

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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HOME

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GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Gardening Tips

1. Freshen up flower beds with **plants that love the heat**, including *zinnias*, *marigolds*, *geraniums*, and *salvias*. **Brighten up shady areas** by planting *impatiens*, *coleus*, wax (fibrous) *begonias*, and others.

2. **Flowers to plant** in late summer and early fall that will provide an especially beautiful fall flower show include *sedum*, *asters*, *impatiens*, *marigolds*, *cosmos*, and *zinnias*.



3. **Continue feeding vegetables** with *EB Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food*. Replace vegetable plants that have stopped producing—come in and choose from delicious and nutritious varieties we have for planting at this time of year.

Watch for details about our
**Great Garden
Photo Contest!**

4. Hang some of our **gorgeous hanging baskets** in your entryway and patios to spruce up your home. Their beauty is almost magical—you'll feel like you are on vacation in a far off place!

5. You don't have to let pests destroy your plants—we have a number of excellent **organic controls** to choose from. Let us point out our effective solutions for all your pest and plant diseases.

6. **Check your irrigation system** to make sure it is working properly. Turn it on during the daytime when you can see what it is sprinkling. Leave it on for the entire cycle length so you can spot any water runoff, and make adjustments.

7. **Mulch any bare areas** that you didn't earlier this year, and any areas mulched in previous years that need refreshing. *Remulch whenever the mulch is less than 2 inches thick.*

Dazzling Low Water Bloomers

Here are a few shrubs, ground covers and perennials which have low water needs once established—and many of these will bloom from now through fall. All these will make great additions to your landscape:

Blue hibiscus, *escallonia*, *lantana*, *lavender*, *shrub roses*, *plumbago*, *California fuchsia*, *salvia* (various), *yarrow*, *coreopsis*, *erigeron*, *euryops*, *gaillardia*, *lion's tail*, *verbena*, and *phormium* (flax—for their colorful, strap-like leaves).

Here are some more low water users that may not be blooming now, but have showy blooms at other times: *ceanothus*, *manzanita*, *rockrose*, *raphiolepis*, and *sedum*. Also consider *pyracantha*, *cotoneaster*, and *toyon* for their snow-white flowers in the spring and bright red berries in the fall.

Although all of these flowering plants need less water than average, they vary in their water needs from less than average to not needing any water beyond rain water once established. We will be glad to help you, based on our many years of experience, pick out the best plants for your particular needs.

Keep in mind that these are only some of the low water users we have in stock at any one time, and that for large jobs we can custom-order what you need. We are here to help you be successful in your garden—we have saved many people years of frustration, and higher water bills, because they would have made poor plant choices at a box store. *Let us do the same for you!*

Decorate Your Yard with Butterflies

Butterflies help give a garden an extra enchanted feeling like nothing else can. They add movement, life, color, interest, and even excitement when you see a variety you haven't seen before.

The key to attracting these beauties to your garden is planting flowers they like to visit. Butterflies are often in need of food, which means nectar from flowers. When they find flowers that gives them that, especially when butterflies are abundant but flowers can be scarce in the summer and fall, good nectar sources can attract them like magnets.



Lots of flowers attract butterflies, but some they particularly seek out include *cosmos*, *lantana*, *verbenas*, *heliotrope*, *zinnias*, *marigolds*, *butterfly bush* (buddleia), *asters*, *coreopsis*, *purple coneflowers* (Echinacea), and *sedums*.

Ah... beautiful butterflies flying amongst beautiful flowers—it just doesn't get much better than this!

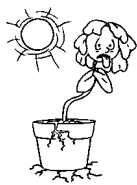
Dwarf Citrus Are Here!

They take up half the space, yet have an abundant crop of full size fruit, plus attractive foliage. Try them in large tubs or directly in the ground. Plant some of these beauties today for years of home-grown fruit!

Citrus bear the most fruit when given ample water and a fertilizer like *EB Stone Organics Citrus & Fruit Tree Food*. Apply once a month for the first year to establish new trees, and then every other month after that.

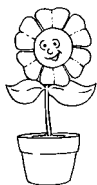


Watering While on Vacation



Ahhh, summertime vacations— with a little preparation, you can ensure your plants are still healthy when you return. Here are a few tips to help your plants go longer between waterings, or make it easier for your caretaker to know just what to do.

