

Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

550 BAYSHORE BLVD • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94124

(415) 824-1900

www.flowercraftgc.com

HOME

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GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

May Success Tips

1. It's planting time! Browse the nursery and pick out some fresh flowers and delicious edibles—including our *citrus, fruit trees, blueberries* and *other berries, and vegetables.*

2. Plant herbs near your kitchen so you can easily pick what you need—even while you are cooking.

3. Fertilize lawns to keep them green and thick.

4. Stake all plants like tomatoes and hollyhocks.

5. Thin fruits when they are about the size of a dime.



Flowers That Love Part Shade

Shady areas can become some of the most colorful and pleasing spots in your yard. Simply plant these shade-loving annuals and perennials to create a visual feast.

Begonias, coleus, mimulus, impatiens, lobelia, campanula, delphinium, nierembergia, coral bells, fox-glove, fuchsias, columbine, astilbe, nemesia, godetia, browallia, torenia, lamium, vinca minor, ageratum, ajuga, nicotiana, and some salvias.



Keep in mind that shade varies from light to deep shade. Many of these plants prefer light shade.



May is Magical!

This is a magical time in our nursery. You'll be captivated by the magnificent, colorful flowers ready and waiting to make your garden absolutely stunning!

We have many tried-and-true, dependable flowers, plus new and unusual plants arriving weekly. Sometimes these beauties are in short supply or available only for a brief period, so come in often and see what's new!

Get ready for Memorial Day and Independence Day! Now is a great time to plant some red, white, and blue flowers. **FOR VIBRANT REDS**, choose *verbena, salvia, dianthus, begonia, and zinnia*. **BLUES** range from pale to deeper tones and include *lobelia, campanula, ageratum, corn flower, and larkspur*.

Every garden needs some **WHITE**; it's especially eye-catching in the evening. *Impatiens, bacopa, nicotiana, vinca, and sweet alyssum* are a few of the many flowers we have available in white.

Petunias bloom brightly in **ALL THREE COLORS** (including bi-colors for a striped effect) and in varying heights!

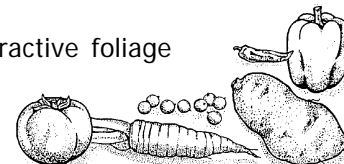
Lots of vegetables can be planted too. Combine vegetables and flowers in the same large container to liven up a porch or driveway. Use one or two of our strawberry jars for visual diversity.

The most productive gardens are regularly fertilized with *EB Stone Organics Tomato & Vegetable Food* and *EB Stone Organics Rose & Flower Food*, and have soils with a high organic matter content—mix in *EB Stone Planting Compost*.

It's Peak Vegetable Planting Time!

Plant vegetables now and enjoy their fresh flavor all through the summer and into fall. You can grow plants like *beans, carrots, chard, radishes* and many others from seed. Use our transplants to get faster crops of *cucumbers, squash, melons, eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes*.

Some vegetables have especially attractive foliage and are a perfect size to add to flower beds. These include *chard, carrots, beets, and all the leaf lettuces*.



Remove Suckers

Always watch for shoots that come from below or near the ground level. On grafted plants—like most roses and fruit trees—these are most likely originating from the root stock portion of the plant. Suckers, if allowed to grow, will not bear useful flowers or fruit, and will sap the strength from the valuable part of the plant.

Trace the sucker to its point of origin and carefully twist or wrench it off by hand, being careful not to tear off extra bark from the main plant. If you simply cut the sucker at ground level, it will often think it is being pruned and re-sprout.

Mother's Day Trivia

The second Sunday in May is the most popular day to celebrate "Mother's Day"—it is the designated day for 77 nations around the world!

☼ President Woodrow Wilson made it an official U.S. holiday in 1914.

☼ Anna Jarvis, who inspired Wilson to sign this special day into law, had already trade-marked the phrases "Mother's Day" and "second Sunday in May" in 1912.

☼ Some historians believe the tradition of giving flowers was started in the 16th century by children picking wild flowers in Europe to celebrate "Mothering Day."

☼ Indonesia, Bangladesh, China, Japan, and Canada also traditionally honor their moms with a gift of flowers—the most popular choices are carnations, roses, and lilies.



Children Love Gardening

Teach a child to garden and you'll pass on important values and skills, plus rediscover the joy you experienced when you first learned to garden! Children love to play in the dirt, and it is such fun to watch things grow and check on their progress daily.

Many parents find gardening an excellent way to *spend quality time* with their kids, teach lessons such as *environmental awareness* and the *workings of nature*. In short, it is a wonderful dose of *old-fashioned family fun!*

Some schools have garden clubs, which teach children to experience nature and science. These gardens also help to *build the self-esteem* of the students. A recent study showed that *kids eat higher quantities of healthy food* when they grow their own fruits and vegetables.

Favorite homegrown vegetables for children include (in ranking order): *carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, broccoli, and corn.*

Whatever you and your children decide to plant together, age-appropriate involvement is a key factor. Even preschoolers can learn simple tasks by observing you at first, and then gradually doing more.

And yes, your example and shared excitement will make all the difference in the world for them.



Design Tips

What Makes a Good Edging Plant?

Edging plants are needed in every planting bed to soften the hard edges of walkways and create a bridge between taller-growing background plants and walkways or grass. Edging plants provide that attractive finishing touch.

The plants you choose to edge a bed should provide balance to your garden through contrast with the existing plants, or as an echo of those plants.

For instance, contrast **TEXTURE** by using plants with smaller leaves with thick, large-leaved plants. Contrast **PLANT FORMS** using small mounding plants with tall spiky ones. Repeat groups of edging plants with **SIMILARLY COLORED** larger background plants to accentuate the flow of the design in the bed, or use colors that provide a contrast.

Because they are planted in the front of a bed, edging plants are generally shorter. You can use a single type of edging plant, or you can group different types of plants—both can be effective. *Have fun!*



Enjoy Garden Herbal Teas

Enjoy *fresh tea from your garden in 5 minutes!* Add 1 TBS fresh herb leaves or 1 tsp dried leaves (see below how to dry herbs) to each cup of boiling water. Pour the boiling water over the leaves and let steep for 5 minutes or until the water becomes a dark tint of whatever color the herbs are. Sweeten with honey. Serve hot or over ice.

Good plants for tea include *lavender, mint, thyme, chamomile, anise, lemon balm* and others.

Harvest most herb leaves before or while the plant is in full bloom. Dry them by hanging them upside down or lay them thinly on a rack or screen that allows the air to get to the bottom of the herbs. Dry them in a cool, dry, and dark place. You can hang herbs in a paper bag to create a dark environment if you don't have a readily available dark spot.

Gift-wrapped, herb teas make a lovely present!



Why Homegrown Food Tastes Better

One of the primary reasons people garden is for better tasting fruits and vegetables.

But have you ever wondered why they taste better?

To begin with, varieties for home gardeners are **SELECTED** for their good taste. Commercial varieties are sometimes bred for other competing qualities such as toughness, which helps them survive mechanical harvesting; and higher, more profitable yields instead of flavor.

THE HARVEST TIME DIFFERENCE: when you can pick produce at the peak of ripeness, the flavor has had a chance to fully develop. Commercially harvested fruits and vegetables are typically picked before they are fully ripe in order to allow for transport time and a longer "shelf" life once they get to the grocery store.

And of course, the **SATISFACTION** of growing your own food has it's own special sweetness that is absolutely priceless, don't you think?

