

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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HOME GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

MAY 2009
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May Success Tips

- 1. May is for planting!** Come visit our store chock full and overflowing with flowers, edibles and landscaping plants.
- 2. Excellent perennial flowers** that do well with low water once established include our *lantana*, *lion's tail*, *Santa Barbara daisy*, *society garlic*, *lavender*, *salvias*, *penstemon*, *yarrow*, and *echinacea*.
- 3. Continue planting** vegetables, plus berries, artichokes, citrus, figs, avocados, and apple trees this month!
- 4. Fertilize citrus regularly** with *EB Stone Organics Citrus & Fruit Tree Food* for larger fruits and greener, healthier foliage.
- 5. The best time to do major pruning and shaping of spring flowering shrubs** is when they finish blooming. If you prune later, you'll be cutting off developing flower buds.
- 6. We have many plants that are very low water users** once established, including California natives and plants from other areas around the world that have similar Mediterranean-style climates. Many of these are just as pretty as high-water users.

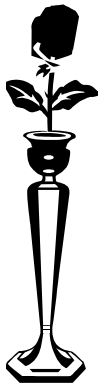
Ladybugs, Ladybugs, Great for My Garden!

 Would you believe *one ladybug can eat as many as 50 to 60 aphids a day?* They will also eat garden pests like *spider mites*, *mealybugs*, *whiteflies*, and other pesky soft-bodied insects and larvae. What a wonderful way to control pests organically!

Attract these beneficial insects to your garden by planting their favorite umbrella-shaped flowers: *dill*, *angelica*, *fennel*, *tansy*, *caraway*, *cilantro*, or *yarrow*. *Cosmos*, *scented geraniums*, and *coreopsis* will also attract these helpful insects. Since ladybugs are sensitive to both natural and synthetic insecticides, use these sparingly.

We have ladybugs in stock. Release some and watch them go to work in your garden! We also have *praying mantids*, plus *earthworms* to improve your garden soil.

Ready, Set, Let's Go With Roses!



May is the time for Mothers and roses, and both are beautiful. Our roses are in bud and bloom, and ready for transplanting, so come in today! We'll help you select from a wonderful variety of *hybrid teas*, *grandifloras*, *climbing roses*, and *more*, including *proven classics* and *new award winners!* Don't be shy if you're not an expert; we are here to help.

Whether you are just starting to plant roses, need a gift for a rose gardener, or have worn out a faithful tool, we have **just the right tools** you'll need to make rose gardening easier and more rewarding! We have quality *leather gloves*, *bypass pruners*, *loppers*, *short digging forks*, *kneeling and knee pads* (to save your knees), *watering wands*, *long-handled shovels*, *wheelbarrows*, plus *garden and leaf rakes*.

Grow a Theme Herb Garden



It's a pity to use dried and bottled herbs if you have a window box or a small patch of sunny ground. The fresh flavor of many herbs is quite short (refrigerate up to 3 days), but it is so easy to grow your own assortment of these incredibly versatile and useful plants—just harvest when needed! Fresh herbs are great in breads, stews, soups or vegetables. You can make **herb vinegars** for salad dressings and marinades, and **herb oils** for cooking. If you can't plant all of them, here are some creative ideas that take up little space.

Some popular culinary pairings: *Basil* with tomatoes, *oregano* with sauces, *rosemary* with lamb, and *chives* with butter or cream cheese.

Tea garden: Plant *chamomile*, *catnip*, *lemon balm*, or choose mints: *spearmint* or *peppermint*.

Natural medicinal herb garden: *Camomile*—a digestive aid, sedative, and skin soother. *Feverfew & Spearmint*—for headaches. *Echinacea*—a beautiful flower that causes an increase in the number of immune cells, Please note: we are not medical advisors, it is always best to consult your physician first.

Homemade aromatherapy: For the fireplace, toss in *rosemary*, *lemon verbana*, or *mint*. Place *lavender* or any combination of favorite scents in a sack of cheesecloth, and hang from the bath spigot when filling the tub with hot water.

Italian spaghetti garden: Plant *oregano*, *basil*, *garlic*, *bay* and *parsley*.

Spring Lawn Care Secrets



Set your lawn mower higher in May and keep it higher until cooler weather arrives in the fall. Set it to cut at 2½-3" for *fescue* and *bluegrass* lawns.

Set your automatic sprinkler to **water lawns early in the morning**—it reduces evaporation. Water deeply to encourage roots to grow deeply, and increase the time between waterings.

