Area's horticultural industry (ranging from fine gardening, to current administer of the Our Water Our World program). Learn how to attract beneficial insects to your garden!

She will also guide us on effective and less toxic pesticide treatments.

Wednesday, June 4th at Sloat Blvd., San Francisco, 6:30 pm

Friday, June 6th at Kentfield, 1 pm

Gardening Fun for the Whole Family

Welcome Kier Holmes of M2 Design and Construction for a fun discussion on what flowers and vegetables are easy to grow with children, cool plants for children to enjoy and what kinds of activities are fun to do in the garden. Learn more about Kier: www.whatsgrowingnow.com

Sunday, June 8th at Kentfield, 10:30 am

Saturday, June 14th at Miller Ave. Mill Valley, 10:30 am

Attracting Butterflies and Hummingbirds

What garden wouldn't love more butterflies and hummingbirds!? Join Jen Strobel from the Sloat Garden Center Design Department for design tips using plants that will attract these lovely creatures!

Sunday, June 29th at Kentfield, 11 am

**SAVE
the DATE!**

**12th annual
Solstice SALE**

June 20th

all locations: 8am - 8pm
Sale prices for Gardener's
Reward Members ONLY

*Rewards members shop one day
before the general public.*

June 21st & 22nd

all locations: 8:30am - 6:30pm

Sale prices available
to all shoppers, all weekend.

*Specials on plants,
pottery, soil and more!*



★ HOW TO: treat roses

Rose Rx is a multi-purpose organic gardening solution for keeping roses healthy.

This two way triple action insecticide, miticide and fungicide kills eggs, larvae and adult insects. It prevents and controls blackspot, anthracnose, rust, scab, blights, and stops powdery mildew in as little as 24 hours. It also kills all life stages of aphids, mites, scale, whitefly, beetles, and leafrollers.

Use it on roses and flowers, as well as fruit, nuts, vegetables, herbs, spices, houseplants, trees and shrubs. Easy on beneficial insects and appropriate for indoor usage, this is an excellent choice for organic and IPM gardens. Contains NEEM OIL organic insecticide. As always, it's better to spray after bees have stopped foraging for the day.