INDOORS: Move your houseplants into the bathtub and give them a thorough soaking and misting. Leave ¼" of water in the bottom of the bathtub, and keep them out of direct sunlight. A 30-minute deep soaking in the bathtub should quench their thirst upon your return a couple weeks later.



OUTDOORS: Color coding with different ribbon colors will make it easier for a caretaker to find specific plants according to their watering needs, and provide the appropriate amount. Just don't use ribbons where they might advertise your absence (prepare a map for these areas). Even better, install sprinklers or a drip system on timers—this is particularly effective for plants in containers.

Take down hanging baskets so they are easier to water and don't dry out as quickly. Move containers into the shade and group them together to help retain humidity.

Kid's Corner:

Backyard Party Fun

Go green, discover simple pleasures, and create lasting memories with an outdoor party this summer! There are an amazing number of ideas to fill many days with exciting activities. Here are a few of our favorites to stimulate your creative juices:

Decorate a small pot and plant marigold, radish, or basil seeds.

Nature Scavenger Hunt: Give everyone a list indicating items that they can either 1) find and collect, or 2) describe and note the location. Kids will need a bag to put their treasures in, and they can compete in pairs.

Girls can make **dandelion chains** or **daisy crowns** (for step by step directions, search for "dandelion chain" on nwf.org).

How about a **watermelon seed spitting contest** for those with a competitive spirit?

Make **pinecone birdfeeders** with peanut butter and birdseed! Visual learners can watch the how-to video on NatureForKids.net, word search "birdfeeder."

Try these activities for a birthday party—or for any other outdoor party or gathering!

Raised Beds Make Sense

Now is a great time to build raised beds. You can plant a late summer or early fall garden as soon as they are done.



Cultivating your favorite vegetables, herbs, and flowers in raised beds has several advantages. For example, a 5 year study by the USDA found that the superior drainage ability of raised beds increased yields of corn by more than 10%. Other good reasons include:

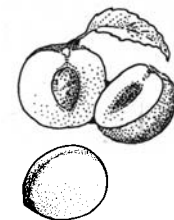
- * Raised beds can be built on multiple levels, used to terrace a slope, and installed as borders for your garden paths, decks, and patios.
- * Their pleasing geometry adds order and charm.
- * Well-drained, warmer soil enables you to plant earlier in the spring and also helps vegetables develop healthier, more efficient root systems.
- * They stay warmer longer, extending your fall growing season!
- * Walking paths are formed at the same time, making it easier to maintain weed-free, obvious places to walk.
- * They save resources because fertilizer and compost are applied to planting beds only, not the surrounding area. They save water because the area is smaller and more confined.
- * Raised beds are easier to tend, with less bending and stretching.



Grilled Peaches with Raspberry Sauce

It's peach and raspberry picking time!

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| ¾ c raspberries | 4 Tbs brown sugar |
| 1 ½ tsp lemon juice | ½ tsp cinnamon |
| 2 medium peaches—
peeled and halved | ¾ tsp vanilla |
| | 1 tsp butter |



In blender, puree berries and lemon juice (sweeten to taste with white sugar). Chill. Place peach halves cut side up on foil. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla, and fill peach centers with mixture; dot with butter. Grill over hot coals 10-15 minutes. Spoon on raspberry sauce for a colorful, and incredibly scrumptious treat! Serve warm. *Optional:* serve with ice cream.

Hurray for Flower Power!

Three years ago, Sugunami, Tokyo launched "Operation Flower", to help prevent rampant burglaries in the area. Volunteer homeowners were asked to plant flower seeds along the streets as one important component of a *crime prevention campaign*. It makes sense; being outside to tend flowers makes it easier to spot and report suspicious behavior.

But that is only part of why it worked so well...

Officials report, "Homeowners who are out in the front yard tending their gardens are sending out a powerful message: 'This is my home. I care about my property. I care about my community. I am staking my claim here.' There is a sense that the home would not be an easy target."

The program has been extremely successful: break-ins dropped almost 80% since the record high in 2002.