Fertilize now with *EB Stone Organics Nature's Green Lawn Food*.

Wonderful Watermelon

Now is the time to plant some sweet, juicy watermelons to enjoy later this summer! Whether you choose a variety with yellow, orange, or red flesh, all are good for your health!

HERE ARE A FEW OF ITS BENEFITS:

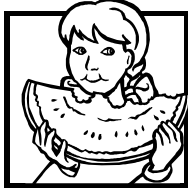
✿ A 2-cup serving of watermelon is practically *it's own multivitamin*, containing vitamins A (for eye health), B6 (helps us cope with anxiety and panic), C (bolsters the immune system), and potassium (helps control blood pressure, and relieves stress).

✿ Watermelon is a rare food source of *citrulline*, an amino acid used in wound healing and cell division.

✿ Watermelon, a *lycopene "all-star"* contains 40% more lycopene than fresh tomatoes. Lycopene helps maintain healthy hearts, reduces the risk of prostate cancer, and removes ammonia from the body.

✿ With 92% water content, you enjoy *only 25 calories per 1/2 cup*, without fat or sodium, making watermelon a perfect craving quencher!

FOR MORE fun facts, recipes, and creative carving ideas, check out www.watermelon.org.



Share Your Gardening Knowledge!



The Peace Corps is looking for experienced gardeners! Help promote sustainable agricultural practices and boost nutrition by becoming a Peace Corps volunteer. Positions are available in countries around the world. Assignments are 27 months long and include free travel, intensive training, full medical and dental care, a monthly stipend, and

\$6,000 upon completion of service.

Contact kkuykendall@peacecorps.gov in California for more information.

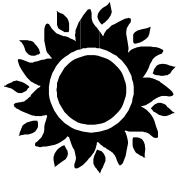
Basic Vegetable Gardening Needs

For a productive vegetable garden, start with the three basics: plenty of sunshine, water, and good soil.

SUN: In order to fully ripen in a stress-free environment, your vegetables will need 6 or more hours of sun. Some greens like lettuce will survive in light shade.

WATER: Regular watering is critical to improve yields. It also can actually reduce bolting in some vegetables. Consider installing a *drip irrigation system* to reduce water usage. The water will go directly to the roots with less evaporation loss. *Mulch* (our favorite "M" word!) around plants to reduce surface evaporation, keep more uniform soil temperatures, and discourage thirsty weeds.

GREAT SOIL: Providing a soil rich in organic matter is important for bigger and more prolific vegetables, and sometimes even better taste! Consider starting a compost pile to produce your own "gardener's gold" to use in addition to our bagged soil amendments.



Chocolate Zucchini Bread

This is one of our favorite recipes—so be sure to plant your zucchini now, and you'll soon be able to enjoy this incredibly delicious bread!

| | |
|--|--|
| 3- 1 oz squares <i>unsweetened chocolate</i> —melted over low heat | 1 1/2 c flour |
| 2 eggs | 1 tsp <i>each</i> baking powder, baking soda, and cinnamon |
| 1 1/2 c sugar | 1/2 tsp salt |
| 1/2 c oil | 1 1/2 c semi-sweet chocolate chips |
| 1 tsp vanilla | 2 c grated zucchini |



In a blender, combine first 5 ingredients. In a large bowl, mix remaining ingredients, folding in zucchini last. Bake in a lightly greased loaf pan for 50-60 minutes at 350°.

New Tree Discovered

As many as 10,000 new species of plants and animals are discovered each year, but most are small and easily overlooked, or few in number. What a surprise when a new tree was recently discovered that covers a huge area of *3,100 square miles!* It had not been discovered before because it is in a remote and difficult-to-reach area in Ethiopia.

The tree is *Acacia fumosa*: it grows up to 20 feet high and has a 30 foot-wide canopy. This unusual tree sprouts pink flowers while the tree is leafless during the dry season.



Did You Know?

The average food garden produces about 300 pounds of fresh produce from a 600 square foot lot, saving \$600 per growing season.

For the past five years, there has been a greenhouse on the South Pole—an environment with a high-altitude, low-air pressure, and -148°F wind-chill factors, brrrr!—that produces fresh tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, strawberries, and herbs for local workers.

The Federal government may start retrofitting their aging office roofs for vegetative or green roofs. The economic and environmental benefits are astounding: it can double or triple the life of a roof, keep buildings cooler in the summer, contribute to cleaner air, and reduce storm water runoff and overflow problems (a significant issue in Washington DC).