

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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HOME GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

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April Success Tips

- 1. Spring is in Full Swing!** It's a perfect time to be outside enjoying your garden and planting.
- 2. Rhododendrons are in bud and bloom,** so it's a great time to pick out your favorite flower colors of these incredible plants.
- 3. Fertilize plants** you haven't fed so far this year. Ask us and we'll quickly select the *best fertilizer* for your specific needs.
- 4. Easter is coming!** Everyone loves a beautiful plant for Easter and we have lots to choose from.
- 5. Renew container plants** with new plant combinations. Ask us to help you select flowers that *bloom longer* or have interesting *leaf colors* or *shapes* that *perform well* in containers.



Need a Low Border?

Use Herbs!

For a striking effect, herbs make a perfect low border! Once established, most will thrive on being watered only two times a month. Group them close together along the edge of your lawn or garden path and enjoy the fragrant aroma some of them release as you walk by and brush against them. Let your tastes and cooking needs help you select your favorites from these and others in stock:



Lavender—Famous for their fragrance and feature flowering spikes set on gray foliage. Does best with full sun, and little water with good drainage.

Rosemary—Choose from trailing and upright plants. Pale blue flowers in spring and often again in fall. Needs good drainage and tolerates hot sun.

Santolina—Trim this low hedge occasionally, can also be planted as a ground cover. Has green or whitish-gray leaves with button flowers. Likes full sun and needs very little water.

Other great border herbs include *yarrow* and *thyme*.



Grow Your Own Fresh Vegetables!

Studies show that home-grown vegetables have **higher nutrient levels**, partly because they are eaten so much sooner after picking. Nutrient levels gradually decrease the longer produce is held in storage. Plus we all agree—home-grown vegetables are far superior in taste compared to those bought from stores. You can also grow your own vegetables organically!



Amend the Soil

Add organic matter such as compost every year to prepare your vegetable beds, otherwise you will end up with tired, depleted soil. Not only does compost add nutrients, but humus as well. Plus, compost helps keep the soil structure looser, which creates healthier roots and plants by allowing more oxygen into the soil. An excellent compost to add is *Greenall Soil Booster*.

Feed with *EB Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food*, starting 4 to 6 weeks after planting.

What to plant

Warm season vegetables to plant now include *tomatoes*, *bell peppers*, *hot peppers*, *eggplant*, *cucumbers*, *zucchini* and other *summer squashes*, *melons*, *beans*, and *corn*. Continue to plant *lettuce*, *radish*, *carrots*, *beets*, and other favorites. If you have limited space, some vining vegetables can be trained to grow up trellises, or choose some of our more compact varieties.

Don't stop at growing just vegetables! Be sure to plant some of our luscious **blueberries** and other **berries**, **fruit trees**, and **herbs** as well.

How to Live Weed-Free

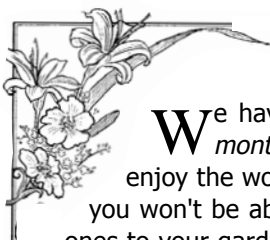
Prevent weed growth around plants by laying down our *landscape fabric* and covering with three to four inches of *mulch*. Use *landscape fabric staples* to hold the fabric in place. Cut an "X" in the fabric and slip small plants through the cut to get good coverage.

You'll have a weed barrier that looks great and lasts for many years. Top dress with fresh mulch yearly, as needed.

Plant A Flower Celebration!

We have flowers galore with more arriving weekly! April is *the month* to stop by, wander through the amazing display, and enjoy the wonderful variety of flowers we have in stock. Unfortunately you won't be able to take them all home this year, but you can add new ones to your garden. We have time-tested top performers and exciting new varieties, just released for your pleasure!

Tests show that people with extensive flower gardens are *happier*, *healthier*, *wealthier*, and *more generous*. They also have *brighter personalities*, *more satisfying marriages*, and *more obedient children*. (April Fool! We don't actually have a study to base this on, but don't you think this must be true?) Flowers do naturally lift our spirits. Just imagine your favorite flower—are you smiling yet?




2009: A New Era for Victory Gardens!

In 2008, Maine gardener Roger Doiron won 1st prize in the "On Day One" contest with his proposal to replant a food garden at the White House. The last White House garden was planted by Eleanor Roosevelt in 1943, and Doiron observed that these Victory Gardens *lifted America's spirits* as well as *encouraged millions* to help conserve financial and natural resources during a time of crisis. Did we mention the benefits of becoming physically active?!

As a result of Doiron's proposal, a garden was planted on March 20! It will be used as an educational tool to teach local children about growing and sustainability, as well as for meals. So, what's growing at the White House? A wide variety of leaf lettuces, collards, black kale, spinach, chard, hot peppers, tomatillos, a few herbs, and a berry patch.

Mother's Day Flower Colors



Now is the time to plant a special Mother's Day bouquet. Here's how to choose from a rainbow of colors that symbolize her unique qualities and what she means to you:

Red: to show your love and respect for a mom who is strong and courageous.

Pink: the ideal way to say "Thank you!" for her lifestyle of grace, happiness, and fun.

Orange: for the energetic mom who is full of enthusiasm and warmth.

Yellow: a bright inspiration for the lighthearted mom.

Green: celebrate your earthy, gardening mom with a fruit tree, or green-colored plant.

Blue: present your busy mom a bouquet so that she can relax into feelings of peace and serenity.

Lavender: is ideal for the ultra-feminine mom, delicate and elegant.

Purple: this royal gift for the queen of the home conveys your admiration for all of her accomplishments.

Spring Landscape Makeover

Does your garden inspire you to visit often and happily linger? If not, chances are your needs and motivations have changed and it is time to begin a spring landscape makeover! Old design elements, artwork, and plants can and should be moved or replaced with a landscape that reflects your current personality and preferences. Here are a few key design elements to incorporate in your new landscape:

View: Are your favorite plants and garden art able to capture your immediate focus? If unwanted views of the neighbor's yard, a compost pile, or AC unit distract and detract, screen them off with a trellis, ornamental tree, or hedge.

Scale: Use smaller or dwarf plants to help keep a small space in balance, plus you can plant a greater assortment.

Variety: Choose plants with interesting seasonal features such as berries, decorative foliage, peeling bark, and flowers.

Flow: Are your pathways wide enough? Can you move about your garden easily? Expanded pathways that meander through your garden will also create visual interest.

Containers: Choose containers that have a unified style, rather than a hodgepodge assortment. Complementary styles, colors, and materials will add to the beauty of your plants.

Luscious Strawberry Cream Pie!

Plant strawberries now and make this absolutely delicious pie the grand finale of many a summer dinner!

1 c. sugar	2 Tbs. cold water
8 c. (4 pints) strawberries	2 c. whipped cream
1 Tbs. cornstarch	1 9-inch pie shell, baked

Wash and hull berries. Add sugar to berries and let stand 1 hour. Strain juice into a separate bowl. Dissolve 1 Tbs. cornstarch in cold water (add more for very juicy berries). Combine all of reserved juice, cornstarch, with half of the berries and cook over low heat 15 minutes to thicken. Chill. Just before serving, spread whipped cream about 1/2" deep in pie shell. Place uncooked berries on top of cream. Pour cooked berries over top. Use remaining cream to decorate around pie edges.

It is true that keeping a garden takes time and occasionally requires some hard work, but what worthwhile thing in life doesn't? --Roger Doiron